



Driver Recruitment and Retention: A Winning Combination

Attracting “good” drivers and keeping the “best” ones are two challenges that can frustrate managers, but are the keys to success within a fleet operation. Why are these two areas so critical?

Maintaining a stable roster of drivers enables:

- Dispatchers to move loads without delay,
- Sales people to bid for more loads with greater confidence,
- Safety managers to better ensure predictable and reasonable results as measured by DOT compliance and accident prevention,
- Companies to preserve a greater share of their profit margin **as a profit** instead of funding expensive qualification activities (i.e. drug tests, MVRs, medicals, etc.)

Additionally, attracting and keeping “professional” drivers directly influence your firm’s results:

- Drivers are the public face of your company. Drivers interact with customers and shape their opinions of your firm.
- There are a lot of folks outside of your company who care about your drivers and how they behave: roadside inspectors, insurance carriers, DOT auditors.
- Drivers can get into trouble (i.e. infractions of regulations, crashes, etc.) and in doing so can get you and the management team into trouble, too.

There are many obstacles that keep firms from achieving strong recruiting and retention results:

- It is difficult to find new, qualified (experienced) drivers who are willing to work long hours at “reasonable” wages (the candidate’s expectations are becoming harder to satisfy)
- Many potential drivers have difficulty with speaking and writing the English language which can introduce regulatory compliance and safety issues.
- Increased competition between transportation firms for what loads are available are leading some to pay a premium for the best drivers, but that’s also driving up their costs.
- Safety departments have a legitimate concern over hiring drivers who may be “at increased risk” of becoming involved in collisions due to prior collisions and moving violations; however, when this interferes with the company’s ability to move loads, it can lead to an internal struggle between managers.
- Many companies can’t afford lavish retention programs and anniversary bonus programs that are cash based.
- Many top managers don’t support their department or team leaders in practical ways that would enable more creative approaches to recruiting or retention; therefore, line managers become de-motivated to try new things that might actually help.

How can a company overcome these obstacles to find and keep productive drivers?

Jack Welch, CEO of General Electric said; “[Business is like a sports team; to win, you have to field the best talent](#)”. Some managers may be reading this and thinking, “[Heck, I'd settle for fielding a 'complete' team let alone the 'best' team](#)”. Don't give up hope and don't let your boss paint you into a corner by demanding results with no budget.

There may be two issues keeping your company from achieving its staffing goals: not enough qualified candidates arriving at your door, and too many veterans leaving your company. While these issues may be connected to each other, we'll start with [Recruiting Strategies](#) first.

Part One - Recruiting Strategies

Effective recruiting is all about [information management](#). If you're serious about improving your recruiting efforts, you need to start by consistently tracking information about your efforts, tactics, sources, and candidates. If you haven't tracked your efforts and the results of those efforts you'll have a hard time getting approval for any changes in strategy or increases in budgets.

- **How have you been tracking the results of your recruiting efforts?**
 - At a minimum, maintain a written record of where or how each applicant first heard about the job opening (regardless of whether you hire them). If most applicants heard about the job through a certain source, expand your use of that source.
 - Preferably, you'll develop a database (or spreadsheet) to track this information over the period of months or years in order to verify the return on investment in your advertising dollars. [This can help justify expanding your budget and experimenting with more expensive options like radio or other “big budget” approaches](#). (Of course, you could also start using our “E-Driver File” program which has a complete recruiting module built in!)
 - Periodically review the applications of those you hired versus those who did not qualify. What were some of the reasons that you passed on certain driver candidates and followed through on others? It may not seem important, but over time you'll discover specifics that:
 - [enable you to save a lot of time when weeding out candidates that you'd never consider, AND](#)
 - [improve your advertising to slow the flow of unqualified candidates](#).
- **Are you tracking past candidates that were not qualified?**
 - Tracking candidates that were unqualified *in the past* may provide a rich resource of candidates that may become qualified within a year or two. This is a long term approach that assumes some candidates may be ready to join your firm at a later date if their MVR records improve, or their age or total years of driving experience will later match your minimum safety criteria.
 - It takes work to keep in touch with these candidates (they may move around and change their contact information, etc.), but it may help you out when you're in a pinch. Postcards, emails, simple newsletters about your company's continued success and growth may entice the candidates to keep in touch with you.
- **Are you networking with other recruiting, HR, or safety managers outside of your company?**
 - Casual contact with other recruiters, if professionally handled, may turn up rejected candidates that don't meet their standards, but could work for your team with a little re-training, coaching and probation status, etc.
 - While drivers may trade from one company to another, so do other employees. Hiring a recruiter from another company may bring a fresh approach to recruiting that can jump start your efforts (be aware that some recruiters may have

employment contracts that do not permit them to bring their contact list along, and it could be considered stealing company property if they did).

While recruiting traditionally consists of sourcing candidates, qualification of potential employees and the “on boarding” process, we’ll focus our attention on sourcing strategies.

