

# FORD PROS

ISSUE 75

FEBRUARY 2024

## CONNECTIONS AS FOUNDATION

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March 5-8 | Indiana Convention Center | Indianapolis, IN



**5 Trends** Shaping Future of  
Commercial Automotive Industry

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# RELATIONSHIPS - STILL A CORNERSTONE

There's no doubt the world of business - of buying and selling goods - has changed. It's no longer simply going down to the corner store to purchase what you need. Or heading to the one and only dealership in town to buy that vehicle you need. The way in which we purchase goods, both for our personal use and for our businesses, is vastly different than what it once was, and some of it is probably for the better, although some would likely argue this point.

The phrase "people buy from people they like" may not be 100% accurate, but they sure do buy from people who build a relationship with them; they purchase from those who are seen as more than just a vendor. Being a partner means something, especially in the commercial vehicle

world. As you read through this issue, you'll see examples of this approach.

The good news is this - we can still build business relationships with customers/prospects (and vendors), both those who ARE in our town/city, as well as those who are ACROSS THE COUNTRY. With technology today, it's possible to interact across state lines with relative ease. We can (and should) form partnerships with ALL of our prospects, customers, and vendors, even if we don't see them at the local coffee shop, restaurant, ball game, and so on. It's important to our collective livelihoods, plus it helps with the overall state of mind when you have connections with others.

Along with the technological methods that assist with interaction, it's also important to capitalize on opportunities to connect face-to-

face, such as at trade shows, expos and conventions. And as the year gets fully underway, so do trade shows/expos, including two big ones: NADA and Work Truck Week. Hopefully you're attending at least one, if not both of these, and will take full advantage of the ability to meet with customers, vendors, prospects, colleagues and industry experts.

Relationships are how commercial vehicle business was historically built, and even though the way we interact today might be different from how it was "back in the day", it's still the cornerstone of all we do. I look forward to seeing YOU this year at one, or several, live events.

Steve Henning

FORDPROS

COME SEE US AT  
**THE WORK TRUCK SHOW**  
MARCH 6-8, 2024 | BOOTH #2001

The image shows a large indoor exhibition space for 'The Work Truck Show'. In the foreground, a white Mercedes-Benz Sprinter van is parked, featuring a 'KNAPHEIDE SINCE 1848' decal on its windshield. Behind it, several white pickup trucks with Knapheide utility bodies are displayed. Large banners for 'KNAPHEIDE SINCE 1848' are visible in the background, along with other trade show elements like lighting and structural beams.





## THE INDUSTRY'S TOOLBOX

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WATCH - NEWS**

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FOR THIS ISSUE TO:**

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*Mitsubishi HC Capital America*

*Premier Truck Body, LLC*

*OEM Systems, LLC*

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# HIGH IN THE BEAMS

## "WILL PRICES EVER COME DOWN?"

Kathryn Schifferle, CVO Work Truck Solutions on  
Pickup Truck+SUV Talk Podcast

January 31st, 2024

Despite a rocky 2022, the 2023 fleet truck market saw a rebound in inventory and continued strong demand. While electrification conversations buzzed, adoption remained niche, and new vehicle prices rose due to the lingering effects of prior shortages. Used car prices in both retail and commercial industries initially soared but then stabilized. Looking ahead to 2024, solid business growth promises consistent fleet truck demand, with alternative fuels like hydrogen and propane joining the electric conversation. Dealerships need



to adapt to better serve fleet needs, and continued advancements in EV technology have the potential to further shape the market.

[WATCH ON YOUTUBE HERE](#)



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

Mullen Automotive, Inc., an emerging electric vehicle ("EV") manufacturer, announces the achievement of a key commercial EV milestone with its all-electric Class 3 low cab forward chassis truck, receiving certification from the California Air Resources Board ("CARB"). The certification is awarded to vehicle manufacturers who meet specific emissions standards in compliance with CARB regulations. The District of Columbia and 14 states, including California, have adopted vehicle standards under Section 177 of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. §7507), which requires additional approvals beyond EPA regulations.

Mullen's Class 1 and Class 3 commercial vehicles are now both in receipt of Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") and CARB certifications. Both vehicles are also in full compliance with U.S. Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards. Having received credentials from CARB and the EPA, Mullen can now sell both the Mullen ONE and THREE in every state throughout the U.S. A copy of Mullen's Class 3 CARB certification can be found on MullenUSA.com.

Additionally, CARB certification opens both the Mullen ONE and THREE eligibility for critical state EV incentive programs, which vary by each eligible CARB-compliant state. The certification takes on even more significance with CARB's recent Advanced Clean Fleets ("ACF") regulation, which will have a requirement that state and local government fleets, including city, county, special district, and state agency fleets, ensure 50% of vehicle purchases are zero-emission beginning in 2024 and 100% of vehicle purchases are zero-emission by 2027. Fleets that fall under high priority may also elect to utilize ZEV milestones as an option to meet overall ZEV targets.

California's HVIP project is an example of a valuable state incentive program

available to CARB-certified vehicles. Under HVIP, the Mullen THREE EV truck, with a suggested MSRP of \$68,500.00, may qualify for a rebate of up to \$45,000.00 and, when combined with the available \$7,500.00 federal tax credit, the net effective cost of the Mullen THREE would be less than \$20,000.00.

"CARB approval accelerates commercialization of the Mullen THREE and makes our vehicle even more appealing to customers who want to electrify their fleets," said David Michery, CEO and chairman of Mullen Automotive. "Having both our Class 1 and Class 3 commercial EVs now CARB and EPA certified will continue to drive sales in all states across America."

To learn more visit  
[www.MullenUSA.com](http://www.MullenUSA.com)







## WORK TRUCK SOLUTIONS FEATURED ON E-COMMERCE PLATFORM "THE SHOP" FROM FORDDIRECT

**February 1, 2024**

***Only commercial vehicle-centric partner included at launch***

**C**hico, CA - In FordDirect's recent launch of their new e-commerce platform called "The Shop", Work Truck Solutions was the only commercial partner presented, and one of only eight vendors included. The Shop's goal is to assist Ford dealerships address the challenges

faced in today's rapidly evolving automotive business landscape. These selected vendors will help dealers explore new revenue opportunities and drive cost efficiencies, while allowing them to keep their primary focus on their core activities; all vetted vendors are at the forefront of their specific category's technological curve.

With a broad commercial vehicle product line, the commercial business opportunity is a rapidly expanding focus for all Ford dealers. As the only software vendor focused on commercial trucks and vans, Work Truck Solutions was proud that their world-class digital marketing, inventory management and merchandising tools were part of this initial launch. Ford dealers using The Shop will see pre-negotiated prices for needed commercial vehicle software and services, thereby streamlining the process of searching for tools to increase efficiency, generate leads, close deals and positively impact their bottom line in this growth market.

"We are both honored and thrilled to be selected as a trusted vendor on FordDirect's groundbreaking platform, 'The Shop,'" said Aaron Johnson, CEO of Work Truck Solutions. "This partnership reinforces our mutual dedication to providing superior service and innovative solutions. With access to our suite of digital marketing and inventory management tools, Ford dealers can optimize their commercial vehicle operations, strengthen their connection with business buyers, and surpass their business objectives. Above all, this collaboration symbolizes our shared vision towards empowering dealerships with the right technology to drive better business outcomes and excellent customer interaction."

[www.worktrucksolutions.com](http://www.worktrucksolutions.com)

**Learn more about The Shop at**  
[theshop.forddirect.com](http://theshop.forddirect.com)



**SAFE FLEET EXPANDS ITS SAFETY-AS-A-SERVICE NETWORK IN LOUISVILLE, OH**  
**December 20, 2023**

**L**ouisville, OH - Safe Fleet, the leading supplier of fleet vehicle safety solutions, continues to expand its Commercial Vehicle division's Safety-As-A-Service (SAAS) network, with a facility in Louisville, OH.

This new location will support Safe Fleet's tarping business and better service the Northeast Ohio dump truck & trailer manufacturers. For

the time being, it will specialize in premium solutions from its family of tarping brands: Roll-Rite, Pulltarps, and Vango. With a wide array of automatic, semi-automatic, and rolling tarp systems, Safe Fleet offers protection for payloads of all types.

The new Louisville location will cater to open-top dump trailers, flatbed trailers, and dump trucks, with trailer pickup and delivery services for preferred customers.

