

Collaborative logistics 'key to easing driver shortage'



Pooling resources with other operators will help maximise fleet efficiency, says Lyall Cresswell, managing director at Transport Exchange Group

Much has been said recently about the driver shortage issue that currently faces the road transport sector, exacerbated by Driver CPC training requirements. However, any initiative designed to attract new blood to the sector, even if successful, is unlikely to have much impact for a number of years, so what are operators expected to do in the meantime to overcome this skills shortfall?

There is unlikely to be a single answer, but improved collaboration through the use of the latest technology solutions could deliver immediate results, by maximising efficiency and utilisation from within the existing fleets of UK road transport operators.

A research paper published at the beginning of last year by the Centre for Sustainable

Road Freight, a joint collaboration between Heriot-Watt and Cambridge Universities, claims that almost a third of HGV miles are driven without a load, which represents a three per cent increase over the last 13 years.

This suggests that much of the required capacity does exist – the challenge is finding an effective means of tapping into this under-utilised resource.

Not all empty capacity will be accessible by any means, but companies do have the opportunity to achieve more by having an open mindset based around collaborative efficiency, as long as they are able to access the necessary



mechanisms for sharing information and working together.

Freight trading platforms, such as Haulage Exchange, have been helping road transport businesses to fill empty vehicles and trailers for a number of years, and recent developments

are making interactive co-operation between trusted business partners even more achievable.

With the ability to now integrate with complementary supply chain systems including vehicle telematics, freight exchanges are increasingly becoming a central hub that

connect people, assets and data.

By embracing and combining with the latest technology innovations and other essential business and operational tools, it is becoming possible to create trusted networks, boost operational efficiency and increase profitability simply by being better connected.

This integration provides an effective way of increasing levels of trust, as well as achieving complete confidence that any loads will be delivered on-time and meet expected service levels.

By making the live vehicle tracking data viewable directly via the freight trading platform, accurate location and status information of

loads in transit can be shared between trading partners and customers in real-time.

Meanwhile, it is possible to match precise vehicle locations with already posted loads, or even receive email notifications of new jobs that are suitable based on current or planned positions.

Moving forward, operators will need to find and deploy all of the unused or under-used latent capacity within the market if they are to meet growing demand, so effective collaboration could just hold the key.

Freight exchanges are making it easier to fill available space, eliminate wasted capacity and maybe just ease some of the burden many operators are facing as a result of driver shortages.

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