Sourcing, or attracting potential candidates to your company, typically includes:

1. **Advertising** by way of multiple media, such as the Internet, general newspapers, job ad newspapers, professional publications, window advertisements, job centers, and campus graduate recruitment programs; and
2. **Recruiting research**, which is the proactive identification of driver candidates who may not respond to job postings and other recruitment advertising methods mentioned above. This research results in a list of prospects who can then be contacted to: solicit their interest in a position at your company; obtain a resume; and get them into the qualification process.

What advertising have you done in the past and what are you doing now?

- **General Newspaper Ads** – How are these worded?
 - Besides telling job seekers that you’d like to consider them for employment, your ad should “sell” the job *and* the company. Give the job seeker a valuable reason to investigate your company. Identify three things that your current drivers see as strong positives for working at your firm – use these in your advertising.
 - How do you describe the position, the compensation, and the benefits? Is it easy to understand, or more “code-speak” that blends into all the other job ads on that page?
- **Job listing newspapers** – Where are these papers placed for distribution? They may not attract CDL drivers if they are placed in grocery stores, but they may work if they are placed in truck stops. Work with the publication sales team to assure that your ad is being placed in the right community of job seekers whose qualifications and interests will be a match for your opening.
- **Journal ads** – driver magazines, trucking magazines and other print media that target drivers or may be read by drivers could be a useful place to announce your intention to hire the best candidates for your team. Specialty magazines that appeal to sportsmen, outdoor activities, and hobbies may be an unusual, but productive, place for your ad if the activities covered in the magazine relate to the activities of an ideal candidate. For example, a firm looking to hire security guards might advertise in a gun magazine to attract candidates that might not otherwise be looking for a job because they are happy where they are right now.
- **Radio spots** – are you working with the radio sales team to tailor your message and make it sound really appealing? It may cost more to hire professional talent to make your spot, but skimping makes the ad ineffective and makes your company seem weak. Picking the right stations and time slots makes a big difference. Ask lots of questions before you sign a contract and try to negotiate for rebates on future advertising based on results.
- **Job fairs** – the organizers of job fairs want you to find candidates so you’ll come back again. They are your ally so use their knowledge to get prepared in advance of a fair. Talk to the organizers about your company’s needs – if they are professionals, they will help you design a short list of questions to cut through unqualified candidates, and the organizer should be willing and able to help steer candidates to your table.
 - Advance advertising about the fair should mention that CDL candidates are sought, and you should negotiate with the organizer to see if there are any rebates, refunds or discounts off of future fairs if you’re unable to get quality candidates during the event.

- If you do attend a job fair, take a driver with you so that he or she can relate what a typical day or week is like, how the company operates, etc. Having a current driver (or driver trainer) attend adds credibility and helps candidates form a best possible impression of your firm.
- **Online recruiting services** (specialized for drivers, or generic services like “monster”) – test drive the system as a job seeker before spending any money to register as an employer. If the system is difficult to use or steers candidates towards companies with large advertising banners, your company will be unlikely to draw many candidates from the site. Talk among current drivers to see what sites they like (and why they like each site that they mention).

Take time to call and talk to the people who run the recruiting service. Ask for their advice and ask about success rates for other companies. They are supposed to be experts at what they do – if they are hesitant to share information with you before signing up, you’ll have to wonder whether they’ll be much help after you send them a check.

- Does your own **web site** have an application form or a way to solicit driver candidates? Adding a “careers” page is simple and including an online application or “follow up form” can be far less expensive than other advertising methods. It may not draw as many candidates, but **not** adding these features simply limit potential candidates from reaching you.
- **Novel approaches** are limited to your creativity (and budget). Maybe you can afford to host a “toll free joke of the day hotline” that starts with a recruiting message for your company. Maybe you could set up a recruiting table at a local truck stop once a month and give out decent quality pens with your recruiting hotline inscribed on the pen. Perhaps you can distribute custom labeled candy bars that encourage drivers to call your recruiting hotline. There’s no limit to the ways you can call attention to your company (but there may be a limit to your budget so plan these “events” carefully and track results!)

Are you actively reaching out to drivers and applicants to get additional names of drivers?

Recruiting research involves actively reaching out to get potential candidate names (it is sometime mockingly called “head hunting”).

It takes a little more work but is essentially free and may get you better job candidates than advertising. After all, the most qualified driver isn’t typically in a job search mode – they’re happy where they are or figure that changing jobs isn’t worth the hassle of re-qualifying. If you want great candidates, you’re going to have to go chase them down, tackle them and drag them to your company!

