

The 2025 Truck Driver Appreciation Playbook



How North America's Best
Fleets Make Drivers Feel Valued

Brought to you by **Truck** **Right**

Welcome to The Truck Driver Appreciation Playbook

National Truck Driver Appreciation Week is coming up, and we're big fans of this important annual event. That said, making drivers feel valued is something winning fleets do every single day.

Ensuring drivers have a great work experience should be baked into your company culture – from hire to retire. We like to refer to it as “driver appreciation all year round” and it's a key component to building a high-performing team.

Here's our playbook for making it happen, updated for 2025, and developed from decades of working with many of North America's best fleets. We hope you find it helpful!

Here we go!



Listen up

The most important contributor to feeling valued is feeling heard. From your first touchpoint with a driver during the recruiting process to their final day with your fleet, truly listening to their needs will make them feel like they're part of something special.

- Urge your recruiters to ask open-ended questions from the first point of contact, to really get a sense of who drivers are as people
- Make sure your door is always open (literally and figuratively)
- Ensure there's a clear mechanism in place for drivers to provide feedback and suggestions to leadership
- Set periodic check-ins with your drivers if need be
- When talking to a driver, give your undivided attention (no phone, no computer)

Reach out

Drivers can be on the road for days or weeks at a time, so making sure they hear from you frequently is important.

- In-cab devices are great for mass communication to drivers, so be sure to use them
- Text messages and email are effective ways to reach drivers in a more personal manner
- Automate outbound messages to celebrate driver birthdays and work anniversaries
- Share as much company news as you can by social media so drivers can stay in the know via their favorite channels

Please note: It's important to think of these methods of outreach as supplemental to in-person communication as opposed to a replacement. Nothing beats the real thing!

Level the playing field

While this playbook focuses on appreciating drivers, much of what we talk about applies to your non-driving personnel as well. After all, if they're happy, they'll help keep your drivers happy. So make sure to drive team cohesion for your entire team.



Celebrate your MVPs

A well-established recognition program goes a long way in creating a positive and supportive work environment. Drivers who have been recognized for their accomplishments are more engaged, more productive, and have a higher rate of retention.

- **Celebrate milestones at least monthly to establish a culture of ongoing appreciation**
 - Recognize things like work anniversaries, accident-free miles, and on-time deliveries
 - Consider celebrating drivers who receive consistent positive customer feedback
 - Name a driver of the month every single month, who can then become a finalist for driver of the year
 - Recognize drivers who refer new drivers to your fleet (we call this “creating ambassadors”)
 - Give drivers the opportunity to nominate their peers for driver of the month
 - Promote team unity by having drivers nominate non-driving staff for recognition
 - Gather feedback from drivers about your recognition program to be sure it's hitting the right notes
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Shout it out loud

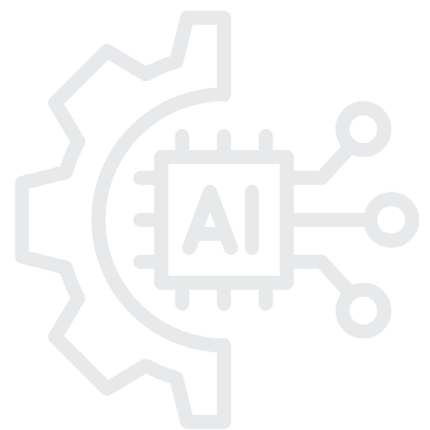
Don't be shy. Shout your drivers' achievements from the rooftops so everybody can celebrate them.

- **Add a page to your website that features the latest driver recognition and milestones, or consider building a company intranet site**
- Share driver recognition and milestones on social media (this has the additional benefit of showing prospective future drivers how amazing your driver experience is)
- If you haven't already, create a monthly email newsletter to share company news, events and recognition
- Have leadership hand out awards in person and publish recognition posts on social media

Be AI-wise

Every driver wants to know: are you going to replace me with a robot? Make it clear: as AI grows, their job is safe. And AI might even make their job easier!

- Consider investing in AI and automation tools that enhance a driver's job, like route optimization, maintenance monitoring and traffic prediction.
- Send an email that makes your position on AI known: truckers cannot be replaced by computers, nor should they be.
- Remember: AI can't react quickly to heavy traffic, bad weather and poor driving conditions. Only a driver can do that.



Suit up with the right gear!

Everyone loves presents, and truck drivers are no exception. Especially if they're useful gifts that they can use on and off the job! Here's how to get your driver gift-giving just right.

Branded swag is a great way to create belonging and a sense of team. Some fleets even offer branded clothing, safety gear and PPE at wholesale so drivers have easy access and can save money on things they need to do their job. This has the added benefit of increasing your brand's visibility out there on the road.