[www.safefleet.net](http://www.safefleet.net)  
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## ANNUAL REVIEW OF 2023 DATA REVEALS STABLE DEMAND FOR COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

January 12th, 2024

Chico, CA -- The commercial vehicle market has seen remarkable changes over the recent years, but for informed stakeholders, most post-pandemic trends have not been completely unforeseen. Work Truck Solutions' reports for 2021 and 2022 offered data-driven insights into how the sector was overcoming labor shortages, manufacturing shutdowns, and inventory challenges. In addition, data concerning price changes, inventory levels, days-to-turn, and mileage were analyzed and confirmed a slow-but-steady recovery.

Amid the dramatic shifts in inventory numbers, one element of the commentary has remained consistent; business owners continue to need and purchase commercial vehicles no matter the circumstances around them. Our latest analysis adds punctuation to this point!

### NEW COMMERCIAL VEHICLE DATA FOR 2023

- Average new vehicle prices increased 1.0% QoQ for 4Q, and 6.5% YoY.
- On-lot per dealer work truck inventory continued to grow, up 20.0% QoQ and a whopping 87.4% YoY, with Medium-Duty vehicles making up over half of the on-lot mix.
- Average Days to Turn (DTT) is likely being influenced by the increase in available inventory and showed a slight increase QoQ (9.2%) and a significant increase YoY (52.2%). Last year, limited inventory was

often sold before hitting the lot.

- Movement of new vehicles increased to the highest value for the year, up 7.8% QoQ and 17.0% YoY.

Note that although new inventory levels outpaced movement growth, which likely caused the increase in DTT, work trucks and vans carried higher price tags than last year, and the total sales of new commercial vehicles increased significantly.

### USED COMMERCIAL VEHICLE DATA FOR 2023

- Median mileage of used work trucks and vans increased 5.9% QoQ and 10.1% YoY.
- Average used vehicle prices decreased 2.1% QoQ and 1.8% YoY.
- Onlot Inventory has been in a decline and fell 6.2% QoQ and 12.1% YoY.
- Average DTT showed a slight increase QoQ of 6.0% and 6.8% YoY.
- Movement numbers fell at an accelerated rate in 4Q, with average moved used work trucks/vans per dealer decreasing 8.7% QoQ and 10.8% YoY.

### COMMERCIAL ALT-FUEL VEHICLE DATA

The future of the commercial vehicle market is in the very early stages of alt-fuel transformation, in large part being driven by net-zero regulations and mandates.

"As the availability of regulation compliant vehicles manifests at dealerships, more data will be available to assess the impact on the commercial vehicle market," said Aaron Johnson, CEO of Work Truck Solutions. "This data will provide insights into the adoption rates of alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) and how they are being used by fleets, and we anticipate reporting on this specific vehicle segment in coming days as the data becomes more

significant across the commercial vehicle market."

### DATA ANALYSIS TAKEAWAYS

The data clearly shows the results of used commercial vehicles filling the void of a two-year manufacturing disruption. The available used vehicles today have increased mileage, and with new vehicle inventory levels increasing, the used vehicle segment is taking a hit in all areas.

The trade-off being that there are more new vehicles available for purchase. We can see the YoY cannibalization of the market as the Q4 2022 new vs. used work truck movement ratio was 3:2 (3 new vehicles sold for every 2 used vehicles), compared to the Q4 2023 being 2:1 (2 new vehicles moved for every used vehicle).

When speaking of 2024, Johnson noted, "The work truck market for new vehicles is trending positively for dealers, with higher prices and expanded inventory levels. Conversely, the used truck segment is showing some signs of challenges with decreased prices and less inventory. However, regardless of the focus, be it new, used or a mix of both, it is important for dealers to have solutions that help their customers address work truck, van and SUV needs for their businesses. With so much continued opportunity on the horizon for commercial vehicle dealers, it will be the solutions they offer their customers that set them apart."

Wrapping up, Johnson said, "2023 was a great year for Work Truck Solutions in that we were able to help so many of our partners, including those new to the commercial vehicle space. Helping customers succeed will continue to be our focus going forward."

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# 5 TRENDS SHAPING FUTURE OF COMMERCIAL AUTOMOTIVE IN 2024

BY KATHRYN SCHIFFERLE, CVO WORK TRUCK SOLUTIONS

The commercial automotive industry stands at the crossroads of economic challenges, evolving customer needs, and a dynamic environmental landscape, setting the stage for a transformative journey in 2024.

As a new year unfolds, bringing fresh goals, evolving regulations, and expanded opportunities, let's delve into the five pivotal trends that promise to shape the industry's future.

## Dealerships Pivot Towards

### Commercial Customer Obsession

In a changing economy where inflation and interest rates have hit the brakes rapidly for retail buyers, dealerships are likely to pivot towards commercial customers.

These customers operate on a different clock – one that ticks loudly, demanding immediate solutions.

The indispensable role of commercial vehicles, generating \$2,000 to \$3,000 per day per vehicle for businesses, underscores the urgency for efficient solutions. These customers can't wait for interest rates to lower or the market to settle. Their industries are resilient through economic highs and lows – meaning vocational businesses ensure a consistent demand for commercial vehicles for dealerships.

In addition to needing vehicles to support their business now, commercial customers are also grappling with the complexities of running a business today. Many businesses and industries are feeling pressure from government regulations, as well as society, to integrate electric vehicles and net-zero carbon solutions into their fleets.

New technologies like telematics offer data and insights that businesses need to operate efficiently. These complexities open avenues for new dealership services, and the key lies

in cultivating relationships built on trust to guide commercial customers through this changing terrain.

## Commercial Evs Find

### Their Niche In Specific Use Cases

Commercial customers certainly recognize the societal benefit of a fleet that sports the label "electric" or "net-zero" compared to the negative impression of an idling gas or diesel vehicle. As the societal appeal of sustainable fleets gains traction, commercial electric vehicles face practical limitations, particularly in vocations with diverse operational needs.

A utility company in a rural area with harsh winters or unpredictable violent storms, for instance, may find EVs impractical. However, specific use cases, such as fixed-route delivery and transport buses, present ideal opportunities for electrification. These vocations with predictable and short-range routes where vehicles can return to a garage or depot that can support charging are prime for adoption. Anticipate a surge in solutions tailored to specific use cases, ensuring a balanced integration of EVs into commercial fleets.

## Fixed Ops Takes Center Stage With Commercial Service Bays

With revenues short on the retail side, dealerships will not only look to commercial sales to keep business moving, they'll also look to other commercial revenue opportunities. Commercial customers can't wait weeks for a vehicle to be serviced. Dealerships who offer dedicated commercial service bays or who provide mobile service offerings enhance their value.

Commercial customers offer many opportunities for dealerships, but fixed ops poses potentially the greatest potential with a staggering

85-90% of commercial customers currently servicing their fleet outside of dealerships. It's an untapped market that dealers can employ immediately.

## Urban final mile: The fastest growing vocation with electric bikes

Giant idling box trucks present an unsightly scene, initiating a traffic nightmare and blocking streets for even small package deliveries. As cities restrict truck access, urban final mile delivery becomes a hotbed for growth, and electric bikes emerge as the ideal solution for navigating congested city streets. Expect a surge in the adoption of eBikes customized for efficient last-mile delivery in urban markets, where traditional trucks face logistical challenges.

## Ai Drives Efficiency In Commercial Sales Processes

The commercial sales landscape is becoming more intricate, with an array of products ranging from vehicles to software, charging solutions, and services. In response, 2024 is poised to unveil a new era of AI-powered solutions, revolutionizing customer prospecting and relationship management. This shift will empower dealerships to navigate the complexities of commercial sales efficiently, allowing them to offer a more tailored and technology-driven approach to their B2B customers.

In the fast-paced realm of commercial automotive, 2024 promises to be a year of adaptation, innovation, and customer-centric evolution. Dealerships embracing these trends will position themselves at the forefront, steering the industry towards a future where commercial vehicles not only meet business needs but also align seamlessly with the changing dynamics of our world.

[First Published: AutoRemarketing.com](#)





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# LISTEN: FOCUS ON WorkTruckWeek 2024



Commercial Vehicle Pro

**S3: E26 - WTW 2024 Preview - Jim Press, Senior Advisor**



00:00 | 09:32

**Kathryn Schifferle, CVO + Jim Press, Senior Advisor - Work Truck Solutions, discuss the possibilities and benefits of the upcoming Work Truck Week 2024 and Green Truck Summit and give a teaser for their Workshop Session on {Day/Time Updated} Wednesday, March 6th, 2024 at the show and Work Truck Solutions Evening Event on Thursday March 7th 2024 at the Hyatt**

The commercial automotive industry stands at the crossroads of economic challenges, evolving customer needs, and a dynamic environmental landscape, setting the stage for a transformative journey in 2024.

