

Chapter 4: Tricks of the Trade – Driver Training

Participants:

Paul Citarella, *Senior Vice President Sales & Marketing, FleetCor*
Benton Routh, *President, Fuelman Network*
Michael Smith, *Executive Vice President, Magellan Fuel*

Paul Citarella: Thanks, Benton. Next up, we are going to take a look at how drivers can play a part in managing your fuel costs. We really are going to talk about the tricks of the trade in driver training. When you think about fuel expenses for your fleet, generally you think a lot about the price at the pump and the fuel consumption of the vehicles and drivers really never enter into the equation. But, you would be surprised just how much driver behavior can affect how much you are spending on fuel.

The way you drive has a HUGE impact on the vehicles fuel efficiency. If you have the tendency to speed up on highways, that lowers the vehicles' fuel economy. Accelerating too fast, braking too often, braking too hard – all things my wife says I do, all add up to a lot of lost fuel as far as fuel efficiency goes. Up to 60% of wasted fuel is due to acceleration issues for example. And, there those long usually avoidable idle times. We all see hundreds of trucks sitting there idling away. If you just letting your vehicle run at a rest stop or at a delivery point for long periods, there is a big impact. Another simple little idea for improving driver efficiency is enforcing a pay at the pump option. So, a driver doesn't turn a 4 minute fill up into a 20 minute extended break by walking inside and viewing the culinary options within the convenience store.

Michael Smith: That's a good point. Teaching your drivers good driving behavior is essential to making sure you are not wasting money. One of the really exciting methods emerging right now involves driving simulators. These programs have been shown not



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only to increase safety, but also efficiency. You can use driving simulators to reinforce good driving protocol with your drivers without wasting fuel in training. In fact, a study from last year in the UK showed that drivers who took part in simulation training improved their fuel efficiency by 1.5 – 3.2%. That can be a lot. This kind of driving is really effective because it allows you to really drill specific skills and ideas until they become second nature. And, you can use that simulation to test out any new ideas or just test out traditional fuels saving methods to see if they can actually be used as a viable method of fuel savings.