

Fleet & drivers

Effective communication is key to successfully influencing drivers and introducing new initiatives. Find out how you achieve this in our special 11-page report

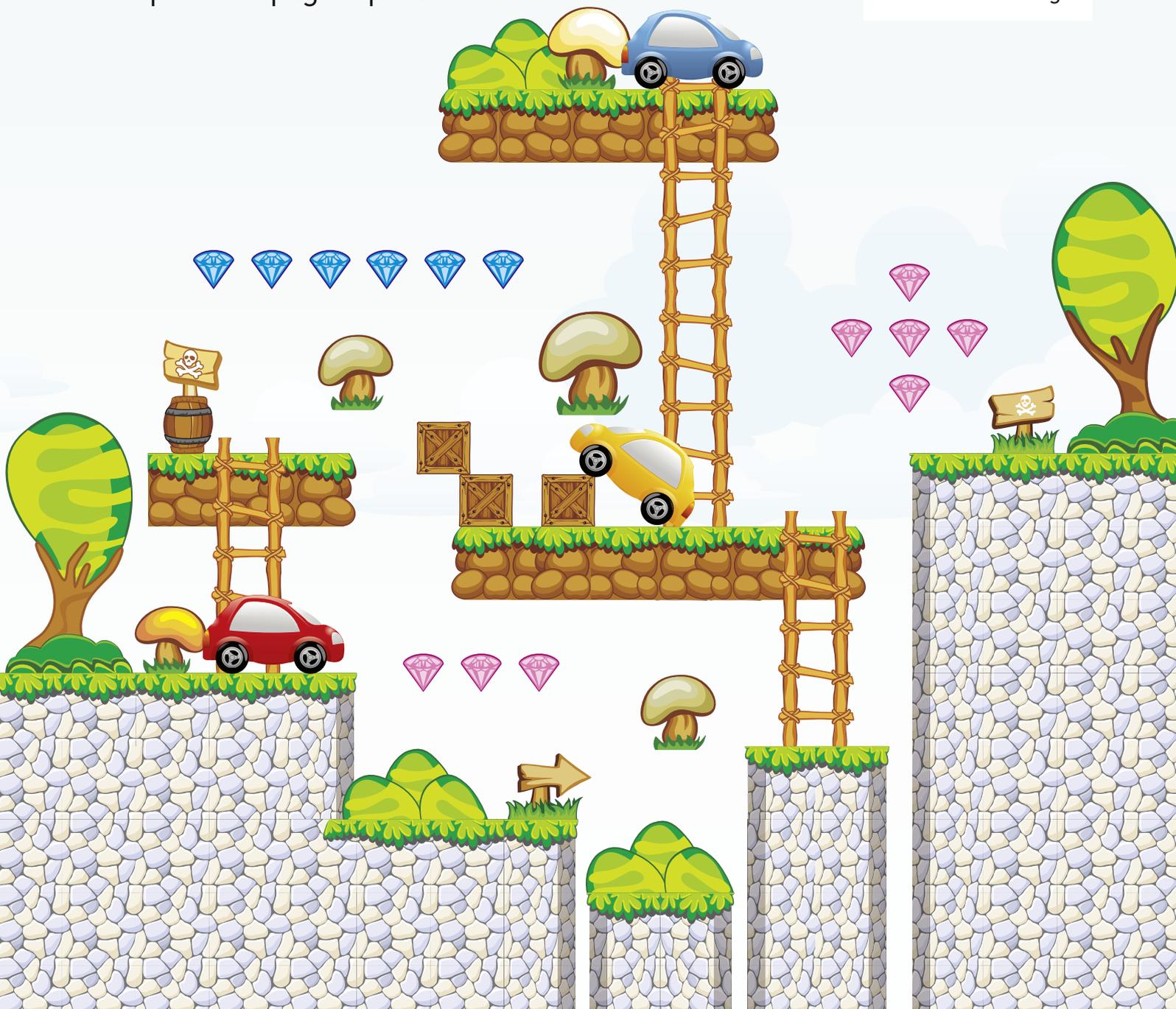
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Getting the message across to drivers is key to policy success

Even the best initiatives stand a chance of failing if they are not communicated correctly to drivers. *Andrew Ryan* reports

NEED TO KNOW

- Finding right method crucial to success
- Interactive communication is often very effective
- Message may need to be repeated

How important is effective communication to the operation of a fleet? "Vastly," says Peter Eldridge, director of the Institute of Car Fleet Management. "If people don't buy in to something, then it doesn't matter how good it is, it's never going to happen."

