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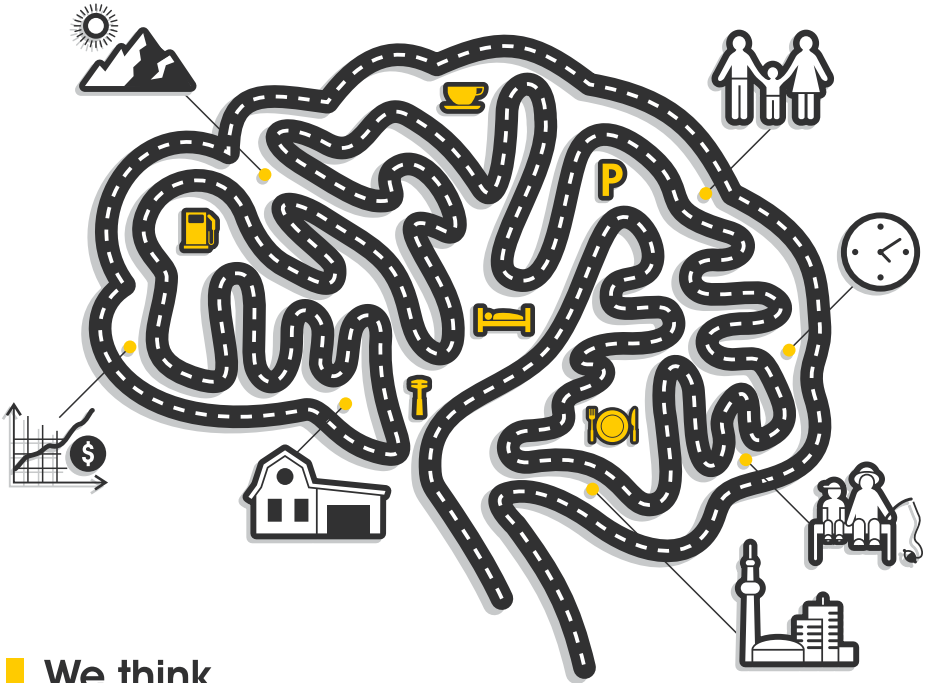
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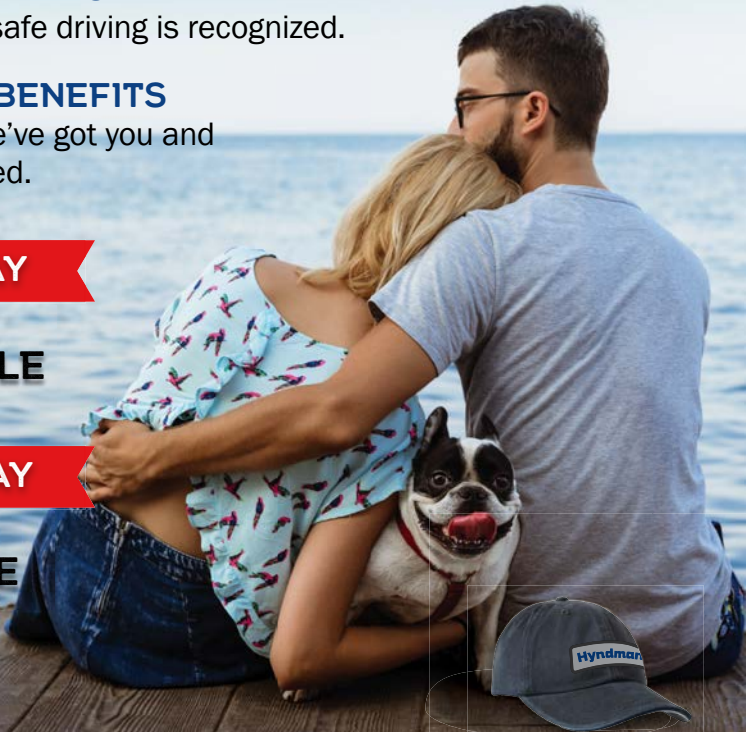
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## MAKING YOUR MILES COUNT

Robert D. Scheper



### Respect leads to Success

A few months ago my family and I got together and took a course to obtain our PAL and RPAL licence (Possession and Acquisition Licence, Restricted Possession and Acquisition Licence). With this licence it allows me to purchase, store and use restricted firearms such as revolvers and/or semi-automatic firearms. It's not that I'm a collector or even an avid hunter but my wife and I live on 80 acres in the country and we have bears!

Doing the PAL/RPAL courses gave me a deep sense of respect for potentially dangerous pieces of equipment. Watching numerous videos of absent minded people or even just situations where simple distractions or ignorance caused high crisis outcomes was very sobering. The courses teach and enforce a methodical system of storing, handling and using a firearm. The rules and procedures are based on eliminating all (or virtually all) potentially grave situations such as pointing the barrel of a gun in an unsafe direction or storing ammunition in a different place than the firearm. All the procedures support an uninterrupted respect for the potential dangers inherent in all firearms. There is no "playing", "joking" or shortcuts. It's a sober

topic that is presented to presumably mature minded people.