Work Truck Week (WTW) is not just a convention, it's a gathering of all the most important people in the industry who come together once a year to work on how to make the future better. WTW is where we spend time with each other; manufacturers, distributors, dealers and customers are gathered at the same time. And so what better place

to learn about the future and how to make it better.

WTW is really about the essence of what Mobility is going to be in the future, and the pioneers that are making it happen will be in Indianapolis for the first week of March. Day one, Tuesday the 5th, is the Green Truck Summit which focuses on advanced fuels, and the display of over 500 different exhibitors at the convention center is open until midday Friday. Wednesday and Thursday there are also daily sessions offered on new products, OEM vehicles, and even business efficiencies.

**{Scheduling Update}** On Wednesday, at 1:00 to 2:30pm in room 209 in the convention center, Maritz and Work Truck Solutions are offering a free session titled: Your Digital Toolkit for Success in the CV Ecosystem. This workshop, moderated by Jim Press, has been designed to help the myriad stakeholders in the commercial vehicle industry by providing them with specific tools on how to communicate to their channel partners and their business buyers about their specific use cases and how to provide consultative support. Utilizing these tools will create loyalty, value in the channel, and more importantly relationships that will last forever.

Everyone should also mark Thursday at 5 pm on their calendar for the Loungin' reception sponsored by Mitsubishi HC Capital America, Work Truck Solutions, Crestline, and Escalent. This is the chance for everybody to get together, celebrate who they've met, the conversations that they've had, and what they're seeing in the industry. Just a quick walk across the bridge to the Hyatt when the show closes at 5, and all are invited.

WTW is the best opportunity for dealers to learn more about commercial vehicles, and what use cases that they have in their market. This is the largest work truck event anywhere - hope to see you there!

**For more information please listen to the podcast discussion between Kathryn Schifferle and Jim Press.**

**LISTEN TO THE PODCAST**

00:00 | 22:23

**INTERESTED IN DOING A PODCAST WITH CVBNETWORK AT WTW2024?  
CONTACT US AT [ADMIN@CVBNETWORK.COM](mailto:ADMIN@CVBNETWORK.COM)! DEALERS + UPFITTERS + WELCOME!**



## EVENTS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS!

**TUESDAY**

MARCH 5TH, 2024  
8AM - 5PM

### GREEN TRUCK SUMMIT

Stop by to learn more about NuPropel - the latest commercial resource for advanced fuel information and resources.

*JW Marriott Indianapolis*



**WEDNESDAY**

MARCH 5TH, 2024  
1PM - 2:30PM

### WORKSHOP WITH WORK TRUCK SOLUTIONS & MARITZ

Your Digital Toolkit for Success in the CV Ecosystem -  
Discover effective methods and strategies for online sales.

*Room 209 - Indiana Convention Center*

**THURSDAY**

MARCH 7TH, 2024  
12PM - 12:25PM

### WORK TRUCK SOLUTIONS PRESS CONFERENCE

Exciting new tools to help dealerships and upfitters serve their customers in the heavy-duty market while also improving their bottom line.

*Room 242 - Indiana Convention Center*



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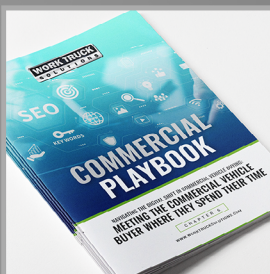
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## NEW EVS, TRUCKS AND VANS DRIVE THE BLUE CARPET AT WORK TRUCK WEEK<sup>®</sup> 2024

### Dozens Of New Products To Premiere At Commercial Vehicle Industry's Main Event

**N**orth America's largest work truck event also serves as the world premiere for the biggest stars in the commercial vehicle universe. New EVs, internal combustion commercial vehicles, and the components, equipment and services that make them more efficient and effective for a wide range of vocational applications will debut at Work Truck Week<sup>®</sup> 2024.

Work Truck Week runs March 5-8, 2024, at Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. It encompasses Green Truck Summit, The Work Truck Show<sup>®</sup>, NTEA Annual Meeting, Ride & Drive, educational sessions and more. Green Truck Summit is March 5, educational sessions run March 5-7 and Work Truck Show exhibits are open March 6-8. Work Truck Week is produced by NTEA - The Work Truck Association<sup>™</sup>.

#### REGISTRATION INFO

"One of the reasons busy industry professionals make time to attend Work Truck Week is to take advantage of the unmatched opportunity it provides for them to not only see, but touch, explore and even drive the latest products from more than 500 exhibiting companies," says Steve Carey, NTEA president & CEO. "Plus, only at Work Truck Week can they meet one-on-one with manufacturer engineers and technical specialists, industry experts and their peers to discuss technology, trends and how to improve their operations."

Many of the biggest product announcements will be made during the more than two dozen press conferences scheduled Tuesday, March 5, through Thursday, March 7. The press conference schedule is available at [worktruckweek.com/mediacalendar](http://worktruckweek.com/mediacalendar).

Attendees can review some new products ahead of time by visiting the Product Gallery at [wtw24.mapyourshow.com](http://wtw24.mapyourshow.com). Register and create a WTW24 Planner to build a personalized calendar including exhibitors, products and educational sessions to maximize time at the event.

#### WTW24 PLANNER MAP YOUR SHOW

An hour before the main exhibit hall opens March 6-7, see what's new from 25 first-time exhibitors in the New Exhibitor Pavilion located in Rooms 137-139 across from the Hall I Work Truck Show exhibit hall entrance.



#### RIDE & DRIVE VEHICLE LINEUP ANNOUNCED

[WORKTRUCKWEEK.COM/RIIDEANDDRIVEVEHICLES](http://WORKTRUCKWEEK.COM/RIIDEANDDRIVEVEHICLES)

All Work Truck Week attendees can experience commercial vehicles with the latest advanced technology, fuel, sustainability offerings and propulsion systems

during Ride & Drive March 6-7. Featured vehicles incorporate advancements that promote reduced fuel usage, greenhouse gasses or particulate matter.

## GREEN TRUCK

### SUMMIT

**Tuesday, March 5**  
**JW Marriott Indianapolis**

In addition to all the new products on display, Work Truck Week also provides opportunities to look into the industry's future. Green Truck Summit focuses on the evolution of the commercial vehicle landscape as the shift toward zero emissions continues to accelerate. Leading commercial vehicle manufacturers will share their latest chassis specifications and designs, review body and equipment installation options and provide insight into future vehicle plans during 15 Chassis Update Sessions offered as part of the educational program.

For more information, including links to register and book hotel rooms, visit [worktruckweek.com](http://worktruckweek.com) or contact NTEA ([info@ntea.com](mailto:info@ntea.com) or 800-441-6832).

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Although Rockport offers a variety of traditional dry freight truck body options up to 28' in length for delivery needs, their rapid growth and popularity has been driven from superior design and quality of their cutaway chassis product line up. These cutaway chassis platforms integrate to Ford, GM, & RAM chassis offerings creating flexible delivery services and contractor service bodies utilizing attractive cab to cargo walk-through options. Their most popular models, Cargoport (Package Delivery) and Workport (Service Vehicle), offer industry leading lowest entry floor height, reducing fatigue and opportunity for injury. The Workport service body continues to differentiate itself through design. Heavy duty and productivity enhancing equipment continue to make this a contractor favorite.

Workport's intentional design also allows flexible integration to any commercial cutaway or cab chassis.

While consistently proving themselves as a reliable performer for national fleet customers, Rockport continues to focus on how it all started with regional dealer retail, and small fleet business. They have developed large chassis bailment pools through Ford and GM, while also pooling RAM chassis, to allow their dealers access to additional products to support their local business demand. "Through consistent performance over the years, and the support of our great dealer network, we have grown our chassis bailment pools to sizable levels, which has allowed us to continue to grow," said Caleb Pontius, General Manager of Rockport. "With the challenges for dealers the last several years to get product on their lots, we value the opportunity to help them through our chassis bailment pools."

When looking at what has contributed to Rockport's rapid market share growth, it is easy to understand because they consistently offer quality and competitively priced products, delivered in a timely manner. Their flexibility and ability to react to customer needs provides added value to their dealer partners.

**For more information about Rockport Commercial Vehicle products, please visit their website at [rockporttrucks.com](http://rockporttrucks.com), or call them direct at 574.295.1022**

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# LISTENING TO VOICES IN COMMERCIAL FLEET

The business to business commercial vehicle and fleet sector of automotive is unique, to say the least. A traditional space built on legacy knowledge and symbiotic relationships, it has arguably evolved more in the last five years than the last fifty.

These statements should resonate deeply with anyone who has been working in this space for longer than a cup of coffee.

