

ADDRESSING THE TOP CONCERNS FOR MOTOR CARRIERS BY FOCUSING ON BETTER HEALTH & WELLNESS

MAY 2023



Presented To
TRUCKING COMPANIES
Presented By
TRUCKERS HEALTH NETWORK

Addressing The Top Concerns for Motor Carriers Focusing on Better Health & Wellness

By Brian Hazelgren

Leaders and drivers from the trucking industry answer questions every year, and rate the top concerns they have, through an annual survey. Then, two lists are compiled separating the top 10 concerns and compared to the answers provided from the drivers, and the leaders. Most of the time the Top 10 Concerns don't necessarily line up between the two groups as far as priority is concerned, but most of the concerns are shared.

From the Top 10 list of 2022, I thought it would be interesting to see what ties into health and wellness related issues. The following list of six concerns share something in common: with a good wellness plan in place, the company can see positive results with their drivers.

1. **Driver shortage** - There are several reasons for the driver shortage in the trucking industry. One major reason is an aging workforce, with many older drivers retiring and not enough young drivers entering the field to replace them. Additionally, the lifestyle and demands of the job can be challenging, including long hours on the road and time away from family and friends. The industry also faces challenges such as regulatory changes and increased competition from other transportation options. These factors have made it difficult for companies to find enough qualified and dedicated drivers to meet demand.

Ways to Attract Younger Drivers

There are several steps that the trucking industry can take to address the aging workforce and attract more young drivers. One approach is to **invest in recruiting and training programs that target younger individuals who may not have considered a career in trucking before**. This could involve partnering with community colleges or vocational schools to offer training and apprenticeships. Another strategy is to **improve working conditions and offer more attractive compensation packages, including benefits such as health insurance and retirement plans**. The industry could also work to address regulatory issues and implement new technologies that make the job easier and more efficient, such as automation and driver assistance systems. Finally, companies could focus on building a positive reputation and company culture that appeals to younger generations, highlighting the important role that trucking plays in the economy and society as a whole.

2. **Driver Retention** - There are several strategies that trucking companies can use to retain truck drivers. **First, offering competitive compensation packages and benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, and paid time off can help to keep drivers satisfied. Additionally, providing opportunities for professional development and advancement within the company** can help drivers feel valued and invested in their careers. *Creating a positive work environment and company culture is also important*, including things like open communication, recognition for good performance, and a supportive management team. Finally, *investing in new technologies, equipment and a wellness strategy can improve driver safety, comfort, and efficiency on the job, making it a more attractive industry to work in overall.*

In my opinion, the most important aspect of a positive work environment and company culture for retaining truck drivers is open communication. When drivers feel that their concerns are heard and their opinions are valued, they are more likely to feel invested in their work and committed to the company's success. Additionally, having a culture of transparency and honesty can help to build trust between drivers and management, which is essential for maintaining a positive and productive workplace.

3. **Compliance, Safety and Accountability** - There are several things that a trucking company can offer its drivers to help with Compliance, Safety and Accountability (CSA). First, they can provide regular training and education on safety regulations and best practices for driving. This can help drivers stay up-to-date on the latest rules and requirements, and ensure that they are operating their vehicles safely and responsibly.

Healthy drivers are generally safer on the roads than unhealthy drivers. Good physical and mental health can help to reduce the risk of accidents and injuries, as well as improve driver alertness and reaction times. Additionally, healthy habits such as regular exercise and healthy eating can help to reduce the risk of chronic health conditions that can impact driver safety, such as sleep apnea or heart disease. Employers can play a role in promoting driver wellness by providing resources such as health screenings, wellness programs, and access to healthy food options while on the road.

Additionally, companies can implement systems for monitoring driver behavior and performance, such as electronic logging devices or dash cameras. This can help to identify unsafe practices or behaviors and address them before they become larger problems. Finally, companies can offer incentives for safe driving, such as bonuses or rewards for accident-free periods or maintaining a good safety record. By focusing on safety and

compliance, companies cannot only keep their drivers safer on the road, but also improve their reputation and bottom line.

