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ISSUE 73

OCTOBER 2023

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

HOW FAR WE'VE COME

Let me take you back to a time before cell phones. If you remember phones that were attached to a wall and had a cord, you probably know what I'm talking about. Or how about the era before the Internet was a "thing"? Some of you may be thinking, "What? Hasn't the Internet always been part of our lives?" While it may be shocking, the answer is no.

You may even remember when some dealers scoffed at having a website, thinking it just wasn't a necessity when it came to running and promoting their dealership. Some were firmly in the camp of saying they didn't need, and wouldn't have, a website. For those who

took this stance, it's HIGHLY likely they're no longer in business, unless of course they came around and realized their short-sightedness.

My, oh my, how times have changed. But the reality is, technology offers us numerous advantages and in many regards, it's made our lives easier, ultimately making us more efficient. Today, we can easily connect with others through that device we all carry around - the smartphone. It makes it so easy to call, text, email, and post.

And most of us use the resources available - the technology - to interact with friends, family, colleagues and customers. It's part of who we are and how we do business. But the

speed of tech, and keeping up with it, can be overwhelming if we let it be.

In this issue, we highlight several different developments, from digital tools, to advanced fuels, to events that can help us keep up with what's happening in the Commercial Vehicle ecosystem. Hopefully, you'll find at least an article or two that will help you with the future of your business by putting technology to work for you.

Steve Henning

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**SPECIAL THANKS
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Driverge Vehicle Innovations

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OEM Systems, LLC

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Transfer Flow

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HIGH IN THE BEAMS



SAFE FLEET ACQUIRES LEADING ROLLING TARP SYSTEM PROVIDER

August 29, 2023

Safe Fleet, the leading supplier of safety solutions for fleet vehicles, has extended its tarp system capabilities with the acquisition of Merlot Vango Tarping Solutions, an industry-leading provider of rolling tarpaulin systems for flatbed and platform trailers.

Merlot Vango Tarping Solutions is a leading designer, manufacturer, installer and servicer of innovative rolling tarpaulin systems and replacement parts. Merlot's unique segmented design provides the industry's highest level of durability and lowest lifetime costs for fleets of all

sizes and for truck and trailer owner/operators. For over sixty years, Merlot has set an industry standard in helping protect and secure valuable cargo and minimize risks to drivers and roadways with tarpaulin solutions. Merlot Vango Tarping Solutions is a premium brand with a long-standing reputation. Its Vango rolling tarp systems are the most functional, most durable, easiest-to-operate, and simplest to maintain systems on America's highways, making it a natural fit within Safe Fleet Commercial Vehicle Group's existing tarp system portfolio that includes automated and semi-automated system brands such as Roll-Rite and Pulltarps.

"Merlot is a perfect addition to our existing tarping systems business, adding breadth to our product portfolio to serve a key commercial vehicle market segment," says John R. Knox, Safe Fleet Chairman & CEO.

"Their innovative products combined with exceptional installation and aftermarket parts and service support will add to the Safe Fleet value proposition for commercial vehicle fleets and operators."

"We are excited to join Safe Fleet," says Robert Schwab, President of Merlot Vango Tarping Solutions. "With Safe Fleet's investment in the Merlot platform, we will continue to enhance our industry leading service to fleets and dealers while expanding our geographic reach."

Merlot Vango is located in Verona, PA, just outside of Pittsburgh and the existing leadership team will continue to manage the business post-acquisition.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT WWW.SAFEFLEET.NET**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
VISIT WWW.MERLOTTARP.COM**



MARITZ PARTNERS WITH WORK TRUCK SOLUTIONS

August 29, 2023

Maritz, a leading provider of automotive training and marketing services has partnered with Work Truck Solutions to provide assessments and sales coaching and training services to commercial dealership customers using the Work Truck Solutions dealership platform. Work Truck Solutions, an industry leading provider of software services for commercial dealers and upfitters, and Maritz will begin offering their Commercial Sales Coaching and Commercial Assessment services to dealers beginning in September.

Both organizations intend to grow commercial sales for dealers by nurturing positive sales and prospecting habits and equipping commercial sales teams with the tools and insight they need to succeed in today's rapidly evolving marketplace.

JOINING FORCES: HOW MARITZ WILL BENEFIT WORK TRUCK SOLUTIONS

Maritz will be providing tailored assessments and coaching solutions which will enhance the shopping and purchasing experience for retail and commercial buyers. Customized tools will be available in order to achieve the following:

- Educate commercial staff and dealers on their lead opportunities, improving their ability to effectively convert leads to sales.
- Assess and coach to provide insight into the utilization of specific tools

from Work Truck Solutions, such as their CRM or CBI reporting, in order to improve efficiency and financial outcomes.

- Build an effective process and solution that will align commercial consumers' online shopping experience with retail standards.

PARTNERSHIP MOVING FORWARD

Throughout the years, Maritz has maintained and steadily increased their presence in the retail vehicle industry and is now expanding into the commercial vehicle ecosystem. Thanks to this exciting partnership, Maritz will expand new possibilities for Work Truck Solutions, leveraging their platform advances, and drive success.

LEARN MORE AT

**WWW.WORKTRUCKSOLUTIONS.COM
AND MARITZAUTOMOTIVE.COM**



ADRIAN STEEL UNVEILS GROUNDBREAKING TRUCK UPFIT PRODUCTS BASED ON THEIR BEST-SELLING VAN LINES September 29, 2023

Adrian Steel, a pioneer in innovative vehicle upfit solutions, is thrilled to introduce its newest product line tailored specifically for hardworking tradespeople who depend on their trucks every day. This strategic move aims to bring the same efficiency-enhancing benefits of their famed van upfits, now to truck owners.

"Our mission has always been to create products that make the lives of professionals easier and safer," said George Bernwanger, Chief Engineer at Adrian Steel. "Understanding the growing use of trucks in the trades, it was only natural for us to extend our top-notch solutions to accommodate that market."

The newly launched line boasts five distinct vocational packages, catering to the diverse needs of various industries:

1. HVAC - Optimized for HVAC professionals, prioritize large equipment, gauges, and tools for peak performance.
2. Plumbing - Tailored storage that perfectly fits pipes, fixtures, and essential plumbing tools for maximum efficiency.
3. Electrical - Streamline every electrical job with specialized compartments for tools, wires, and components.
4. Security - Ensure swift installations with dedicated spaces for surveillance equipment, wiring, and tools.
5. Base - Versatile compartments designed for tradespeople, ensuring easy access to tools and materials across any job.

One of the driving forces behind the inception of this line is the fact that compact vans are being phased out of

production, leading to approximately 40% of those in the trades currently using compact vans to consider trucks as their next replacement vehicle. With this transition, these workers won't be concerned with missing out on the reliable and functional upfit options from Adrian Steel they've come to trust.

Each meticulously crafted package seamlessly integrates common tools and consumables specific to its respective vocation. "We've incorporated our tried-and-true shelving units as the foundation. From there, we've added industry-centric products to each package, ensuring a perfect fit for every professional," elaborated George Bernwanger.

A highlight of this line is its compatibility. Every package is engineered to function flawlessly with trucks fitted with a topper, allowing for optimal space utilization and protection from external elements.

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WWW.ADRIANSTEEL.COM



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To learn more, complete [this form](#) or call/write Steve Fink at 330-247-5246, stephen.fink@driverge.com

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|---|------|----------------------|-----------|
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VENCO VENTURO ANNOUNCES NEW HEAVY-DUTY SERVICE CRANE August 18th, 2023

High weight capacity and innovative safety features help heavy-duty hydraulic service crane fit applications in several industries

Venco Venturo, an industry leader in the engineering, service and sales of work-ready service cranes, truck bodies, hoists and accessories since 1952, is underscoring the importance of safety and power in heavy-duty crane technology with the HT60KX.

"We are excited to roll out the HT60KX crane," Venco Venturo Vice President, Sales and Marketing Ian Lahmer said. "This crane gives operators a perfect balance of rugged performance, power and safety."

A unique feature on the HT60KX is the proprietary Venco Logic Controls™ (VLC) system.



This electronic crane control management system provides redundant safety features for crane operators with a wireless, pistol-grip remote control and overload protection to improve operator safety. An LCD screen alerts operators to potential dangers and displays key information for the boom angle and capacity percentages. As an additional safety measure, green, yellow and red lights are mounted on the boom to indicate different alert conditions.

