



Building an Effective Driver Professional Development Program at Your Fleet

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AGENDA

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- 02 Proactively Addressing Risk
- 03 Tailoring Training to Each Driver
- 04 Continuously Engaging All Your Drivers
- 05 Steps You Can Take Today

Effective Professional Development: Onboarding Drivers

- Fleets should ask questions of their drivers before they join the fleet to understand the skills they will need to develop during onboarding.
 - “What if?” questions can be an effective way of assessing how a driver would respond to difficult situations.
 - These questions can also help a driver understand the types of situations they may be put in while on the job.
- During onboarding, regulations hold that **at minimum every driver must be assessed on:**
 - Road tests for non-CDL holders
 - General knowledge of safety regulations
 - Medical certificates
 - Drug testing
- However, the “minimum standard” that regulations hold fleets to **often isn’t enough to mitigate risk.**
 - During litigation, plaintiff’s attorneys will often point to other fleet’s best practices and claim that the defendant fleet should have employed those practices too.
 - The best way to avoid this is to stay abreast of industry trends and invest in the technology and processes that the best fleets engage in.
- Onboarding is a critical aspect of **bringing a driver into a fleet’s culture. Why is that?**
 - **Survey response:** 83% of drivers who turned over in their first 90 days made the decision to leave during orientation.
 - Fleets will immediately tarnish their culture in a driver’s mind if they don’t live up to a promise made during recruiting.

Effective Professional Development: Onboarding Drivers

- **Onboarding and orientation are not the same thing** and should not be treated as such.
 - While orientation is a 1-5 day process at most fleets, onboarding is 90-day to year-long process.
 - Onboarding is less about teaching a driver about their fleet, and more about integrating them into a fleet's culture.
- Some fleets assign their veteran drivers as “champions” who join the onboarding process and help bring new drivers into a fleet's culture.
 - These champions can answer a new driver's questions from the perspective of a driver. They can also empathize with new drivers because they, too, were once a new driver at the fleet.

Effective Professional Development: Proactively Addressing Risk

- The first step in identifying driver risk is **understanding your driver data**.
 - Fleets should use data from all their systems to discern patterns in driver behavior that correlate with risk.
 - Fleets can also look for deviations from a safe driver's typical behaviors to discern risk from their safest drivers.
- One of the most effective ways to identify driver risk is to **holistically analyze your driver data**.
 - It can be easy to miss driver risk when only looking at one system, but when looking at all your data, trends can emerge.
 - Often, it can be difficult to analyze all of a fleet's driver data because there's so much of it. Predictive analytics systems the [Idelic Safety Suite's®](#) Driver Watch List use AI to do this automatically.
- Sharing a driver's data with them is often the best way to **generate buy-in for training**.
 - It can be difficult to convince a driver that they need to improve, but when you share the data you're seeing with them, it can often change their perspective on their driving habits.
- From a liability perspective, **CSA scores are the most important safety metric to track**.
 - The most important thing a fleet can do to reduce their liability is to proactively address their CSA violations.
 - For smaller fleets, it can be feasible to speak with drivers 1-on-1 about their violations.
 - For larger fleets, it's often more practical to analyze trends in your violations to see where you need to train your drivers.
- **Even owner-operator fleets need a program in place to address their risk**, whether that's training or not.
 - Even if a fleet can't coach their owner-operators, they can still have a discussion with their contractors about meeting the safety regulations that all drivers are responsible for.

Effective Professional Development: Tailoring Training to Each Driver

- Each driver learns differently and has different career goals and **training should reflect this**.
 - Having conversations with drivers about their unique goals should be central to an effective professional development program.
- Some of the most effective professional development programs have a three-pronged approach:
 - **Orientation** - Reviews regulations and the day-to-day of their jobs.
 - **Routine** - Quarterly or monthly safety trainings that discuss fleet-wide trends.
 - **Specific** - Training that is tied to a driver's individual data and needs.
- Tracking a driver's positive telematics events can be just as effective of a coaching tool as tracking their negative ones.
 - Financial or other incentives for positive performance have been shown to yield positive behavior change.
 - Positive video events can serve as an example for how to handle a situation when coaching or onboarding other drivers.
- Because each driver is different, **a holistic approach to driver coaching is crucial**.
 - Professional development programs should include video coaching, quizzes, reading materials, and even peer-to-peer conversations about safety.

Steps You Can Take Today

- The most important step a fleet can take to improve their professional development is to always be open to changing what they're doing.
 - Just as a fleet expects their drivers to continuously improve, so too will drivers expect their fleets to always improve.
- The first step to improving your professional development is to understand where you're falling short.
 - Fleets should look into their CSA scores, telematics events, and more to gain a holistic picture of their data. From there, they should look for which of their metrics are trending negatively and address those first.