- Start by asking each applicant to list 3-5 names (and contact information) of other drivers that they know and respect as “good drivers”. If they supply only one name and a way to get in touch with that driver, it’s one additional lead for your job opening. Call or email that driver immediately and follow up with them until they say yes or no to sending you a completed application or resume.
- Ask your current drivers if they have buddies that they’d recommend coming to work for your company. You won’t know how many will provide names until you ask them several times.
- If you feel the need to offer a “recruiting bonus” or “reward” to drivers who give you contact names, split the bonus into two parts – one paid after a face to face interview is completed and the second half after the applicant has been qualified and accepted a job. Pay for performance, not promises – after all, your current driver is doing their friend a favor to “get them into” your company and shouldn’t need a reward from you for making an introduction unless it leads to a placement.
- Calling ex-employees who voluntarily departed (ie. not terminated for cause) may turn up prospects for re-employment. The follow up shows you miss them and wish they had

stayed at your firm. If they are not happy where they ended up, they may come back. This process can take weeks, months and even years, but it's worth it since your firm will always need "solid" drivers that they can count on.

- As pointed out earlier, the recruiting effort will succeed if you track your information very well. ANY name you receive should be tracked since their qualifications, age, and experience will continue to change over time. Someone that was not a good candidate three years ago may be perfect for you at this time.

Other proactive [recruiting research](#) approaches include:

- Contingency Recruiters – in a pinch you may consider hiring an outside consultant to get you the talent you need. They only get paid if they deliver a qualified candidate who actually takes the job, but the fee is often a percentage of the first year's wages (which may be a lot to gamble if the driver leaves within the first six months on the job).
- Retained Recruiter Agencies – an often expensive option where you place an agency on retainer to actively recruit long-tenured drivers away from their current positions. Typically these drivers are happy with their current job but may move if there is sufficient cause to switch (i.e. better routes, better equipment, etc.)

Part Two – Holding on to the “best” drivers

So you've invested in tracking information about potential drivers, and your qualification process is humming along. Now, how do you keep the best drivers from leaving?

It would be easy to start rambling off a long list of “must dos” about compensation package details, bonus program schemes, training programs, and “driver empowerment”, but that would miss the mark every time. Why? If we don't know with certainty why drivers are leaving, we won't know what we need to do to actually change the situation (*plus, every company is different: certain programs that may work for one company may not help your company at all).

Keeping drivers starts with understanding very precisely why they are leaving. You can *assume* or you can *settle for a “canned answer”*, but unless you're willing to really push to discover the details, you may never really know why drivers are leaving your company.

As we had pointed out in the recruiting piece, information is your ally. Has your team:

- [Implemented a well structured exit interview process?](#)
 - [Is this part of your driver handbook or policy manual?](#)
 - [Does it include a pre-printed form with specific, mandatory questions?](#)
- [Insisted that each driver complete at least a phone interview before releasing final settlements or pay? \(Face to face may be difficult, but may also be a “last ditch opportunity” to salvage the relationship\)](#)
- [Tracked the results of each and every interview in a database or spreadsheet?](#)
- [Identified any ongoing trends?](#)
- [Periodically reviewed what questions \(and follow up questions\) are used to get drivers to reveal the true nature of why they're leaving?](#)

It can seem overwhelming if you get several drivers who really “unload” a ton of opinions and objections all at once. It's also tough to deal with criticism of your own management style, but if you really want to improve retention results, you've got to be willing to wear a thick skin and deal with whatever the drivers reveal.

When you've done the exit interview process consistently with all drivers (not just the “good ones”) you'll start to build some helpful information. Just as you wouldn't spend money on a consultant and totally ignore his or her findings report, you'll need to analyze the results of the exit interviews. This will help uncover the underlying issues that are giving your drivers a reason to shop around

for another job. Chances are that these issues are the same at most companies, but that doesn't excuse their existence (or the perception that the issues exist).

Now you have the hard work of setting priorities and beginning to address these issues. You still have to put out your normal day-to-day fires and deal with finding resources, but at least you'll have a plan to start making changes based on the real issues.

Common driver concerns (that can push them to leave or keep them onboard) include:

- **“Pay”** -- The easiest answer for any driver to give is “I'm leaving due to the pay”. All drivers drive to get paid. If your pay was so horrible, why did they stay as long as they did? “Pay” is often a smokescreen to hide the real reasons – they want to be polite and give you some canned answer so they can leave.

Similarly, if you want to attract better quality (and long lasting) employees, you usually need to pay better than the “average”. Compensation specialists can consult with you to evaluate the average pay scale for each position and terminal area in your network (and deliver recommendations for adjustments based on market conditions).