"The VLC™ system is a game-changer for operators," Lahmer said. "It alerts operators to any dangers and keeps the crane and truck in the most stable position to get the work done, which is especially important when moving very heavy material."

The HT60KX is one of Venturo's strongest cranes, with a high weight capacity and full-hydraulic operation to lengthen its duty cycle. Rated at a 60,000-ft-lb capacity with 25 and 30 ft reach options, the versatile HT60KX can serve many jobs and industries.

"We know demanding jobs in industries like construction, agriculture and truck repair need dependable equipment," Lahmer said. "That's why our heavy-duty hydraulic cranes like the HT60KX are designed to be safe, long-lasting and easy to use."

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON
THE VENTURO HT60KX SERVICE
CRANE, VISIT [VENTURO.COM/
PRODUCT/HT60KX](https://www.venturo.com/product/ht60kx)**

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NTEA RELEASES OEM CHASSIS CONSIDERATIONS GUIDE

Oct. 3, 2023

NTEA – The Work Truck Association™ released the first edition of OEM Chassis Considerations Guide during the 2023 Commercial Vehicle Upfitting Summit.

“NTEA’s Chassis Considerations Guide serves as an important tool for OEMs and anyone designing truck-mounted equipment to use during their product development process,” said Steve Spata, NTEA senior technical assistance director. “This comprehensive guidebook comes at a pivotal time – as vehicles become increasingly complex – and helps

support chassis product development for a broad array of commercial vehicle applications. Building on the history and success of NTEA’s Chassis Design Considerations for the Service Body Industry, this guide captures valuable truck body and vehicle upfitter perspectives and industry knowledge.”

Topics covered include:

- Chassis features and functions
- Electrical needs
- Regulatory and safety considerations
- Vocational market and design challenges

Provided from the perspective of vocational body and equipment manufacturers and upfitters, this guide offers strategic recommendations and considerations for key industry segments.

Sections address:

- Ambulances
- Articulating cranes
- Cargo van interiors
- Dump bodies
- Mid-size buses
- Propane trucks
- Service bodies & telescopic cranes
- Snowplows
- Van bodies

LEARN MORE

The OEM Chassis Considerations Guide is available free to NTEA members.

Visit ntea.com/chassisguide, or contact NTEA at info@ntea.com or 800-441-6832, for additional details and report access.



GREEN TRUCK ASSOCIATION – GET ON OUR PATH TO ZERO

Established in 2010, Green Truck Association (GTA) is an operating division of NTEA – The Work Truck Association™ and a voice for companies creating vocational vehicles and products with a focus on sustainability.

Ever-evolving emission reduction

technologies and solutions are increasing the complexity and planning required to deploy commercial vehicles. In response, GTA is seeking feedback from fleets that have experience with various fuel types and advanced vehicle technologies designed to reduce carbon emissions. By gathering continuous industry feedback through this GTA initiative, NTEA members will gain insight on the adoption of low-/zero-emission vehicle usage in commercial applications (all classes, all vehicle types, including sedans).

Fleets do not need to be an NTEA or GTA member to participate in this important survey. Any commercial fleet with experience deploying emission-reducing technologies is encouraged to provide feedback.

Scan the QR code below or visit surveymonkey.com/r/GTA-fleet-survey to participate.



FALL 2023 CVB SUMMIT *SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT*



NIKKI WILSON

Senior Director of Member Services, NTEA

Nikki Wilson has served in various marketing, project management, and leadership roles throughout her career. She is a former teaching assistant, mentor, and coach. In her current role, she leads the National Truck Equipment Association membership services team and is responsible for programs and services provided by the association. Over the past six months, Nikki has assumed the role of Secretary of the Green Truck Association. In this role, she is focused on understanding and supporting the needs of fleets as they navigate their own path towards zero emissions with advanced vehicle and fuel technologies.

Nikki will be participating in the Growing Together Panel on Oct 25 2023 at 10:50AM–11:50AM PT

THE BLUE OVAL



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THE BLENDED FUTURE OF ALTFUELS IN COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION

Amid the clamor surrounding the rise of Electric Vehicles (EVs), there lies an unspoken reality—the commercial transportation industry is just not on a path of singular dependence on EVs.

The complex balance between environmental responsibility and commercial transportation cannot be satisfied solely by vehicle electrification, it also depends on the diverse potential of alternative fuels.

Conversations within the commercial vehicle industry make it increasingly clear that renewable fuels, hydrogen, and propane, the silent stalwarts of the alternative energy industry, will not be relegated to the backseat.

It's also revelatory to consider the tremendous resources OEMs are spending to develop products that take advantage of propane, hydrogen, and renewable fuels. And these non-EV products are already coming to market.

A MYOPIC MISTAKE

Media, in general, seems to have a singular focus on EVs, excluding coverage of other less-touted, yet highly effective alternative, low-emission technologies.

"There's a tremendous push from the U.S. federal government to clean up the environment, and EVs are getting a lot of attention right now," says Steve Whaley, Director of Autogas Business Development at PERC (Propane

Education and Research Council). "But we need to distinguish between passenger and commercial vehicles because they have very different requirements. Passenger vehicles are a good match for an EV platform because they have small batteries and are relatively lightweight, but that exponentially changes when you get into the medium and especially heavy-duty market."

MEDIA, IN GENERAL, SEEMS TO HAVE A SINGULAR FOCUS ON EVS, EXCLUDING COVERAGE OF OTHER LESS-TOUTED, YET HIGHLY EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE, LOW-EMISSION TECHNOLOGIES.

Indeed, the current administration has earmarked huge amounts of funding toward overcoming the stumbling blocks to EV adoption.

For example, according to the EPA's website "With funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, EPA's new [Clean School Bus Program](#) provides \$5 billion over the next five years (FY 2022-2026) to replace existing school buses with zero-emission and low-emission models."

The EPA had posted a [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) stating, "EPA's Office of Transportation and Air Quality is announcing the availability of funds and soliciting applications from eligible entities to incentivize and accelerate the replacement of existing school buses with clean and Zero Emissions (ZE) school buses." The notice explained, "Eligible activities include the replacement of existing internal-combustion engine (ICE) school buses with electric, propane, or compressed natural gas (CNG) school buses."

Although these initiatives do mention "low-emission" and alt-fuels, there seems to be a dearth of coverage for anything except EVs.

But the fact is, when it comes to ecology, every form of transportation has an environmental impact of some sort. Each technology will be relatively more front or rear-loaded as far as where in its value chain the impact is greatest.

"We have to look at life-cycle analyses of the various forms of transportation," explains Whaley. "The energy to manufacture and operate that vehicle came from somewhere. So all of those things need to be addressed and EV is in the spotlight right now to make that happen, but there's a tremendous amount going on with other alternatives that doesn't quite get that kind of a spotlight."



Commercial Vehicle Pro

Season 3: Episode 1 - PERC - Conversation with Steve Whaley

LISTEN TO THE PODCAST

00:00 | 22:23

A MORE FARSIGHTED APPROACH TO CLEANER COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION

"There's a very large metropolitan school district in the Northeast that has 1,600 vehicles and twenty-one of them are EVs," confides Whaley. "They just ordered thirty-eight propane buses. That in itself tells a little bit of a story. Although both propane and EV school buses came out about 10 years ago, there are 22,000 propane school buses in the field compared to about 800 EV school buses. I think we're doing pretty good."

All of us must remember that there is no single silver bullet fix for reducing our environmental impact. Alternative fuels are not mutually exclusive either. For instance, even in use cases where EV technology is a good fit, the charging infrastructure may not be viable or even possible.

In those cases, propane, solar, and wind generation systems can be used to charge EVs.

"Propane, wind, and solar in off-grid systems are charging EVs in ways that they haven't been able to do before," says Whaley. "There can be delays of up to three years for power companies to be able to get power to a certain location. But propane can make that happen quickly and easily because it's such a portable and clean fuel." And it's not just propane vs. EVs. There are multiple technology choices as we talk about alt fuels and which one is best suited to each use case.

"These are technologies that people can implement now, and that's why we've looked at the fuel types and platforms we have," adds [Chris Vanasdalan](#), senior marketing communications specialist for Cummins' on-highway segment. "We feel it's critical for fleets to take action now versus waiting for a silver bullet solution, which we all know doesn't really exist."