There are several incentives that trucking companies can offer to encourage safe driving among their employees. Some examples include:

- a. **Performance-based bonuses:** Companies can offer bonuses to drivers who maintain a good safety record or meet specific safety goals, such as reducing accidents or violations.
- b. **Recognition and awards:** Companies can recognize safe drivers with certificates, plaques, or other awards. This can help to boost morale and motivation among the workforce.
- c. **Time off:** Companies can offer additional time off to drivers who achieve certain safety milestones or maintain a safe driving record.
- d. **Training opportunities:** Companies can offer additional training opportunities to drivers who show a commitment to safety and compliance. This can help drivers improve their skills and stay up-to-date on the latest regulations and best practices.

By offering these and other incentives, companies can **create a positive culture of safety** and encourage their drivers to make safe choices on the road.

To ensure that recognition and awards programs are fair and transparent, trucking companies can establish clear guidelines and criteria for eligibility. They can also involve employees in the development of these programs to ensure that they are designed with their needs and preferences in mind. Additionally, companies can provide regular feedback and communication to employees about their performance and how it relates to the recognition and awards program. By being transparent and consistent in their approach, companies can foster a sense of trust and fairness among their workforce.

Trucking companies can involve employees in the development of recognition and awards programs by soliciting feedback and suggestions through surveys, focus groups, or one-on-one meetings. They can also **form committees or teams made up of employees** to help design and implement the program. Additionally, companies can communicate regularly with employees about the progress of the program and any changes that may be made based on their feedback. By involving employees in the process, companies can ensure that the recognition and awards program meets their needs and expectations.

Companies can effectively solicit feedback and suggestions from their employees by using various methods such as surveys, focus groups, suggestion boxes, or one-on-one meetings with managers. These methods allow employees to share their opinions and ideas about the recognition and awards program. Companies can also encourage open and honest communication by providing a safe and supportive environment where employees feel comfortable sharing their thoughts. Additionally, companies can use technology to gather feedback and suggestions, such as through **online surveys or social media platforms**. By actively seeking out employee feedback and suggestions, companies can improve the effectiveness of their recognition and awards program and boost employee engagement and morale.

4. **Economy** - Executives can address the fear of an unstable economy with its drivers by providing transparency and open communication about the company's financial state and future plans. They can also offer stability through things like guaranteed hours or salaries, as well as opportunities for career advancement and development. ***In terms of wellness programs, trucking companies can offer things like gym memberships, healthy meal options, stress management workshops, and mental health resources.*** They can also implement safety protocols to ensure a safe working environment and prioritize driver rest and breaks.

By prioritizing employee wellness and providing stability, trucking companies can retain their valued employees and maintain a competitive edge in the industry.

Some specific examples of wellness programs that trucking companies could offer to their employees include:

- *Fitness programs and gym memberships*
- *Healthy meal options, such as a subsidized healthy meal program or access to healthy snacks on the road*
- *Stress management workshops and resources*
- *Mental health support, such as counseling services or access to a mental health hotline*
- *Health screenings and check-ups for drivers*
- *Ergonomic equipment for trucks to reduce driver fatigue and injuries*
- *Incentives for safe driving habits and compliance with safety regulations.*

5. **Insurance Cost/Availability** - *A wellness program can help to reduce the cost of healthcare expenses for a trucking company in a number of ways. By promoting healthy habits and providing access to preventative care, employees are less likely to develop chronic health conditions that require expensive medical treatment. Additionally, wellness programs can help to reduce stress and promote mental health, which can lead to fewer days missed due to illness or injury. Finally, by investing in employee wellness, trucking companies can improve their overall workforce health, which can lead to increased productivity and reduced healthcare costs over the long-term.*

Examples of preventative care measures that can be implemented through a wellness program for trucking company employees include immunizations, regular health screenings and check-ups, **easy access to healthcare professionals while on the road, access to flu shots, and education on disease prevention.** Additionally, wellness programs can encourage healthy lifestyles by **promoting physical activity, healthy eating, and stress reduction techniques, all of which can help prevent the onset of chronic health conditions. By focusing on prevention,** trucking companies can help employees stay healthy and avoid costly medical expenses down the road.