- **Dispatch** – Drivers don't always enjoy a glowing and happy relationship with dispatchers. Let's face reality – the dispatcher's job is designed to increase productivity and move the maximum amount of loads as is possible. If dispatchers are causing un-needed friction, then you may need to work with them on their “people skills”. Maybe it's that some drivers perceive that other drivers get all the “good” loads. That perception comes from gossip, but gossip usually starts with some element of truth that gets distorted. Make sure rules are followed and no one gets unfair treatment.
- **Training** – Too much or too little training can give drivers a reason to complain. If the training helps them accomplish their daily tasks, and “feels” credible because it doesn't talk down to them, then you're doing well. If drivers are asking for help with route selection or how to deal with cranky shippers/customers, then maybe you need to address it ASAP. Training designed to help them advance in their career is becoming more common among progressive companies (i.e. training on using computers and the internet, training on better person to person communication skills, etc.) Training may be assigned based on career path plans to help transition some drivers into new roles such as dispatch, sales, safety or driver support roles.
- **Quality of Life** – Also known as “too little home time”. Drivers with families must have some predictable home time or they will eventually come unglued. The issue is balancing what is reasonable with what is preferred. Sometimes there may be creative solutions to “quality of life” issues, but that will vary from driver to driver. Talking through the issue one-on-one is the only way to diagnose what could work beyond scheduling more “home time”.
- **Driver Respect/Quality of Equipment/Etc.** – Drivers will always have concerns about how they feel they are treated. Whether their equipment is comfortable or dependable and so on. There are no easy answers, but ignoring their concerns is a sure way to show them the door and see them walk through it. Your team, I am sure, doesn't ignore the concerns, but may have limited or no resources to address the concerns. Talk to your drivers – don't let them **assume** you don't care. (If this point hits close to home, read our document on Driver Communication Plans – it may be very helpful).

After investigating why drivers choose to leave, and implementing a plan to address any immediate areas of concern, you may want to begin to build “proactive” strategies to keep drivers motivated. Motivating drivers is all about keeping them excited about working for **your** company rather than looking at **other** companies.

When you practice these strategies efficiently, it can help you attract drivers from other companies (a boost to your recruiting efforts!)

We’ve outlined some of the most common strategies that fleets have used to build up their drivers confidence in their company.

- **Orientation** – if you want employees who will stay, you need to introduce them to your company carefully and deliberately. What does your orientation program consist of now? How long does it last? Do you use veteran drivers as “mentors”? Do you give new hires a “lifeline” phone number to call when they’re really confused, angry, or out of their wits? Do they leave orientation feeling like they’re part of a team/family or just the next number (driver ID) in a long line of numbers? Does your orientation end when they hop in the truck, or do you have a 30-day, 60-day, 90-day follow up plan?
- **Training** – When do you train and what does your training cover? Lifestyle training, wellness education, help dealing with family finances and tips on managing customers may be topics that drivers would line up to hear. Do you ever ask your drivers what types of non-traditional training could help them with their jobs? Training benefits both your drivers and your company (if the training helps them to perform more effectively).
- **Achievement** – Does your company have a career plan for drivers? Can drivers “graduate” to different titles, pay scales, or job responsibilities (i.e. driver trainer, driver support, sales, dispatch, etc?)
- **Recognition** – How do you give drivers recognition of a job done correctly and safely?
 - Are there anniversary rewards?
 - Are there safety bonuses or incentives?
 - Is your recognition program cash based, or product based?
 - Do you have company logo-ed shirts, hats, pins, or other give-aways that promote your company and promote loyalty to your company? If you decide to try offering promotional materials, don’t be tempted to skimp on quality – giving out cheaply made items can backfire (it may be perceived that you don’t think them worthy of quality products).
 - Do you ever recognize your drivers in their hometown newspaper when they’ve achieved anniversaries (miles driven with no accident, most miles driven in the year, etc.)?
- **Driver Support Department (i.e. steadiness of work, “getting enough loads”, support while on the road, etc.)** – How does your team work to keep drivers as busy as they want to be, and balance that with “home time”? It is a real juggling act that takes a lot of talent – talent that many drivers may not appreciate or understand. Can you help them understand that it’s not a personal attack against drivers, but the logistics of the marketplace that drive these situations? How does your home base team help support drivers who are otherwise isolated and “out of sight”?
- **Dispatchers and Drivers as a team** – due to turnover, do you make efforts to keep dispatchers and drivers meeting each other as frequently as possible? If they work as a team instead of impersonal adversaries, you’ll probably achieve more goals (including turnover reductions). If you can’t arrange frequent face to face activities, can you keep a one page biography on each driver and dispatcher so that they can get introduced by email (at a minimum?) What is your driver to dispatcher ratio (and is it too high)?

- **Ongoing Driver Communication Plan** – Do your drivers know your company's business goals and how drivers can specifically help achieve those goals? Do you ever discuss a driver's personal goals during the annual review so that you can see how the company may assist him or her achieve those goals? Drivers may be more interested in helping your company meet goals if your company takes an interest in the driver's goals, too.
- **Safety or Equipment issues** – any hazard to personal safety should be addressed immediately and systematically.

Connections between Retention and Recruiting

If you keep drivers longer because you've investigated and addressed their most pressing concerns about working for your company, then you've accomplished three things:

1. You're retaining drivers longer
2. You've improved your company's operations (efficiency)
3. You've started to make your company more attractive to other drivers (recruiting)

People want to work for companies that are perceived as "good" or "winning" companies (companies that they can be proud of). A well managed company that fairly enforces simple rules and demonstrates that they value their drivers as important team members will keep their drivers longer **and** attract greater numbers of job seekers.