Offer up branded swag

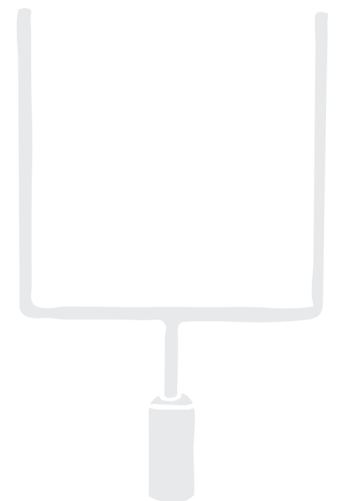
Reward excellence

Motivate drivers just that little bit more by adding rewards on top of recognition with simple, cost-effective prizes.

- Offer gift cards to stores and restaurants with a focus on things that drivers really need
- Award “limited-edition” or personalized company swag that can only be earned through recognition
- Let drivers choose their own prizes from a set of pre-defined options. Set up a simple “awards store” online where drivers can redeem points earned through your recognition program for gift cards, camp chairs and coolers, limited edition swag and more
- Simple “Driver of the Month” decals on rig doors help secure bragging rights, and can go a long way to getting drivers motivated to excel

Truck wraps for the win!

Consider creating special truck wraps for drivers who deserve special recognition, such as military veterans, or drivers who are heavily involved in charity causes. These have the added benefit of becoming newsworthy, and highly sharable via social media. If you feel this is more than you can handle in-house, then marketing agencies – such as our sister company, **KAT Media** – can help you design the swag you need that your drivers will love.



Create a "Wall of Fame"

Many fleets designate a space in their facility to serve as a Wall of Fame celebrating drivers of the month and other team members. One longtime client even polished up an Alcoa Wheel in brass and uses it to frame the most recent winners.

Ensure events include the whole team



Barbecues, parties and other company events are a great way to foster a positive company culture. However, these can have the opposite effect if certain people can't attend due to their shift or being out on the road.

- Hold barbecues and other such events at multiple times throughout a week so that everyone has a chance to attend
- If you have drivers out on the road for more than a week, consider including them virtually with a gift card for some food, or even a Facebook Live event.

Special note: There's no better time to plan events than during **National Truck Driver Appreciation Week!**

Show gratitude

It may seem like a small thing, but be sure to thank your drivers for their hard work every time you talk to them. Shake their hand and share a smile. Over time, small acts of gratitude and warmth can add up to something very meaningful. **So make gratitude your default setting.**

Strategically upgrade team facilities

Making material changes to your facilities can be a big investment, but it's hard to think of anything that will make a larger improvement to your driver experience.

- The first step is to listen to your drivers: ask them what material changes would make the biggest difference for them
- Implement changes that will clearly make their job easier, safer or more comfortable
- Make sure your driver lounge and other facilities are top notch and exceed their needs
- Make an honest assessment of your shop, loading and unloading facilities and beyond
- One fleet we worked with even installed a massive red carpet for drivers entering their terminal!

OTR superstars

You can make OTR drivers feel more connected to your team by placing a digital welcome sign at their gates that is personalized to those arriving and departing that day, calling them out by name and wishing them well.



Optimize their equipment



If you have company drivers, finding out what they think about your equipment and technology is important, and will give you great ideas for improvements.

- Do they love their rig or are there spec improvements that can be made?
- Would they benefit from features like an under-bunk fridge, EpicVue in-cab entertainment or SiriusXM satellite radio?
- Is the software they use for their work giving them a great user experience?
- Is there anything else that would make their job easier or help them do it better?

Go beyond the rig

We've all got a keen eye on the wellbeing and happiness of our drivers, but it can go a long way to reach beyond life in the rig to include their families and their life outside of work.

- Create a Facebook group for your drivers' spouses so they can be connected and support one another
- When drivers need help at home, and they're on the road, have a vetted shortlist of handymen and other tradespeople ready for them to call
- Consider making virtual mental health resources available to drivers and their families
- Look out for the military veterans on your fleet by creating events and message boards just for them

Most of all, get creative!

Every fleet is unique, from the mix of company drivers and owner operators, to types of runs, to what you're hauling, to your region's unique geography, to... countless other factors. Much of what we discuss in this playbook will apply to you, and some of it may not. When you devise your driver appreciation gameplan, get creative and make it unquestionably yours. [You can see some examples of creative approaches in this article](#) we published awhile back.

TruckRight helps fleets give their drivers a great experience

The TruckRight software platform is a game changer for countless fleets. Give us a shout to find out how it can help make your drivers' lives easier from hire to retire by:

- Letting them sign and update documents from anywhere on any device
- Enabling remote onboarding
- Empowering them to take training from anywhere on any device
- Helping them stay compliant by keeping their own credentials up to date

All through an intuitive, self-serve driver portal created by an independently-owned company.



Hire great drivers faster.
Retain them longer.
Stay fully compliant.



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Thanks for checking out our playbook.
We hope you find it helpful when it comes to rallying your team!