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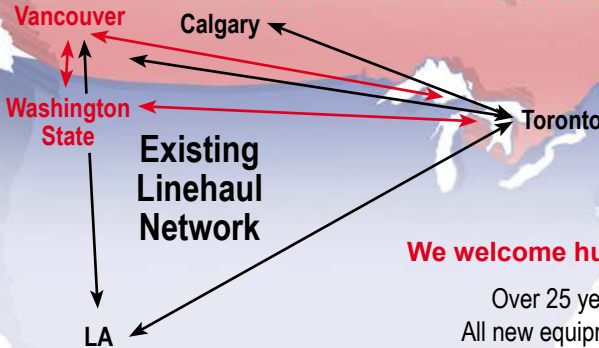
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A Lesson on President Trump

Trying to get a balanced opinion of President Trump in a world of extreme media bias and nearly infinite internet partiality is like wading through a septic tank looking for an edible apple. Personally, I shy away from the mainstream media as a viable source of facts. My opinions of internet sites that shout strong propositions and strong anti-positions are also suspect.

While obtaining my Master's Degree I was taught to go straight to the source (original documents) rather than second hand or opinionated material. In making a realistic evaluation, the closer we get to original documents the better. I have read a couple of President Trumps books (The Art of the Deal and The Art of Survival) and an unauthorized publication (The Making of Donald Trump, David Cay Johnston). I think it provided opposite extremes and a natural balance.

I have read nearly a hundred biographies of business people and politicians. Mr. Trump's business stories are very readable. Though I cannot confirm some of the boasts he claimed, I do admire his ability to focus on getting things done (such as the Wollman Rink in Central Park, NY). In the Art of Survival, Mr. Trump described the 2000/2001 recession as a "Depression",

and confessed a time when he was worth **NEGATIVE \$200 million**. As he walked along a sidewalk with an acquaintance he pointed at a homeless person and said "...this guy is worth \$200 million more than I am..." (Paraphrased). Then, he rebuilt his empire. That takes courage and tenacity. I know many business people who, after failure, rebuilt. To the person they are - better, stronger and of higher quality.

Mr. Trump (during the building of Trump tower) claimed to have saved \$10,000 by spotting an addition error in an invoice before signing... what billionaire signs checks in a project of that size? I know CEO's of much smaller million dollar companies that do not look at invoices. This reflects a hands-on to detail orientation. I am convinced his workaholic detailed mindset has not, and will not change.

However, the most relevant examples I found that reflected the mindset of this new President was actually in David Johnston's book (not recommended reading). The bias is unmistakable as he took 'evidence' and combined it with personal opinion and wild interpretation. Let me share an example that every independent operator should relate to. Mr. Johnston openly argued against using depreciation on assets as a means to 'avoid' taxes. Stating that the tax

savings is an "... interest-free loan from the government..." is such a leap of nonsense it clearly shows the ignorance of the author to business tax law. Something that the author thought a strong point against Mr. Trump actually was clarity against his bias.

If a reader can filter out the bias there are other stories (depicted as negative against Trump) that are fascinating reading as a business person. Here are a few:

Donald Trump owns 14 golf courses. On one (in Bedminster Township) he reduced his property taxes from \$80,000 to \$1,100 by penning in a small group of goats and having it classified as farmland rather than commercial.

Owning buildings in Chicago and prior to being President, he fought (and won) to have his property taxes reduced 48-49%. In order to do this, Donald Trump argued that the buildings he owned are/were valued at much less than what he claimed publically they were valued. I know several property owners who do this regularly. Yes, they may well be cheap... but they have a total right to do so.

In my opinion Donald Trump is one of the most aggressive, legal tax reducers I have read about. I have met many people who hate taxes; some even willing to lie to avoid paying taxes. Mr. Trump was not one of them. I did not find any evidence in a book (designed to malign his character) that he was willing to go that far. However, his aggressiveness in my opinion, is legendary, still legal, but legendary. He very much appears to loath... no HATE both taxes and government while adoring every opportunity to save money.

The most common line I get in tax consulting reflects a serious contempt for government spending habits. What Canadian wouldn't adore his antigovernment frugality? This, coupled with his workaholic personality will be nearly impossible to keep up with.

