

FORD PROS

ISSUE 74

DECEMBER 2023

THE VIEW AHEAD IS BRIGHT

3 Trends Shaping the
Commercial Vehicle Industry

The **Untapped Well** in
Your Own Backyard



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IN THE SPOTLIGHT



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WHAT'S TRENDING?

Have you ever used Google Trends to see what's trending in our world - both in the U.S. and elsewhere?

As I considered this issue - which is the one where we focus on trends in our space - it's telling that the top trending search on Google right now centers around AI and the co-founder/former CEO who was recently ousted from his post. Not only is it interesting to see what happened, and how swiftly he was offered and accepted a senior executive position elsewhere, but it also reinforces how quickly the world in which we live changes.

We all likely have some sense that AI is going to impact our lives, both

professionally and personally. But, it's not just AI that's evolving. In reality it's also technology overall that's advancing, along with the way in which we do many, many things, including how we interact with our customers.

As you read through this issue, you may well find some key takeaways to apply to your business and your role in it. Maybe it will be Shawn Horswill's article that mentions smart technology powered predictive maintenance that sparks an idea for what your dealership could offer your commercial vehicle customers. Or perhaps it will be Ken Taylor's article and his point about online marketing tools that inspires you to take that

next step with your marketing. It might even be the deep dive into fleet management tools that generates that lightbulb moment.

Whatever those key takeaways are, try to read through this issue with a truly open mind and consider how you might apply these ideas to your business. You never know - the seed that's planted and results in that next step you take may be what we see on Google Trends tomorrow.

Steve Henning

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**SPECIAL THANKS
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HIGH IN THE BEAMS



TRANSFER FLOW ANNOUNCES LARGER REPLACEMENT FUEL TANK SYSTEM AVAILABLE FOR FORD TRANSIT VANS November 8, 2023

Transfer Flow (Chico, California) introduced the 45-gallon replacement fuel tank system that increases the fuel capacity and driving range on a 2021-23 gasoline Ford Transit 350 Van. It replaces the stock 31-gallon fuel tank and is available for passenger or cargo vans with a 148-inch wheelbase or cutaway vans with a 158-inch wheelbase. The Ford Transit 350

Van must have a GVWR over 10,000 lbs. and be equipped with a 3.5L EcoBoost engine. The 45-gallon fuel tank system is legal in all 50 states and has passed extensive emissions testing.

The fuel tank is made from American-made 12-gauge aluminized steel for superior strength and corrosion resistance and a high-tech evaporative emission system. Each fuel tank is

equipped with internal baffles for additional durability and to reduce fuel slosh. This system includes new mounting straps and hardware, and is backed by a 6-year, unlimited mile warranty.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
TRANSFERFLOW.COM**



Your #1 source for auto industry news and content

ACHIEVING DEALERSHIP SALES GOALS WITH A COMMERCIAL VEHICLE STRATEGY November 30, 2023

In the automotive industry landscape, where unpredictability has become the norm, stability and growth serve as essential cornerstones for auto dealers seeking to remain competitive. A strategic move worth considering, as many dealership professionals have already discovered, is to include commercial vehicles—an industry characterized by its consistency and profitability.

DRIVING SOLUTIONS



JIM FITZPATRICK
JFITZ@CBTNEWS.COM

KATHRYN SCHEIFFERLE
WORK TRUCK SOLUTIONS

The Untapped Potential: Commercial Vehicle Segment

One might wonder why more dealers have not shifted their focus to the commercial segment. Inertia, uncertainty, and lack of knowledge may play a role in maintaining the status quo. However, auto dealers must adopt an informed, strategic position—now more than ever—by considering their potential involvement in the commercial segment.

Achieving Sales Goals by Engaging a New Demographic

Harnessing the power of commercial vehicle sales enables dealerships to access a fresh marketing demographic, previously untapped. “Even during the worst of the pandemic, we could all see work trucks and vans still on the road. They were essential businesses then and will always be.”

—Kathryn Scheifferle, Founder and CVO of Work Truck Solutions
Including commercial vehicles in your dealership's lineup opens up a whole

host of new revenue opportunities including:

- Initial sales
- Maintenance and repair
- Ancillary sales of passenger vehicles to employees

Dealers that incorporate commercial vehicles also have opportunities to sell products unique to business customers, such as telematics, fleet management, gas cards, etc. Thanks to a new wave of support from OEMs, these alternative revenue propositions are more feasible than ever.

Conclusion

Embracing the commercial vehicle sector is a shrewd strategic move for auto dealers in times characterized by volatility. Circumstances are ripe to seize opportunities offered by the commercial vehicle market, providing the stability and growth required to thrive in an increasingly competitive world.

**WATCH AND READ MORE AT
WWW.WORKTRUCKSOLUTIONS.COM
AND CBTNEWS.COM**



FLEET ADVISORY HUB

**TELLING THE STORY OF
TOMORROW'S FLEET IN A
NEW WAY, TODAY
December 6th, 2023**

New tools and technologies are disrupting the commercial vehicle and fleet industry, making it essential for dealers, product manufacturers and service providers to get two steps ahead of their customers' ever-changing needs.

To do that, it takes a broad set of data-driven insights for the 360-degree view of the pressures, concerns, and influences that are driving small, medium, and large fleet decisions ranging from EV adoption (or other zero/low emission options), to services such as fleet management, charging, and mobile maintenance. And, of course, each unique vocation has its own set of business environment pressures and changes.

How can anyone stay on top of all this? Well, it takes an experienced research team to understand not just the questions to ask, but how to identify the right cross section of stakeholders, as well as how many people are statistically enough to create a true picture of what is happening.

For many years now, the professional team at Escalent, the award-winning data analytics and advisory firm that helps the industry understand human and market behaviors, has helped navigate disruption and business transformation. They have been tapping into the expectations and emotions of those who live and breathe fleet through the Fleet Advisory Hub™ (FAH).

FAH is an innovative, adaptive solution built on a large, ever-expanding audience of commercial vehicle and fleet decision-makers currently representing nearly 12,000 businesses that collectively number over 1,000,000 vehicles—profiled and engaged through different levels and activities.

EXCITING NEWS

Work Truck Solutions and Escalent are excited to announce a collaboration bringing the FAH to Comvoy.com. As a result, the approximately 250,000 unique monthly visitors to Comvoy.com will have the opportunity for their voices to be heard, to share their perspectives with their peers, and to help address current and future challenges they have with their commercial vehicles and services.

Work Truck Solutions CVO, Kathryn Schifferle, explained, "Since both companies are driven to understand where the commercial vehicle and fleet business is today and where it can go tomorrow directly from those living it, we felt that offering Escalent access to our commercial vehicle shoppers on Comvoy.com was a win, win, win situation!"

