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Fleet Matters

Best practice in fleet management

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ISSUE 10



Best practice in fleet management

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We bring you the news that matters most, selected for its impact on fleet management best practice. In this issue, we cover five subjects that could help or hinder your fleet operations. These include how to improve cost-efficiency, bracing for Brexit, safety advice, forward planning, and a heads-up on legislation – all with recommended actions for fleet managers.

Video screen shot TBS

In this Fleet Matters:

EFFICIENCY TIPS

10 tips for a more cost-efficient fleet

BREXIT

preparing for the uncertain road ahead

SAFETY

spotting the warning lights of driver burnout

PLANNING

how to future-proof your fleet

LEGISLATION

four laws just around the corner

Efficiency – 10 tips for a more cost-efficient fleet

Fleet Matters:
ISSUE 10

Even the smallest fleet isn't cheap to run. And as your number of vehicles grows, so do the costs and the headaches. Here are 10 ways to lower those bills, and your blood-pressure.

1 Ensure your drivers optimise routes:

Otherwise they're wasting fuel and time – and increasing your carbon footprint. Talk with your drivers to identify and agree the best fuel-efficient routes.

2 Only pay for fuel used for work:

If your staff take personal trips using company fuel, you're paying for it, and the wear and tear. Reinforce company policy about vehicle usage terms, so drivers are clear.

3 Only pay for hours actually worked:

If your employees round up timesheets even by a little, you're simply giving money away. Again, accurate and reliable tracking software can help control costs here.

4 Make sure you bill accurately:

Inaccurate start and finish times on job sheets mean you could be missing billable hours too. Tracking also gives you data to help resolve customer disputes about bills.

5 Keep your vehicles maintained:

The better you look after a fleet, the less it costs. Fleet management software helps you stay up-to-date on maintenance and servicing – saving you time and money.

6 Eliminate bad driving habits:

These include idling, sharp accelerating and hard braking. Combined, these habits can cost you money on fuel, maintenance and repair, and environmental impact.

7 Downsize your vehicles:

It is estimated a fleet can save up to £10,000 on whole-life costs when moving from a heavy to light van across a four-year lease, and heavy to medium can save up to £3,000.

8 Automate as much as you can:

If any of your manual day-to-day processes can be automated, do it. This can save you hassle, improve accuracy and give you more time to focus on what matters.

9 Streamline your admin:

Look into software that can help you crack through admin much faster, and with far less hassle. Aim for scheduled reporting with fleet data compiled in a dashboard – at your fingertips.

10 Switch your fuel card provider:

Switching from a pump price card to a [fixed priced fuel card](#) to save serious money every month, and help you track, budget and forecast.

Action Point:

Try any number of these tried and tested tips, and count the savings you make.

EFFICIENCY TIPS

10 tips for a more cost-efficient fleet

BREXIT

preparing for the uncertain road ahead

SAFETY

spotting the warning lights of driver burnout

PLANNING

how to future-proof your fleet

LEGISLATION

four laws just around the corner

The countdown to Brexit is ticking away, and looking unstoppable. While fleets await the actual outcome, we look at the possible roads ahead.

Let's start with a "No deal" Brexit. This would mean the UK leaving the European Union without a comprehensive deal. The world's road transport organisation, the [IRU](#), said this would be the worst outcome for transport. It's pushing for the government to be clear about any transition and "replicate current practice". Sounds ambitious.

To achieve greater clarity, the [BVRLA](#) set out a [six-point manifesto](#) for the government. One of its key points was "Making a success of Brexit". This includes the UK remaining as a member of the European Economic Area, or otherwise secure tariff-free access to the Single Market. If not, "a trade preference scheme must be established with the remaining EU Member States". Unless [Brexit is reversed](#), this scenario is looking unlikely.

The Road Haulage Associated ([RHA](#)) says Brexit would almost certainly see [a dramatic reduction in foreign hauliers' work](#). Trucks from abroad are unlikely to be allowed to undertake UK domestic transport work. This has "potentially serious implications" for some large British importers they say. Shippers and hauliers beware.

To help ensure that the UK operates frictionless borders if Brexit goes ahead, companies involved in the supply chain – including van operators – are being [urged](#) by the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) to become [Authorised Economic Operators](#) (AEOs). Worth pursuing.

5 other factors to be aware of if Brexit happens...

1 Changes to import and export tariffs:

the number one concern for most international businesses. It's impossible to say, but these are unlikely to become cheaper. Flexible leasing could help you adapt.

2 Changes to emissions legislation:

to operate within the EU, British fleets will almost certainly need to comply with stricter EU emissions rules. Ensure yours do.

3 New Health & Safety legislation:

the same will apply for EU health & safety rules too. Keep your standards high to protect your workforce and remain commercially competitive.