The greatest hurdle to overcome may be a push to adopt electric tech to the exclusion of other alternatives

that make more economic AND environmental sense. It's all about how we overcome those hurdles with a mix versus a one-size-fits-all approach.

Recent, and current, disruptions to the fueling/recharging supply chain have also highlighted how a diverse infrastructure is much needed to build resilience and address risk management in our nation's transportation needs.

CLEANER ICE EXAMPLES

Those familiar with the commercial vehicle industry know that despite what may happen within the passenger vehicle market, no matter what hoopla is made about future government bans on internal combustion engines (ICE), the future of commercial vehicles is not going to be an all-electric fantasy. Where commercial OEMs spend their R&D budget provides some reliable tea leaves for reading the future.



FORD ROUSH 7.3-LITER PROPANE ENGINE

The [Ford Roush 7.3-liter propane engine](#) is a compelling example of the effectiveness of alternative fuel solutions in the commercial vehicle industry. This motor is a result of a long-standing partnership between Ford Motor Co. and Roush CleanTech, a company known for providing advanced, environmentally friendly propane autogas fuel system technology.

Rated at 240 - 350 hp and torque of up to 468 lb-ft, the motor is comparable to gasoline and diesel-powered counterparts, and able to meet various commercial demands. All while

achieving much lower emissions.

The real game-changer with the Ford Roush 7.3-liter Propane Engine is its environmental benefits. Propane autogas burns cleaner than gasoline or diesel due to its lower carbon content. This translates into significantly fewer greenhouse gas emissions, making it a key player in the quest to reduce commercial vehicle emissions.

The 7.3-liter propane engine is ready for integration into Ford's commercial vehicle lineup. With propane autogas infrastructure already extensive in many regions across the globe, many commercial fleets can easily adopt this alternative fuel option. This engine showcases how the application of innovative technologies can blend with existing models to lessen the environmental impact without sacrificing performance.



CUMMINS 6.7-LITER PROPANE ENGINE

In December 2020, Cummins and PERC entered into a [joint project](#) to develop Cummins' 6.7-liter engine into a commercially viable propane power plant in 2024.

"In testing, the Cummins B6.7 propane engine delivered the lowest greenhouse gas emissions of any propane autogas-powered engine," boasted [Puneet Singh Jhawar](#), General Manager of the global natural gas business for Cummins Inc. "It will also deliver some of the lowest GHG emissions in the medium-duty market. It is an ultra-low, .02 NOx engine that will meet or exceed EPA and CARB regulations in 2024 and beyond."

The relatively higher octane content of propane allows manufacturers to use higher compression ratios that achieve astounding efficiencies improving miles-per-gallon, horsepower, and torque. According to Cummins, the propane engine is expected to produce between 280–360 hp and 600–860 lb.-ft. of torque; tailor-made for light and medium-duty applications.

“That [kind of power] makes this capable to be not just a workhorse but the cleanest workhorse that exists,” says **Sam Geckler**, technical project leader at Cummins. “That’s the kind of stuff that gets me out of bed in the morning.”

HYDROGEN-POWERED ICE COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

Propane is not the only ready alternative either. Cummins is also showing off its brand-new **B6.7H** hydrogen internal combustion engine at the Busworld Convention in Brussels, Belgium this year.

According to Cummins, the B6.7H is rated at 290 hp, 885 ft.-lbs of peak torque, and provides “diesel-like performance using zero-carbon



hydrogen fuel for coach applications in the 9-10m range. It provides a path to zero-carbon emissions that is familiar to OEMs and operators. Its similarity with current diesel and natural gas-powered vehicles reduces integration complexity, while high parts commonality supports optimized parts procurement strategies for operators running mixed fuel fleets.”

Cummins plans to make the 6.7 propane engine, and other low-emission options, available in their 2026 lineup.

“We’re really excited about these medium-duty propane engine advancements,” says Whaley. “We have a great partner with Ford and Roush on the 7.3-litre propane engine available in many Ford Chassis. But we want propane engines to be available in all the truck OEMs, so partnering with Cummins, who is a provider to all the other truck OEMs, is very important.”

It looks like Whaley et al are getting their wish—with consumers inheriting all the benefits.

FALL 2023 CVB SUMMIT *KEYNOTE SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT*

Oct 25, 2023 01:00PM–01:30PM PT



STEVE WHALEY

Director of Autogas Business Development, Propane Education & Research Council
Stephen Whaley has managed the over-the-road market portfolio for PERC since January 2020. He is responsible for growing propane autogas market share in on-highway light-, medium-, and heavy-duty vehicle markets. He focuses on new product research and development, product launches, maintenance and growth in existing market segments, and potential new market development opportunities. Prior to coming to the Propane Education & Research Council, Whaley ran his own consulting company for the last four years. Before that, as eastern U.S. regional sales manager for Agility Fuel Solutions in North Carolina, he helped develop class 7 and 8 vehicle fleet markets for natural gas. He also trained and supported heavy-duty truck dealers with their fleet customers’ adoption into CNG and LNG implementation. Whaley was formerly a director of business development for Roush CleanTech and oversaw propane autogas research and business development for Blossman Propane. Whaley has a bachelor’s degree in industrial arts education from Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, and a master’s degree in industrial education from Clemson University. He has lifetime post-secondary teaching credentials from the State of California.



THE QUEST FOR SILVER LININGS & POTS OF GOLD

According to Contrive Datum Insights, the commercial vehicle market is expected to reach around \$1,712.44 billion by 2030 and grow at a CAGR Of 8.7% during the forecast period 2023–2030. That's great news for manufacturers, and it also bodes well for the companies that supply them.

However, with news cycles dominated by stories such as the UAW strike and possible worldwide Lithium shortages, it's understandable that many commercial vehicle professionals might suffer a bout of frustration now and again. Maybe even an occasional lapse into a doomsday funk. Things have been funky for several years running, so we can forgive that. But we're here to talk about growth opportunities amid the chaos that seems to define the current state of the commercial vehicle industry.

Most everyone has heard the old adage, "In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity." Usually attributed to a military general in ancient China named Sun Tzu, this sentiment couldn't possibly be more relevant for today's commercial vehicle manufacturers, dealers, upfitters, and end users.

The commercial vehicle industry has been in a state of turmoil for several years, and while there's no denying that this is a challenging time for dealers and end users alike, there are also opportunities to be found in the chaos.

COMMERCIAL VEHICLE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

As electric vehicles (EVs) become more mainstream and green



In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity.

SUN-TZU

initiatives gain traction, we have no option but to deal with how the push affects our day-to-day operations and decisions for the future. Looking ahead, we should anticipate that market dynamism will create its own growth opportunities for pioneering solutions.

Here are two examples of current issues causing much consternation within the commercial automotive industry at large, and possible silver linings.

ZERO-EMISSIONS PRESSURE

Amid the pressures of moving towards zero-emission vehicles, there are silver linings. On the one hand, governmental emphasis on green energy is creating challenges to long and even medium-term fleet planning. Conversely, we see potential rebates and tax incentives for businesses that adopt environmentally-friendly transportation solutions. Such initiatives can lead to significant savings, making the transition to zero-emission vehicles more achievable.

There is also the issue of recharging infrastructure to contend with. Here again, we have entered uncharted

waters where options like installing a charging station in the company yard are real possibilities.

If we maintain an open mind, we can see new ways of doing business that have just recently emerged.

FINANCING GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Growth is good, but while financing growth has always been a challenge, the prices of commercial vehicles in the last two years have generally been elevated. For improvements such as fleet upgrades, internal accruals combined with loans can be a viable solution. However, financing fleet vehicles has become a major issue. Can we find a silver lining here?

Indeed, we're already seeing some financing institutions working with OEMs and fleet management companies to create and iterate on comprehensive fleet lease models.

These models can defray the upfront costs and streamline operations by introducing predictability in expenses. Moreover, they can enhance efficiency by alleviating the burden of fleet management and potentially bolster profitability in the long term.

THE QUEST FOR SILVER LININGS & POTS OF GOLD

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY

In today's digital era, technology has become an agent of growth. For commercial vehicle professionals, staying updated on the latest technological advancements, including fleet tracking systems and AI-powered predictive maintenance platforms, plays a crucial role in efficiency. Because efficiency has become the cornerstone of remaining competitive and facilitating growth, businesses can no longer ignore technology.