Failure to communicate properly can undermine policies and initiatives, but get it right and fleets will reap the rewards: initiatives, whether safety, cost saving or duty of care, are much more likely to succeed.

"Driver engagement, in my experience, is one of the biggest issues faced by companies," says Geoffrey Bray, chairman of the Fleet Industry Advisory Group.

"Too often there is an assumption that all an organisation has to do is issue a company car or van handbook and drivers will read it and know exactly what they should be doing.

"That is simply not the case. Over a 50-year career in fleet I've seen, and continue to see, how vehicle-related problems have occurred simply because fleet decision-makers have failed to communicate properly with drivers. That then has a direct impact on business efficiency and fleet costs."

Bray feels that with the technology available today there is no excuse not to have an interactive driver communications strategy that will enhance the efficiency of the fleet.

This strategy should include a multitude of different mediums such as intranet and email, as well as more traditional ways of communicating such as meetings and posters.

"The best companies we work with use all of the mediums," says Will Murray, research director of eDriving Fleet.

"They also realise that communication is not a one-off event where you say 'here's the vehicle' and then you've done your job. It has to be an ongoing process."

Murray says it is important to make sure the communication is targeted and relevant.

"Recently, one of our clients identified through DVLA licence checks that speeding was an issue with its drivers, so it was able to distribute information and online training on that," he says. "Before Christmas it also identified bad weather and winter driving as a risk, so everyone received online coaching on this.

"Another company has taken on a lot of young apprentices, so it has got an increasing issue with younger drivers and it has been focusing on them through face-to-face meetings, workshops and online coaching."

Identifying drivers to target can be done in a variety of ways, says Murray. "It could come from an online risk assessment, or analysing claims data, licence check data or HR data," he adds. "It might even come from the demographic profile of employees: there's a whole load of different ways to target."

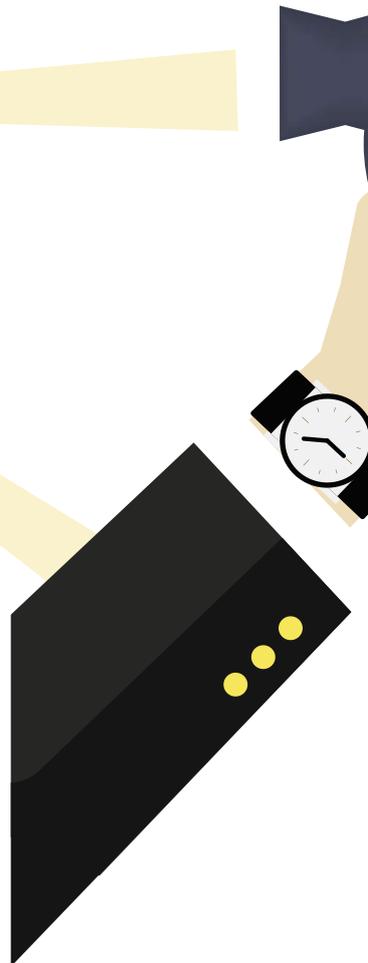
Once a fleet operator has identified its message and who it wants to communicate it to, the next step is to consider how it should get that message to them.

"In one business, something like a poster campaign on the company noticeboard could work well, but in a transportation business where people don't really commune in any one area, that won't work at all," says Eldridge.

"So finding the right method of communication for your business is vital: there is no one approach that will suit every company."