Product and service evolutions, and recent events not previously experienced in our lifetimes, are causing ripple effects on how business gets done. Technology and data are playing a more highly visible role in this new period of dynamic change.

The reality is there are always both 'push' and 'pull' forces for products or services to be successful in the market. These are not necessarily opposable forces; done well, they can work in harmony. But, it is critical to listen well in order to understand the market.

Frequently, the pull force is what brings new offers into the market. The "business"—those operating and using vehicles—identifies a need, and the industry—OEMs, suppliers, dealers, upfitters, service providers, etc.—responds with a solution accordingly. Today newer solutions seem to be coming from more of the push effort from the industry side, and often, the results are proving to be less than hoped for.

**"Houston, we have a problem."  
It seems we've had a  
breakdown in communication.**

In both these groups, one thing remains constant over all the years and change—the human element. And in each case, there's a whole lot of people involved, who have a lot to

say. But who's making sure that the customer is being asked what they want and need? And who's really listening? And wouldn't it be great if this could be a holistic dialogue?

The key to accomplishing that goal is understanding the human perspective from each side—using language that connects with one another, translating and aligning the needs of business with the solutions of industry.

This is where **Escalent**—a research and consulting company with decades of experience in the sector can come in. Escalent has partnered with **Work Truck Solutions** and **Comvoy** to give voices to all those in the ecosystem through our one-of-a-kind Fleet Advisory Hub (FAH) Community.

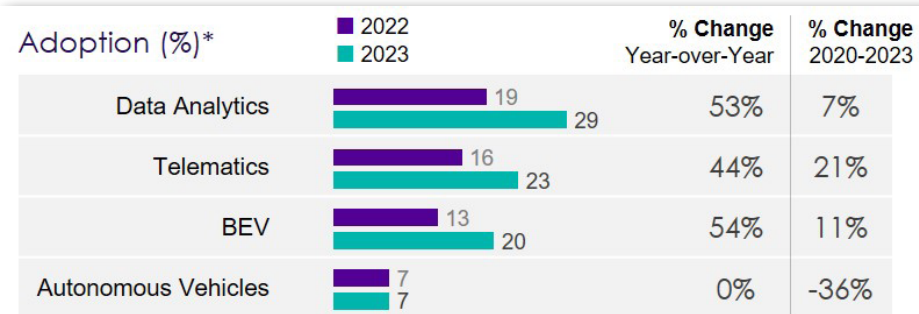
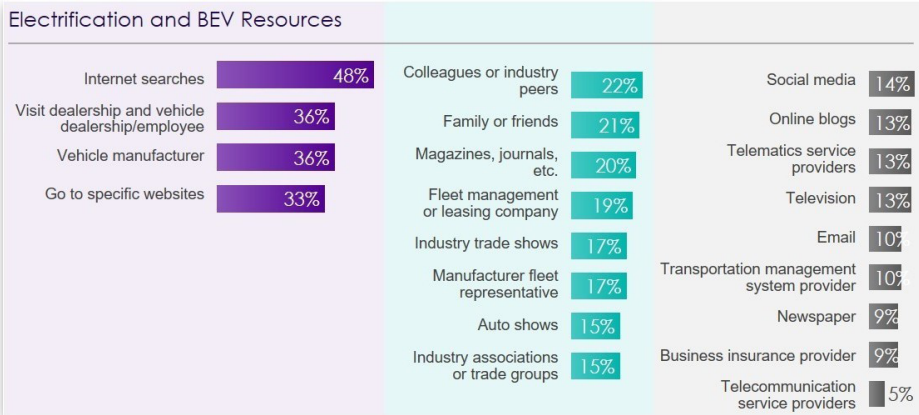
Together we want to bring stakeholders into a shared dialogue

and mutual understanding. By leveraging relationships and contextual understanding, we will get all of us much closer than would be possible without this new tech-supported effort.

Below is an example of the end results from an Escalent research project, where we wanted to understand what resources fleet decision-makers and influencers leverage for information about **Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs)**.

Below that is an example showing time-trended data for adoption of various technologies.

Both of these graphics illustrate the opportunity for the industry to be trusted advisors to the business side. It's vital that the industry listens to why businesses are, or are not, taking actions today, in order to prepare for tomorrow.



\*Adoption is defined as integrated technology into the business or currently pilot testing

### "THE REALITY IS THERE ARE ALWAYS BOTH 'PUSH' AND 'PULL' FORCES FOR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE MARKET. THESE ARE NOT NECESSARILY OPPOSABLE FORCES; DONE WELL, THEY CAN WORK IN HARMONY."

With new solutions comes a learning curve, where education and experience are critical. The business end users do not want to be talked at or sold to. They want partners to come on the journey alongside them—help them to help themselves by thoroughly understanding both their business and objectives—together aligning products and services that ultimately meet the needs of that business.

The speed of business slows down for no one. If anything, it is only

accelerating today with more new technologies and an explosion of data. It is in this spirit that Comvoy, Work Truck Solutions, and Escalent have partnered to create the FAH Community.

We invite you, along with referrals among your network of relationships, to join us in this new way to chart the path forward. Together we will listen intently to what the sector needs to ultimately be as successful as we all want to be—a true “win, win, win”.

#### WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO KEEP UP?

- [CLICK HERE](#) to join the FAH Community by telling us about yourself and your business ([USE THIS ONE](#) for sharing).
- [CLICK HERE](#) to learn about Comvoy, Work Truck Solutions, and Escalent partnership on the FAH Community.
- [CLICK HERE](#) to take a short survey to let us know how you feel about Electric Vehicles for business users.

Please feel to share these links with your customers so that they know how important it is to YOU to help them...

**By Lucas Lowden, Escalent  
Insights Consultant,  
Automotive & Mobility  
Program Lead,  
Fleet Advisory Hub**

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# NAVIGATING NETWORKS:

## Building Valuable Connections in the Work Truck Industry

To remain dynamic in the ever changing landscape of the work truck industry, staying power often hinges on the ability to forge meaningful connections and lasting partnerships. Sure, technological advancements have made the world tremendously bigger and smaller at the same time, so taking advantage of technology while establishing relationships around the industry is a useful strategy for success, despite being a new or seasoned member of the work truck network.



### KNOW THE PLAYERS

In the complex work truck industry, we are a vast network of key players who are all connected in some way:

#### SUPPLIERS & MANUFACTURERS

Large and small manufacturers are innovating truck bodies and equipment to meet the needs of today's end user! A collaborative and communicative approach can lead to strategic partnerships, ensuring a streamlined supply chain and enhanced product development. By understanding the needs and challenges faced by manufacturers, suppliers can tailor their offerings and create mutually beneficial arrangements.

#### DISTRIBUTORS, DEALER NETWORK & RETAIL LOCATIONS

How do we get trucks out on the road and jobsites? In addition to a manufacturer's retail locations, distributors and dealers play a pivotal role in connecting with fleet opportunities and individual consumers. Building relationships with these intermediaries is essential for companies looking to expand their market reach. By understanding the distribution channels and collaborating effectively with dealers, manufacturers can ensure that their products reach the right audience and complement their efforts, while distributors benefit from access to quality products for their clientele.

#### SERVICE & SOFTWARE PROVIDERS

From maintenance to SaaS solutions and everything in between, the work truck industry relies on a vast array of partners to keep vehicles on the road and operations running smoothly. Being able to offer both out-of-the-box and custom offerings, as well as integrate daily tasks and systems, brings great value to dealer networks and fleet managers. Providers should maintain a consistent focus on how to make life easier for their customers.

#### FLEET MANAGERS

Fleets may operate from one location or have multiple locations around the country. Fleet managers often look for right-sized distribution networks to match their specific business needs, as well as local support for ongoing maintenance. Whether it's a fleet of 15 or 500, managers

want customization options, as well as to build their own brand and reputation. Manufacturers, dealers/distributors, and service providers benefit from taking time to understand complex requirements, building deep relationships and exceeding expectations.

#### END USERS

A satisfied end user can be your best brand ambassador and build brand loyalty! Help curate feedback and reviews with a robust online presence, including online forms, Google Business listing, and social media. Use feedback to refine your offerings and drive innovation! At the heart of all your communications, remember that your customer is the "hero" in your brand voice; you are the guide.

### CONNECT WITH KEY PLAYERS

Building a diverse network can prove instrumental in career growth and opportunities.