4 Changes to driver recruitment and training:

be prepared for driver recruitment to become tougher, but driver training to remain similar.

5 Uncertainty about future contracts:

longer contracts may become rarer as market uncertainty increases; try to keep your fleet-size fluid.

Action Point:

Keep an eye on the [Brexit negotiation news](#), and consider the points above carefully.

EFFICIENCY TIPS

10 tips for a more cost-efficient fleet

BREXIT

preparing for the uncertain road ahead

SAFETY

spotting the warning lights of driver burnout

PLANNING

how to future-proof your fleet

LEGISLATION

four laws just around the corner

Safety – the warning lights of driver burnout

Fleet Matters:
ISSUE 10

“Tiredness can kill. Take a break” reads the famous motorway sign we all know. But did you know that, according to a [study](#), one in five crashes is fatigue-related? Or that driving when tired has been [shown](#) to contribute to more road accidents in the UK than taking drugs?

Fleet managers take note: commercial vehicles accounted for 40% of those accidents! And, worryingly, another [study](#) found that a fifth of all fleets don't even have a road safety policy in place to help prevent this.

It's not just the human cost that's involved. The government-backed [Driving for Better Business](#) campaign calculated that businesses would have to sell £60,000 worth of goods (based on a 10% return on sales), to cover the combined cost of a £3,000 crash.

But driver burnout is more than just being tired

“[Burnout](#)” is a relatively new term and is not just about being tired, bored or unhappy with your job. [Studies](#) on the subject reveal it

encompasses specific factors and can be extremely difficult to recover from. Many sufferers have to quit their jobs to do so.

According to [Michael Leiter](#), editor of the peer-reviewed journal [Burnout Research](#) who's been researching burnout for 30 years, there are **three signs to watch out for:**

1 Showing physical and mental exhaustion.

Exhaustion isn't burnout, but it could be the first sign of it. Feeling tired at the end of the day is normal. However, if someone says they feel tired at the beginning of the day, then that tiredness is chronic. They're not getting the rest they need, and this could lead to...

2 Being cynical about the job and becoming distant.

If an employee used to take pride in their job, or at least not mind it, but then starts saying they “don't care anymore” or they just want to “get away from all this” then they're doing something which isn't good for them – and won't get better without change.

3 Losing confidence in abilities and skill.

This is where you start doubting whether your work is important and whether you're any good at it. It's this combination of exhaustion, cynicism and a lack of confidence in one's abilities and skills which defines burnout. And then a crash of some sort is coming.

What to do: Read in this [article](#) on how to combat bad driver behaviour, which could lead to burnout. Top of the list is “behaviour training” – which involves far more than just driver skill. Telematics can help track, but not improve, behaviour. Ultimately, culture change may be needed to ensure your business nurtures safety and lives by its policies.

Action Point:

Know how your drivers are doing, and ensure you have behaviour training in place.

EFFICIENCY TIPS

10 tips for a more cost-efficient fleet

BREXIT

preparing for the uncertain road ahead

SAFETY

spotting the warning lights of driver burnout

PLANNING

how to future-proof your fleet

LEGISLATION

four laws just around the corner

Planning – how to future-proof your fleet

Fleet Matters:
ISSUE 10

Managing a fleet is never simple, but in recent years, the level of complexity has accelerated. Keeping up with fuel management, telematics, safety, maintenance and more requires forward-planning to be ready to meet the fleet challenges of the future.

Outsourcing

One of the simplest ways to combat the increased complexity of fleet management is to outsource it. There are several [pros and cons](#) to fleet outsourcing. The benefits amount broadly to increased efficiency and reduced overheads. But beware a one-size-fits all approach to outsourcing. The capability of your fleet to be managed by an outsourced vendor must be considered above and beyond the desire to simply save money.

Flexibility

The truth is, the future is fiendishly hard to predict. Underestimating your fleet needs can lead to a shortfall in your ability to service customers. Overestimating your needs can stretch your finances. As technology, legislation and policies change at an ever-increasing pace, fleet managers are looking for ways to be ready to change with it. Vehicle leasing and contract hire are prudent ways to prepare, helping to keep your fleet flexible.

Fuel choices

[Diesel is still by far the most widespread fuel](#) for commercial vehicles. Around 96% of all commercial vehicles use it. However, fuel-choices must adapt to specific situations. Although diesel will remain the preferred choice for high-mileage motorway driving and journeys mainly in non-urban environments, air-quality legislation in towns is driving more uptake of petrol or “hybrid” options.

The way to future-proof your fuel choices lies in analysing the role of each of your vehicles, and choosing the most appropriate solution. A [fuel card](#) can help control costs, and switch fuel types easily depending on your fleet's evolving needs.