Virtually every aspect of daily business has been or can be digitized. What's more, software and hardware can frequently be integrated into systems and programs designed to, you guessed it, increase efficiency.

Additionally, employing technology

can provide a wealth of data. Tracking vehicle usage information, fuel consumption patterns, and driver behavior can help managers make informed decisions and optimize vehicle usage; again, maximizing efficiency and driving growth.

CONCLUSION

Times of uncertainty often give way to opportunities, and the commercial vehicle industry is no exception. From tax incentives that make EV adoption more affordable, to leasing models that create streamlined operations, to leveraging technology and data for efficient operations—these are the "silver linings" and "pots of gold" that businesses can, and should, leverage to grow and prosper amidst evolving landscapes.

So for the truck pros, commercial

vehicle business owners and commercial fleet managers reading this, it's time to step up, adapt, and seize the opportunities that lay before you.

A resource you should consider is the virtual Commercial Vehicle Business Summit that will have leaders from across the industry discussing current challenges, and opportunities.

**REGISTER NOW FOR THE
FALL 2023 CVBSUMMIT**



Commercial Vehicle Pro

Season 3: Episode 4 - Fall 2023 CVBSummit Preview

**LISTEN TO JIM PRESS + KATHRYN SCHIFFERLE'S
CVB SUMMIT PREVIEW PODCAST**

00:00 | 15:58

FALL 2023 CVB SUMMIT *FIRESIDE SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT*

JIM PRESS

Former COO, Toyota NA; Co-Pres/Vice-Chair, Chrysler; Senior Advisor, Work Truck Solutions

During his 50 years in the automotive industry, Jim Press has served in several top executive roles for automotive manufacturers and dealer groups. As COO of Toyota North America, he was the first non-Japanese board member in Toyota's history. Jim left Toyota in 2007 to join Chrysler as Co-President and Vice-Chair, where he was tasked with revamping Chrysler's products, perceptions, and dealer bodies when Daimler sold the company to Chrysler LLC. Starting in June of 2009 he served as Deputy CEO of Chrysler, working directly with Sergio Marchionne during Chrysler's transition to Fiat. Since then, Jim has provided guidance for a number of dealership groups, such as the McLarty and RLJ Groups, and served as advisor for The Renault-Nissan Alliance, and currently is Senior Advisor to Hyundai Motor North America.

Jim will host his popular Fireside Chats on both days

FIRESIDE CHAT Pathway to Sustainable Growth on Oct 25 09:15AM–10:15AM PT

FIRESIDE CHAT Cashing in on Growth on Oct 26 09:05AM–10:05AM PT

BEFORE YOU LOSE THEM: CUSTOMIZE YOUR LEAD RESPONSE FOR COMMERCIAL

BY ALICIA VON BOKEL, MARITZ AUTOMOTIVE

THE "ONE SIZE FITS ALL" METHOD

If you are like most stores, you likely have a specific Internet/BDC department to handle your website, 3rd party and all Internet leads. Whether you have a specific BDC department that turns over leads to the sales team, or you have a "cradle-to-grave" approach to closing leads, your store has a process for that.

What your store might not have is a specific process for just Fleet and Commercial leads.

WHY DIFFERENT PROCESSES?

Your first thought that comes to mind may be: "Why would I need a different process for Fleet and Commercial leads?" For years OEMs and dealerships have been developing all kinds of different training tactics to implement the "best practice" in terms of lead capture, response, and closures. So why create something new from scratch, why fix what's working already for retail sales?

1. DIFFERENT CUSTOMER WITH DIFFERENT NEEDS

Remember all that training your BDC/Internet department has completed to become a master at closing leads? Well, that process likely isn't configured to assist someone looking to add a handful of additional units to their fleet or for someone shopping for a truck specifically upfitted for their line of work.

"Thank you for your interest. We have several models in stock and available. When can you come to the dealership to test drive?"

FLEET AND COMMERCIAL LEAD RESPONSES SHOULD BE SPECIFIC, TIMELY, AND HANDLED BY SOMEONE WHO IS TRAINED ON COMMERCIAL VEHICLE PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE AND FLEET BUYING PROCESSES.

"I'm just following up to see if you are still interested in this make model. Please let me know what I can do to help?"

"Our records indicate we haven't been able to connect yet. Is there a better way to reach you regarding your interest in our make model? We'd love to earn your business"

"Your complete satisfaction is our #1 priority. Let us know how we can help today!"

It's possible your current lead response and follow-up strategy sounds a lot like this. Calls, emails, texts, maybe even some videos, all focused around "When can you come to the dealership?" because that's how we've been trained to handle leads.

The problem with that is that many business owners:

- Don't have time to come to the dealership.
- Are simply looking for some quotes for budgeting.
- Know what they want because they already have a number of these vehicles and just want to place the order to add to their fleet.

- Would be wasting their time coming because what they want is not physically on your lot.

What is a customer's most likely response when given the "standard retail response" instead of a customized response strategy?

Delete your email and opt-out.

Block your phone numbers.

Now you've lost not just the sale, but the ability to market to that customer in the future.

2. TRACKING & MEASURING RESULTS

If you ask your Commercial Manager how many Commercial leads you got last month, they might give you an answer about all the past sold customers that are looking to purchase again or all the potential "prospects" they are working to quote and close. They also might look at you like you have 3 heads and scramble to provide some sort of accurate number.

It's ok. You're not alone! The truth is, we don't do a very good job of actually tracking and understanding our total Fleet and Commercial opportunities, especially digital and Internet lead opportunities. It's even more possible that no one has ever brought to the attention of the department why you would want to do so.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT A COMMERCIAL-SPECIFIC PROCESS

Fleet and Commercial lead responses should be specific, timely, and handled by someone who is trained on Commercial vehicle product knowledge and Fleet buying processes.

To do that, we must first understand and identify our total Fleet and Commercial opportunities and then create a great response and follow-up process that "cuts the fluff" and captivates your customer.

The truth is, it's not an easy, simple fix. You'll have to sit down with the stakeholders, come up with a viable

strategy, and then work diligently to implement it. But in the end, it's the only way dealerships can be set up to be profitable with Commercial and Fleet sales long-term.

For more information visit WorkTruck.MaritzAutomotive.com

FALL 2023 CVB SUMMIT

SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT

Alicia VonBokel is an accomplished, energizing, and passionate speaker with over 17 years of experience in the automotive industry. Having held various dealership roles, such as BDC Manager, Internet Manager, Customer Experience Manager, Sales Consultant, and Finance Manager, Assistant Sales Director, she has gained invaluable firsthand knowledge of the challenges that car dealerships face, especially when it comes to her area of most interest - lead management. She has also worked directly for the OEM in both retail and fleet organizations, working one-on-one with dealerships to improve their sales and profits. Today, as a Performance Coach, Alicia focuses on helping dealerships to close more sales by implementing effective processes and lead management strategies. Her dedication to delivering exceptional customer experiences in the automotive industry make her a sought-after speaker at industry events and conferences.

Alicia Von Bokel
Performance Manager, Maritz Automotive



Alicia will be joining the Fireside Chat: Cashing in on Growth on Oct 26, 2023 09:05AM-10:05AM PT

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LISTEN SPOTLIGHT: WRAPMATE, JAVIER LOZANO JR.



Commercial Vehicle Pro

Season 3: Episode 2 - WRAPMATE, Javier Lozano Jr.,



00:00 | 11:10

Kathryn Schifferle, CVO of Work Truck Solutions sat down with Javier Lozano Jr., CMO of Wrapmate, to talk about the importance of “Putting Pretty Pictures on Vehicles” – from the advertisement needs, to data tools, to the necessity of marketing on wheels.

[LISTEN TO SEASON THREE OF THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE PRO PODCAST HERE](#)



ABOUT JAVIER

Javier Lozano, Jr. has been the Chief Marketing Officer at Wrapmate since February 2022. He has deep roots and an understanding of what it takes to be an entrepreneur. He successfully sold his first company in 2018, after 10 fruitful years. In that time, he gained expert knowledge in marketing and has since applied it to Wrapmate’s go-to-market strategies.

ABOUT WRAPMATE

Wrapmate is a technology-driven managed marketplace that is reimagining the buy-and-sell experience in the vehicle graphics industry. With innovative customer interaction and a network of 2,000+ local installation service providers, Wrapmate efficiently serves business owners, fleet managers, franchises, and consumers coast-to-coast.