Escalent's Vice President, Automotive & Mobility, Dania Rich-Spencer, added, "Over the last seven years we have been focused on feedback primarily from fleets only. However, now

through our partnership with Work Truck Solutions, with Comvoy.com's expanded reach, we look forward to hearing from all types of stakeholders. Anyone in our industry can join FAH – fleets, manufacturers, distributors, service providers – if you are in the industry, you can invest the 5 minutes it takes to join the community to then be able to provide your views on the status and direction of change for the benefit of both your company, and all in this ecosystem."

Industry stakeholders who **JOIN FAH** immediately start receiving Escalent's 'Targeted Monitoring' newsletter that highlights key news and industry trends through year-end 2024. This weekly email, along with monthly summaries, is curated by Escalent's experts who select, organize and maintain the most important information and news in one easy-to-navigate online collection, to help you separate the signal from the noise. FAH members can also receive monetary incentives, monthly sweepstakes, branded swag, and results on quick industry polls. Take a spin through **Escalent's FAH site** to learn even more.

Comvoy and Escalent intend to identify opportunities, test ideas, optimize vision and help inform decision-making. In addition, they offer a standing invitation to the industry to submit questions, suggest topics and request consultation with experts at any time. Simply send an email to info@worktrucksolutions.com

Companies that will own the fleet business of tomorrow are listening to those living it today. **CLICK HERE** to begin participating and enjoying the benefits of the FAH community.

THE BLUE OVAL



FORD PRO AND XCEL ENERGY COLLABORATE TO SUPPORT INSTALLATION OF 30,000 EV CHARGING PORTS FOR BUSINESS FLEETS BY 2030

December 5, 2023



Ford Pro and Xcel Energy are launching the 30x30 initiative within Xcel Energy's broader Electric Vehicle Supply Infrastructure (EVS) program to scale EV adoption and increase access to charging infrastructure for business fleets across Xcel Energy's service areas in the U.S. Through the program, most upfront costs for EV charging equipment and installation for businesses will be offset by Xcel Energy. Ford Pro will offer its suite of end-to-end charging solutions to Xcel Energy business customers as part of the effort.

Ford Pro, the commercial division within Ford Motor Company, and Xcel Energy, a national leader in clean energy, announced a unique collaboration to support the deployment of

30,000 electric vehicle (EV) charging ports in Xcel Energy service territories across the U.S. by 2030 with most upfront costs offset by Xcel for qualifying business fleet customers.

[READ THE REST OF THE STORY HERE](#)





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HOW TO KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE 'NET ZERO' ROADMAP

In a recent survey, Gartner found that 65% of decisions being made today are more complex (involving more stakeholders or choices) than they were two years ago - and the lines between strategic, tactical, and operational decisions are blurring.

One very complex challenge is deciding on the right approach for your company as you navigate the seemingly inevitable pathway to 'net zero'. Most of us in the commercial vehicle industry have been watching, sometimes cynically, as EVs have been forced into that commercial decision tree by both regulatory and social commentary.

Viewing from the top-down it is clear that there are three large segment views that either drive or limit EV adoption. Not to over simplify, but 1) the size of fleet (larger fleets can afford to experiment more and expect to gain from the social benefits), 2) the geography of the fleet (the extreme heat and cold affect, as well as access to charging), and of course 3) the business use case of the vehicle (heavy loads not so good, urban delivery a great fit.)

Each segment has permutations, which, when combined create an algorithmic increase in complex choices. The push to 'regulate change' has surfaced real life issues related to each of those 'buckets'. Effective decision making today requires increased information, data, and analytics to drive better business outcomes. Although there definitely is a lot of information around EVs and other alternative fuel choices, in reality, most information being produced has a goal to influence- not genuinely educate.

So where can fleets and their stakeholders in the industry find independent and objective information and data, and hear how others might be analyzing options?



EXCITING NEWS

A new resource center launches on Comvoy.com this month called NuPropel! The mission? To curate and provide objective, diverse and broad information for the industry all about advanced fuel solutions.

NuPropel is the place that industry stakeholders can trust to be both current and neutral. Although sponsors will be selected to help drive growth, they too will be curated and expected to provide value beyond simply 'hawking their wares'.

Director of Business Development for Comvoy.com, Candy McCollum, expressed, "We truly want to help visitors to our marketplace have greater access to trusted information, to be more efficient in their research, and to empower them to make better decisions for their fleet's future, whether they are a fleet of thousands or of three."

Comvoy.com plans to add sponsor partners slowly and with great discernment. On launch they are proud to feature Mullen as a truly viable solution for a new era of clean, connected commercial vehicles. In addition to overall advanced fuel educational information, NuPropel will be featuring a checklist for EV adoption readiness, a national charging network link, and will be offering up new content regularly.

Founder and Chief Vision Officer of Work Truck Solutions Kathryn Schifferle added, "When we launched Comvoy.com in November of 2019 as the first commercial vehicle national marketplace, our long-term commitment was to continue to provide more than a commercial vehicle search platform, with accurate pricing and detailed upfit configurations. We committed to delivering information, news, and data, and are here to help lead the industry that powers 80% of the U.S. GDP into the net zero future it deserves."

Work Truck Solutions and Comvoy.com are eager to hear feedback and are open to requests for types of information that will make industry stakeholders more efficient, and to move us all towards realistic net zero goals.

Please send comments and requests to: info@Comvoy.com

NUPROPEL SPOTLIGHT : CANDY MCCULLUM, BDM, COMVOY.COM



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"Most news [about alternative fuels] is focused on retail and end consumers. If you're a small to medium sized business owner, it's probably a little daunting to determine the next step [for your business]."

2023 FALL CVB SUMMIT SESSIONS SHOWCASE

When it comes to our commercial vehicle business, we all want it to grow. But, simply having a desire to grow your business is only the first step to actually achieving (and potentially exceeding) the goals you've set. There are many other pieces involved, starting with examining where you are today, and how you got there, to making a plan, to putting that plan in motion.

The Fall 2023 Commercial Vehicle Business Summit sessions arm you with insights, metrics, ideas, and tools to push your business forward. First broadcast live on October 25-26, you can WATCH or LISTEN to any/all of the sessions below!

DAY ONE



DAY ONE: SESSION 1

CV Market Outlook:

The outlook for the commercial vehicle market is analyzed by Kathryn Schifferle, founder and Chief Vision Officer at Work Truck Solutions, and Andrew Wrobel, Director of Commercial Vehicle, Fleet Research and Advisory Practice at Escalent.

[LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)

DAY ONE: SESSION 2

Pathway to Sustainable Growth:

Jim Press, senior advisor at Work Truck Solutions, leads a panel discussion on industry trends and challenges.

