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### Women in Trucking

**Question:** What does a Mars engineer, a dating doctor, a satellite radio host, a NASCAR driver and a safety administrator have in common?

They were all speakers at the recent Women In Trucking Association's Accelerate! Conference and Expo.

The 350 attendees learned about self-defense and self-esteem, how success depends on relationship building, being a female racer in a male dominated environment and much more. Although the topics were diverse, they were all focused on creating a positive environment for women employed in the transportation industry.

The conference wasn't for women only, as both women and men appreciated the insight shared by the diverse speakers. The goal of the event was to learn best practices to increase the employment and advancement of women who work in transportation careers. Currently, while strides are being made, women employed in management positions in transportation, storage, and distribution is slightly over fourteen percent with only eleven percent of transportation degrees earned by women.

The conference started with a Sunday night welcoming reception and ended two days later. The Monday night event was a line dancing party hosted by the Women In Trucking Scholarship Foundation, where attendees wore red to support the charitable organization. Over \$2,000 was raised at the conference to support scholarships for students pursuing transportation related careers.

The conference kicked off with an inspirational message by Jennifer Jo Cobb, (compliments of Arrow Truck Sales) who is a NASCAR Camping World Truck Series racer and the only female to both own and drive her vehicle.

A panel discussion hosted by TA/Petro included Robert Rothstein, a transportation attorney who holds a commercial driver's license, Dr. Jeanette Kersten, a professor at the University of Wisconsin in Stout who has conducted extensive research for Women In Trucking Association regarding recruiting strategies for drivers, and Michael Colonnese, President and Co-Founder of Work America (workamerica.co), a social impact business focusing on helping unemployed and under-qualified Americans start a new technical career. The topic was driver recruiting issues from three very diverse perspectives sharing a common goal to attract and retain professional drivers.

The breakout sessions Monday afternoon included a presentation by Nagin Cox, and space operations engineer who shared her experiences working on the Mars Curiosity Mission at the NASA Jet Propulsion Lab. Cox showed examples of the technology used by the Mars rover and how some of the advanced engineering can be used on earth.

Debbie Gardner, a former deputy Sheriff and founder of the Survive Institute, taught attendees how to avoid and deflect an assault through a combination of self-esteem and self-defense.

Lee Klaskow, a Senior Analyst at Bloomberg Research, shared his insight regarding the economy and how transportation has and will be affected by fuel prices, capacity issues and other external and internal factors.

Meredith Ochs, talk show host on Sirius/XM's Freewheelin' show started the day off Tuesday morning with her insights on what drivers share with her on the air. She offered insight into what her listeners are thinking about their carriers, their industry and their fellow drivers.

The morning continued with a panel discussion featuring four of the five "Influential Women In Trucking" candidates talking about "How to Influence Your Company to Become a Market Leader." The panel discussion, led by Women In Trucking President/CEO Ellen Voie, included Rochelle Bartholomew, President and CEO of CalArk Incorporated, Joyce Brenny, founder and CEO of Brenny Transportation, Rebecca Brewster, President and COO of the American Transportation Research Institute and Kari Rihm, owner of Rihm Kenworth headquartered in St. Paul, Minnesota. These four accomplished women talked about the challenges they faced in their careers, as well as the reasons for their accomplishments and successes.

Tuesday afternoon's session began with David Coleman, also known as "The Dating Doctor." He received a standing ovation after his presentation about why relationships, both in business and in interpersonal situations, are important for success. He spoke about challenges and opportunities in creating a network for support and encouragement at work and at home. Tuesday afternoon's breakout sessions included a presentation called "Performance on Steroids: How to Maximize your Organization's Performance," by Joel McGinley of TranStrategy Partners and "Driver Compensation: Solving the Puzzle of Attracting and Retaining Female Drivers," by Beth Carroll, Prosperio Group.

The conference ended with final keynote speaker, Daphne Jefferson, who currently serves as the Deputy Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. Jefferson talked about her experience riding with female drivers in a two-day ride-along arranged by the Women In Trucking Association. She responded to questions from the audience on current regulatory compliance initiatives of the department.

Throughout the conference, the energy level was consistently high and the attendees remarked about the positive focus on the future for the transportation industry. Next year's event is already in the planning stages and feedback from attendees will determine the time and location for the 2016 Accelerate! Conference and Expo.

If you missed it this year, be ready to learn, network and be energized at next year's event. We look forward to seeing you there.

#### **Ellen Voie**

President/CEO/Founder of Women In Trucking, Inc. ellen@womenintrucking.org www.womenintrucking.org

Mission: Women In Trucking was established to encourage the employment of women in the trucking industry, promote their accomplishments and minimize obstacles faced by women working in the trucking industry.



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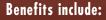
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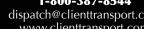


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#### MAKING YOUR MILES COUNT



**Robert D. Scheper** 



### Making Your Miles Count: Choosing a Trucking Company

Probably the most controversial section of the book "Making Your Miles Count: Choosing A Trucking Company" is the proposed analysis of carrier contracts beginning in 1996 and ending in 2012. The origins (and restrictions) of the data is explained in the book and the charts expose significant industry changes.

