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SOCIAL STAGE CREW

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Just Forwards and Backwards, Right?

An analysis on what it takes to conduct a subway train

Though most of the world has adapted to workerless trains, the U.S. has yet to implement the long term investment (1).

The profession hosts a total of 39,235 workers in the U.S. which are represented through the average age of 45 year olds (2). This, and the fact that subway conducting is privatized profession through the jobs available, position conducting as a deep rooted trade. This has led the vast majority of individuals to be unaware of the what the job entails, which we see as an issue.



"Visiting a new city, and having to adjust to a different transit system can be day ruining. Having a good conductor can be the only resource you need"

- Ava Ellis

What Does the Job Call For?

In most subway systems in the States, the conductor stands as a separate entity to the train operator. Though they have to openly communicate at all times, this means the conductor primarily deals with passengers. Similar to bus drivers, subway conductors ensure the safety of people getting on and off the train. Rather than bus stops however, conductors have infamous subway stations to manage. Not only must they maintain order near the doors of the train, to safely close and open the doors, but they must also act as the first response to the issues dealt to passengers at each continuous stop along their route (3)



Put to Practice

By looking for the zebra striped board along the wall facing the subway doors, you can position yourself to be right in front of the conductor's window as the subway train arrives. From here, the conductor has access to two different communication systems, one which runs directly to the train operator and one that allows the conductor to speak to all the passengers at once over an intercom. It is vital that the conductor and operator stay in communication to ensure the safety of the passengers riding the train, especially in situations which may call for extra help from emergency services. Using the intercom system, the conductor is able to make all riders aware of a situation as once if need be.

In order to allow for two way communication between the conductor and the passengers, in case an emergency happens on one of the train cars during the ride, the subway cars have either call buttons or switches located within the train cars. This line runs both to the conductor and to the train operator in case the situation is absolutely dire. Any conflicts which may arise outside of the train car, perhaps in the train station, are also monitored by the conductor using the window attached to their control room.

3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrtUToXqbCE>
2. <https://www.zippia.com/train-conductor-jobs/>
1. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/morning-brief-why-do-us-subways-still-have-drivers>