Participants include:

- **Kirk Mann**, EVP & Head of Transportation at Mitsubishi HC Capital America
- **Mandar Dighe**, Global Sales/Marketing and Business Development Executive at Knapheide
- **Tony Stinsa**, Vice President, Used Trucks at Navistar

[LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)



DAY ONE: SESSION 3

Growth Hot Spots:

Gregory Skinner, Vice President of Strategic Insights at Escalent, delves into growth opportunities in the commercial vehicle market.

[LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)

DAY ONE: SESSION 4

Growing Together:

Lauren Fletcher, Executive Editor at Work Truck Magazine/Bobit, leads a panel discussion on the importance of collaboration and competition.

Panelists include:

- **Dania Rich-Spencer**, VP Automotive & Mobility at Escalent
- **Ann Brodette**, SVP of Sales, Eastern Region at Mitsubishi HC Capital America
- **Jennifer Mitchell**, NTEA

[LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)

00:00 | 22:23

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WORK TRUCK MAGAZINE

COMMERCIAL VEHICLE BUSINESS SUMMIT

FALL 2023: DAY 1

Growing Together

Lauren Fletcher
Work Truck Magazine, Executive EditorDania Rich-Spencer
Escalent, VP Automotive & MobilityAnn Brodette
Mitsubishi HC Capital America, SVP of SalesJennifer Mitchell
NTEA, Senior Director of Content Development

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WORK TRUCK MAGAZINE

COMMERCIAL VEHICLE BUSINESS SUMMIT

FALL 2023: DAY 1

The Best Vehicle for Growth

Javier Lozano Jr.
Wrapmate, Chief Marketing Officer

escalent

PITTSBURGH HC CAPITAL AMERICA

CONVOY

DAY ONE: SESSION 5

The Best Vehicle for Growth:

Wrapmate CMO Javier Lozano Jr. explains the opportunities that vehicle wraps present for businesses and dealerships.

[LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)

00:00 | 22:23

DAY ONE: SESSION 6

Mapping the Future of Commercial Vehicle Insights:

Insights and admonitions concerning successful operations at commercial vehicle dealerships. Presented by Kathryn Schifferle, Founder and Chief Vision Officer at Work Truck Solutions, and Alicia Von Bokel, Performance Manager at Maritz.

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00:00 | 22:23

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WORK TRUCK MAGAZINE

COMMERCIAL VEHICLE BUSINESS SUMMIT

FALL 2023: DAY 1

Mapping the Future of Commercial Vehicle Insights

Kathryn Schifferle
Work Truck Solutions, CVO/FounderAlicia Von Bokel
Maritz Automotive, Performance Manager

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PITTSBURGH HC CAPITAL AMERICA

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WORK TRUCK MAGAZINE

COMMERCIAL VEHICLE BUSINESS SUMMIT

FALL 2023: DAY 1

Criteria for Successful Alternative Energy Adoption for Your Fleet

Steve Whaley
Propane Education & Research Council, Director of Autogas Business Development

escalent

PITTSBURGH HC CAPITAL AMERICA

CONVOY

DAY ONE: SESSION 7

Criteria for Successful Alternative Energy Adoption for Your Fleet:

Steve Whaley, Director of Autogas Business Development at the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC), dives into myriad facets of alt-fuel adoption for business fleets.

[LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)

00:00 | 22:23

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FALL 2023: DAY 2

Growing Your Fleet in Challenging Times

Ed Powell
Holman, Director, Holman Consulting Services

Brandy Hanifen
Holman, Director, Client Relations

DAY TWO: SESSION 8

Growing Your Fleet in Challenging Times:

A lively discussion about methods and strategies for the growth of fleets in the face of ongoing challenges. Presented by Ed Powell, Director of Consulting Services and Brandy Hanifen, Director of Client Relations, at Holman.

[LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)

DAY TWO: SESSION 9

Cashing in on Growth:

Jim Press, senior advisor at Work Truck Solutions, leads a panel discussion focussing on revenue and profit opportunities in the current climate of the commercial vehicle industry.

Participants include;

- **Dan Bryan**, General Manager at Ricart to Business
- **Norm Gilbert**, Commercial Manager at AutoNation Ford Memphis
- **Alicia Von Bokel**, Performance Manager at Maritz

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FALL 2023: DAY 2

Cashing in on Growth

Jim Press
(Moderator) Work Truck Solutions, Senior Advisor

Dan Bryan
Ricart to Business, General Manager

Norm Gilbert
AutoNation Ford Memphis, Commercial Manager

Alicia Von Bokel
Maritz Automotive, Performance Manager

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FALL 2023: DAY 2

Commercial Vehicle Growth Strategies

Gregory Skinner
(Moderator) Escalent, VP Strategic Insights

Jennifer Weaver
Clean Fuel Alliance America, OEM Manager

Sara Montalat Verdú
Xos, Director of Program Management

Alan Levy
Crestline Logistics, LLC, President and Founder

DAY TWO: SESSION 10

Commercial Vehicle Growth Strategies:

Gregory Skinner, Vice President of Strategic Insights at Escalent, leads a panel discussion about emerging trends and effective methodologies for growth in the commercial vehicle sector.

Panelists include;

- **Jennifer Weaver**, OEM Market Development Manager at Clean Fuel Alliance America
- **Alan Levy**, Founder of Crestline Logistics, LLC
- **Sara Montalat Verdú**, Director of Program Management at Xos

[LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)

DAY TWO: SESSION 12

Mapping the Future of Commercial Vehicle Insights:

Kathryn Schifferle, Founder and Chief Vision Officer at Work Truck Solutions, and Alicia Von Bokel, Performance Manager at Maritz, continue their discussion about successful commercial vehicle dealership operations.

[LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)

CLICK TO WATCH

FALL 2023: DAY 2

Mapping the Future of Commercial Vehicle Insights

Kathryn Schifferle
Work Truck Solutions, CVO/Founder

Alicia Von Bokel
Maritz Automotive, Performance Manager

DAY TWO: SESSION 12

It's a Marathon, Not a Sprint: Jim Castelaz, Founder and CTO of Motiv, presents business growth as a marathon rather than a sprint.

[LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)

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SPRING 2023: DAY 2

It's a Marathon, Not a Sprint

Jim Castelaz
Motiv,
Founder & CTO

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FALL 2023: DAY 2

Leveraging Technology for Growth

escalent | MITSUBISHI HC CAPITAL AMERICA | COMVOY

DAY TWO: SESSION 13

Leveraging Technology for Growth: Kevin Kinell, CTO at Work Truck Solutions, leads an insightful discussion about using technology to empower growth in the commercial vehicle industry.

Panelists include;

- **Jameel Ghata**, Chief Strategy Officer at PAVE
- **Ethan Nadolson**, President and CEO at SOARR
- **Eric Foster**, Head of Marketing at Taycor Financial

[LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)

DAY TWO: SESSION 14

Finding Your Future Growth: A discussion about developing trends affecting the commercial automotive industry. Presented by Kathryn Schifferle, founder and Chief Vision Officer at Work Truck Solutions, and Steve Greenfield, Founder and CEO of Automotive Ventures.