Being that the United States is in a cultural civil war, it's important to remember that the first casualty in war will always be the truth. One thing everyone agrees on is that President Donald Trump is not a typical politician. All I can say is put on a helmet, maybe even wear a cup.

About the Author:

Robert D. Scheper is a leading Accountant and Consultant to the Lease/Owner operator industry in Canada. His first book in the Making Your Miles Count series "taxes, taxes, taxes" was released in 2007. His firm exclusively serves Lease/Owner Operators across Canada. His second book "Choosing a Trucking company" is the most in-depth analysis of the operator industry available today. He has a Master degree (MBA) in financial management and has been serving the industry since he and his wife came off the road in 1993. His dedication, commitment and strong opinions can be read and heard in many articles and seminars.

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SAFETY DAWG

Chris Harris



Satellite or Cellular ELD's

My goodness, March already! Time is flying by.

Soon, if you cross the border, you will have to have an ELD (Electronic Logging Device) installed in every truck. It looks like the new and mandatory ELD law will be going ahead. Some people had hoped that President Trump would step in and change the situation but that currently doesn't look likely. Others had hoped that OOIDA (Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association) and their court challenges would save the day. OOIDA are now taking this to the USA Supreme Court and they are hopeful - but I see it differently. If they have not won in any of the lower courts, why would they suddenly win in the Supreme Court? So in my opinion, December 2017 is the likely start date for the USA ELD program.

Have you started to prepare yet? If you haven't then I believe that you had better begin. Here is my ELD shopping guide:

First question? Are you going to go with Satellite or Cellular technology? There is a difference as they both have features that the other doesn't. They operate differently and each has some bells and whistles. You

must start your investigation soon or you may be left scrambling at the last minute which could cost you.

What options do you want or need? Just like buying a car or truck, you have options to pick from. Some of the ELD providers have IFTA reporting email solutions for the drivers, speed tracking of the power unit and of course the ever popular "hard braking" information. What information does your company need? Just the essential Hours of Service or more enhanced fleet management software? You may be surprised at how little some of the add-on features cost. I have been both shocked at how expensive some of the features are and of course on the other side of the coin, at how little some are. I can't believe that some of the features are not priced higher.

My point is that there are many options so you need to start investigating. You should first decide on Satellite or Cellular and then start testing some of the units. You will need at least two to three months for testing.

I recommend that you obtain your top two or three picks and start real world testing.

Most of the suppliers have a desktop user interface. This desktop version is used by Dispatch, Safety and Management. So they all need time to use the software which will help in the ultimate decision. Each will have their favorites as to which one suits their needs the best.

Of course, you may want to also consider your shippers. What information will they be asking? Your competitors will be using ELD's and giving your customers valuable data. If this information helps the client and you don't have it, you will be at a competitive disadvantage. After all, everyone will be using ELD's by December, 2017.

You need to start testing ELD's now. When I speak to small fleet owners, they often tell me that a small group of their drivers are already using Hours of Service cell phone apps and the drivers are using the apps for a reason; to make sure that they are following Hours of Service regulations. If they are using the electronic version of Hours of Service already, they are the perfect candidate to test the ELDs.

I should explain what the difference is between a cell phone app and an ELD. ELD's are wired to the truck engine computer and the mobile phone app is not. Can the mobile app become wired to the vehicle? Many of the app providers offer a wired version. You may ask, what

do I mean by a wired version as it sounds like it will be expensive to install? Well, not for the cell phone apps. If you can pair a Bluetooth headset to your mobile phone, you are likely able to establish what is needed for the mobile phone app. The cost of installation for the cell phone app and hardware is likely just a little of your time. Regardless if you use a mobile phone or an inexpensive tablet, you will need some sort of holder installed.

So I urge you to start investigating and testing your preferred type of ELD. It is already getting late and you need time to make this decision. If you start now you will have the opportunity to test and then make a rational decision. If you wait any longer, you may decide on a provider that you will regret.

Good luck and stay safe!

Chris Harris

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SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

Ray J. Haight



Safety Pays – it is a FACT!

Hello folks, hope all is well. This month I am laying a framework for all of the safety personnel that this industry depends upon so heavily. I reported on this once before but the message bears repeating; the Truckload Carriers Association benchmarking service, www.tcaingauge.com reveals that companies with lower insurance costs have higher operating ratios overall. FACT: Safety is good business. Not just because it is good corporate citizenship but because safer carriers make more money!