Summary

There are no "silver bullet" solutions, or trendy, novel "programs in a box" that will suddenly cure your unique driver recruiting and retention issues. However, there are many resources available to help you track information and investigate your situation (see appendix A through I).

Take time to inventory your current strategies and evaluate their effectiveness. You may be surprised to find that a little "fine tuning" will get you greatly improved results.

About the Author

Prior to joining SafetyFirst Systems, Paul Farrell worked in the insurance industry as a Loss Prevention Professional. During his tenure in the insurance industry, Paul worked closely with many different industries that use commercial vehicles to complete their daily tasks. Additionally, Paul has completed numerous fleet safety training programs and has developed fleet safety programs in support of his clients' loss prevention goals. As CEO of SafetyFirst, Paul continues to work with insurance carriers, risk managers and directors of safety to help ensure the welfare of their drivers and to assist them with their regulatory compliance programs. SafetyFirst works with more than 3,800 fleet clients representing more than 180,000 powered vehicles throughout the USA and Canada.

Appendix A – Additional Recruiting Suggestions to Consider

(Submitted to SafetyFirst by various safety managers)

- “Prescreening programs such as personality profiling may help avoid situations where the driver and your dispatch team are going to become frustrated early and often. Prescreening won’t increase the number of hires, but it may decrease the number of drivers who quit in the first week or month, and it may help reduce the frequency of “conflicts” between drivers and customers/shippers.”
- “Incorporate a personality assessment into the application. You can track data to help identify those most likely to perform well. It also helps familiarize dispatchers and supervisors with new employee's personality.”
- “Re-evaluate your job descriptions (especially those used in recruiting advertising). If you can increase the level of detail, or get feedback from current drivers to revise the wording, your going to waste less time later with candidates that walk out when they realize that 80% of their time will be driving in New York City (when they thought they wouldn’t have to go there at all, etc.)”
- “Maximize time home where practical and where it is actually valued by the driver. Some drivers may not have a family to return to and want to maximize their earnings, but others may not last at your firm unless they have time to reconnect with their families. Can you re-evaluate routes to encourage more home time? If necessary hire remote drivers for the 2nd half of a run (shuttle loads)”
- “Seek diversity... It’s often too easy to build up using the friends and relatives of current drivers... it may discourage others from signing on, and if you fire someone’s best friend, they may start looking to leave, too”
- “Give consideration to unionizing, may be a dirty word to some, but a friendly union can be very beneficial.”
- “Contact the veterans association or local armed services base for recruitment of recently discharged servicemen”
- “Develop a brand name and demonstrate professionalism (no small feat)”
- “What I’ve seen some companies do is to hire people with good driving records but no truck experience and then train them for truck driving.” [Note: be very careful if you consider this approach – the inexperience in handling a heavy truck could lead to accidents]
- “My personal suggestion is to check driving record and credit rating. Both imply one's ability to act within themselves, and socially responsible.”

Appendix B – Suggestions that may apply to “recruiting” or “retention”

- “If you’re not using them now, consider driver surveys.”
- “Your current drivers may be able to provide insight into why they are loyal, what they’d look for if they were looking for another job at another company, what would make them consider staying here until they retire permanently from driving.”
- “The driver survey process can be informal discussions, or formalized feedback. If you do implement any changes based on driver feedback, sell the fact that you implemented a driver suggestion. If you can’t implement their suggestions, offer a short reason why it’s not practical.”
- “Keep rules simple and then enforce those rules consistently. It’s easier to recruit when the company is perceived as being fair with clear rules and expectations -- no one likes surprises (either drivers or managers). If you want “rule followers” on your team, you need simple rules and fair, consistent enforcement.”
- “Develop an advancement program or draw up the “career path” of a typical driver. Everyone wants an opportunity to move up somehow. Is there a way to advance in title, pay, and “seniority” and if so what are those titles, perks, etc.? Have drivers ever transitioned to management or other types of positions (can you cite a specific story of a driver who has moved up)?”
- “Pay, Pay, Pay, - guess what drivers drive for...”
- “From my conversations it is not always money”
- “Most drivers that I’ve seen would rather have the \$ up front, rather in a savings / retirement plan.”
- “Another option is to offer benefits in a cafeteria type plan, so those who have working spouses with benefits, can opt for more money in their normal paycheck.”
- “Consider promotion from within, someone who has been reliable driving fork-lift trucks on the shipping dock [may be another way to find drivers]”
- “The best fleets have nice vehicles, assigned to one driver so they can fix them up like they like them and keep them clean. ‘Bells and whistles’ are desirable...”
- “There is a lot to be said about keeping the driver in clean and well maintained equipment, SAFER results, if the account has a Pass rating instead of Inspect there is a good amount of time saved in roadside inspections”
- “Dispatch attitude and tone directed at the drivers is important”
- “EZ Pass and electronic toll options can save time and reduce paperwork”