Attending key industry conferences or association meetings is the perfect way to meet others and understand how your worlds may intersect, even if you're separated by a few degrees (connecting with contacts on LinkedIn may open doors to other connections as well). Utilize this time to exchange ideas, gain valuable insights, discuss industry trends, and explore potential collaborations. Consider hosting or sponsoring networking events where key players can enjoy a little downtime while strengthening relationships - meaningful in-person facetime almost always supersedes virtual meetings and quick check-ins.

### EMPATHIZE WITH CHALLENGES; SOLVE PROBLEMS TOGETHER

Looking back even over the past four years, it's evident that a problem impacting one player often impacts all players - hello, pandemic era supply chain issues!

And while we won't always see eye to eye on every issue or share all the same struggles, building connections across the diverse segments of the industry, from manufacturers and

suppliers to distributors and end users, is a strategic investment that pays off in the long run. As professionals actively engage with the industry ecosystem, they not only open doors to new opportunities but also contribute to the overall growth and innovation within the work truck industry.

No doubt there are problems being faced by one key player that can be solved through collaboration with another.

If 2024 projections are correct, the demand for work trucks will increase, giving us all the opportunity to rise together.



**AT WTW2024  
BOOTH #601**

### IN SUPPORT OF INDUSTRY COLLABORATION AND GROWTH

You have a chance to help support a 360-degree view of the pressures, concerns, and influences mentioned above that are driving all the stakeholders in the commercial vehicle industry!

- **Join the FAH (Fleet Advisory Hub™)** Community now available free through a collaboration between **Work Truck Solutions** and **Escalent**.
- Immediately you start receiving Escalent's 'Targeted Monitoring' newsletter that highlights key news and industry trends.
- Test drive a quick poll [HERE](#), or take a spin through Escalent's [FAH site](#) to learn even more.

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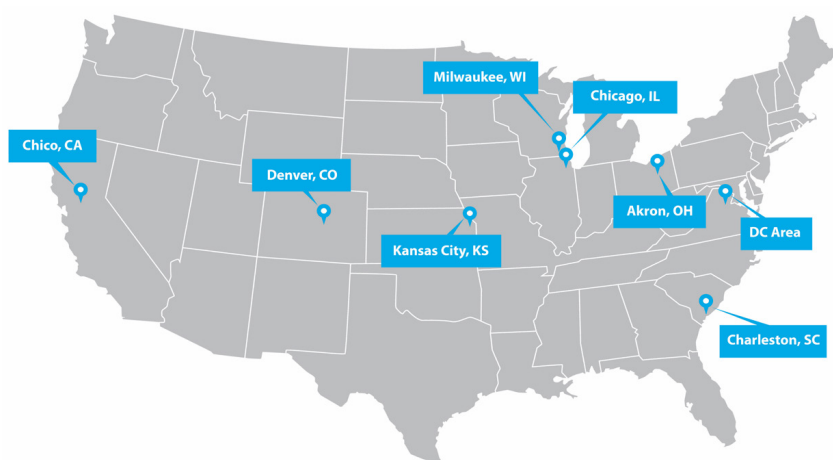
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# REVOLUTIONIZING THE ROAD

## IN THE FAST LANE OF AUTO TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS IN THE WORK TRUCK INDUSTRY

In an era where businesses and customers are no longer confined by geographical boundaries in their vehicle purchases, auto transport and logistics companies are at the forefront of reshaping the industry. One such trailblazer is Crestline Auto Transport, a dynamic organization specializing in the work truck sector. And as the traditional constraints of purchasing fleet vehicles within local markets fade away, Crestline is redefining how logistics in the work truck industry operates.

Alan Levy, the founder and President of Crestline, has positioned the company as a powerhouse in nationwide work truck shipping by embracing cutting-edge technologies to enhance the end-to-end online vehicle purchasing experience. His latest strategic partnership with Work Truck Solutions marks a significant milestone in realizing a seamless and efficient platform for buyers and sellers in the work truck industry. A shared vision goes beyond mere transportation logistics; Levy envisions a future where every aspect of the work truck industry is interconnected and easily accessible through digital platforms. His commitment to innovation and customer satisfaction positions Crestline as a driving force in the evolution of the work truck industry.

### **BREAKING BOUNDARIES: BEYOND LOCAL MARKETS**

"Gone are the days when businesses and individuals are restricted to purchasing vehicles within their immediate vicinity," says Levy. "The ever-evolving

marketplace has opened up new possibilities, allowing for greater flexibility and choice. We recognized this shift, early on, and it has resulted in facilitating a more seamless movement of work trucks across regions."

### **GONE ARE THE DAYS WHEN BUSINESSES & INDIVIDUALS ARE RESTRICTED TO PURCHASING VEHICLES WITHIN THEIR IMMEDIATE VICINITY**

#### **ADDRESSING THE DOWNTIME DILEMMA**

In the work truck industry, downtime is not just a concern, it's a critical factor that can impact a business's bottom line. Crestline understands the urgency involved and has implemented innovative strategies to minimize downtime during the transportation process. Through optimized routes, state-of-the-art tracking systems, and an established fleet base of specialized carriers, Crestline ensures that work trucks of all shapes and sizes are managed effectively and safely transported to their destinations.

#### ***Tips for Moving Vehicles at Increasing Speed to Market***

**1. EFFICIENT ROUTING:** Utilize advanced routing algorithms to identify the most time-efficient paths, considering traffic, road conditions and potential delays.

#### **2. REAL-TIME TRACKING:**

Implement cutting-edge tracking technology to monitor vehicles in real-time, allowing for proactive intervention in case of unexpected issues.

#### **3. SPECIALIZED CARRIERS:**

Invest in a diversified fleet of carriers designed specifically for the proper loaded on-trailer transport of all types of work trucks. Ensure the secure and efficient transportation tailored to the unique needs of the industry.

#### **4. STREAMLINED PROCESSES:**

Eliminate unnecessary paperwork and inconsistent vehicle inspections by digitizing documentation and streamlining administrative processes.

In the ever-evolving landscape of the work-truck industry, Crestline stands as a beacon of innovation and efficiency. By embracing the global nature of vehicle purchase and leveraging advanced logistics solutions, they are helping to drive the industry towards a future where borders are no longer barriers, and work trucks reach their destinations faster than ever before.





# CALIFORNIA REGULATORS CHARGE AHEAD WITH EV WORK TRUCKS

**E**lectric vehicles (EV) in the US have been growing in popularity for over a decade. Tesla began production of its Roadster sports car in 2008 and followed that with various other models in the ensuing years. Tesla and others have also developed first generation electric pickups and semi-trucks and vans. But power requirements for passenger vehicles and vans are vastly different than for work trucks – especially if those work trucks are outfitted with cranes and generators and hoists, etc. A delivery van or lightweight transit vehicle may be able to operate well with the current generation of battery and EV technology available, since very few power-hungry accessories are included as standard equipment. This is not true for most commercial work trucks.

## STATES BEGIN TO PUSH THE PANIC BUTTON

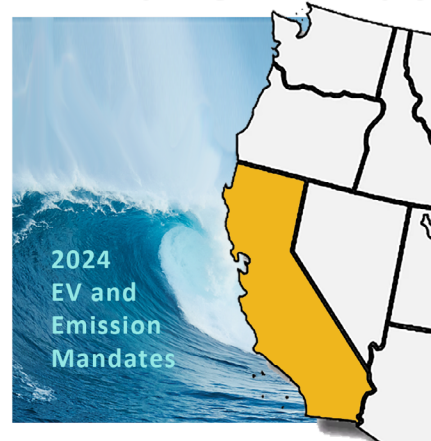
Dissatisfied with the speed in which carbon-emission free power sources have been adopted for vehicles in their state and frustrated as well with

rising pollution levels, some states are enacting laws to accelerate the transition. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) enacts and enforces air quality regulations in the Golden State. According to their research, trucks account for a disproportionate amount of pollution in that state – especially diesel-powered trucks. Tired of waiting for the free market and technology to solve this problem, CARB set January 31, 2024, as the start date for a set of statewide restrictions aimed at curbing and eventually eliminating the use of diesel-powered work trucks sold and driven there and encouraging the purchase of EV work trucks.

Some long-time industry experts do not believe the timetable for this switch has been thought through completely.