Different communication strategies may also be adopted, depending on the nature of the fleet.

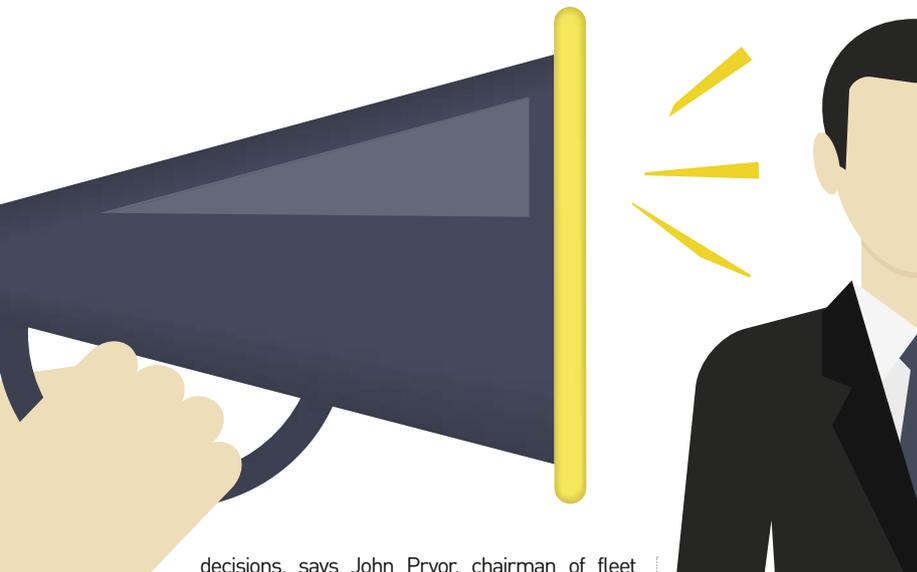
For example, with a user-chooser fleet where the company car is seen as a key employee recruitment and retention tool, it may be important to work closely with the HR department to devise and communicate strategy and subsequent policy



SAMPLE 12-MONTH FLEET SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME

MONTH	NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY ISSUE	COMPANY TOP 10 ISSUES
January	Fatigue	Why work-related road safety is important
February	Driving in snow	Programme launch/pledge/declaration
March	Mobile phones	Slow-speed manoeuvring
April	Seatbelts	Rear-end collisions
May	Drugs and driving	Hit while parked incidents
June	Summer driving	Incident reporting
July	Young driver road safety	Family member safety
August	Speed	Incident costs
September	Holiday driving/child restraints	Time of day incidents
October	Flexible topic	Theft and vandalism
November	Winter driving	Higher speed incidents
December	Drink-driving	Glass and windscreen damage

Source: eDriving Fleet



decisions, says John Pryor, chairman of fleet operators' association ACFO.

"The communications strategy adopted may also be dependent on the seniority of the fleet decision-maker in the business and their level of industry knowledge and experience," he says.

"For example, a relatively inexperienced and junior employee may feel that they have to communicate frequently with their managers on all decisions, whereas an experienced full-time professional fleet manager may feel that sending out a memo may be enough for all but the most important policy changes."

The effectiveness of any communication can also be improved by striking the right chord with its recipients, according to Nick Webb, fleet manager of Miller's Vanguard.

"It would be brilliant for all fleet managers that if you send one email or bulletin to drivers it has the impact you want, but it doesn't," he adds.

"It's more of a drip-drip effect; it has to be gradual. I may send the same message out four times, but I'll send it out differently for different people, because not everybody reacts to the same story in the same way."

Miller's Vanguard's headquarters is in a 20mph zone, with a school nearby.

"The road is also the main rat-run for people to get to the motorway, so it was obvious to send out a bulletin saying it's a 20mph zone for a reason," says Webb.

When he first did that, he wanted the message to be hard-hitting, so used a poster of a child's face which at that time formed part of a national campaign.