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Wrapmate believes your vehicle deserves the best, which is why they exclusively use 3M vinyl film on all of their vehicle graphics. Wrapmate has been in a collaborative relationship with 3M for nearly 4 years. This has allowed Wrapmate customers to experience firsthand how durable, reliable, and safe 3M films are for promoting their business and protecting their work vehicles.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT CVB SUMMIT

Javier will be a Day 1 Keynote speaker at the CVB Summit on October 25th at 12:10 PM PT/3:10 PM ET. As an SMB, you’ll learn unknown branding strategies while he covers the topic: “How to Revolutionize Your Company’s Marketing Strategy Using 3 Need To Know Insider Secrets.” This keynote lays out the blueprint that Wrapmate has used to scale its business in 4 years.

COMMERCIAL EVS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Electric vehicles (EVs) have been around for quite a while. In fact, the **dawn of EVs** is simultaneous with that of internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, with both electric and ICE vehicles showing up in the late 1800s and both modes being commercially produced in the early 1900s. Commercial applications began as early as 1897 when New York City built its fleet of electric taxi cabs, and UPS had an EV delivery fleet by 1935.

Fast forward to the 21st Century, and EVs are again making a name for themselves in the commercial world. The technology has improved significantly since its debut, and many OEMs and startups are developing modern EVs for commercial use.



WHY EVS FOR COMMERCIAL USE?

There are several reasons why EVs may be more desirable for commercial use rather than gas or diesel vehicles, including:

- Reduced air pollution
- Reduced fuel costs
- Reduced maintenance intervals and costs
- Reduced noise pollution

WHAT ARE COMMERCIAL EVS?

The term EV covers a variety of technologies. As you read through the following sections, you'll see that we've highlighted the main types of EVs available today and what makes them different from one another. Read on to learn more about what they are and which features will affect their suitability for your business applications.

WHAT IS A BATTERY ELECTRIC VEHICLE (BEV)

Battery electric vehicles (BEVs) are the simplest form of electric vehicle. Featuring a battery pack that powers one or more electric motors, BEVs do not have an internal combustion engine (ICE), transmission, or fuel tank. The BEV requires the largest,

thus heaviest, battery pack of all the electric vehicle configurations. Batteries are heavy, comprising a large portion of the vehicle's total weight, so creative design is essential to provide payload capacities comparable to ICE counterparts.

BEVs are well-suited for businesses with predictable, shorter-range routes, such as delivery services or shuttle buses. Although BEVs typically have a higher price tag than either HEVs or PHEVs, they still have lower operating costs, require less maintenance than ICE or hybrid vehicles, and produce zero emissions, making them environmentally friendly. However, access to charging infrastructure is not optional and must be considered.

WHAT IS A HYBRID ELECTRIC VEHICLE (HEV)

A hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) is a type of vehicle that combines an ICE with one or more electric motors. HEVs have no plug-in system to recharge, instead using regenerative braking to recharge their batteries for later use. The electric motor assists the ICE during acceleration and provides power for low-speed driving, while the ICE is used for high-speed driving and longer trips.

HEVs can provide improved fuel efficiency and lower emissions compared to traditional gasoline-powered vehicles. The HEV also provides simplified operations; basically, you drive until you need to refuel, just like any ICE vehicle.

The downside is a higher price tag compared to its ICE competitors. However, HEVs are generally less expensive than both BEVs and PHEVs.

WHAT IS A PLUG-IN

HYBRID ELECTRIC VEHICLE (PHEV)

Plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) use batteries to power an electric motor in conjunction with an ICE. PHEV batteries can be charged using a wall outlet or charging equipment, by the ICE as it runs, and through regenerative braking. PHEVs can run on electric power alone for local driving, but also have the convenience and range of a traditional gasoline-powered engine for longer trips.

PHEVs have a smaller battery and are less expensive than BEVs, and they can still be plugged in at night to recharge. Conversely, because they have an ICE, PHEVs require more maintenance than a BEV, and the BEV uses electricity more efficiently, so operating costs for the BEV may be lower in the long run.

WHAT IS A FUEL CELL ELECTRIC VEHICLE (FCEV)

Fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) are zero-emission vehicles that use hydrogen to generate electricity which powers an electric motor. FCEVs work like a BEV, except that instead of batteries storing energy, it uses a fuel cell to convert hydrogen into electricity via an electrochemical reaction.

FCEVs have been around for decades, but have not been widely adopted compared to other EV types, meaning that refueling infrastructure is far behind even electric charging stations. FCEVs are a promising technology with many advantages over other alt-fuel solutions, but it just isn't viable yet as an off-the-shelf replacement for gas or diesel.

MATCHING THE TECHNOLOGY TO THE JOB

The first step in choosing the right EV for your business is to decide if adopting EVs will move you closer to accomplishing your business goals. Issues to consider should include the following:

- Is there currently sufficient recharging infrastructure available?
- Are you willing and able to train operators on new equipment?
- Is it a fiscally sustainable and advantageous solution?

The next step is to match the technology to your needs. Issues to consider should include the following:

- Which is more important to you; range or payload capacity?
- Which technology will fit your budget and satisfy your needs?

For commercial applications, the choice between EV types depends on the driving patterns and needs of the business. A delivery company might choose PHEV, prioritizing range over power output because their vehicles travel long distances daily. Manufacturing or warehousing operations might choose BEV, prioritizing power output over everything else because its employees spend most of their time transporting heavy loads within proximity. An organization might choose HEV to satisfy zero-carbon goals and HEV is the most budget-friendly and easy-to-implement option.



CONCLUSION

EVs can be suitable for many different purposes, and although it's been a point of contention, recharging infrastructure is improving. And as long as the nation's energy grid can cope with the massive demand that's building, that's a welcome development. But, before investing, business owners should consider their own particular needs and how the strengths and limitations of each type of EV will match those needs.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS COMING TO A WORK TRUCK NEAR YOU

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a hot topic in technology today. Some believe it will change many things in our lives, including how we do business. But how might it affect the work truck industry?

For Fleet Owners and Drivers, AI appears ready to accelerate changes in several areas, including:

- **Acceptance & safety of self-driving trucks.** As trust in AI grows, the final technical roadblocks to self-driving vehicles could be minimized, making this idea much safer and more economical than it is today. It is estimated a self-driving truck could operate up to 17 hours a day, leading to shortened lead times and a tighter supply chain. How many years are we away from this Jetson's future where more than half of transport trucks are self-driven? Estimates range from 10 to 30 years. The technology will arrive first; acceptance will take more time.
- **Fleet Maintenance:** Truck body sensors that give more precise maintenance instructions to the user and proactively signal service is needed. This will reduce breakdowns, lead to higher fuel and driver efficiency and lower costs.
- **Safety and compliance:** In addition to points mentioned earlier, AI could make real-time adjustments to fuel mixtures and driving routes given road conditions and expectations.

This should increase safety to a large degree, leading to fewer accidents and lower insurance premiums.

- **Dispatch and routing** could also see huge improvements, especially in large fleets where real-time traffic monitoring, combined with load sensing and other information, would lead to increased efficiencies.

For Truck Body Manufacturers like Scelzi Enterprises, the impact of AI is harder to estimate. But here is what we might see coming soon:

- **Order Entry:** Interactive spec and order-entry apps and websites that can more easily configure a Bill of Material on the fly with little input from sales or engineering support. And then, more efficiently create internal schedules for production, balancing lines and maximizing shifts. This will decrease

the lead time from order-to-production for many truck bodies and lead to more accurate forecasting.

- **Improved Supply Chain efficiencies** due to more and better real-time information available from suppliers to OEMs.
- **Expanded use of robotics in production.** AI will require less CNC programming and be able to give variable instructions to lasers and punch presses based on previous builds and real-time availability of components. Even short-run production parts that were previously prohibitive due to lengthy and expensive setup costs could be run due to shorter setup times and human input previously required. There could be a large rise in the development and use of collaborative robots (called "cobots") which work alongside current staff to accomplish tasks.



BEST-IN-CLASS

- **Chat-and-AI-based customer and technical support** will also be much easier to implement. Some companies are already beginning to use this, with sometimes frustrating results. It is assumed this will get better over time.