I enjoyed learning the system because it demanded a serious, deliberate and professional mindset. It forces an otherwise playful person to constantly consider all the short and long term effects of immaturity and carelessness. It exposes how one moment of thoughtlessness and distraction can cause disastrous consequences.

Being a professional truck driver (or independent contractor) also requires a deliberate and serious mindset. Moving at 100 km per hour with an 80,000 pound vehicle is serious business. Even still, it's not always popular to be professional. Some are teased as: anal, prudish, slow, bossy or worse. Yet when it comes to long term results, those who develop and submit themselves to the high quality systems that lower or eliminate failure always tend to succeed.

It also got me to thinking about what would happen if we would apply a serious level of professionalism to all areas of our lives? What if we followed all the rules for financial success?



Would we not see a serious reward? What about relationships: marital, family and personal? What if we apply all the rules to career development? Would we not build a great reputation and cultivate opportunities? If we lay aside or temper the attraction to pleasure, comfort or pride, where would we be in 10 years or even 20? Would we not gain the respect and comfort we all desire? If we sacrifice the now for the future, would we not have a great one?

Dave Ramsey's greatest quote is "if you live like no one else, later you can live like no one else".

If we learn the secrets to respect and success we will usually surround ourselves with a similar world. If I respect and submit to authority such as the DOT, I can safely live in a world free from DOT's volatile residue.

Respecting guns is sometimes easier than respecting authority because guns are an inanimate object. A gun doesn't talk back or insult you.

Respect for authority should be unconditional. We can't disrespect a police officer just because he somehow didn't measure up to our expectations. We can't mouth off to our boss just because we are having a bad day... or he is. Those "shortcuts" are dangerous. Eventually someone can get shot.

Sometimes I fear for the future generation. They have failed to learn the art of humility and discipline. They seek the shortest route to "basking in the benefits". They want all the benefits yet avoid the disciplined responsibilities. Maybe they are just children with mature bodies.

I once talked to an independent operator who was having a tough time financially and didn't know why. His fuel expense was above normal and he didn't know what to do. In conversation, he stated that he traveled

at 110+km per hour because he valued his home time & relaxation and believed that getting somewhere faster meant he could accumulate more miles in the week. Yet his average miles were very little above normal. He simply refused to submit to the "truth" about fuel economy with a truck. He believed he was the exception to the rule. It was clear by the facts that he was not. He believed he the exception to a lot of other rules as well.

Being a professional driver requires a deliberate, disciplined and serious mindset about your work. Being a professional PERSON will require a disciplined, serious mindset in all areas of life. A successful life requires detailed training and submission to the right rules.

I think, the wiser we get, the more we realize how important the rules are. They are there to keep us from being shot.

#### **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.

You can find him at [www.makingyourmilescount.com](http://www.makingyourmilescount.com) or 1-877-987-9787.

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## ***Driver Retention Masterclass – Communication, Communication & Communication***

The title of this article isn't just "Communication" – it's "Communication, Communication & Communication" and it is repeated a few times for the following reasons:

- First, to emphasize the importance of communications to the Driver Retention project
- Secondly, to emphasize that many different types and methods of communications need to be employed and
- Finally, to note that technique is important for effective communication – these are tried and true practices that will make communication effective.

Communications run throughout this process from beginning to end.

Here is an interesting notion: Communications communicate more than just the content of the message. By sharing information, you are making it clear that you trust your colleagues, that you value them and consider it important to keep them informed. The alternative to sharing and communicating is that people are left in a vacuum and are left to their own imagination. They are not blind or unaware when something significant is happening around them. If not advised what is going on they will do what people will always do naturally – they will fill in the blanks with partial or completely inaccurate assumptions. And the fact that they are not being kept informed will likely convince them

that whatever is going on is probably not good or rosy.

This is human nature at work. If you have two people in an office you have a rumor mill. But this is not a problem if you know that and use your communications to fill that rumor mill with every positive message you can find that pertains to your company, your community or your project.

You must bring your colleagues on board about the project plans – as well as with wider topics such as: reasons to celebrate achievements, O/O's who have bought a new truck, folks inside the walls who have received a promotion, new customers, new children, the reduction of company turnover and the Driver of the Month. We introduced a few of the "content" ideas during the creation of the Communications Action Team. Now we are looking at how and why these things are helpful to our project and our company. These are things that have a positive impact and fit in with the general objective of the Driver Retention project.

Regarding the Driver Retention project, first and foremost, folks must know that a change is coming. Then the sales job begins inside the walls;

- Declare that you will no longer accept high Driver Turnover as the status quo.
- Why it is important for everyone that this situation improves.