Grey fleet

Encouraging employees to drive their own vehicles can be beneficial for businesses that don't clock up high mileage. This can take considerable weight off your shoulders in terms of costs. However, grey fleet driver mileage can be hard to manage without a good tracking system. Vehicle maintenance, accident responsibility and overall duty of care can be issues too.

Action Point:

There's no one solution to future-proof your fleet. Take a holistic approach and be realistic.

EFFICIENCY TIPS

10 tips for a more cost-efficient fleet

BREXIT

preparing for the uncertain road ahead

SAFETY

spotting the warning lights of driver burnout

PLANNING

how to future-proof your fleet

LEGISLATION

four laws just around the corner

Legislation – four laws just around the corner

Fleet Matters:
ISSUE 10

Every fleet manager knows the potential cost of legal compliance, not just the potential cost to the company's bank account, but to its reputation. Because "Ignorance of the law is no excuse" we've looked at what legislation's around the corner, so you don't run into it.

Cost of driving in London could rise by 90%

London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, is determined to drive down congestion and air pollution in the capital by discouraging three million car journeys every day. Sadiq's draft [plans](#) to introduce [pay-per-mile road pricing in London](#) would see road charges go up by 90%. This would be on top of the upcoming [Ultra Low Emission Zone](#) and the [T-charge](#) – a combination which will significantly impact businesses.

Private parking fines up by 64%

Over the past year, the number of drivers given fines by [private parking firms has risen by two thirds](#), renewing calls for a clampdown on this industry. New data has revealed that the [DVLA shared 1.74 million records with private parking companies](#) in the first quarter of the 2017-18 financial year. This data is used by companies to track down owners for alleged infringement of private car park rules and [chase for fines of up to £100](#).

[The RAC Foundation](#) says these figures show self-regulation of the private parking sector "has not worked" and show why the proposed [Parking \(Code of Practice\)](#) bill is so badly needed to correct this.

Workplace parking levies – an alternative way to cut congestion

Local councils have been considering [workplace charging levies](#) as an alternative means of reducing congestion in cities. Fresh ideas are certainly needed, as [a report by the Local Government Association \(LGA\)](#) forecasts congestion will cost the UK £300bn a year by 2030 – a x10 increase of the current costs of £30.8bn a year.

The LGA has also [said](#) "the average motorist is spending a working week every year sat in traffic on major roads, and losing almost a £1,000 in the process." This move is less likely to impact fleets than pay-per-mile proposals.

Pay-per mile proposal for ALL roads

Pay-per-mile charges in London is just the beginning. [This pay-per-mile road tax proposal encompassing the whole of the UK](#) scooped a major prize and is being seriously considered. The per-mile charge rate would be based on your vehicle's weight and its emissions – the lighter and cleaner your vehicle is, the lower the per mile charge – forcing fleets to possibly downgrade in size and move to alternative fuels faster.

Action Point:

These changes could prove costly your fleet. Keep an eye on them in the news.

EFFICIENCY TIPS

10 tips for a more cost-efficient fleet

BREXIT

preparing for the uncertain road ahead

SAFETY

spotting the warning lights of driver burnout

PLANNING

how to future-proof your fleet

LEGISLATION

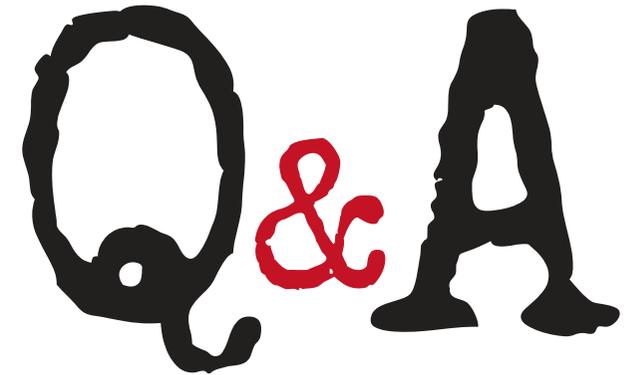
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What help is available?

Fuel Card Services has many years' experience in helping with cost-effective fleet management, gaining an invaluable depth and breadth of expertise. Its help is readily available to fleet managers through a widening range of specialist services and products.

Whatever the fleet management question, either Fuel Card Services or one of its expert, specialist partners is likely to have met the issue many times already. You can be assured of straightforward answers, based on deep fleet insight and long experience.

Its services include [emissions recording](#), [mileage capture](#) solutions and automation of [fleet management](#) tasks, from service scheduling to licence checking. There is also access to exclusive deals in such areas as tyres, insurance and more.



Action Point:

Contact Fuel Card Services with your fleet management issue. At the same time, ask for an illustration of how much money and time you could save, with solutions that exactly meet your specific refuelling and fleet management requirements.

Call 0844 870 9988



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Fleet Matters:
ISSUE 10

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