1996 represents a time just as deregulation was finishing its final phase. Taking thirteen different Carrier contracts and charting them reveals a general outline of three classes or levels (A,B,C) of carrier financial projections. Though there is a little blurring of the class between A and B, class C was fairly obvious.

2012 represents a time after deregulation; actually well over a decade past deregulation. Another sample of carrier contracts shows a much clearer separation of the three different "classes". A closer analysis shows Class A has pulled itself up and ahead of the two others while the lowest has dropped in performance relative to 16 years before. This spread of earnings reflects how carrier contracts in an open market react to the freedom of deregulation.

There may still be some advocates of regulation but the net affect towards operators is relatively clear. Some operators have even greater opportunity for wealth accumulation while others have multiplied their poverty. Now, more than ever before it remains clear; all carrier contracts are NOT the same. Taking care in choosing a carrier is much more important today than it was twenty years ago.

Deregulation has greatly increased competition and the net effect displays both good and bad outcomes. Some market niches/sectors have provided higher margins for their operators while other market niches/sectors have cut into operators profits.

The only way this can really happen in a free market is when the lower margin niches/ sectors benefit from ignorant or uneducated operators. The assumption that all contracts are basically the same justifies uninformed drivers to take the plunge into the operator market. False assumptions (or unrealistic expectations) are one of the many reasons failure (and turnover) occurs in the operator industry.

The phenomena displayed would not be unique to the trucking industry. Any industry that would go the deregulation route would experience a spread of results. Some would produce an increase of earnings while others would fall to new lows.

It must be understood that Lease Operator contracts are presented in a supply/demand

market. For example, if you are in an area where there is an over-supply of operators the rates will have downward pressure. If you work/ live in an area where there is a high demand (but little supply), contracts will be much more generous.

Research and education is more important today than ever before in the lease/owner operator industry. I'd like to thank the people at Over the Road Magazine for their continual commitment to the industries success.

Robert D Scheper operates an accounting and consulting firm in Steinbach, Manitoba. He has a Master's Degree in Business Administration and is the author of the Book Series "Making Your Miles Count" (taxes, taxes, taxes in 2007) and (Choosing a Trucking Company 2015).

You can find him and his books at www.makingyourmilescount.com or 1-877-987-9787. You can also e-mail him at robert@thrconsulting.ca.

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#### SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE



Ray J. Haight



### Dear Ray:

I probably receive 5-6 calls or emails per month from Drivers and Owner Operators who want advice on one issue or another. I quite enjoy talking to folks who want to just pick my brain on issues of the day, are looking for direction on things like profitability or are having a conflict with their carrier. I thought I would share the nature of a few of these calls with you. Maybe some of you are having the same issues or are looking for similar direction and can benefit from these conversations. The names will be changed to protect the innocent, the guilty and myself from any unwanted, unscrupulous, time wasting repercussions.

I received an e-mail from Johnny Wannabe (JW) from Alberta. This well-spoken young fella has given it a ton of thought and he is determined to become an Owner Operator. His question is: what do I do first? He wants to do his homework before he goes and buys a truck. I love enthusiasm and this young man is full of it so I sent young JW some of my past articles on the subject. I also sent a link to a set of videos that I did that have received over 100,000 hits on YouTube, plus I suggested that he go online and look up Kevin Rutherford's web site that I love: Let's Truck https://letstruck. com/. I also have been referring folks to Robert Scheper from Winnipeg to help set up their business and keep the books straight http:// makingyourmilescount.com/services/. Robert also writes for Over the Road but believe me. it is not for that reason that I recommend his

services. This is who I would have doing my stuff if I were still an Owner Operator. I also sent some additional info that was at my disposal. Best of luck JW, I think you'll be fine.

I received a telephone call from Lost in the Dark (LITD), a fellow from eastern Canada who operates a couple of trucks and doesn't know if he is as profitable as he should be. This was a great call as this fellow has his stuff together for the most part. After a number of probing questions from me, this experienced driver and small businessman seemed to have it all together. He is operating two trucks with his own authority; has great gross revenue and is paying his second driver a decent salary. He knew his numbers when asked and I was guite impressed. That is until he revealed that he had not filed his 2014 tax return. That opened up a gaping hole in the conversation. How can you seem to have your act together but overlook this little dandy? Paying your taxes has to be done so why not do it on time? I speak from experience here; there is no sense spending money on late payments and interest charges that are not necessary. It is a part of the business that HAS to be taken care of, hate it as we may. LITD informed me that his wife had no interest or skills necessary to perform this function so once more L recommend Robert Scheper http://makingyourmilescount.com/ services/. LITD will be fine; he just needs a little quidance.