Wellness programs have been shown to be very effective in reducing medical expenses for trucking companies and their employees. According to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), companies that implemented wellness programs saw an average return on investment of \$3.27 - \$6.00 for every dollar spent on the program. This is because wellness programs help to prevent or manage chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity, which can be very expensive to treat. Additionally, wellness programs can improve employee productivity and reduce absenteeism, which can also lead to cost savings over the long-term.

Some specific wellness programs that have been effective for trucking companies include smoking cessation programs, weight management programs, and stress reduction programs. These programs are designed to address common health issues among truck drivers, such as obesity, heart disease, and mental health disorders. Additionally, some trucking companies have implemented programs that **encourage physical activity, such as walking or biking programs, or offer on-site gym facilities for their employees.** By tailoring their wellness programs to the specific needs of their workforce, trucking companies can maximize their effectiveness and ultimately improve the overall health and well-being of their employees.

6. ***Diesel Technician Shortage*** - To be competitive in the face of a diesel technician shortage, trucking companies can consider offering attractive compensation packages, signing bonuses, and referral bonuses to attract qualified candidates. They can also invest in training and development programs to help employees improve their skills and advance their careers within the company.

Additionally, companies can focus on ***creating a positive work culture that fosters collaboration, teamwork, and employee engagement, which can help to retain current employees and make the company more attractive to potential hires.*** By taking a comprehensive approach to addressing the shortage of diesel technicians, trucking companies can position themselves as employers of choice and remain competitive in the industry.

First, management can establish clear communication channels and encourage open dialogue between employees and management. This can help to ensure that everyone feels heard and valued within the organization.

Secondly, they can provide opportunities for professional growth and development, such as training programs and career advancement paths. This can help to increase employee satisfaction and engagement, as well as attract new hires.

Thirdly, companies can establish recognition and reward programs to acknowledge and celebrate employee accomplishments, which can help to foster a sense of pride and motivation among employees.

Finally, companies can focus on creating a welcoming and supportive workplace environment, by implementing policies and practices that promote work-life balance, and employee wellness.

TRUCKERS HEALTH CON 2023

Our primary goal is to educate trucking company executives and truck drivers on the merits of tying Wellness into the overall corporate strategy, and then deliver solutions to help achieve this goal. Truckers Health Network does this every day, and every Fall we get together as a group to support trucking companies and drivers in making the best decisions for Health & Wellness.

Transportation, Medical & Wellness professionals coming together for 3 days to network, learn, and uncover the next level of healthy living. Trucking Owners, Risk Mgt Leaders, HR Directors, Medical/Wellness professionals.

The professionals in Transportation and Health & Wellness are getting together to create more awareness and opportunities for the trucking community. As the worlds largest annual health and wellness industry conference, Truckers HealthCon attracts trucking companies, truck drivers, medical professionals, investors, legal experts, and technologists from around the world and all corners of the health and wellness galaxy.

Our shift to focusing heavily on truck drivers health and wellness has brought on the meteoric rise of new wellness classes, and as we return to in person events, the outside the box view of investing into health and wellness will continue to make its presence felt.

Developing from a wellness-centric event, Truckers HealthCon has evolved into the center of the universe for everything health and wellness related for the trucking community. The event attracts medical service providers, medical professionals of all specialties, wellness professionals, affiliate marketing companies, brand managers, investors, manufactures, financial service providers, and companies related to the health and wellness industry.

Come and join us for the Truckers HealthCon. Learn more at:
<https://truckershealthnetwork.com/events>