"I have always been a big believer that commercial truck buyers know what is best for their fleet in the long term, and they vote with their pocketbook," states Mike Scelzi, founder and owner of California-

## A Wave Builds



## In California

based Scelzi Enterprises. "These are businesspeople who want a sustainable solution to provide long term services to their customers. They don't make too many decisions on pure emotion, but on rational supply and demand thinking. Few of them think the technology and infrastructure is ready to support this sudden change. Beyond just the number of charging stations needed to support work trucks across the state, there is the limited power available within this current generation of batteries themselves. It is just not there yet. It's like trying to power the lights and appliances in your kitchen with a pair of rechargeable D-sized flashlight batteries. The refrigerator will really struggle to keep food cold, but when it's time to use the microwave or the toaster you will really be disappointed with the results. Somewhere you are going to have to access additional power sources. So how does a hydraulic dump truck empty its load or that portable generator on



Some Commercial Work Trucks May Never Be EV

a service truck maintain power on a remote job site for several hours? It won't be with just the battery that came with the chassis cab. We could see a lot of trucks stranded at remote job sites waiting for a charge to finish the job. Scelzi may need to develop a new type of work truck – the California Battery Truck.”

#### OTHER STATES WATCHING CALIFORNIA

In addition to California's drive to switch more quickly to EV trucks than market forces would usually dictate, at least 10 other states are considering similar legislation. But most seem a bit more concerned about some of the unanswered questions than California (CARB). For Scelzi and other work truck upfitters operating there, this will be a year of transition. “It certainly has an effect on our long-term

## SOME LONG-TIME INDUSTRY EXPERTS DO NOT BELIEVE THE TIMETABLE FOR [THE EV] SWITCH HAS BEEN THOUGHT THROUGH COMPLETELY.

manufacturing plans,” Scelzi adds, “and our Engineering team has had to be a bit more creative than usual, adapting quickly to a new EV power interface. We are very proud of how we have weathered the big storms which have affected our industry in recent years: the COVID fears, the microchip shortage, supply chain breakdowns, and just the challenge

## BEST-IN-CLASS

of filling and maintaining a great work team. But now to face a man-made, artificially created restriction like this one! That makes it a little harder to accept. But this is the government we are dealing with, and like the old joke says, I am sure they are just here to help us.”

As Scelzi begins their 45th year building Premium Work Truck Bodies for Ford and other chassis cab manufacturers, help from anyone is always appreciated.

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# COACH KEN

BY KEN TAYLOR - [ken@coachkentaylor.com](mailto:ken@coachkentaylor.com)

## IS YOUR "NET" WORKING?

I often get asked, "Ken, what is the best way to network?" I have an unusual response to this question that requires a lengthy answer. I tell them to imagine they are fishing with one of two kinds of nets: a "casting net" and a "drag net." A casting net spans about six feet in circumference and drag nets can be up to fifty feet long. The casting net is thrown into the ocean water by one person and after many tries you are lucky to catch two or three fish. A drag net can be twenty to fifty feet long and requires at least two people. The individuals choose a spot where they have seen some fish jumping in the ocean and "drag" the net for several hundred feet. The result? A net full of fish! Effective business networking requires a "drag net." The person helping you with your drag net is your referral source. Here is how effective networking works:

1. You strategically choose someone to help you with your drag net. We call this your referral source. The best referral sources are your best customers, close friends, or someone in your networking group (more on networking groups later).
2. Your satisfied customers are your best source of referrals. To get the maximum amount of referrals, like getting fish, you strategically drag your net (your referral strategy) through a series of questions. Here are the networking process I use when I am out with my customers:

a. I ask the salesperson to identify their top customers with whom they have built trust through providing great service, and set up appointments with each of them.

b. On the appointment the salesperson/fisherman starts dragging their net (dragging the next is asking a series of questions). Here are the questions to ask:

**Salesperson:** "Jim, I wanted to meet with you today to ask a few questions regarding the service we have been able to provide to you. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?"

**Customer:** "No, not at all."

**Salesperson:** "How is the customer service we have been able to provide to you?"

**Customer:** "It's been great, you always either meet or exceed my expectations."

**Salesperson:** "Thanks so much for the compliment Jim, I always try to provide the best service possible to important clients like yourself." Could I ask you a quick question?"

**Customer:** "Sure."

**Salesperson:** "How many vendors do you have that supply you with goods and services where you are the customer?"

**Customer:** "About fifteen to twenty."

**Salesperson:** "Do you think they would appreciate the level of outstanding service I've been able to provide to you?"

**Customer:** "I'm sure they would appreciate quality service."



**Salesperson:** "Great, how do I get in touch with them in a way that is comfortable for you, knowing I'm focused on building relationships and providing the exceptional service you described you received from me?"

**Customer:** "I'll get you a list with the contact information."

**Salesperson:** "Jim, thank you so much. I'll keep you in the loop as I make contact. Thanks so much for your trust in me; I won't let you down."

I have gone on sales calls with our clients and used this process many times, always with great results!

Successful people do what unsuccessful people are afraid to do or are too lazy to try new techniques and processes. What about you? Are you willing to practice and implement new things? If you do, you will be among the sales professionals that go the extra mile and become champions!

[www.coachkentaylor.com](http://www.coachkentaylor.com)



# 5 WAYS TO HELP GET YOUR BUSINESS FOUND ONLINE

These days, it's not enough to just have a website. After all, there are billions, yes, you read that right, **BILLIONS**, of web pages out there. And even though many of those pages have no relevance to your business's site, they're still your competition. Their content and make-up can make it challenging for search engine users to find you, even when the users are purposefully looking.

So, the question is, what are you doing to set your website apart from the others? And more importantly, what are you doing, or rather, should you be doing, to ensure that you're being found by and served to the right audiences?

## THE KEY TO BEING FOUND

If you've done any sort of research on how to be found online, you've probably come across the acronym/term SEO.

### WHY IS SEO IMPORTANT?



It's a buzzword, and it's everywhere these days, but it's not always explained.

So, to get started, let's break it down.

### WHAT IS SEO?

SEO, or search engine optimization, is essentially a process that helps you increase your website's visibility. The process includes making modifications to your website and its content. And if it's done correctly, it should improve your site's organic ranking.

### WHY IS YOUR ORGANIC RANK IMPORTANT?

After all, isn't it enough to just show up in Google's search results, even if you're not at the top of the page, or on the first few? You'll still be found, right?

Well, it's becoming increasingly less likely.

Each year, it seems as though fewer and fewer people are taking the time to scroll down, much less click through, the search engine result pages (SERPs). And according to facts compiled by [Semrush](#), "[l]ess than 1% of searchers click on the second page of Google results." And what's worse? Only .63% of Google searchers actually end up clicking on a link on that second page ([Backlinko](#)).

So, really, first-page placements reign supreme.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO IMPROVE YOUR WEBSITE'S RANKING?

### STUDY YOUR COMPETITORS

The first step to improving your visibility online is to research your competitors. After all, you need to know what you're up against. But it can get a little tricky because your SEO competitors aren't always the same as your competition IRL (in real life).

#### Why?

Well, it's a combination of factors. But it mainly boils down to the algorithm and your keyword usage, which we'll talk more about in a moment.

Let's get back to it. How exactly do you find your SEO competitors?

There are a couple of ways to go about it, but the simplest is to use an online tool, like [Semrush](#). By simply typing in your URL, you are

able to see a list of your main organic competitors. (Those are the people that are showing up alongside you in the search engine results, but not through sponsored ads or listings.) Hopefully your IRL competitors are part of those results. But if they aren't, you're going to want to search their URLs as well, to get an idea of where the differences lie. (Note: It's not necessarily a bad thing if they aren't ranking alongside you.)

Next, you'll want to take a look at the websites of, or [Semrush](#) data on, your SEO and IRL competitors. Analyze them. Are there any areas, like keywords, content or linking, that they do well, and you could improve on?

And how DO you improve?

### DO KEYWORD RESEARCH



The algorithm uses keywords to rank you, and others, on the SERPs.

But wait, back it up. What are keywords?

According to [Backlinko](#), "SEO keywords (also known as "keywords" or "keyphrases") are terms added to online content in order to improve search engine rankings for those terms." Essentially, keywords or keyphrases are what people are typing into the search engine bars when they're looking for something. What they're typing in should correspond to the actual words or phrases you're using on your site. And the better you are at that, the higher you will be ranked for those terms.

But it's important to note that nearly any word could be a part of a keyphrase. Not all of them are going to be valuable for you. It's crucial to determine what keywords and keyphrases are important and popular for your business, industry and location.

**Semrush's** tool can help you with that too, showing you keywords you currently rank for, your competitors rank for or that you may be missing opportunities on. And there are other sites, like **Google Trends**, that allow you to search popular or trending keywords and phrases that may also help.

But now that you have these terms and phrases, what do you do with them?

### CREATE QUALITY CONTENT

They say content is king, and they aren't wrong.

But why?

Content creation provides an opportunity to show everyone why you're the best in the business and why they should turn to you for help. (It's your chance to show what a wealth of knowledge you are or humbly brag on your products and capabilities.) There are loads of ways to do this: blogging, vlogging, posting on social, etc. And it's also where you'll be integrating keywords.

