

Driver's Health... well here's the thing!



TruckSure
By Trevor Toohill

The health and fitness of professional truck and bus drivers has a profound and direct effect on your safety and wellbeing and ultimately on the cost of insurance and fleet management.

I have written a few articles on this topic recently and just wanted to finish off with a couple more comments to see if some driver attitudes can be modified.

This has largely been sparked off by one of our major fleet clients looking to partner with us to establish a program that will engage their 1000+ driver workforce in their desire to improve driver wellbeing.

While researching for this project I came to a number of conclusions I felt worthwhile to share with you.

There is no shortage of health promotion efforts. Everyone hears about them all the time.

We have health promotion programs in schools and at work, in churches, and supermarkets. We have efforts directed at the very young, and the very elderly.

We have programs to help people lose weight; avoid diabetes; get fit; recover from a heart attack, or avoid one. We have free programs; incentivised programs; and commercial programs.

Regardless, we mostly just keep getting fatter and sicker overall. Admittedly, rates of obesity may have levelled off a bit over recent years, but that's not much comfort really. At some point, you are pressed up against the ceiling, and can't keep going up; but you can remain squashed up there and we definitely seem to be squashed.

But being overweight does matter because it is the canary in the coalmine of chronic disease. Where there is more obesity there is more heart disease. There is more cancer. There is more dementia. There is more arthritis. There are more strokes. There is more sleep apnoea. And most importantly as it affects drivers, since obesity is a principal

cause of type 2 diabetes, there is more diabetes.

So what?

So we need to fix it, and we absolutely can.

But so far, we have not. And unless we change our approach, we will not. As Albert Einstein said, "we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them".

Our lifestyles have created an epidemic of chronic disease, getting worse for decades, and the costs to business, family, and society cannot be measured. Something is amiss, and it is the most blatant and obvious of somethings, – we don't know where "there" is!

Everyone has an opinion on "getting there" – achieving the goal, but until you

“Our lifestyles have created an epidemic of chronic disease”

can define "there" and determine that you really want to achieve the goal, you will just go around in circles.

How many fad diets?

How many healthy eating programs?

How many gym memberships?

Actually, we know exactly where "there" is - we just don't acknowledge it. We act as if every opinion about how to be healthy is the SOLE authority. We act as if we can focus on one issue and fix our diets and our health, and we perennially fail from lack of willpower.

In our culture of confusion and information overload it makes perfect sense to wring our hands about our rampant obesity and diabetes (and now in our children), even as we keep

running to the takeaway for the complete breakfast. It makes perfect sense to devise new health promotion programs, even as we add unprecedented doses of bacon to the meat lover's pizza.

In our culture, what is supposed to be a "health promotion" can be defined by cutting carbs, and eating badly; or cutting fat, and eating badly; or avoiding gluten, and eating badly; or avoiding GMO, and eating badly, or exercising and eating badly.

When it comes to being inventive about pretending to promote health, we are continually devising new ways to eat and live badly and we think we win.

And so we lose - tragically and unnecessarily.

But this need not be. All missions involve a concerted effort to get "there", from here. And so prerequisite to all missions is acknowledging where "there" is. We have been skipping that step.

We will never reach the Promised Land of true health wellbeing and fitness, where 80% of all chronic disease has gone away and people routinely live longer and better- if we just keep going in the same circles. If we do this for another 40 years, as we have for the past 40, it will be 2055, 40% of us will be diabetic; and it may be too late.

There is global consensus among experts that the "there" is what matters most to eating and living well. That is the goal – pure and simple.

Eat well, exercise moderately and live well – be happy and you will get "there".

Health promotion programming is all about helping people get there from here. But there's the thing, it's prerequisite to know where there is. Follow the lead set by other workplace health and wellness programs and keep an eye out for the TruckSure lead on this.

Think you need to discuss – www.trucksure.co.nz



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