- Explain right up front that this is not simply a matter of reducing costs.
- This is about improving the quality of life and job satisfaction for your Drivers and Owner Operators.
- It also brings improvements to those many other employees who work with and depend upon Drivers for some of their own job responsibilities.

Through clear, open and regular communications you can share details of the project objectives and steps with all the employees across the company. And also explain to them what their role will be: how they can contribute to transforming the company, why you are going to do this, how you are going to do this and “what’s in it for me”? This starts with the announcement of a commitment to improve Driver Retention (asking for company-wide participation) and continues with regular, supporting communication programs.

This is the kick-off to communications. The ball is now in play.

Let’s now talk about a few characteristics and principles of communication that you probably already know about but bear repeating. Why? Because we know that one of the most important features of effective communication is repetition. Think about it. Politicians, educators, religious leaders, marketing companies and many others all use message repetition to ensure their message is delivered and its content is accepted. This may sound a bit unsavory put this way, but remember our previous discussions about the natural resistance to change. Even good messages, like ours regarding the Driver Retention project, must break through this resistance in order to

create the “new normal” of what our company employees do and what they expect to be accomplished.

All this repetition must have important content to be shared among the company employees. They deserve to know what the project is focused on, what the targeted results are (with progress numbers), what their role will be and they must be updated on a regular basis regarding progress and milestones achieved – or not achieved and why. Open, honest and collaborative. This is everything that good communications must be among mutually supportive team members.

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### 4. Improved Driver Retention

According to a recent study, 40% of employees who receive poor job training leave their positions within the first year. With the average cost to hire one new driver at \$8,234, improving driver retention rates with ongoing training can substantially improve your bottom line.

### 5. Decreased CSA Violations

CSA violations mean costly fines for your business. A 2014 study found 76.3% of violations should have been discovered during drivers' pre-trip inspections. *Infit-i Prime* offers short training videos keeping your drivers aware of possible CSA Violations and best practices for pre-trip inspections.

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# RAY HAIGHT

DRIVER RETENTION MASTERCLASS

## What's it Going to Take to Reduce Driver Turnover by 50% in the Next 12 Months?

*"I've been at the helm of a company with 120% turnover. It was at a time when the company I was running was growing at an exponential rate, and I just lost sight of what was going on with our turnover. We took our driver turnover numbers from 120% to 20% turnover in under 24 months. We went from needing to hire 300 plus drivers to maintain a fleet of 275 trucks over a one year timeframe to needing to hire under 60 in 24 months for a fleet size of 290 trucks. In retrospect, we could have called it a safety initiative because our accident rate plummeted and so did our insurance cost. We could have called it a profitability initiative because as we streamlined our processes to become driver centric, we also became much more efficient and much more profitable."*

—Ray Haight  
Creator, Driver Retention Masterclass

People stay in situations they like and feel comfortable in, and they leave those that they do not like. You can build an entire retention strategy around that simple thought. Ray Haight did exactly that. Now he's put together a comprehensive training program designed to teach other trucking companies how to do the exact same thing.

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## A RANT ABOUT DRIVER SHORTAGES

I keep hearing about the 'Driver Shortage'. Everyone that I talk to tells me about it. When I'm talking to drivers, they say that they know that they can quit a job today and be driving tomorrow. When I discuss hiring with my clients, they repeatedly say that they can't hire drivers and that there is a shortage.

I call Bullshit! Yup, in my opinion, everyone that says that there is a driver shortage is full of sheep-poop. Now before my e-mail box fills up with your contrary opinion or viewpoints, let me explain.

If there was a true driver shortage, when you go to the store there would be no milk to purchase. When you go to work, the plant would be shut down because the parts didn't arrive and you would get sent home. If I go to the store and I can't find whatever it is that I went shopping for, THAT IS A DRIVER SHORTAGE. When manufacturing plants shut down temporarily because of a shortage of parts, then you have a DRIVER SHORTAGE.

When my clients stop complaining to me about the low trucking rates, then there might be a shortage. Right now, trucking is not making gobs of money. That means that there is an oversupply of trucks to move the freight. And since we are not yet using autonomous driving trucks, we know that there must be a driver behind the wheel for each and every truck out

there. So, when the freight is still getting to the destinations and trucking rates are at historical lows, WE DO NOT HAVE A DRIVER SHORTAGE!

Drivers of trucks are not getting paid a fair price. We all know that drivers pay has not kept up with inflation. If we truly had a driver shortage, then drivers would be paid what they are worth and maybe even a little more. So again I say, there is not a driver shortage.

What are the signs of a driver shortage? Store shelves are at least partially empty, plants have temporary shut downs, freight rates rise and driver wages go up to where they belong. Since none of this is currently true, we do not have a driver shortage. What we do have is a severe QUALITY SHORTAGE! Yes, quality.