Appendix C – Retention Suggestions to Consider

- “Orientation and Training. How much “hand holding” goes on with new employees versus drivers who’ve completed a year of service. Training isn’t just lecturing about rules and processes – it’s a chance for drivers to ask questions (if encouraged properly) and to provide feedback. Sometimes the “right” training isn’t what the management team “assumes” is needed – it may be on how to communicate with cranky or pesky customers/shippers. Refresher training isn’t just an investment of time and money, it’s also a way to acknowledge drivers who’ve been doing a good job and involve them in the training discussions/sessions.”
- “Train, Train, Train. We are seeing that drivers actually like to receive quality, innovative training. After receiving it, they actually ask for more. The stereotypical image of commercial drivers who loathe classroom training only applies if they’re being dragged into the classroom to hear the same old material they’ve already heard a thousand times. Their attitude, “I’ve been doing this for years. I could probably teach this course better than you!” But if you provide them with high-quality insight training, their attitude is, “I’ve been doing this for forty two years and really didn’t want to be here for this, but I learned something today. Thank you.” (I actually had a driver say that to me last week, and I’ve heard similar statements hundreds of times over the past couple of years)”
- “Properly training drivers not only shows them you care as an employer and are prepared to walk the walk when it comes to safety, but it helps to prevent the crashes and violations that might lead to you having to terminate them.”
- “Traditionally, we have thought of training as a way to help prevent crashes and protect ourselves in litigation, but we are now beginning to understand it can be another piece of the recruiting/retention puzzle. The key is that the training must be of high quality, and relevant.”
- “Place all corporate purchases are done on a "rewards card" linked to a central account. The daily purchases add up and then "rewards points" are used to fund the driver safety pool for awards and trips, etc.”
- “For retention using some of the new behavior tests to see if one has the "temperament" for driving I think is good and would be a predictor for longevity.”
- “GPS in vehicles for those who have delivery type jobs are considered helpful. Especially if the driver doesn't have to load the info; if they can do it from the company computer with the shipping load.”
- “Home at night is the best for drivers. Even if the company needs to "relay" the load across the country. They can eat better and have a more stable family life. Their health is generally better.”
- “Steady work with steady customers and routes.”
- “Stable management with reasonable business policies and paperwork requirements”
- “Scheduling the driver to be home on a regular basis. The longer the trip in the number of days the more likely that there are issues with turn over”
- “Use of electronic tools and weekly settlements of out of pocket expenses. With the cost of fuel companies with a two week settlement of expenses with paper checks on return frequently have issues with drivers floating money. If they send via computer the data for expenses and the money is electronically returned to drivers accounts this is an asset.”
- “Surprise drivers [that report to a central location] with a box lunch or healthy snacks. It shows you’re thinking about them”
- “Always be honest – they may not like what you have to say, but they have to respect that you’re not patronizing them”
- “Implement a communication plan – give them feedback, ask for feedback on your own performance as a management team. You may not like what you hear, but it’s a start towards something better”

Appendix D – Safety Management Council Bulletin

19 WAYS TO RETAIN YOUR DRIVERS **Safety Management Council Bulletin - September 1998**

A mail survey, which focused on carrier members of both the Truckload Carriers Association and the National Tank Truck Carriers, found that 55% of the respondents felt their driver retention had improved since 1995. The most effect retention tactics for those who believed driver retention had improved were as follows in order of popularity:

1. More genuine concern shown for drivers by managers and supervisors
2. Treated drivers with more respect and appreciation
3. Improved dispatchers' attitudes towards drivers
4. Increased the friendliness of managers toward drivers
5. Got drivers home more frequently. Improved supervisory practices by disptachers/fleet mangers toward drivers
6. Improved communications between drivers and dispatchers/fleet managers
7. Drivers treated more fairly by managers and supervisors than in the past
8. Helped drivers be home for special occasions
9. Increased drivers' annual pay
10. Improved driver safety
11. Drivers shown how valuable they are to the company
12. Gave drivers more recognition for a job well done
13. Provided tractors that are more appealing to drivers
14. Company backed its policies and procedures with actions
15. Improved training of disptachers/fleet managers
16. Improved top-manager competence
17. Created more predictable and steady weekly paychecks
18. Provided greater responsiveness to driver inquiries, needs, suggestions
19. Improved the quality of the drivers retained by the company

When compared with a national truckload driver study taken in 1995 of 1,791 truck drivers, it becomes evident that all of the driver retention tactics correspond with the top 20 driver concerns of that year. These included wanting better pay and benefits, improved communications, more respect and appreciation, more pride in the trucking profession as well as the trucking company, fairer treatment by managers and dispatchers, improved safety, reduced idle and/or non-pay time, and greater job security, among others.