"It was half-child, half-skull and that got the impact I was looking for," adds Webb. "The next email equated the impact speed to falling from a height. So in other words, if you hit somebody at 20mph, it's the same as falling from the second-storey of a building.

"We did that because people may not be very good at equating distance but they can visualise the height of the second, third or fourth storey of a building. It's all about trying to understand how other people think. Different people think differently. If someone has a young family, you can equate it to them taking their child to school, and a driver hitting them at 20mph.

"They think differently to a single guy who is in his 20s and doesn't have kids. However, he can look up at a building and think 'if I fall down from that height...'"

As well as tailoring messages to appeal to different groups of employees, fleets can also use seasonal or topical issues to keep employees interested.

"There is a danger that you can do too much and people will stop taking notice of what you are saying," says Murray.

"You can avoid this by having some kind of rolling programme (see panel, page 38) which can be used to get messages across at appropriate times."

"Finding the right method to communicate your message is vital: there is no one approach that will suit every company"

Peter Eldridge, Car Fleet Management



Keeping drivers informed:
fleetnews.co.uk/
informed-drivers

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

**Andy Cuerden, managing director,
eDriving FLEET**



We are delighted to support the *Fleet News* feature on driver communication and engagement. Now is particularly timely as we join forces with eDriving and Mentor eData to form a world-leading

risk management business, supporting organisations of all types and sizes across the globe to lead their people to safety.

Based on our experience over many years, helping managers engage and communicate with drivers, operators and riders through a whole range of channels is vital. Online tools, e-learning, one-to-ones, emails, toolbox talks, WebEx, social media, games, videos, events such as Road Safety Week, team briefings, communications calendars, magazines such as onemoresecond.net, risk assessment and coaching all provide opportunities.

Such tools and resources that we provide for the likes of BT, Nestlé, Zurich and Transport for London have helped them cut their collisions and costs in a sustained way over many years.

Engagement lies at the heart of the enhanced opportunities provided by eDriving FLEET:

- More robust research, databases and big data analytics – making communications even more targeted.
- State-of-the-art technologies – to support effective driver engagement through telematics and all available communication channels.
- Improved predictive modeling for risk management – allowing proactive coaching and communication with managers and drivers to prevent collisions before they occur.
- Enhanced data security framed by ISO27001 – increasingly important as better ways are evolving to communicate and engage with drivers, which also bring new potential threats such as cyber-security.
- More choices and unmatched scale, including a wide range of communication channels customised to millions of drivers in multiple languages in real time around the globe.

Our mission is to continue working towards making crash-free culture a reality, by managing out risky events, collisions and incidents. Targeted, robust and timely coaching, communication and engagement are at the heart of our approach.

To find out more visit: virtualriskmanager.net





ways to communicate with drivers

From vehicle handovers to social media, we look at the different methods fleets use to get their message across to drivers. *Andrew Ryan* reports



DRIVER HANDBOOKS

Driver handbooks are the traditional way to communicate fleet policy to drivers and should contain information such as restrictions on vehicle use, fuel, use of company vehicles outside the UK, fixed penalties, insurance cover and business mileage.

They can also include guidance on licence checks, driver behaviour, use of mobile phones and in-car devices.

However, this means they can often be large, unwieldy documents.

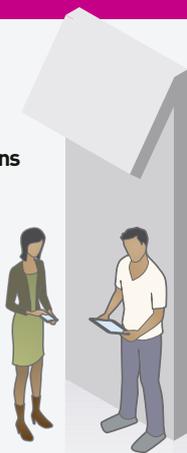
"When I was a lot younger, fleet policies used to be about five inches thick, weigh about 10kg and you were told 'read that, you'll know everything', but that isn't good enough in this day and age," says Peter Etheridge, director at ICFM.

"If you go on Ebay, or a similar site, there are all those terms and conditions, and most people click the 'accept' button without reading them. So why would we think our drivers are reading a lengthy document?"

"No one is going to read it and you can guarantee that in the middle of it there will be something very important."

Gateshead Council deals with this potential issue by giving drivers a small handbook that addresses areas such as vehicle load, driving styles and daily walkaround checks.

