

# TRANSPORTATION & LOGISTICS INTERNATIONAL



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## Boost Your ROI





*Technologies can help enhance the lives and safety of drivers.*

*By Michael Rofman*

There's no question that technology is transforming trucking, just as it has disrupted and transformed so many other industries. It has improved performance, vastly increased the amount and type of data that trucking businesses have to evaluate efficiency, and it's also changing the role of drivers.

Along with that, these new technologies can and should be viewed as cost-savings instruments. While we're still a few years away from having an industry that runs on self-driving trucks, there are a number of technologies that exist today that not only help businesses grow their bottom line, but enhance the lives and safety of drivers – ultimately shrinking shortages and improving retention.

#### The Rise of the Electronic Log Device

The electronic log device (ELD) mandate is the single greatest change to the trucking industry. The ELD synchronizes with a vehicle engine to automatically record driving time for easier and more accurate hours of service recording. This not only streamlines the accurate tracking and managing of records of duty status, but also creates a safer work environment for drivers. From what we've seen of its impact to-date, we can expect a 10 percent reduction in utilization across the industry.

This will result in a leveling of the playing field – making it easier for LTL carriers to compete with TL carriers. It also will help to eliminate the single greatest barrier to industry growth – driver shortages. While some have raised concerns that the ELD could worsen the driver shortage by managing and limiting work hours, others see it as a boon – creating a better experience for drivers who otherwise would have been overworked and attracting others to the industry. This would be huge benefit for companies that have had to hold off on growing their fleet due to the driver shortage.

## Improve Safety, Improve ROI

Improving driver safety is an important priority of its own and should always be a top concern for businesses. It can, however, also have the side effect of improving a company's bottom line. There are a number of driver-focused technologies available today that can help trucking businesses identify and address risky behavior.

For example, face recognition software can help to detect driver fatigue while wearable devices can monitor vital signs. This not only helps to remind drivers when it's time to rest, but can also catch other risks affecting drivers before they cause issues on the road. In addition to technology that monitors the driver's health, there also are systems that focus on improving driving. Collision warning and lane detection systems alert drivers to issues, increasing reaction times and in turn avoiding potential accidents.

All of which contributes to lower insurance expenses and fewer claims that have to be paid. Businesses should not underestimate the value of these risk-abating technologies – it's estimated that lane detection technology should provide a three-to-one cost benefit payback, with return on investment in just four to 12 months.

## The Importance of Analytics

Access to new data streams are great, but are only truly valuable when there are systems in place to actually analyze inputs and take action based on insights generated. This can be as simple as analyzing video to prove that a driver was not at fault in an accident, or as complex as reviewing all the elements of driving to improve performance. Just as UPS vastly enhanced productivity by analyzing data and providing recommendations to drivers on small changes that generate efficiency, so can the broader trucking industries. By making sure that investments are made in analytic systems as well as connected truck technologies, trucking businesses can make more significant changes – not only identifying and eliminating risky behaviors, but instituting practices for the best driver performance.

While some business owners may hesitate to invest in new technology because of upfront cost concerns, others will jump in quickly only to realize limited benefits because they cannot maximize their use. It's important for owners to work with their team and accountants to determine which technologies can offer them the best return on their investment – which can do the most for them today to provide new insights and improve driver performance. Setting up dashboards and monitoring key performance indicators such as maintenance expense per mile can lead to true operational effectiveness and increased profitability, when approached from this perspective.

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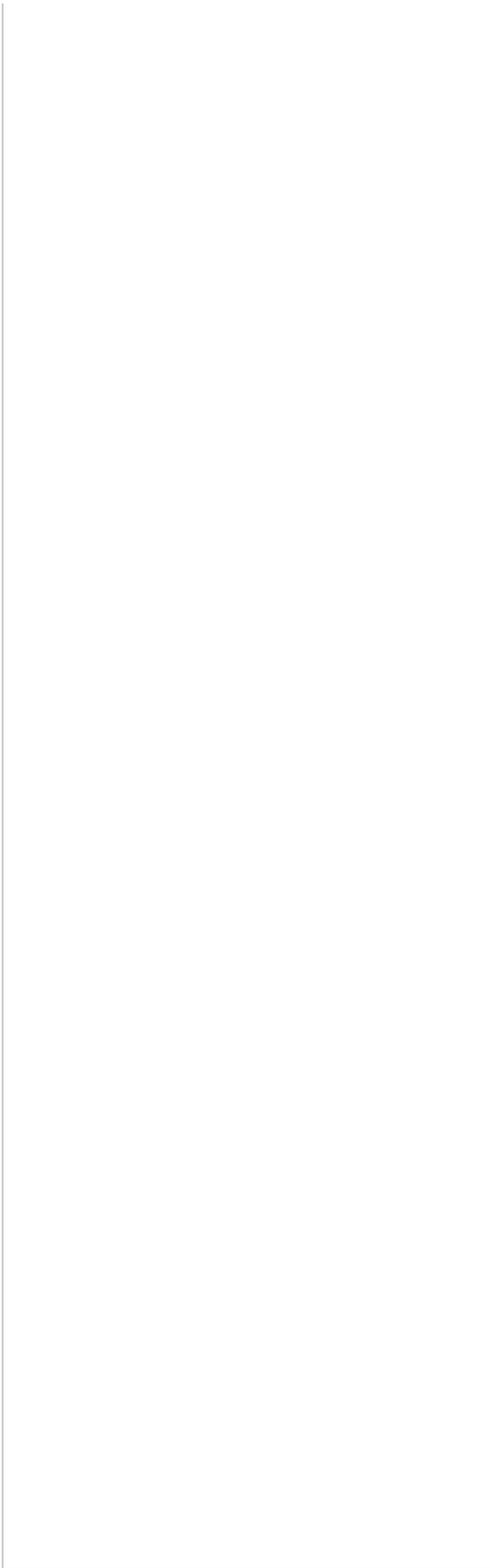


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