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FALL 2023: DAY 2

Finding Your Future Growth

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Work Truck Solutions

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Season 3: Episode 23 - SPECIAL - Fall 2023 CVBSummit - Day Two - Session 14: Finding Your Future Growth:

Season 3: Episode 22 - SPECIAL - Fall 2023 CVBSummit - Day Two - Session 13: Leveraging Technology for Growth

Season 3: Episode 21 - SPECIAL - Fall 2023 CVBSummit - Day Two - Session 12: It's a Marathon, Not a Sprint

Season 3: Episode 20 - SPECIAL - Fall 2023 CVBSummit - Day Two - Session 11: Mapping the Future of Commercial Vehicle Insights

THE UNTAPPED WELL IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD



Today's auto industry represents a landscape that is at its most unpredictable as it's ever been. There are a multitude of reasons, such as supply chain disruptions, shifting regulations, and a rocky lending climate, all out of a dealer's control, yet with great impact on both sales and profit. Maintaining consistent profits is tough enough; looking for stable growth can seem unattainable.

But amidst this sea of volatility, a golden and stable opportunity shines through for auto dealers that can mitigate risk and optimize profit.

THE MOST RELIABLE DEMOGRAPHIC

Just as in any other enterprise, facing change and instability proactively is the best strategy to meet today's challenges and prepare for the future.

As many dealers have already discovered, opportunities for stability and growth lie in selling commercial vehicles—a sector known for its consistency and profitability.

"When I was a general manager at a dealership, I had a manager that was over commercial vehicles. Every month he had sales and deliveries to report. I wasn't sure where he got his leads or who exactly was buying them, but I certainly liked the gross profit and what it did for our volume!"

—Jim Fitzpatrick, CBT News

Commercial vehicles, which are typically work trucks, vans, pickups or SUVs, are a great way to diversify business and protect against market fluctuations. And due to the rise of delivery services, the commercial vehicle segment is poised to grow substantially in the coming years. This means a growing demographic that must have vehicles to do business.

SNOWBALLING OPPORTUNITIES

The commercial side of auto sales also opens up opportunities for a more steady and profitable service center catering to fleet vehicles. On average, ROs are significantly

higher on commercial repairs, and maintenance is more regularly scheduled.

The defining characteristic of business owners and fleet managers is that their motivation is both urgent and consistent. Their need to maintain vehicles and keep them operable is critical to their livelihoods. This need is so paramount that they don't concern themselves with waiting for a coupon like many retail vehicle owners do; rather, getting their work truck back on the road is priority number one.

Secondary sales are another of the many benefits of adding a commercial vehicle presence to a dealership. As fleet vehicle operators, managers, and business owners become familiar with the dealership that sells and services their fleet, it's natural for them to give that dealer the first shot when they need a personal vehicle too. And don't forget their family members and employees fulfilling their retail vehicle needs with you too, which represents additional growth.

There is also a growing list of products and services that are only applicable to commercial customers. Dealers are perfectly poised to offer services like fleet management tools and vehicle wraps to their offerings.

"We've watched as EV charging, gas cards, fleet management services, telematics, and vehicle wraps are starting to be offered right at the dealer level. Selling wraps is an opportunity for dealerships. So much so that we also work with a national partner."

**—Kathryn Schifferle,
CVO, Work Truck Solutions**

Ignoring the opportunities inherent in the commercial vehicle sector is a big mistake, as this is precisely where reliable sales and long-term growth can be leveraged.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO ENGAGE A SAVVY CLIENTELE

One of the elements disrupting the way dealerships do business is commercial buyers' increasing preference for online engagement. This trend towards digital commerce has forced dealerships to change their approach to customer service and marketing. The need for dealerships to adapt to these changes is more important now than ever before. As the automotive industry continues its journey into the digital age, dealerships must embrace emerging technologies in order to stay competitive.

Although building a digital presence for the passenger car demographic has long been an accepted norm for dealerships, some have been slow to recognize the very same need for commercial customers. This is creating a very large 'first to market' opportunity for dealers who want to serve their local businesses.

EVOLUTION OR EXTINCTION: THE CHOICE FOR DEALERS

The commercial vehicle community is already in the midst of a technological revolution. ERP-style software and data-gathering hardware are reshaping the standards of business, leading to an increase in efficiency and profitability across all verticals; OEM, body manufacturers, upfitters, and dealers.

This rapid technological change invites dealers to choose; evolve and reap the benefits, or resist and wither away. The imperative to adapt has never been more pronounced.

Cutting-edge technology is poised to deliver the data business owners need to make profitable decisions, and the digital footprint dealers need to leverage commercial business to develop reliable revenue and realistic opportunities for growth.

A critical aspect of serving the commercial vehicle buyer is TRUST - and dealers need to find the right partner that will help them serve their business customers with the technology, the data and the overall consultative knowledge needed to grow their business.

It's what counts today.

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THE VIEW AHEAD LOOKS BRIGHT DESPITE A FEW OBVIOUS POTHOLES

As we reach the end of 2023 and look ahead to next year, it is easy to spot some potholes in the road ahead. Will they be as large as those challenges we have sidestepped over the past few years? Consider what we have gone through:

Huge Hurdles Behind Us

From 2020-2021 we were all shaken by a worldwide pandemic that directly affected our workforce as well as those of our partners, suppliers, and customers. Previously rock-solid supply chains were suddenly bent or completely broken, forcing us to scramble to find alternative sources or new designs. Temporary shutdowns at automakers helped to cause a shift in semiconductor allocation, and when they tried to resume full operations, a shortage of microchips caused a backlog of cars and trucks that has been difficult to reverse. A truck driver shortage and union strikes (and fears of more) have added to the frustration and made even smooth production operations look choppy and disjointed at times – both for automakers and upfitters as well.

And yet, we are still here, surviving and thriving despite these huge obstacles. In October 2023, Scelzi Enterprises completed their fiscal

year with a 24% increase in shipped truck body volume over the previous 12 months, slightly exceeding their 10 year average. But it certainly was not easy. Others have survived with varying degrees of success.

Glimpsing into 2024

While peeking ahead at 2024, it is easy to see a few squalls that might lead to full-fledged storms, but do any match the hurricanes just mentioned from the past three years? That does not appear to be the case, though there are some good reasons for concern:

- The US economy: Fuel prices remain high and inflationary pressures seem to be in a holding pattern for now. High home prices together with higher interest rates have dampened new housing sales, and new home construction is running 4% below 2022 averages.
- Wars and International Conflicts: the war in Ukraine has been joined by the Israel - Hamas violence, diverting attention and financial resources away from commercial activities and adding to feelings of uncertainty that can delay business decisions.
- Weather: historic patterns of rain and heat are being challenged and broken.