Because of the poor quality of drivers, insurance rates are rising; crash rates are flat or as some people are even saying, may be on the rise. And when I say, "Poor Quality of Drivers" I do mean all drivers - both automobile and truck. Car drivers are worse today than ever before. Because of their lack of knowledge about how to drive around large trucks, they are constantly putting themselves in danger and causing most of the crashes on our highways. But I also see truck drivers making stupid choices as well. When you drive our roads, do you see trucks following too closely? And have you noticed that fewer semi-tractor

trailers seem to be governed at the 105 kilometers per hour that has been legislated?

Well, that was my rant. Please let me know what you think. Do you think that there is a driver shortage? Or is it a quality deficit? Will we ever see rates and driver pay go up? Let me know; I look forward to your thoughts and comments.

Please be safe out there.

**Chris Harris**

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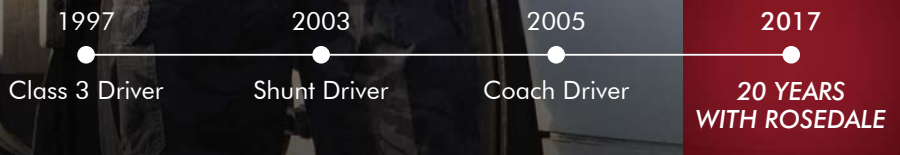




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## WOMEN IN TRUCKING

Ellen Voie



# Women In Trucking & Uber Freight

The word Uber means “very super.” Uber Freight is working to become a “very super” way to match carriers with shippers through its app. Recently, I had the opportunity to visit Uber Freight’s offices in downtown San Francisco and speak with the team about the underrepresentation of women throughout the trucking industry, as well as ways to attract and retain more women into trucking careers.

The team at Uber Freight includes engineers, load planners, sales and marketing professionals and so much more. They seemed to be younger than a typical group of transportation professionals. Many of them came from a technology background and since they are working to build an app that improves the lives of all truck drivers, they were eager to better understand the unique challenges female drivers face.

My talk focused on the need to raise awareness among women about opportunities in the trucking industry and other areas of transportation. I touched on the challenges in attracting and retaining women as drivers and leaders and offered suggestions as to how we can better address these issues. I also discussed ways WIT is working to improve conditions including truck cab design and ergonomics, harassment and more inclusive recruiting advertising.

The presentation to the group was well received and in addition to the four dozen or so folks in the room, the event was also broadcast to Uber Freight’s Chicago office. The questions from the Uber Freight team were focused and insightful,

although I would have to admit that I learned as much from them as they learned from me.

As a separate effort from Uber Freight, Uber also has a group working on self-driving technology for both cars and trucks called the Advanced Technologies Group (ATG). The mission of Uber ATG is to create safer roads and save lives with the use of self-driving technology that will remove as much opportunity for driver error as possible. I had a chance to also visit with the ATG team and ride in one of their trucks on the highways around San Francisco. A professional truck driver was in the driver’s seat the entire time while another employee monitoring the laptop was receiving information from the truck’s LiDAR sensors.

The separate teams at Uber Freight and Uber ATG trucks are both working hard to stay ahead of the industry with the use of technology and WIT is excited to continue working with Uber to build a “very super” future for women across the industry.

### Ellen Voie

President/CEO/Founder of  
Women In Trucking, Inc.  
ellen@womenintruck.org  
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AYR Motor Express .....	27	Liberty Linehaul .....	46	Speaking from Experience ..	28,29
Brian Kurtz Trucking .....	41	Linamar .....	22	Thompson Emergency .....	12
Carmen Transportation Group ..	35	Livingston .....	6	TRANSAM Carriers .....	2
Chris Harris - Safety Dawg Inc.	34,35	McKevitt Trucking Ltd. ....	47	Trans-frt McNamara .....	14
CNTL .....	48	Midwest Transit .....	37	Transpro Freight Systems .....	10
Darcol International .....	35	Mill Creek .....	17	Trappers .....	18
Eassons Transportation Group ..	9	Nishan Transport .....	24	Truckdriver.com .....	18,43
FTI .....	17	Nu-era Freight Lines .....	42	Trucker Buddy .....	31
Gardewine .....	25	OTR Digital .....	44	VeeBoards .....	10,46
Genesis Express .....	3	Pival Expedite .....	3	VersaCold .....	19
H8 Media .....	38	Premier Bulk Systems .....	4	Walmart .....	26
Highland .....	8	Primex Transource .....	5	Wildwood Transport .....	36
Highlight Motor Freight .....	7	Ray Haight - Driver Retention		Women in Trucking Article .....	40
Hyndman .....	13,45	Masterclass .....	33		
Infiniti .....	30	Robert Scheper Article .....	20,21		



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