UNTIL AI IS READY TO DELIVER on all these dreams, preparations can be made to help with the transition. None of these technologies will be adopted overnight, and extensive staff training and adjustment to new processes will be required. "We are already looking at more robots," states Scelzi Owner Mike Scelzi. "Not the simple ones we have used until now, but smarter ones that can be adapted quickly to different task configurations. We are getting more employees involved in the planning and purchase at an earlier stage.

"NONE OF THIS [TECHNOLOGY] WORKS IF OUR TEAM DOES NOT UNDERSTAND IT AND EMBRACE IT!"

None of this works if our team does not understand it and embrace it."

To be sure, much human intelligence will be required for businesses to make the best use of Artificial Intelligence. And plenty of patience and training. "Those aren't two areas where we have always excelled" adds Scelzi, "but we will continue to expand our training while trying to stay patient as we implement new ideas. And

all while maintaining our levels of production and customer support to keep our company growth going far into the future."

Artificial Intelligence is coming to a Work Truck near you. The only question seems to be how quickly its effects are seen.



SCELZI Enterprises, Inc.

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COACH KEN



BY KEN TAYLOR - ken@coachkentaylor.com - www.coachkentaylor.com

THE EXTRA MILE

A phrase I have learned to despise is "good enough." We live in an age of "good enough" versus "the best." Good enough means average. Good enough means you cut corners, get by, or do enough to get a "C" on a project or paper. Imagine for a moment that a firefighter, police officer, paramedic, brain surgeon or professional athlete lived by the phrase "good enough?"

Here is a quote to remember & live by:
"The road to the extra mile is never crowded."

The individuals who dare to travel this road reach a unique destination called "Success Street" and earn the title of "Champion." They know that to travel this road and earn this title takes certain traits:

- A passion for excellence! "Good enough" is not a part of the champion's vocabulary or thinking. If something is to be done, it is done with excellence.
- An unwavering work ethic that knows the value of hard work and determination.
- Courage to do what he/she has never attempted, despite the odds.
- Turning fear into a motivating force versus a barrier to success.
- Creating the "Wow Factor" for team members, clients, and the competition.

The millionaire and famous financier John D. Rockefeller once said, "Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great." Good enough is comfortable and does not take a lot of effort. "Great" takes effort, requires overcoming fear of failure and takes a person far beyond his or her comfort zone. Are you ready to travel the "road to the extra mile?"

Here are a few things you will want to take on your journey:

- Bring extra motivation in the form of positive people as your partners in success.
- Load your travel bag with detailed plans and strategies because the road to the extra mile will not be without distractions to success.
- Make sure your tank is filled with the fuel of positive thinking. You will hit bumps and detours, but with a full tank of the right thoughts you will overcome all obstacles.
- Don't forget your road map that will guide you to greatness!

The motivational speaker and author Jim Rohn said it best, "Successful people do what unsuccessful people are not willing to do. Don't wish it were easier; wish you were better."

We will be waiting for you on the road to the extra mile, when you arrive the celebration of life will begin!



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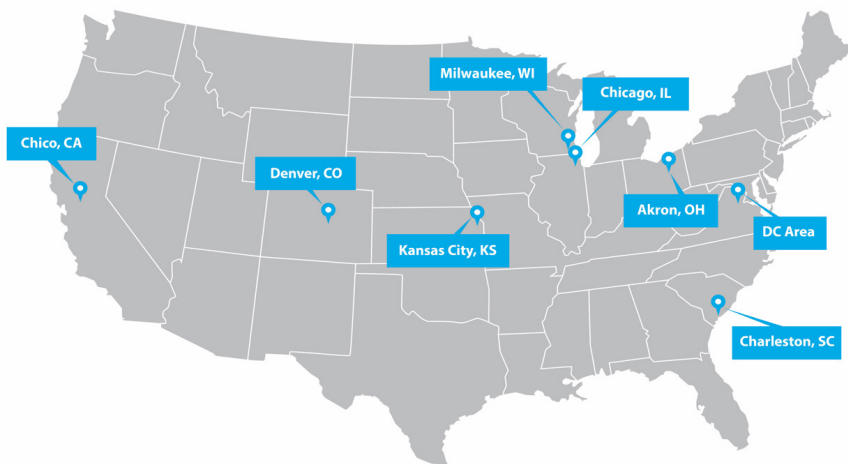
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Shawn Horswill - Work Truck Solutions, SR VP of Product

SURVIVING & THRIVING IN THE TECH JUNGLE



It's not just handwriting on the wall, there's miles of graffiti, gallons of virtual ink, a tsunami of information engulfing the commercial industry; and it's all about tech. Everywhere we turn, the unrelenting tide of emerging technology is crashing onto the shores of our business world.

Am I being a bit overly dramatic-poetic? Probably, but I don't think it's possible to overstate the evolutionary impact that technology is having on the way commercial vehicle professionals do business.

In fact, I would argue that technology is having a greater impact on the commercial vehicle industry right now than any other single factor. And it's not just your dealership that is being challenged by tech—it's also impacting your customers, who are increasingly demanding more from their suppliers.

Your customers NEED more from you, which means you must adapt your business processes to keep up with the demands of this new era. You need to be ready to deliver on their needs. But how?

Seeking out and leveraging technology that helps you to be a better solution provider is definitely a good start.

For instance, Work Truck Solutions has several products, such as CV Showroom™, that help dealers capitalize on the increasing propensity of B2B buyers who do the majority of their shopping online before they ever reach out to

a sales rep. In fact, CV Showroom lets you display inventory you don't even have on your lot. Today's customers expect that level of online savvy from dealer websites, just like they would from any B2C website.

Your site must have up-to-date inventory listings that include all the details of the vehicle... AND the commercial body it's been upfitted with. The truth is, if your site doesn't plainly display that kind of body data, today's buyers are inclined to leave your site rather than contact you. Work Truck Solutions can pull that information right off your vehicle invoices and display it on your site.

And there's technology that can streamline your commercial inventory management. There's tools like Communicator to improve your connection with business buyers. Or the Vehicle Acquisition Search Tool (VAST) that saves hours of research when searching for a specific vehicle for a customer. It's tech, tech, and more tech!

By incorporating value-add systems into your business strategy, you can grow your business with the confidence of knowing that you're leveraging the latest technologies, services, and resources to stay ahead of the competition.

Embracing technology can improve your bottom line, optimize your operation, and increase profits, all while improving customer satisfaction.

As Charles Darwin once said, "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but rather the one most adaptable to change". Let's take those wise words to heart as we navigate the future of business technology.

**ARE YOU READY TO
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KNAPHEIDE: DEALER RESOURCES

5 EASY WAYS TO GENERATE MORE ONLINE LEADS IN VEHICLE SALES

While your online inventory may be raking in leads for your retail business, can the same be said about your online commercial inventory?

The generation of leads is crucial for the survival of many businesses, including auto dealerships. Keep reading to learn more about lead generation and easy ways to optimize your online inventory to draw in more potential customers.

FIRST, WHAT ARE LEADS?

According to [HubSpot](#), “a lead is any person who indicates interest in a company’s product or service.” (cough cough... a potential customer)

AND WHAT EXACTLY IS LEAD GENERATION?

Lead generation is the process of finding and developing a potential customer’s interest in your company’s products. This can take place through a variety of methods like email marketing, social media, blogs, web forms and more. (If you’re interested in learning more about utilizing digital media to cultivate leads for your business, check out one of [our previous blog posts on it here.](#))

Now, to the good stuff.

HOW DO YOU OPTIMIZE YOUR ONLINE INVENTORY?

1. DESIGN WITH DEVICES IN MIND

Robust online inventories are becoming increasingly important.

Why?

Because according to [Google](#), “92% of car buyers research online before they buy.”

SO, WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

When looking at your vehicle search results (VSR) page on your computer, pay attention to the item boxes. Are they short and concise? Or, do they require scrolling?

Now, try the same on your phone. Are you constantly scrolling to get to the next item? Do they load quickly?

If you answered “yes” to scrolling and “no” to loading, you’re going to want to make an update. (Disclaimer: Making this change may or may not be something you can fix on your own, but should be a design change that your marketing agency can easily do.) Shorten your VSR item boxes to display a photo, minimal information and a call to action. For additional information, potential customers can navigate to the vehicle display page (VDP).



WHY IS THIS THE WAY TO GO?

According to a study conducted by [AutoTrader](#), 46% of potential customers are searching for their new vehicle on multiple devices; 23% said a smartphone, specifically. (Keep in mind, this is a stat from 2016, meaning there are likely more people using a smartphone now to do their research.)