- A Presidential election is looming next November, and the divisions among us will likely be intentionally provoked and exaggerated by some factions for short-term political gains.

- In California, the state Air Resources Board (CARB) has set new restrictions on truck-based carbon emissions that will begin to take effect on January 1. These rules will require that a certain percentage of all trucks sold in the state be Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV), and those percentages will increase at set intervals in the future. CARB states that trucks represent 6% of all vehicles on California roads but 25-35% of the harmful emissions. The result will be a change by automakers in the mix of chassis cabs offered for sale and upfit in California and surrounding states.

Steering with Both Hands on the Wheel

How will Scelzi and other upfitters respond to these challenges? "More advance notice of the CARB rules would have been my preferred choice," states owner Mike Scelzi. "It is not easy to mix and match which models are produced in our facilities in different states. It certainly makes it harder for proper staffing and to adjust our supply chains for optimal delivery to dealers. But I am confident we will overcome it."

And that is one thing 2024 will share with recent years: a confidence that obstacles can be overcome with a little bit of creativity and plenty of focused teamwork. At Scelzi Enterprises, that has proven to be a path to success for nearly 45 years.

For more information,
Visit www.seinc.com



California's New CARB Rules will mean fewer new Diesel F650s on California roads in 2024

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THE IMPORTANCE OF "SAFE" IN SAFE FLEET



Jared & Amanda Pridmore
Owners - Precision Auto Glass

Jared Pridmore and his wife, Amanda, are the proud owners of Precision Auto Glass in Conway, Arkansas. Their Safe Fleet story begins when they bought a new van for their growing company.

Amanda, always vigilant about safety, researched the importance of having a partition behind the van's seats. Jared, after 20 years of driving a van without a partition, felt he didn't need one. "We are going to order this partition, install it, and THEN you can drive the van," Amanda declared.

"Of course I listened to her. We ordered it and waited," Jared conceded. Until the partition arrived, the van sat unused, a life-saving decision.

Just a few weeks after installing the Heavy-Duty Steel Partition from American Van, a Safe Fleet brand, Jared's investment and his wife's intuition would be put to the test.

Jared and a co-worker were inside his van idling in a road construction zone when a drunk driver crashed into the back of their vehicle at a speed between 80 to 90 miles per hour. The impact caused six Auto Glass windshields and all the van's

contents to propel toward the front of the van, where Jared and the co-worker were sitting. The partition absorbed the impact, shielding Jared and his co-worker from the glass and tools contained in the back of the van.



Reflecting on the incident, Jared said, "If we had not had that partition, there's no telling what would've happened. The glass would have definitely been in the front with us. One hundred percent."

Auto Glass, designed with lamination for extra durability and safety, is meant to prevent shattering and reduce the risk of injury during collisions when properly installed on vehicles. As cargo, however, the story plays a bit differently. "Auto Glass will cut you up," Jared explains and, reflecting on Amanda's insistence on waiting for the partition to drive the van, he added: "It was a blessing Amanda said, 'I don't feel comfortable with this.'"

"If we would not have had that [the American Van partition], we probably would not be here today," Jared emphasized.

The near-death experience left an indelible mark on Jared's perspective. He vowed, "I'll never own another van without a partition." He now urges everyone, regardless of their business, to have a partition between them and what's behind them. The American Van partition's effectiveness in such an event reinforced its significance as a fleet safety tool.

Jared concludes, "I understand why Safe Fleet is the trusted fleet safety expert."

Let's build a safer future for our roads, our communities, and our people!

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HOW COMMERCIAL DEALERS MAKE A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION ONLINE

Seven seconds. That's all the time you get to make a great first impression on a new potential customer, when you're meeting face-to-face.

And when they find you online? (It's an important question. Especially because **92% of car buyers** start their buying journey there, long before stepping foot in a dealership.)

How long do you think it takes for them to form an impression then, when they visit your site?

Guess.

The answer?

Only 0.05 seconds.

(It's a blip, really.)

And, it may get you thinking. Are you capturing their attention? In a good way? And, how might you improve?

Although we know you make strides every day to become the best, below are two things you may want to consider that can improve impressions of your business online.

COMMERCIAL VERSUS RETAIL

Busy business women and men do not have time to filter through the chaos of retail inventory. And why should they, really? After all, they're commercial customers seeking commercial products.

This is your time to shine. Show them you're committed to providing a great commercial experience by simplifying their search for your commercial inventory. Prominently list your commercial offerings in your website's main navigation. Maybe even employ **content marketing** and reference the types of bodies and equipment and even brands you carry.

Which leads us into...



SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Although you've probably heard the term, you may be wondering, what exactly is search engine optimization?

Well, according to **Semrush**, "SEO (search engine optimization) is a set of processes aimed at improving a website's visibility in search engines, like Google, with the goal of getting more organic traffic."

So, when you're working on your SEO ranking, focus on things like the specific words or phrases you use.

Certain key terms are more likely to be searched, and therefore, will result in a higher ranking for your page. Additionally, you'll need to include links to your own site, and others, and make sure your content is easy to read.

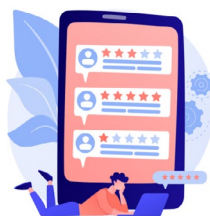
And the end goal?

When someone searches for commercial vehicles in your area, they should be able to easily find your website and available inventory. If you aren't in the first page of search results, definitely consider working on SEO for your site.

Of course, this is only a high-level explanation of SEO. If you want a more in-depth review of how to improve your site's SEO, check out **Google's SEO Starter Guide**.

Curious to know what else you can do to improve your online presence? Check out more of our posts (See below!) through the links contained in this article! We cover topics like **how to implement an online reputation management strategy** and **using your online inventory to generate more leads**.

HOW TO MANAGE YOUR BUSINESS'S ONLINE REPUTATION



5 EASY WAYS TO GENERATE MORE ONLINE LEADS IN VEHICLE SALES



WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



TRENDING: INTEGRATED FLEET MANAGEMENT

Human beings are naturally drawn to whatever is currently of interest to their peers, the newest information on their feed, the best-sellers of anything. We want to know what's trending now, especially trends that have an influence on the success of our business.

As is the case with most trends, those within the commercial vehicle industry are reflections of multiple influences. What we're seeing now is a confluence of unprecedented connectivity, the explosive emergence of AI, and the gradual uptick of EV adoption.

This confluence is a perfect storm for the rising trend of integrated fleet management.