I had a phone call from Ontario from a lady I will call The Victim (TM). I have to say that this call was an exercise in patience for me as it was from an O/O's girlfriend/co-driver. This couple was in the midst of being worked over by the carrier that the truck and boyfriend were contracted to. As she described it, there had been friction and bad manners displayed from both parties that had been going on for guite a while. Boy does this conversation bring back some nasty flashbacks. So after a barrage of words from her I finally got a chance to ask a couple questions like; so when the very first issue occurred did anyone from your side ask for a sit down to find resolution to whatever caused the problem? Answer - No. So when things went bad the second time, what did you folks do? Well, much the same thing. So I asked, when were things supposed to get better? Before I get any nasty emails from you folks, I'm not saying that the carrier doesn't share in this O/O couple's issues because they clearly do. My advice is to be proactive in these situations. Let's be honest; you have done everything in perfect sequence to put yourself in the situation that you're in today, good or bad. Step one; take responsibility and ownership. Once you learn that critical lesson and understand it, you have to act when things go wrong. If you don't it's just laziness. I won't go on any longer on this one. I gave TM some advice on how to efficiently cut the cord with their company and hopefully they'll be alright, but I do have concerns.

I also had a phone call from someone I'll call The Constructive Critic (TCC), Not sure where he was from as the connection was very poor but I got enough of it to understand the sentiment. TCC was sharing his observation, in a very respectful way I will add, that it appeared to him that I had begun leaning more and more in my writings towards a company bias and against Drivers and O/O's. I have to admit that this took me aback. So I asked TCC if he had any specific examples that he could share with me of my indiscretions. He didn't offer any specifics but did share some of his frustrations as a Driver dealing with border crossings, waiting at customers etc. Thanks for the call TCC. Much appreciated. You got my wheels turning man.

Folks, I drove for 10 years and have done over a million miles of safe driving all over North America. I proudly exclaim this wherever possible. In my career I was the President of a small, a medium and a large sized carrier for a couple of decades. Do I have a bias towards companies? You bet I do. Do I also have complete empathy and understanding of what it's like to live on the road? Ya buddy I do. Bin there, done that, wore out the tee shirt. Hopefully what I write comes across in a balanced way. I hope so anyway.

If something is eatin on ya; if you got a comment or observation you want shared, drop me a line at rhaight10@gmail.com

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SAFETY DAWG Chris Harris





## **Constructions Zone – Slow Down!**

I live in the greater Toronto area, often referred to as the GTA. Living in this area I'm sure is very similar to living in any major populated city in North America. But one of the issues that might make traffic unique is our major highway. The 401 is said to be the busiest stretch of highway in North America. It carries more cars and trucks in an hour than any other major roadway. With this kind of traffic, it is not unusual that maintenance must take place 12 months of the year.

Recently the highway has been closed for two collisions that involve both tractor-trailers and passenger vehicles. The loss of life has been large. Several people are no longer with us because of these crashes and some of the dead were children. The collisions that I'm referring to both happened in a construction zone.

The preliminary reports as to the cause of the accidents in these construction zones are the same for each collision. The driver of a tractor-trailer it would appear was not paying attention and traveling too fast in the work area. The tractor-trailer rear-ended vehicles.

What are the costs of these types of collisions? The loss of life of the victims of the crash is tragic. Sometimes a workman dies in a construction zone due to the actions of drivers. The first responders that see the horrific scene and try to extricate the victims from the mangled metal often suffer from PTSD. These are only some of the costs; the human costs. These collisions may have been preventable had the drivers taken simple appropriate steps. The construction zone where these crashes have taken place is well marked. Signs warning of upcoming construction start kilometers ahead of the construction area. Drivers have been warned but they failed to take appropriate action. What will it take to have all drivers, but especially truck drivers, take construction zones more seriously? The loss of life and the untold dollars involved can be greatly reduced with a few simple steps taken by all drivers.

How to navigate a construction zone? First step, be alert. This step applies to all driving. Drivers and operators of equipment always need to be alert but in construction zones things can happen quickly with dire consequences. Many of the collisions happen as all the traffic gets funneled into fewer lanes. Drivers are impatient and often will cut off a tractor-trailer just to get ahead of them. So the professional truck driver needs to be alert and more patient than car drivers. Especially in construction zones, truck drivers must be polite and let those cars in willingly.

Second step, slowdown! Slow down as soon as you see the signs warning of construction ahead. Start easing up immediately on the accelerator. This does many things such as saving fuel and wear and tear on your brakes. It also puts you in the position that you are able to react appropriately should something go awry.

Step number three. Leave more space. Yes, leave even more space than normal. Maneuvering through a construction zone can be tricky so give yourself a little lecture to leave even more space than normal which can help relieve your stress and allow you to drive while maintaining your composure and with less aggravation.

Pay close attention to what is in front of you but never forget about your mirrors. You need to be checking your mirrors frequently for those around you who are being aggressive and impatient. They may inadvertently involve you in a collision while you are behaving correctly.

The purpose of this article is to plead for truck drivers to be more aware in construction zones. Slow down and leave more space in work areas. The loss of life recently in the GTA area has been front-page news. They used to say that there are two seasons, winter and construction. But with advances made in technology the construction season seems to be lasting 12 months of the year now so we are never truly out of it.

Drivers please, slow down; leave more space and get home to the ones you love.

Drive safe out there.

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