Appendix E – Sample Exit Interview Note-taking Sheet

(reprinted from XTRA's web site)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Start date: _____ Separation date: _____

Person conducting interview: _____ Title: _____

- 1) Why are you leaving? Did anything trigger your decision to leave?
- 2) Tell me about the opportunity where you're going and what it is about the opportunity that attracts you.
- 3) Do you feel that a similar opportunity is available at our company? Why or why not?
- 4) If a similar opportunity was available would you stay? Why or why not?
- 5) What will you miss most when you leave?
- 6) What would you change about the job? Tell me about any barriers, policies or people that prevented you from achieving your personal and professional objectives.
- 7) When you joined our company, you came with certain expectations. How did the promises live up to reality?
- 8) If you were running the company, how would you change it? What improvements would you make?
- 9) In general, how would you rate our company as a place to work? Specifically:
 - a) Our values?
 - b) Our equipment?
 - c) Our dispatchers or fleet managers?
 - d) Our compensation package?
 - e) Our communication?
 - f) Our ability to live up to our words?
 - g) Our ability to get you home as promised?
 - h) Our physical working conditions?
- 10) Based on your experience, what do you think it takes to succeed here?
- 11) What advice would you give to the person who's taking over your responsibilities?
- 12) Would you come back to work for our company? Why or why not?
- 13) What do you see as the future of this company?

Appendix F – Example Web Page on Driver Retention

When CFI finds good drivers, we want to *keep* them.

That's why CFI established the Driver Retention department. The goal is simple: we listen to drivers, find out what they need, then make their job as easy as possible. Unlike other carriers that may only look at shipping and receiving, CFI treats drivers like they're our top customer.

Committed to Driver Satisfaction

We focus on keeping our drivers happy. Our Driver Retention department has helped change the company's entire culture by:

- Making "service to drivers" a priority throughout the company, from the CEO and fleet managers to recruiters, maintenance staff and driver support
- Creating better communication with drivers
- Serving as a resource for driver questions and concerns
- Working with fleet managers and drivers to schedule flexible routes around important family occasions
- Making sure that when a driver calls with a question or problem, a CFI employee stays on the phone until the problem is fixed or the person is found who can fix the problem

"There are so many things we can do to make the job better for drivers. They're sometimes small things, but it all helps to make a difference. At CFI, we believe our drivers are as important a customer as the people shipping freight."

- Tom Hatfield, Director of CFI Safety and Retention

Appendix G – Potential Driver Survey, Focus Group, or Phone Survey Questions

Driver Survey – New Hires, Current Employees

- What about the recruiting process made you join Our Company?
- Having gone through the training program—do you think there is anything that could be done to improve it?
- What do you like most about working at Our Company? What do you like least?
- Have you ever referred anyone to work here?
- What ideas do you have for recruiting bus drivers?
- How do you feel about the benefits the company provides?
- What do you think are the characteristics of an ideal bus driver?

Focus Group Questions – Trainees/Orientation Stage

- How is the training progressing for you? Is it what you expected?
- What do you like about the training? What are you finding most challenging?
- Is there anything you would change about the training process? If so, what would that be?
- Is there anything about becoming a driver that you are concerned about?

Phone Survey of Former Employees

- Why did you not stay with the program?
- What would have made you stay?
- How was it different then from what you expected?
- What recommendations would you have for improving the program?
- Would you consider returning to the program?
- Would you refer a friend to the program?

Appendix H – Resource List

Books

Motor Fleet Safety Supervision: Principles and Practices -- by NATMI (North American Transportation Management Institute)

You're NOT the Person I Hired! -- By Janet Boydell, Barry Deutsch, Brad Remillard

Perfect Phrases for Perfect Hiring: Hundreds of Ready-to-Use Phrases for Interviewing and Hiring the Best Employees Every Time -- by Lori Davila, Margot King

Recruiting, Interviewing, Selecting & Orienting New Employees (Recruiting, Interviewing, Selecting and Orienting New Employees) -- by Diane Arthur

The Employee Recruitment and Retention Handbook -- by Diane Arthur

101 Strategies for Recruiting Success: Where, When, and How to Find the Right People Every Time (Paperback) -- by Christopher W. Pritchard

The 7 Hidden Reasons Employees Leave: How to Recognize the Subtle Signs and Act Before It's Too Late -- by Leigh Branham

Employee Opinion Questionnaires: 20 Ready-to-Use Surveys That Work -- by Paul M. Connolly, Kathleen G. Connolly

Employee Surveys: Practical And Proven Methods, Samples, Examples -- by Paul Connolly

Web Based Articles

Drivers Magazine "Easing down the road"

http://driversmag.com/cover/driver_owner_operator_job_search_hunt_041405/

Refrigerated Transporter Magazine "Got Drivers?" 4/1/2008

http://refrigeratedtrans.com/carriers-shippers/effective_driver_strategies_0401/

Refrigerated Transporter Magazine "Keeping Drivers" 4/1/2008

http://refrigeratedtrans.com/carriers-shippers/keeping_drivers_book_0401/

Refrigerated Transporter Magazine "Extensive Training Improves Driver Retention" 4/1/2003

http://refrigeratedtrans.com/mag/transportation_extensive_training_improves/

XTRA Lease -- Exit Interviews Document (including sample form)