ENABLING A TREND

The Industrial Internet of Things

The Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) is a term used to define the network of interconnected devices used in the industrial/commercial sector. It is a subset of the broader concept known as the Internet of Things (IoT). IIoT employs smart sensors, actuators, and other devices, such as radio frequency identification tags, to improve commercial processes. These devices are linked together to offer data collection, exchange, and analysis.

Hardware and software providers are becoming increasingly aware of the tremendous potential this kind of connectivity offers to businesses that depend on commercial vehicles.

Artificial Intelligence

In today's increasingly competitive markets, digital transformation is critical to achieving new levels of sustainability and profitability. The

challenge, though, is that increasing digitization multiplies the amount of data a company must contend with. Knowing that what we do with data is as important as the data itself, commercial or industrial, Artificial Intelligence (AI) becomes a key enabler of that change.

With computational abilities far beyond human limitations, AI can significantly aid fleet managers in dealing with data in multiple ways.

AN INTEGRATED FLEET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (IFMS) IS A SOPHISTICATED SOFTWARE SOLUTION SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO STREAMLINE THE MANAGEMENT OF A FLEET'S VEHICLES, DRIVERS, AND ASSOCIATED ASSET AND PROCESSES

The Commercial EV Connection

In the last few years, more than one automotive executive has alluded to modern vehicles, EVs in particular, as being a lot like computers on wheels. This reality makes them a natural component in a connected world. Although non-EVs have been progressively more able to integrate with the IIoT, EVs have connectivity as a core element from the beginning.

The relentless promulgation of EVs has given birth to a connected-first kind of mindset that is permeating the entire transportation sector. Fleet management is a prime focal point for this level of connectivity.

WHAT IS INTEGRATED FLEET MANAGEMENT?

Fleet Management refers to a system of processes and actions that

ensure a fleet of vehicles operates on time, within budget, and at maximum efficiency. An integrated fleet management system (IFMS) is a sophisticated software solution specifically designed to streamline the management of a fleet's vehicles, drivers, and associated assets and processes.

The key to its integration lies in the unification of various hardware modules and functionalities into one shared platform. This allows an organization to effectively monitor, control, and scrutinize its entire fleet both in real-time and with data-driven retrospect.

The integration level, or scope, typically depends on the specific organizational needs and the fleet size. Some fleet management software provides flexible packages depending on these factors. The process involves a combination of hardware and software components,

HOW DOES INTEGRATED FLEET MANAGEMENT AFFECT MY BUSINESS?

One significant impact of an integrated system is on fleet ROI. Various studies indicate that integrating fleet management systems has a positive impact on ROI by increasing efficiency and reducing costs.

Integration in fleet management systems primarily focuses on harmonizing various systems to provide end-to-end assistance and visibility. These systems have many features and benefits that help optimize operations, reduce costs, and improve customer service by providing insights into vehicle performance, driver behavior, and overall fleet efficiency.

Typical areas of operation that might be integrated include:

Automating Fleet Management Tasks:

Modern AI-based fleet management software automates tasks, reducing manual interventions and paperwork. This automation can simplify management procedures and ensure better accuracy.

Optimized Decision-making:

AI-driven data can streamline decisions, helping fleet managers improve components like driver safety, cost tracking, and overall fleet operations.

Effective Risk Management:

AI and data insights synergize to offer exceptional benefits in fleet risk management. AI can help predict and identify potential risks, allowing managers to address them proactively.

Predictive Analytics and Real-time Monitoring:

AI revolutionizes the way fleet managers operate by providing predictable analytics and real-time monitoring capabilities. AI can analyze vast amounts of data to generate insights on things like route optimization and vehicle performance.

Predict, Optimize, Automate:

With AI-driven Fleet Management, managers can predict outcomes, optimize operations, and automate processes, such as:

- “Fuel” usage and mileage
- GPS tracking
- Centralized telematics
- Load management
- Dispatching
- Fleet cameras
- Tire inspection
- Vehicle inspection

- Driver training and behavior management

Seeing how every one of these functions impacts company profits, it's no wonder integrated fleet management is trending now. We are fortunate to live in a time of such tremendous technological innovation, and the advances that we see today are truly remarkable.

Business owners and fleet managers must stay up-to-date on the latest developments in the industry. An integrated fleet management system can be a game changer for any company looking to improve their efficiency and ROI, so it's worth taking a closer look into what they can offer.



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COACH KEN



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

THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

We have been experiencing difficult economic and social times. Inflation, a pandemic, shortages, and even protests have gripped the nation and the world with uncertainty. Businesses and families have been “psychologically” impacted and have held back on new purchases and business expansion. The good news is in times like these some of the world’s greatest businesses have been created and prospered.

Publix Super Market: Twenty-two-year-old George Jenkins quit his job as manager of a Florida Piggly Wiggly and started his own grocery store next door. The store not only survived next door to its competitor, but eventually became the 1,000-store chain of today.

Hy-Vee: Hy-Vee began as a small general store in Iowa that offered what people really needed during tough times: low prices. That, and good service, helped grow the general store into a chain of some 225 supermarkets.

Yellow Book, USA: The Yellow Pages gave struggling consumers an efficient opportunity for comparison shopping. Instead of wasting gas or—more often—shoe leather, they could “let their fingers do the walking” in search of the best deals.

Standard Oil: Oil tycoon J. Paul Getty abided by a simple business formula: “Buy when everyone else is selling, and hold on until everyone else is buying.” His acquisition of oil companies during the “Great Depression” led to the largest petroleum company in America.

Ocean Spray: When the going gets tough, the tough get cooperative. Instead of seeing who could make the tastiest cranberry sauce when consumers were pinching pennies, three cranberry companies pooled their bogs and found success.

What are the lessons in tough times?

1. Be innovative in your marketing. The first mistake most companies make during difficult times is to cut expenses, and that includes advertising and marketing. Fortunately, in today’s world we have low cost, effective alternatives. Many of our dealership clients have benefitted from “Internet marketing.” Notice I didn’t say “advertising.” Great marketing adds value. The articles we recommend in electronic newsletters give dealerships and businesses ideas and instructions on how to grow sales.
2. The best way to promote your business is to promote your customers! Many companies are using YouTube to promote not only their own businesses, but also their customers and prospects. Typically, an outside commercial salesperson interviews his or her customer using video to help promote the customer’s business.
3. Help your customers grow. Commercial businesses often grow through “Online Marketing Tools” and companies like Work Truck Solutions make this process easier to accomplish through maximum exposure nationwide. Their Internet marketing software gives you everything you need to

maximize your marketing efforts. Go to www.worktrucksolutions.com and let them guide you through the process!

