

Maintenance of small and mixed fleets

The Principle of Partnership

After the liberalisation of the rail market, a large number of private railways have been able to establish themselves on the market. These new companies have relatively small vehicle fleets with a comparatively wide range of vehicle types, and their operational locations are widely dispersed. This places increased demand on the cost-effectiveness of maintenance.

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There has always been a conflict of interest in vehicle procurement: on one hand, homogeneous fleets are desirable in order to spread development and approval costs over a large number of vehicles. On the other hand, requirements made on the vehicles are highly varied. The all-in-one solution does not exist, and so-called universal vehicles are often a complex and costly solution. On top of this, universality is often limited, and for this reason many rail companies end up preferring vehicle types with features that match specific requirements. This conflict of interest – vehicles according to requirements or a homogeneous fleet – affects vehicle maintenance in the same way. Especially spare parts inventories and training of personnel are cost drivers for mixed fleets. In addition to these general problems, there are peculiarities in the individual transport modes to be taken into consideration.

Regional freight transport

A small private market was already present in freight transport before the railway reform. Accordingly, in this segment of the small and medium-sized performance category, the product range and service of the manufacturers are already developed. Therefore, used spare parts can be profited from increasingly often, and trained technical staff can also be found. Requirements for the existing fleet are very common and similar. In general, diesel locomotives of up to 1200 kW that meet no special requirements are used, which means that it is quite easy to find spare parts when performing major maintenance tasks. The operational area of the vehicles is very limited, so maintenance can be performed at a fixed location. The size of the fleet is usually critical in this market segment. While DB alone housed about 70 locomotives of the class V 100 at its train depot in the 1980s, there are private operators today who only own a single locomotive. This means that there is no way to operate a train depot cost-

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