

Trucking info... at a click of the mouse



TruckSure
By Trevor Toohill

I frequently get asked where I get information and inspiration from when producing my articles, particularly on 'insurance'. I have made comment on previous occasions that insurance is not a topic that anyone generally breaks their neck to read about – pretty boring really!

But the big thing is that insurance makes up a sizeable portion of a truckers operating expenses. Even worse if you don't have any or you have the wrong insurance, then at claim time you have major problems.

Apart from the fact that I have spent my entire career in the business of insuring trucks and as such like to think that some knowledge and experiences have stuck somewhere in the old brain, mostly internet research and networking produces the topic and the basics for the article.

Owner and fleet operators don't have to look too hard to solve most problems at the click of a mouse, and I am talking about any problem – not just insurance.

The web is a fantastic resource and an unending supply of useful data and opportunities.

Personally, I rely heavily on **social networking** via several useful mediums and these help keep me in daily contact with professionals and truckers worldwide. Their problems, ideas and opportunities are the same as ours – fuel costs, driver shortages, driving hours, deadlines, safety, speed, technology, regulations, freight rates, maintenance, insurance, rigs, tyres, health, – just to name a few and in no particular order.

I cannot see why any truck operator should not embrace internet technology with open arms. A few minutes a day to keep educated, informed and entertained.

I use and recommend LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Blogspot alongside my email and website. Blogspot, gets my ideas and articles out into the national and world arena, while Facebook and Twitter keeps me attached to the various individuals, groups, and communities that interest me.

However, **LinkedIn** has the most value from a professional point of view and is a network that I would suggest to all individual and company truck operators.

Some of the groups that I belong to and would recommend for truckers include:

- A Truckload, Trucking, Logistics, Supply Chain, 3PL, Distribution group
- Fleet Risk Management
- Linkin Transportation Professionals
- Transportation Risk Group – Insurance, Safety, and Compliance
- Transportation Safety Network
- Worldwide Transport Forum

Through these groups I have 66 connections which link me to 363,389 drivers, company owners and professionals worldwide. That is a hell of a lot of resource that I could not possibly handle alone.

A couple of good examples of recent discussions that have moved through these groups and one or two that I have started, show the power of these internet connections:

Where do you see diesel prices going in the upcoming months? – There is some suggestion to be prepared for a 10% increase!

Truck driver shortage officially over? This comment was thought to be an April fool's prank but the article is really interesting. In North America there is a massive driver shortage and looming to be a major problem by 2014 with estimated shortage of 111,000 drivers. No different to here in NZ and something the planners have to factor in now.

How are your drivers reacting to GPS being installed in their vehicles? This discussion also touched on In Cab cameras and Speed Limiters. Generally, if drivers are sold the benefits then no problem. Regardless, there is no doubt that GPS is likely to be as common in the truck as a radio.

What are thoughts around the attention being drawn to sleep disorders and their effects on the commercial transportation industry? We have given this a pretty good airing

recently, however the discussion did not go far enough and should have tackled lack of sleep and driver hours.

What is it going to take to get carriers to quit hauling cheap freight?: This recent discussion produced the largest response and went on for a couple of weeks with no clear outcome – it seems you just can't stop competition and carriers will continue to cut price and some go broke along the way!

What do you believe is the #1 reason for driver turnover? Big discussion but it all came down to pay and company culture.

Who is the 'Kingpin' in your company? This was a survey that I put out there and gave a few options – The driver? The Owner? The Salesman? The Maintenance Man? The Front Office? Got a very strong response and participation rate with 53% saying the owner, 21% the driver, 21% the salesman and 5% the front desk. Very surprisingly for me there were no votes for maintenance and safety. What message does that send?

Which truck has a better single vehicle accident rate – cab over engine, or engine out front? I put this question up for discussion as one of our insurers wanted to know if there were any stats on this. Interestingly there were no stats but plenty of opinion. It seems the transport companies prefer cab over engine but drivers want the grunt out front! Needless to say companies buy vehicles to suit drivers in times of driver shortage. Different industries also have their own preferences but it seems aerodynamics is now playing a part in the buying factor and the long haulers may see the cab over start to disappear!!!!

Well these are a real small sample of what is being talked about worldwide in your industry.

I cannot more highly recommend that you explore the world of on line networking and social media.

Ongoing education, problem solving and entertainment are the positive bi-products. 📺



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