4. Engage in outside sales training. Retail automotive sales have always been based on the prospect coming to the dealership. The typical dealership spends thousands of dollars a week getting the word out through television, radio, and the Internet. To be effective, commercial vehicle sales requires sales professionals to make outside sales calls and to join organizations, like trade associations, to grow sales. We’ve seen sales grow dramatically when the sales staff got actively involved in outside groups and associations like the Chamber of Commerce, their local home builders’ association, as well as organizations like Associated General Contractors.
5. Get involved in event marketing. Most industry groups have monthly meetings and major events like trade shows that give great opportunities to market your organization. You can also sponsor marketing events for your customers.

There are so many ways to economically market your organization. These are just a few ideas. Never has there been a better time to build new relationships and to get involved in key groups that will help you market and sell more vehicles. What are you waiting for?

DEALERSHIP SUCCESS

Shawn Horswill - Work Truck Solutions, SR VP of Product

3 TRENDS SHAPING THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE INDUSTRY



The landscape of the commercial vehicle industry is rapidly evolving, with cutting-edge technologies and new energy alternatives driving the industry into uncharted territories. Evident trends among these changes are the rise of electric vehicles (EVs), the expansion of propane-fed Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles, and the incorporation of connected technology utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Electric Vehicles Gaining Ground

A notable trend reshaping the commercial vehicle industry is the increasing popularity of EVs, particularly in the light-duty category. Urban areas, where final-mile deliveries are commonplace, are witnessing a surge in EV adoption. This trend is propelled by numerous benefits of EVs, such as reduced emissions, lower maintenance costs, and favorable government policies. However, their introduction into medium and heavy-duty segments remains sluggish, primarily due to their relatively high upfront cost and limited range.

Rise of Propane-fed ICE Vehicles

Another trend influencing the commercial vehicle industry is the growing interest and deployment of propane-fed ICE vehicles in the medium-duty category. Propane technology has withstood the test of time and is proving to be a dependable alternative to traditional fuels.

Propane vehicles also guarantee lower emissions than their counterparts, contributing to environmental sustainability. There is an increasing investment in infrastructure to accommodate the growth of propane-fueled vehicles, lending more credence to their rise in the commercial vehicle market.

solutions, and improved navigation modules can streamline operations and optimize resource allocation. These solutions assist in decision-making processes, fostering a more efficient utilization of resources and driving the industry's growth.

"DEALERS CAN BENEFIT BY UNDERSTANDING THESE TRENDS AND OFFERING PRODUCTS THAT CAPITALIZE ON THE NEEDS OF THEIR COMMERCIAL VEHICLE CUSTOMERS. THE MORE THEY CAN MEET THE NEEDS OF CUSTOMERS, THE MORE LIKELY THOSE CUSTOMERS WILL BE TO RETURN FOR FUTURE PURCHASES AND ALSO RECOMMEND YOUR DEALERSHIP TO OTHERS."

Connected Technology Enabled by AI

The commercial vehicle industry is leaning into the possibilities offered by connected technology backed by Artificial Intelligence. Two significant areas benefitting from this development include:

1. Productivity

Harnessing big data can lead to substantial productivity improvement. Fleet management systems, energy management

2. Predictive Maintenance

Predictive maintenance, powered by smart technology, influences service status, vehicle health monitoring, remote diagnostics, and service history. This innovation can significantly reduce vehicle downtime by enabling companies to proactively address maintenance needs, which leads to more significant operational efficiency. This proactive approach extends the vehicle's lifespan and decreases long-term maintenance costs.

What Do These Trends Mean For Dealer Success?

As the commercial vehicle industry continues to innovate and adapt, these trends signify significant shifts in operation and outlook. By understanding how these developments impact the end users of work trucks and vans, dealers can better connect with their customers and position themselves as a valuable resource for vehicle management. With new technologies, dealers can provide an enhanced service experience that keeps commercial truck and van companies running smoothly.

Dealers can benefit by understanding these trends and offering products that capitalize on the needs of their commercial vehicle customers. The more they can meet the needs of customers,

the more likely those customers will be to return for future purchases and also recommend your dealership to others.

Commercial vehicle dealers themselves must embrace the same trend toward technological solutions that compel their commercial customers. Digital tools have evolved considerably in the last ten years, and the trend among successful dealerships is to leverage an industry-specific CRM with integrated marketing and analytic tools to increase efficiency and profitability.

I'll leave you with one parting thought. Regardless of trends or technological achievements, dealerships must always be mindful of the need to provide a high-quality experience

for their customers. Yes, our industry is fiercely competitive, and dealerships must employ adequate tools to meet the needs of commercial vehicle customers. Still, good relationships and trust are the foundation of a successful dealership. So, as you consider how to stay ahead of the curve and provide an exceptional customer experience, remember that it's not just about technology—it's about people, too!

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INCREASING WORKER PRODUCTIVITY & SAFETY

KENNEBUNK, KENNEBUNKPORT & WELLS WATER DISTRICT



The Kennebunk, Kennebunkport & Wells Water District (KK&W Water District) is a quasi-municipal water utility established in 1921 by an act of the Maine State Legislature.

The service area, the second longest in Maine, extends 25 miles along the York County coastline and includes the towns of Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, Wells, Ogunquit, Arundel and portions of Biddeford and York. Within these communities, KK&W Water District provides quality water service to a population that varies seasonally from 28,000 to more than 75,000. The 40 employees are dedicated to the mission, which is to provide the highest quality of water and customer service at the most reasonable cost.

THE CHALLENGE

Employees with the KK&W Water District have used a CT- 2003FB Venturo crane for several years to load and unload 80 lb. generators and 120 lb. test pumps.

As a mechanic for KK&W, Mark Lank had used the Venturo CT2003FB crane and said it works well. It has a heavy-duty, high-torque, high-speed 1.8HP winch with manual rotation, extension and a folding boom. The crane has a 2,000 lb. lifting capacity and is rated at 6,000 ft lbs.

"The ET6K has been awesome," Lank said. "We are able to use it with just one man where the crane functions as a second person. It works exactly as we want it to and needs only one person to operate it. We are very happy with it. We should've gotten it a long time ago."

**- Mark Lank,
Mechanic, KK&W Water District**

"Although we're not picking up anywhere near what it's rated for, we use the Venturo CT2003FB daily to minimize the risk of back injuries," Lank said. "It's been great."

As the work volume increased, a second crane was needed for similar loading and unloading uses. This was when Lank reached out to a Venturo distributor, WA Messer in Westbrook, Maine, who recommended the Venturo ET6K crane.

THE VENTURO SOLUTION

The Venturo ET6K is an electric-hydraulic service crane with features that are particularly suited for KK&W's needs:

- Capacity overload shutoff system
- 50 feet of 3/16" aircraft-quality wire rope
- Remote pendant with 20 ft. cord
- Load block with swivel hook and safety latch
- Master disconnect switch
- 25 ft. battery cable
- 2,000 lb. lifting capacity
- 6,000 ft-lbs. rating

Despite its small footprint, the low-cost ET6K service crane is powerfully efficient and easy-to-use. In fact, this crane falls outside the OSHA regulations for certified crane operators, which means any worker can easily learn how to operate the crane and use it on the jobsite with minimal training.