<http://www.xtralease.com/WebDocuments/PreviewFileDoc.aspx?cdid=333000280>

FMCSA "**Tech Brief: Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver Retention and Safety**"

<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/facts-research/research-technology/tech/driver-retention-safety.htm>

FleetOwner Magazine "Driver Retention: Learning from Success" 7/1/2006

http://fleetowner.com/mag/fleet_driver_retention_learning/

FleetOwner Magazine "Building a Pipeline of People" 10/03/2008

http://blog.fleetowner.com/trucks_at_work/2008/10/03/building-a-pipeline-of-people/

Con-Way "Example Driver Statement"

<http://www.cfi-us.com/Driver-Connection>

Training Courses

HR Boot Camp – NATMI (www.natmi.org)

Innovative Driver Retention Strategies – NATMI (www.natmi.org)


Appendix I – Sample Screen Shots from E-Driver File Recruiting Module

Online Safety and Compliance Electronic Reports System - OSCER
Recruiting Driver (user: Wang, Jian)

Driver Search (Character)		Search By		#/Page			
By Any Character <input type="checkbox"/>		Last Name		10		Go	
Name (LN, FN)	Driver ID	Profit Center	City	State	General Status	Status Date	Status
Howard, Allan		5001 - Albany	Wilkes Barre	PA	New Applicant		Recruiting
Ray, George		5001 - Albany	Rockford	IL	New Applicant		Recruiting
Ray, George		5001 - Albany	New York	NY	New Applicant		Recruiting
Scott, Allan		5001 - Albany	Scranton	PA	New Applicant		Recruiting
Walt, Chris		5001 - Albany	HENDERSONVILLE	TN	New Applicant		Recruiting
Wang, Jian		5001 - Albany	Chicago	IL	New Applicant		Recruiting
Michael, Bill		5001 - Albany	brooklyn	NY	Sent Application		Recruiting
Singh, Ramul		5001 - Albany	Easton	PA	New Applicant		Recruiting
Stark, William		5001 - Albany	Whitehall	PA	New Applicant		Recruiting
Tucker, Henry		5001 - Albany	MEMPHIS	TN	New Applicant	8/11/2008	Recruiting

Total # of Records: 10 (Page: 1)

Online Safety and Compliance Electronic Reports System - OSCER
Recruiting Driver (user: Wang, Jian)



8/8/2005

Personal Info:

First Name: Mid W Last Name: Suffix: Address:

City: State: Zip:

Home Phone: Cell Phone:

SSN: DOB: (mm/dd/yyyy)

Driver ID: Email:

Start Drive Date:

Status: Comments:

Employment Status: Inactive Date: Reason for Leaving:

License Info: Type: Class: ST: #: Expiration Date:

Endorsements: HazMat Passenger Double and Triple Trailer Tanker Commercial Restriction

Application Info: Application Date: Referral Source: Referral By: Position: Recruiter: General Status: Reason: Accepted Date: Latest Update:

Company Info: Hire Date: Uniforms: Short Sleeve: Long Sleeve: Size:

Comments:



E-Driver File provides both a simple to use, and yet, comprehensive web-based system to manage your driver and vehicle information.



E-Driver File integrates data from internal and external data sources (like your internal HR program and your MVR provider) to minimize your workload and put all your critical driver and fleet risk management information in one spot.

E-Driver File monitors and documents licenses, endorsements, certifications, DQ Docs, Training, employee events (like workers comp accidents or log keeping violations). The information is stored and cataloged by driver id, by location, and by management hierarchy (so that location managers see their own information and corporate managers can get a complete roll up).

Unlike competing systems, **you can set up your own requirements** for your DOT DQ checklist (for self audits and document management). There are escalating reports (at 60-30-15 days prior to expiration) sent out based on your company's organization. The reports are all exception based and hierarchal. You only see what you need to know when you need to see it.

Getting started is easy too! The E-Driver File team will analyze and incorporate your specific concerns, upload your initial data and then the program automatically tracks the

compliance by continuously verifying records against defined parameters (i.e. expiration dates, hire dates, scheduled dates, etc.) There is online training and on-site training options to get your team fully up to speed!

E-Driver File has customized dashboards that track real time information about key performance indicators. We offer a range of sophisticated but easy to understand management reporting options.

E-Driver File enables you to focus on compliance **activity** rather than the **administration** of a compliance program.

Come take a tour of the system at:

<http://www.edriverfile.com/presentation.html>

www.edriverfile.com

by SafetyFirst Systems

1-888-603-6987 Toll Free

OUR SYSTEM PROVIDES FOR:

- Driver Qualification File Management
- DOT Compliance
- Employee Profile Management
- Auto MVR Requests
- Driving History Profile
- Drug and Alcohol Management
- Background Checks
- License Management
- Hours of service
- Accident & Violation Tracking
- Document Management
- Training Records