And, let’s be real. No one wants to sit scrolling for ages through things they’re not interested in, just to get to what they want to see, regardless of what device they’re on. Plus, all that additional information and space could be slowing down their loading of your site.



NOTE: Just 10 seconds of loading can increase your bounce rate by as much as 123%!

Need another reason to make the change?

By removing excess information from the VSR and routing visitors to the VDP, you will have more accurate data regarding the number of those interested in learning about the vehicle. It should also help with your loading issues.

2. PHOTOS.

Notice the period above? This is serious business.

Imagine you’re the potential customer: You’re searching for a new work vehicle, a specific upfit that’s not altogether rare by any means, but you need what you need, and you’ve got to have it soon. That’s why you’re looking to make your purchase through a dealership. You luck out because ABC Dealership has it in stock, but they’re not exactly located in your backyard. And, when they say they have it in stock, do they really?

KNAPHEIDE: DEALER RESOURCES



<< >>

As a retailer, you have to keep in mind that with the internet, you have the potential to reach people anywhere in the world. (Although, let's be honest, for commercial dealerships, your customer radius is going to be significantly smaller.)

Potential customers aren't always going to be from the area, able to pop in whenever to look at units they're hoping to buy. That's why photos are so important. They tell us what words often don't and can be the difference between a potential customer making the trip to your dealership, and not.

What kind of photos should you include?

Think about what you would want to see as a potential customer. Make sure to take photos of the unit at your dealership. Capture the outside from different angles, the inside and any special features it includes. While there's no magic number of photos that will perfectly

satisfy these potential customers, you should shoot to include 15-30 photos on each commercial listing.

3. WORDS

While each of those photos is worth 1,000 words, it doesn't mean you've said so much that you don't need to add anything else. Make sure to include all the relevant details about the unit in your listing. This is particularly important for used vehicles. For those especially, you'll want to include vehicle condition, mileage, recent service and/or reconditioning history, fuel economy and anything else you would want to know if you were in the shoes of a potential buyer.

4. LIMIT THE NUMBER OF CALLS TO ACTION

CTAs. They're great because they provide us with quick stats and help visitors take action. But, because of how great they are, we

can sometimes go a little overboard. While you may want visitors to "Contact Us for Pricing," "Request a Quote," "Get Financing" and "Schedule a Visit," try to pick which is most important. Usually, your CTA should be something like "Request a Quote" or "Lock in Price" because using too many CTAs will reduce the number of visitors who take action.

Lock in Today's Price

5. DOUBLE POST/PROMOTE

No, we're not talking about multiple listings for the same unit to create the illusion that you have more. We're talking about expanding where you list your inventory.

In addition to posting inventory on your own website, consider utilizing other popular online commercial vehicle listing platforms. For instance, Work Truck Solutions provides dedicated websites for dealerships to showcase their own commercial inventory with the option to distribute listings simultaneously to their Comvoy national marketplace. Additionally, Commercial Truck Trader stands as another popular widely recognized national marketplace that dealerships and private sellers frequently use for listing their commercial vehicles.

Of course, there are other sites, like Autotrader, Cars.com and Craigslist, that are more widely recognized, but aren't actually geared toward the commercial segment of the market, that you can post to. Similarly, you can take to social media, linking your inventory to posts or ads, which will help drive more traffic back to your website.



KNAPHEIDE: DEALER RESOURCES

HOW DO THESE CHANGES ACTUALLY IMPACT YOUR LEAD GENERATION?

By optimizing your online inventory, you're making your site more navigable and improving the visitor's experience. This is important because the goal of

lead generation is to convert those site visitors to actual leads. And, by making your online inventory easy-to-use with a simple path to becoming a lead, you're more likely to reel them in, moving them further down the sales funnel and one step closer to becoming a customer.

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FALL 2023 CVB SUMMIT *SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT*



MANDAR DIGHE

Global Sales/Marketing and Business Development Executive, Knapheide
Mandar Dighe is Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Knapheide, a leader in vocational work truck bodies and systems solutions. Over the past 25 years, Mandar has held a variety of engineering, operations, sales, and business development leadership positions within the automotive and commercial vehicle sector. Leveraging his cross functional experiences, Mandar continues to embrace change and advance technological evolution within the transportation industry.



**Mandar joins others in The Fireside Chat: Path to Sustainable Growth -
Oct 25, 2023 09:15AM-10:15AM PT**

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5 WAYS DATA HAS CHANGED THE WORK TRUCK INDUSTRY

BY KATHRYN SCHIFFERLE, CVO - WORK TRUCK SOLUTIONS

In today's rapidly evolving automotive landscape, the work truck industry has emerged as a crucial segment with immense potential for stability and growth.

Despite its significance to local, national, and global economies, the commercial vehicle opportunity has often been relegated to the periphery of the automotive dealership.

However, with the erratic economy brought on by the vagaries of supply chain disruptions and the looming labor strikes, embracing the power of data can be the difference between success and struggle for fleets.

Here are five ways data is reshaping the work truck industry, revolutionizing traditional processes, and setting the stage for a more efficient and streamlined future.

No 1.

ENHANCED SEARCH AND INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

Buying and selling commercial vehicles has historically been complex due to the diverse array of vehicle types and specialized upfits.

Data gleaned from dealer invoices has emerged as a game-changer, offering specific categorization, and streamlined search functionalities

for existing inventory, including vehicle types and unique upfits.

Unlike outdated online platforms that mirrored print catalogs and failed to capture the nuances of work truck configurations, modern data-driven systems empower dealers and customers with a more intuitive and tailored approach to vehicle selection.

**CLICK TO CONTINUE
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COMMERCIAL VEHICLE PRO PODCAST

Candy McCollum, Business Development Manager, Comvoy & Steve Henning, Senior Director of Marketing, Work Truck Solutions sit down to discuss the new and upcoming DeliveryCon October 16th - 18th, 2023 in Las Vegas, NV

FALL 2023 CVB SUMMIT *SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT*



LAUREN FLETCHER

Executive Editor, Fleet, Trucking & Transportation, Bobit

Lauren Fletcher is the Executive Editor of Fleet, Trucking & Transportation at Bobit. Her focus is on content strategy and digital growth across these industry segments. She has been covering the truck and van fleet industry since 2006. With a passion for work truck fleets and the people that make it all happen, she is also the host of Truck Chat, a video and podcast series. Fletcher has authored hundreds of articles over her career in fleet, including the monthly Chatty Chassis blog.



Lauren will be Moderating the Growing Together Panel on Oct 25 2023 at 10:50AM-11:50AM PT

Panelists are Dania Rich-Spencer VP Automotive & Mobility, Escalent - Ann Brodette, SVP of Sales, Eastern Region, Mitsubishi HC Capital America, Inc., Nikki Wilson, Senior Director of Member Services, NTEA

TOOLBOX NEWS & EVENTS

READING TRUCK'S 24TH ANNUAL CUSTOMER APPRECIATION EVENT

Reading Truck was in full SWING on Tuesday, October 3rd for their 24th Annual Customer Appreciation Golf Outing and Product Showcase. The local event took place on a beautiful day at Foxchase Golf Club in Stevens, PA.

Customers, vendors and team members were greeted with a showcase of products from Reading Truck, as well as representatives from Leer and Masterack before being sent off to enjoy an afternoon to hone their golf skills. After dinner, they recognized those that excelled on the course and thanked both customers and sponsors who helped to make the day a success.



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UPCOMING TRADESHOWS & EVENTS



Used Car Week 2023
Scottsdale, AZ —
November 6th - November 9th, 2023
[Registration >>>](#)

"Combining five different tracks, Used Car Week (UCW) unites all corners of the used-car industry from remarketing to dealer-consignor relations and auto finance for four days to discuss current trends, forecasting for the future and prepping for the road ahead." Find WTS at Booth #509!



U7th Annual Autovate Conference
Scottsdale, AZ —
December 6th - December 8th, 2023
[Registration >>>](#)

The 7th ANNUAL AUTOVATE CONFERENCE is a must-attend event for anyone who is interested in the future of the automotive industry. By bringing together visionary investors, progressive dealers, innovative entrepreneurs, and cutting-edge automakers, the conference provides a platform for the discussion and development of new ideas and solutions that will shape the industry in the years to come.