The KK&W Water District uses the ET6K daily to load and unload a large compactor stored in the back of the truck, as well as other equipment and tools.

"Depending on where the truck is parked, we may need to lift the compactor off the site or out the back," Lank said.

The Venturo ET6K is also used for a variety of other tasks, including using the extension to get out over a snowbank or over a gap to pull out a compactor part over an in-ground fire hydrant.



TOOLBOX NEWS & EVENTS

Transfer Flow Open House & Factory Tour

If you've ever wondered how Transfer Flow designs, engineers, and manufactures their tanks, Friday, October 13th's Open House (and Duel 40th Anniversary) Event was the place to be!

Transfer Flow offered guided tours of their manufacturing buildings, had various models on display and fed those who attended!

This Year is Transfer Flow's 40th Anniversary - be sure to check their [Facebook account](#) for their events and news (like expanding into Tennessee!)

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TOOLBOX NEWS & EVENTS

Reading Truck Open Houses from East to West



Open House in front of Reading Truck's Nashville location

Following their rebranding launch, Reading Truck was excited to showcase their facilities, products and services by holding open houses at six Reading Truck centers on the East and West Coasts. Hosting its valued customers and dealers, Reading highlighted their breadth of capabilities and services. "The open houses were a great way to connect with our customers and discuss how we can continue to support their evolving needs," explained Jason Connell, President, Reading Truck Center.

The open houses presented Reading Truck's full line-up of its latest work truck bodies and equipment, along with products and equipment from LEER, Masterack and EAVX, all sister companies also owned by JB Poindexter & Co. EAVX, the technology and innovation hub of JBPCO, demonstrated the Proxima – a Class 5 walk-in step van body from Morgan Olson. The Proxima, powered by an electric chassis and integrated technology, sparked conversations centered on EV technology and the future of the work truck industry.

While the focus was on 6 locations, all 22 Reading Truck center locations provide an outlet for new or upgraded work truck outfitting, support from their sales and service teams, and purchasing products and equipment from a variety of vendors. "We work hard to make sure our Reading Truck locations are a one-stop shop for all our customers. The opportunity

to strengthen our relationships and ties in the communities we serve made each day a huge success," stated Eric McNally, Vice President, Sales & Marketing.



Open House in Caldwell, ID showcasing the Proxima, a Class 5 walk-in step van body from Morgan Olson

Reading Truck's open houses generated meaningful conversations with their dealers and customers in those specific service areas. As leaders in the truck body manufacturing industry, Reading is always available to support inquiries anyone may have about equipment, upfits, or service. Reading Truck is looking forward to next year's round of Open Houses!



Perfect weather for Reading's truck bodies on display in West Palm Beach.

UPCOMING TRADESHOWS & EVENTS



NADA Show 2024
Las Vegas, NV —
February 1st - February 4th, 2024
[Registration >>>](#)

NADA Show 2024 offers a unique opportunity for dealers and managers to immerse themselves in the latest trends, innovations and strategies to help improve their performance and grow their business.



Work Truck Week 2024
Indianapolis, IN —
March 5th - March 8th, 2024
[Registration >>>](#)

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What Time is It?

DIGITAL DEALER

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RECAP

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..."

If you've read *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, either as required reading when in school, or perhaps because you're a fan of the classics, you surely recognize this line. But, you may not have thought about how it relates to the automotive dealership space, so let's expand on this thought.

While in Las Vegas at Digital Dealer in October, it was clear there were differing mindsets, opinions and approaches to where we are today. On one hand, inventory levels have been rising and some customers are still buying. On the other hand, most say the economy is surely heading toward a recession and interest rates are the highest they've been in years. Said another way, floor traffic, based on my not so scientific "eyeball test" coupled with conversations with several of those at the show, revealed fewer dealership personnel than in shows past.

So, does that mean there's doom and gloom on the horizon for the automotive sector? I'd say not so, especially for those in the commercial vehicle space. That's right, those of us reading this publication should consider ourselves optimists - but with good reason. We know that the

commercial vehicle ecosystem, and the demand for the vehicles used by small to medium sized businesses (and even large ones), is strong.

As such, we know that while some may see hurdles, we know better; we know there are significant opportunities. These opportunities might be finding ways to offer more to our commercial customers, such as mobile vehicle servicing, or telematics, or a variety of other things that can help us strengthen our partnership with these business owners by helping their businesses grow.



While it certainly felt like there weren't as many dealer principals, general managers, commercial managers, etc. at Digital Dealer this Fall, those who were there were looking for paths to expansion. And the best news of all - the businesses in our communities are frequently our hedge against economic factors. For example, when housing stats are up, this means there's a great deal of construction happening, which equates to a need for work trucks. And when the new housing market isn't strong, it usually means homeowners are staying put and looking for ways to increase the value of their current homes, which results in those in the various housing trades having an uptick in their business. In both scenarios, the need for work trucks, vans and SUVs is strong, and this means the dealerships selling and servicing these commercial vehicles are in positive positions.

So when you hear someone lamenting that it's the worst of times, you might set them straight; or maybe you'll just smile to yourself because you're part of the commercial vehicle ecosystem and you know better.

A NEW EVENT TAKES CENTER STAGE: *The First DeliveryCon*



The inaugural DeliveryCon event, held Oct 16 - 18th in Las Vegas, was a powerful display of industry expertise focused on the expanding and important area of long, middle and final mile delivery. Two days of panels and keynote-led discussions revealed the strength and resilience of the delivery fleet ecosystem, with a shared understanding that the future will be unlike today. Whether a tagged look at maintenance or logistics, or a broader view about diversity and optimizing driver safety and loyalty, all agreed that focusing on new ways to leverage resources will be key.



Creativity applied to finding intermediate vehicles through rentals and vehicle sharing, using new upfit configurations to address existing use cases and new partnerships to move the entire industry forward. Founder and CVO of Work Truck Solutions, Kathryn

Schifferle, who moderated a few of the panels, reported, "The conference was filled with value from my perspective, by touching on all aspects of the delivery industry, as well as bringing together the smartest and most successful in those areas. Looking forward to next year so we can continue to keep on track in this space."



Director of New Business Development at Comvoy.com Candy McCollum, who moderated sessions on both days, validated that message. "As the national commercial vehicle marketplace that serves all vocations, Comvoy.com sees a great deal of delivery search and engagement activity. We've watched the delivery space grow, and expect continued expansion and new technologies to support it, not only with EVs and advanced fuels, but logistics technology too. As part of this effort, we're launching more resources on Comvoy.com to help vehicle buyers and fleets of all sizes stay up-to-date with everything they face in the evolving ecosystem."





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