If you're interested in learning more about **content marketing**, **content for social** or how to **leverage video**, check out the linked blog posts!

### BUILD LINKS

And don't forget about the links!

Links are a powerful part of your content. In fact, Google has confirmed that they are one of the three most important factors for your SEO. So, make sure you're linking to pages, yours and others, throughout your website and blog

posts. The more you can link back (backlink) to authority websites, those that are seen as credible in the industry or are often visited for that specific topic, the better. (And keep in mind, not all links are seen as equal. Backlinking to and from authority websites will carry more weight than doing so with others.)

And the power of links is not limited to your website. Your SEO will improve as other websites link back to you, too. So, make sure you take advantage of all available opportunities for backlinking, and check to make sure links to your site are correct on online directory listings and your Google Business Profile.

### OPTIMIZE YOUR ON-PAGE ELEMENTS



And last on this list, but definitely not least, are your on-page elements.

For the most part, you'll be able to optimize your on-page elements by yourself, even if you don't have a lot of technical knowledge. On-page elements are things like titles and headings, content and images (all things you'll need to keep in mind when creating content for your website, especially blog posts).

With titles and headings, you'll want to try and integrate your keywords and phrases. Doing so will help you as the algorithm crawls and indexes your site for its SERPs.

But it's important that you don't add the keywords willy-nilly! They need to align with the core content of the page to be helpful.

And, the images may be a little more involved, but not by much. When you upload images or graphics to your website's image library, be sure to include alternative text, which explains what is shown in visual elements and is necessary for visually impaired users.

### WHAT NOW?

While going through this process once will help you improve your business's website's SEO now, it's really more of an ongoing process, requiring regular attention. And as you add more pages and content, be on look out for duplicate content and dead links, as these will reduce your SEO score, too.

### INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

For more in-depth explanations on how to improve your website's SEO, check out the helpful resources below.

- **SEO Starter Guide**
- **Study Your Competitors**
- **Keyword Research**
- **Creating Quality Content**
- **Backlinking**
- **Optimizing On-Page Elements**



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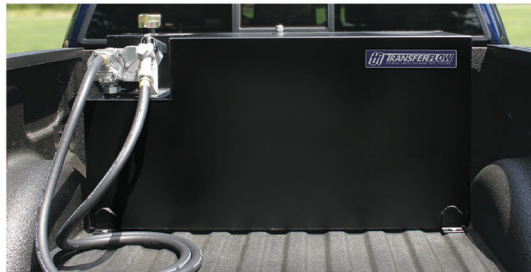
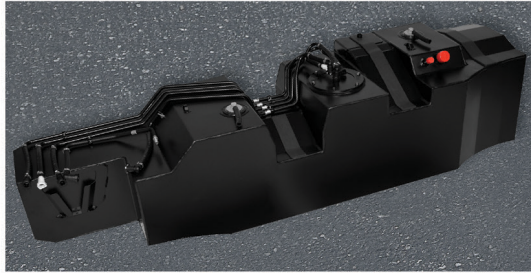
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# DEALERSHIP SUCCESS

Shawn Horswill - Work Truck Solutions, SR VP of Product



## CAN TRADE SHOW CONNECTIONS BOOST COMMERCIAL DEALERSHIP SUCCESS?

**A**s the trade show and expo season of 2024 begins to bloom, it's the perfect time to emphasize the significant role these events play in our fast-paced commercial auto dealership industry. Trade shows and expos bring forth opportunities for dealership owners and managers, along with personnel from OEMs and upfitters, that are truly unique to in-person events.

First of all, trade shows and expos give commercial auto dealerships direct VIP access to industry experts and peers.

These events establish a single location where stakeholders can:

- Discover and share new products, services, and technologies.
- Learn about the latest trends in commercial auto sales and marketing.
- Get a first-hand look at the latest commercial auto vehicles and upfit products on the market.
- Attend educational sessions on topics such as: How to increase sales with social media; How to improve customer service through technology; How to build a successful dealership website.

### CUTTING-EDGE TRENDS & TECHNOLOGIES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Although much of staying up-to-date on industry trends, innovative technologies, and best practices can be done online, in-person events provide access to vendors who can show you how their products can help your dealership succeed. It's

one thing to read about it and see it on a computer screen, but quite another to see it in person and talk to the people who are using it. You can see demos, ask questions, get answers, and see how things work for yourself. This is especially important when you're considering new technologies or services that could have a big impact on your business.

The difference between online and live is like the difference between chat messaging and a live conversation. The rate at which information can be shared increases dramatically and that information is instantly tailored to your specific needs. Nothing compares to live one-on-one Q&A to have your questions answered.

### CHARTING THE PATH TO TRADE SHOW SUCCESS

To unlock the full potential of trade shows, you need to plan and strategize effectively. Align your team's objectives with those of your dealership's goals.

It's wise to scan the scheduled displays and demos and make a short list of those that may address some of the issues your dealership is facing. Also, don't pass up those "after-hours" types of gatherings, such as the Cocktail Lounge event put on by Work Truck Solutions at last year's Work Truck Week (and happening again this year too). These types of events offer a great opportunity to relax and chat in a more casual atmosphere than on a convention show floor.

### THE TRUE VALUE OF TRADE SHOW AND EXPO ATTENDANCE

The true and full value of in-person events is the unique opportunity to make connections you would otherwise not have. Connections with vendors, OEMs, prospective buyers, peers, and industry leaders are connections that can lead to new business opportunities, partnerships, and collaborations.

In this digital era, it's too easy to underestimate the power of face-to-face networking, especially in the commercial vehicle space. Trade shows bring together a variety of industry stakeholders—manufacturers, dealerships, and customers—under one roof. They offer a unique opportunity to create, deepen, and maintain business relationships.

Such personal interactions help us build that essential element of trust—a critical element of a dealership's success. Step up and embrace these game-changing opportunities for your dealership's unstoppable growth and success.

**VISIT US AT WORK  
TRUCK WEEK 2024  
BOOTH #446**

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## DRIVING TOWARDS CLEAN FUEL:

### The Impact of Propane Autogas Conversion in Achieving Net Zero Emissions

Climate change and environmental sustainability are increasingly central concerns shaping both policy and practice across numerous sectors—notably, the transportation industry. As much as 29% of greenhouse gas emissions **originate from transportation**, urging the need for consideration of a transition to cleaner fuels.

#### FEDERAL & STATE NET ZERO MANDATES AND REGULATIONS

Government policies substantially influence the adoption of non-diesel or alternate fuels. Both **federal and state regulations** are trending towards more robust support for alternative fuels to meet climate objectives. Although mandates can produce anxiety for business owners and commercial fleet managers, they often include **incentives** like tax breaks and grants for businesses making the switch to alternative fuel usage.

Emergent in this quest for compliance and positive evolution is Propane autogas, an alternative fuel with a proven history and significant potential for expansion.

#### PROPANE AUTOGAS:

##### A PROMISING ALTERNATIVE

Propane autogas (Liquefied Petroleum Gas, or LPG) is a clean-burning, eco-friendly fuel that presents substantially lower greenhouse gas emissions compared to conventional diesel.

Beyond the environmental scope, however, transitioning to propane autogas offers **noticeable business advantages**. Propane autogas vehicles typically feature lower running and maintenance costs and deliver performance on par with their diesel counterparts, providing significant economic savings.

“Propane offers a readily available, affordable, and uncomplicated solution to reduce emissions,” said Todd Mouw, executive vice president at ROUSH CleanTech. “All ROUSH CleanTech propane products are certified to the **ultra-low NOx level of 0.02/bhp-hr**, making them 90% cleaner than the strictest federal emissions standard.”

Additionally, companies transitioning to cleaner operations further their

corporate social responsibility commitments, benefiting stakeholder relations and providing an advantageous edge in an increasingly eco-conscious marketplace.

#### REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

With more than 160 vehicles in its fleet, DDA Transport was seeking a solution to reduce its carbon footprint that wouldn't burden them with infrastructure constraints or costly maintenance.

“As a supplier to the U.S. Postal Service, we are continually striving to find ways to protect the environment through sustainability efforts,” said **Dwayne Andreasen**, president of DDA Transport. “Our fuel consumption is our biggest environmental concern, so the ability to lower this impact through propane autogas helps us achieve our short and long-term goals.”

The contractor estimates it will save \$25,000 in fuel spending and up to an additional \$15,000 in maintenance and uptime costs for each truck annually compared to their diesel models.



## PURCHASING VS. CONVERTING

Companies looking to transition their fleets to propane autogas basically have two options: purchase new vehicles or convert existing vehicles.