LISTEN: UPCOMING EVENT PREVIEWS



Commercial Vehicle Pro

Season 3: Episode 3 - DIGITAL DEALER Preview - Work Truck Solutions



Commercial Vehicle Pro

Season 3: Episode 6 - Fall 2023 CVBSummit Preview - Kevin Kinell



FALL 2023 CVB SUMMIT *SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT*



KEVIN KINELL

Chief Technology Officer, Work Truck Solutions

Kevin leads product development, software engineering, and technical operations as well as our digital marketing efforts. His involvement in the company started in 2013 when he formalized the company's product development and engineering capabilities. Kevin left the company briefly for 2 years to work at Design by Humans, focusing on eCommerce Marketing and business development, rejoining Work Truck Solutions in early 2016. Kevin previously served as Vice President of Engineering at Auctiva. He is also an active mentor at ChicoStart, a local tech incubator, and serves on Chico State University's Computer Science advisory board.

Kevin is Moderating the "Leveraging Technology for Growth" Panel at Oct 26 12:10PM-01:10PM PT

Joe Passes the Cup

A New Era with Shift in Joe Hughes' Role



The National Ford Truck Club (NFTC), founded by Joe Hughes in 2007, has had the paramount role of bringing together Ford TruckPros for open dialogue and knowledge exchange, by supporting its members and the industry as a whole. As we face this significant turning point in the club's history, we bid goodbye to the innovative leader as he retires from his role as president. Simultaneously, we embrace evolution as the NFTC (and the FordPros publication) continues the transformation into the Commercial Vehicle Business Network (CVBN).

JOE HUGHES' TENURE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS AT THE NFTC

The inception of the National Ford Truck Club (NFTC) was a result of Joe's desire to utilize the internet and offer Ford CAMs (Commercial Account Managers) who were not geographically close to a local Ford Truck Pro club an opportunity to share information and best practices.

"I just wanted a way that I could talk to people that are in the commercial department within the dealership and talk about ideas and see how things work the best," explains Joe. "We started a Northwest chapter in 2003, but it wasn't long before I wanted to start including local clubs

from around the country."

With support from key contacts at Ford, Joe managed to put together a group of other truck club leaders during the 2006 NTEA show in Atlanta. This meeting would establish a cornerstone for the Ford TruckPro community, eventually bridging connections among commercial vehicle dealers, body builders, fleet managers, and upfitters.

The club's mandate was not complex: to cultivate an exchange of knowledge, collaborative learning, and mutual advancements. The NFTC became a pillar in the industry facilitating access to invaluable resources and networking opportunities for its nationwide member base.

From insightful interviews at the yearly NTEA Work Truck Shows to collaborative efforts with regional clubs, Joe has left an indelible mark on the industry through the NFTC and its members.

APPRECIATION FOR JOE HUGHES

Joe's contributions to the NFTC were not limited to his founding the club and his successful leadership as President. Throughout his tenure, he used FordPros magazine as a platform to connect with, encourage, and educate Ford Truck Pros across the country. His letters to the community were true markers of his commitment.

In his articles, indexed at Joe Hughes' FordPros archive, you

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NATIONWIDE MEMBER BASE.**

Hughes' 17-year presidency of the NFTC is a clear testament to his commitment of nurturing a community that thrives on sharing knowledge, resources, and best practices.

"Our business is all about developing relationships," says Joe. "And it's not only relationships with our business clients, it's a relationship with our fellow commercial managers. When you develop relationships, you develop trust with one another and you develop long-term opportunities."

can observe his passion for the industry, his expansive knowledge, and his dedication to his fellow professionals. Every piece, be it the empowering "Plan 'T'" where he talks about the challenging economy, or his introspective note on gratitude, reveals the depth of his industry insights and his always unyielding optimism for better times ahead by putting in the effort.

Aside from his written contributions, Joe was a ubiquitous presence at Work Truck Week events where he invited Ford Truck Club leaders

Joe Passes the Cup

to an annual breakfast and conducted numerous insightful interviews of companies and leaders in the industry. His conversations with industry leaders, innovators, and fellow Ford Truck Pros gave NFTC members a chance to gain first-hand insights from those at the forefront of their field. These interviews underlined Joe's commitment to using all available platforms to facilitate knowledge sharing and education.

WRITING A NEW CHAPTER

Fortunately, Joe's influence on all of us will not be diminished just because he has laid down the mantle of the NFTC president. Joe continues to serve commercial vehicle customers in the great Northwest as well as contributing his considerable knowledge and industry connections to provide vehicles for orphanages and mission efforts in Mexico, Central, and South America.

an exciting new era of growth. While FordPros has always focused only on Ford Truck Pros, the CVBN broadens the scope to encompass all commercial vehicle professionals. This expansion creates an even more dynamic platform where dealership personnel, fleet managers, business owners, and vehicle upfitters can congregate for collaborative growth.

As we look to the future, we understand the massive shoes Joe has left to fill, yet the future is also brimming with opportunities. The vision for CVBN remains both ambitious and clear—to continue fostering a platform that fuels growth, learning, and connectivity for all commercial vehicle professionals. Utilizing Joe's framework and the club's deep-seated values, the CVBN aspires to enhance the scope of discourse and bring in novel perspectives that can drive the industry forward.



AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE, WE UNDERSTAND THE MASSIVE SHOES JOE HAS LEFT TO FILL, YET THE FUTURE IS ALSO BRIMMING WITH OPPORTUNITIES.

"It's has been a deeply meaningful opportunity to serve the needs of the missions down there that are trying to bring people hope," confided Joe. "To take the gifts that I've been given; knowledge of the industry, the vehicles, how to buy a vehicle, how to license and title it, how to look at it and decide whether or not it's dependable and suitable, and finding people that are willing to provide financial support to help that happen; it's thrilling."

INSIGHTS ON THE TRANSFORMATION TO THE CVBN

The transition from FordPros magazine to the Commercial Vehicle Business Network (CVBN) marks

CONCLUSION

As these changes unfold, we extend heartfelt gratitude and best wishes to Joe for his incredible work and unyielding dedication. His vision started the NFTC and his ongoing contributions to FordPros have been transformative for the industry, setting a precedent for future leadership. As we go forward on the journey with the Commercial Vehicle Business Network, we're excited to uphold his legacy as we address new challenges, seize fresh opportunities, and continue driving the industry ahead.



TRUCK CRANE PROVIDES SECURITY FOR MOVING PROPANE TANKS

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Ferrellgas is a propane provider and trusted partner for approximately 1 million customers across the United States. Their service technicians pick up and deliver propane tanks in various sizes to customer locations across a wide geographic area.

team after inspection. This ensures each customer not only knows who inspected and approved their truck, but who built it.

The HT40KX crane delivers 16 feet of hydraulic extension and four feet of manual extension with the manual pull out pin.

CONCLUSION

Tucker uses the Ventura HT40KX crane an average of four times a day at the plant and at various customer locations.

"I like the Ventura crane and the boom is plenty strong enough for what I need," Tucker said. "When

"Venco Ventura provided the exact solutions to correct any issues and has worked to ensure the equipment is customized to meet our needs. They are a great partner and I highly recommend them."

- Ty Tucker, Service technician, Ferrellgas

THE CHALLENGE

Ty Tucker, service technician with Ferrellgas, operates a service truck to load and unload propane tanks for residential use.

Tucker needed a reliable, easy-to-use crane to keep his deliveries on track. The crane had to be able to withstand different weather conditions and job sites, while being used multiple times per day to move 500-gallon tanks that weigh 1,500 to 2,000 pounds as well as 1,000-gallon tanks weighing up to 3,000 pounds.

THE VENTURO SOLUTION

Ferrellgas worked with Signature Truck Systems, a worldwide manufacturer of propane delivery trucks and a Ventura distributor, to mount the Ventura crane on Tucker's truck.

In addition to the installation, each delivery vehicle built by Signature Truck Systems has a decal signed by the lead technician and a member of the management

"I don't use the extra extension all the time," Tucker said. "But if I can't reach a tank or I can't get the truck close enough, it's great to know I can get another four feet of reach when necessary."

using the boom, I have to have a lot of faith and trust in it, as it could be a potential disaster if anything went wrong and I have great confidence with it."





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Kathryn Schifferle

Founder/CVO
Work Truck Solutions



OCT 17 - 4:45 PM (PT)

**Think Differently: A New
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Candy McCollum

Business Development Manager
Comvoy