If you're a driver at a company that does not recognize safety as one of its primary values then you are in a dangerous situation. If you think about it from the perspective of a company that doesn't make safety a priority, it is likely because safety is a drain on their resources. The safety department produces no revenue and exists to keep the company on the plus side of legal and nothing more.

The enlightened know that this is not the case. As a matter of fact, an ongoing investment in safety is actually an investment in the longevity of a well-run company. I would go so far as to say an effective safety department is the cornerstone of a well-run trucking company which affects every department. It will affect turnover positively and will create driver loyalty. How does it do that? When you invest in the safety and wellbeing of employees it shows them that you are concerned for them and that you are prepared to invest in their future. It will keep insurance rates at bay including WSIB, roadside assistance, company

benefits etc. It attracts a better quality of people to the company, it assists greatly in 'on time' performance on customer freight, claims and on and on.

In my past life, I had a couple of very good safety managers work for me and I did my utmost to support them in their difficult role. I attribute much of any success I have had over the years to these individuals and I thank them for their knowledge and dedication. A couple of the rules you are about to read come out of my experiences and my absolute respect and admiration for the folks who have chosen to take on our most valued resource; our drivers - and those that train them to be responsible, safe, driving professionals.

Rule 1: If I could, I would legislate that every company over, let's say 25 trucks, must have a safety manager on staff and that manager must have a CDS certification (Certified Director of Safety). One of the efforts from my past that I am most proud of was bringing Mr. Jeff Arnold, Executive Director of NATMI (North American Training and Management Institute) to meet with the safety division of the OTA and then getting unanimous support to offer this training in Ontario. Check them out at www.natmi.org. If you see an individual's resume or plaque on the wall showing CDS certification then you know you are dealing with a safety professional that warrants serious consideration.

Rule 2: Safety managers must have a healthy dose of common sense when it comes to

enforcing and creating the rules of behaviour. This industry is one of the most heavily regulated industries when it comes to the rules of the road. A good safety manager must know when to use the carrot and when to use the stick. It's a fine line but the best in the industry have this talent.

Rule 3: Keep it fresh. There is nothing more boring than having a safety meeting where the manager gets up in front of a group of drivers with his 4 X 8 foot log book and rails the crowd on how to fill it out. I am not saying that this is not necessary as it might be in certain situations. But this message is best done mixed in with other messages and speakers. News flash! Drivers want to know what is going on in the industry outside of their trucks and CB radios. You can make your meetings interesting by inviting guest speakers; bring folks up to date on the latest news from the company and the industry at large. Whatever it takes but keep it interesting.

Rule 4: Ask your drivers for feedback and input on your department and what they need to be safer operators. Nothing makes people feel more engaged than asking them their opinion. Nothing! Beware though that you absolutely have to respond to the feedback you receive. As powerful as asking for people's feedback is, it can be just as much a negative if you do not let them know that you valued their input. Feedback can be gained by running company draws, providing surveys to fill out and entering their name into a draw for company items such as jackets, coolers etc. Let them know that they have input into the safety program at your company.

Rule 5: Recognition of individual positive behaviour will reinforce that behaviour to

happen again and again. As a safety manager your job is not to just search out the bad guys, it is also to recognize the heroes and the top performers. Truckload Carriers Association has a great program for this called Highway Angels and a great safety division. Check them out at www.truckload.org. When I was chairman of TCA I had the opportunity to spend some time with the safety division at their annual meeting and at the planning session for their meeting. In all honesty, it rejuvenated my spirit for this industry by just being around these folks and picking up on their passion for what they do.

Here is a bit of advice to those drivers who are reading this article and might be thinking of looking for a new driving job. It might not be your favourite subject but if you search out those companies who demonstrate a true commitment to safety you will be the winner in the end. These companies likely have sound equipment and a strong commitment to maintenance. They likely have a clean and healthy work environment. They likely demonstrate employee and Owner Operator loyalty in as many ways as they can find and they likely try and get your family involved in as many ways as possible. You want to work for a winner? Then find a company with a strong, dynamic, safety department and you have likely found a good home.

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