Purchasing new vehicles is often the most straightforward approach, but it also comes with a higher initial cost than converting existing vehicles. Propane autogas vehicles are available for purchase from a variety of different manufacturers. These vehicles are typically priced similarly to their diesel equivalents and feature the same fuel economy ratings, which means that they offer comparable running costs while also providing environmental benefits. However, purchasing new propane autogas-powered vehicles requires significant upfront investment in terms of capital expenditure.

Converting existing diesel-powered trucks and buses can be more cost-effective, but it requires more time and expertise from your service provider. With adequate planning and a certified service provider, converting existing diesel vehicles offers a viable alternative route to transitioning away from traditional fuels.

## CONVERTING DIESEL TO LPG: CERTIFICATION & RETROFITTING

Converting from diesel to propane autogas involves installing **certified conversion kits** and engaging trained retrofitting technicians. Regulatory authorities ensure that all conversion kits and installers meet stipulated safety and performance standards, preserving the operational integrity of the transformed vehicles.

"Propane is the common sense approach; it works and will do the job you need it to while meeting

regulations," said Todd Mouw, executive vice president of **ROUSH CleanTech**, an advanced clean transportation solutions company. "In an increasingly complex world, propane keeps things simple for fleet operators."

## Conclusion

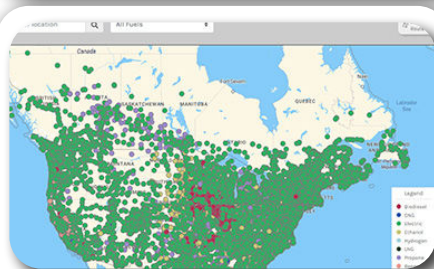
The switch from diesel to propane autogas represents a significant stride towards cleaner transportation and the pursuit of net zero emissions. As our society continues to address the pressing concerns of climate change, we understand that the path forward involves strong support for clean fuel initiatives from both businesses and policymakers. The adoption of alternative fuels embodies a blend of environmental responsibility and economic sustainability, definitely a journey worth exploring.



ALL ABOUT ADVANCED FUEL SOLUTIONS

## EXCITING NET ZERO NEWS

Convoy.com has created a new resource center called NuPropel. The mission? To curate and provide objective, diverse, and broad information "all about advanced fuel solutions."



**FIND ALTERNATIVE FUELING STATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES & CANADA**  
Alt Fuel Map for U.S. & Canada  
By default, this tool displays only available, publicly accessible stations.



## POWERING YOUR COMMERCIAL ELECTRIC VEHICLES

With a keen focus on innovation and technology, combined with its entry into the electric vehicle market, Ryder has made it easy for companies to adopt sustainable, advanced vehicle technologies.

## EV ADOPTION OPPORTUNITY Checklist

Incorporating commercial electric vehicles into your business/fleet needs requires careful planning and evaluation. Download this checklist to use as a springboard for your own discussions and planning with your team.

**ALTFUEL  
RESOURCES  
& INDUSTRY  
STORIES**



# TOOLBOX NEWS & EVENTS

## SAVE THE DATE



### VIRGINIA TRUCK CLUB MEETING!

Mark your calendars and save the date – the first Truck Club meeting of 2024 will be on **Thursday, March 14** at the **Top Golf National Harbor** – there will be several educational programs as well as trivia, food and golf! The agenda will be available very soon, so stay tuned!



### CVB SUMMIT RETURNS SPRING 2024

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# TOOLBOX NEWS & EVENTS

## KNAPHEIDE EMPLOYEES HELP BRING HO-HO-HOLIDAY SPIRIT TO ILLINOIS VETERANS' HOME RESIDENTS



**K**napheide employees dedicated their time, talents and treasures to bring joy to residents of the Illinois Veterans' Home in Quincy, Ill., on December 19, 2023.

"During Christmas, there is so much that draws our attention, and there are so many opportunities to donate and help kids and families in need, but it seems like, in general, the older generations are forgotten. I love that this program reminds them that we haven't," Stacy Houghton, Customer Service Representative and Veterans Tree co-organizer at Knapheide, said. "When you can get a community behind something like this, the results are always greater than expected. That's why I love that we get to participate as a group, and that so many of our employees are involved."

Employees from seven of Knapheide's facilities in Illinois and Missouri contributed this year, "adopting" a total of 130 Illinois Veterans' Home residents, by selecting tags from their location's "Veterans Tree", then purchasing and

wrapping the gifts chosen from each veteran's wish list.

"My activities staff helps determine which residents could use a little extra Christmas spirit each year," Sara Colgrove, Director of Volunteer Services & Activities at the Illinois Veterans' Home, said. "With all the sickness and isolation periods this year, these gifts will be a welcome reminder that they are not alone or forgotten. Many of the gifts are as simple as candy, soda or even new pants, but it shows them that there are people here, in their community, that are thinking about them."

More Illinois Veterans' Home residents will receive homemade cards or handwritten letters from Baldwin Elementary School students, as a result of this year's program, thanks to the Stegeman family.

"It is truly a family effort," Kristen Stegeman, Fleet Production Coordinator at Knapheide, said. "My brother Andrew [Stegeman, Custom Product Specialist at Knapheide,] and I reached out to our mom, Tammy Stegeman, for help. Because of her,

560 students, in grades kindergarten through 5th, decorated cards and wrote letters, thanking the veterans for their service and wishing them a very Merry Christmas."

In addition to receiving their tangible gifts, a few residents of Hammond Hall got something a little more special that day: an opportunity to chat with Santa and other Knapheide employees.

"While the gifts are a wonderful gesture, the time spent with these vets is what Christmas is all about," Mike Dailing, Corporate Safety Manager at Knapheide and this year's Santa, said. "What I didn't realize before my dad became a resident here is that many of these residents are from out of town and do not have family nearby. Delivering these presents, and spending a few minutes chatting, brings happiness to these brave men and women, which is a special thing. Putting on my Santa suit just makes for a good ice breaker."

**TAKE A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES**



# SAFETY CENTRAL

## SAFE FLEET PREPARES TO CONDUCT ITS MASTERCLASS IN ALL THINGS “FLEET SAFETY” AT WORK TRUCK WEEK 2024

For the biggest fleets and manufacturers, something special happens in the first week of March; the floors of the Indianapolis Convention Center open, the industry's best get together, and a period of discovery ensues for 3 days during NTEA's Work Truck Week.

For Safe Fleet, it's an opportunity to continue its annual tradition of putting their best fleet feet forward, specifically those of their Commercial Vehicle division, now consisting of 11 brands.

It is each brand's chance to curate their best offerings, demonstrate product effectiveness, and expound on how their niche solutions integrate via the **power of the Safe Fleet platform** to provide a single source of solutions for some of North America's largest fleets.

Last year, the Safe Fleet booth caused quite a stir, with eye-catching technology, interactive

arcade-style product demos, and vehicles armed to the teeth with Safe Fleet branded shelves, video solutions, lighting, partitions, ladder racks, tarping solutions, and steps.

In 2024, that part of the show will indeed go on. Safe Fleet plans to bring a cadre of commercial vehicles from clients like Wabash and Altec that are upfitted with products like Prime Design FoldPro shelving, the RVS 360° Camera System, American Van vehicle partitions and storage products, a Roll-Rite Tarpmaster 300, and Labcraft lighting.

However, for the first time, alongside the product demos and recent brand additions (like Vango Rolling Tarp Solutions), Safe Fleet plans to promote two service-base ventures that don't require power sources: a new **Safe Fleet SAAS (Safety As A Service) Center** and their **Trusted Fleet Safety Experts** initiative.

As the network of clients continues to expand to all corners of North America, a Safe Fleet presence in hard-to-reach places became a necessity. **Safe Fleet Safety As A Service** provides a network of strategically located centers that can better reach and service preferred customers in need of installation, maintenance, or upfits. We can also come to you. AMFS (American Mobile Fleet Services) will meet your upfit needs anywhere, anytime.

The **Trusted Fleet Safety Experts** idea grew organically from years of experience, as consultation and testing were ever-present, natural aspects of considering and purchasing safety systems. Positioning Safe Fleet as the go-to source for safety-related advice, our team of specialists have already assisted fleets like Nissan and a Large National Leasing Fleet with improving safety, mitigating liability, reducing injuries, and testing revolutionary products.

See for yourself what last year's most popular booth is rolling out in 2024, by visiting booth #5321 at Work Truck Week 2024 from March 6th to March 8th.



SAFE  FLEET

**WTW2024  
BOOTH #5321**

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