"Its brevity ensures drivers will read it," says Graham Telfer, fleet manager at the local authority.



LINE MANAGERS

Line managers and other senior members of staff should lead by example when it comes to safety initiatives, says Will Murray, research director at eDrive Fleet.

"They need to champion them, manage them, do them themselves and support them," he adds.

"There are loads of companies who have introduced really good risk management programmes and, as well as having a positive impact on collisions, they have improved the reputations of those businesses. Some initiatives have also enabled individual managers to get promoted on the back of their success, so there are lots of benefits."

At Gateshead Council, whenever there is a change to procedures or any aspect of operational road risk, toolbox talks are created and communicated to drivers by line managers.

Drivers must sign to say they understand the information provided.



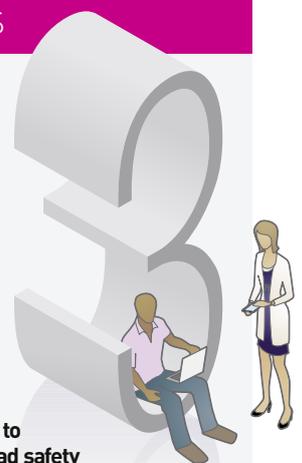
DRIVER PACKS

Kelly Group issues its drivers with winter packs to raise awareness of safety issues in bad weather.

The packs include equipment such as an ice-scraper, de-icer, sunglasses and a tyre pressure gauge.

"Having this equipment should make them safer, but the big drive behind it was to promote discussion to get them thinking about road safety over winter," says Dermot Coughlin, operations director at Kelly Group.

"We are employing engineers who have to drive for their job. The packs are a tangible gift to them and are not a lot of money when you consider the safety benefits of both having the equipment and making them think about how they can be safer on the roads."



Focus on the positives to improve driver behaviour:
fleetnews.co.uk/positive-driver-behaviour



"Driver packs are a tangible gift and are not a lot of money when you consider the safety benefits"

Dermot Coughlin, Kelly Group



STAFF INTRANET

Intranet sites can be used to convey polices and other fleet-related matters to employees.

For example, Bauer Media company car drivers who log on to the the company's intranet can access information on subjects such as driving at work policy, mileage rates, maintenance guide, insurance and safety advice.

Britvic also uses its intranet to influence employees' company car choice by producing special offers and encouraging staff towards lower cost and lower emission vehicles.

"People like to be told what they should be buying, either through third-party reviews or by us – it's informed decision-making," says Will Smith, rewards and benefits manager at Britvic. "They like to know what best fits their needs."

Using the intranet to promote offers has allowed Smith to secure better terms with car manufacturers, despite adding more brands to the fleet.

"We make manufacturers understand that internal promotion impacts take-up: the ones we advertise to employees are the ones they order," he says. "So we go back to them for better commercial terms and ensure that those are the ones we promote internally."



PRESENTATIONS/WORKSHOPS

Outside organisations are often used by fleet operators when they want to promote a message or new initiative to employees.

Peter Shields, assistant road safety officer at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, says an increasing number of fleets are asking the organisation to deliver presentations for the benefit of their staff.

"Companies have a duty of care to their employees to provide them with health and safety information and, while fleet managers can provide this, information coming from the fire service or police will perhaps carry more weight," he says.

"There's also an element of trust with us because if we go and deliver something it will be right: we're not going to go and say something when in actual fact it's something different."

Workshops proved a useful way for South & City College Birmingham to educate staff when it introduced its salary sacrifice scheme with TCH Leasing in October 2012.

"We'd been running more of a PCP-type car lease scheme, but the number of people taking that up dwindled," says Mark Jenkins, the college's executive director of HR.

"Around that time we merged with another college, so we, as a college, had made a decision to take all the staff away on three training days so they all understood what the culture of the new college was going to be.

"That was an ideal opportunity to launch the scheme, so TCH provided us with information which we were able to pass on to our staff, as well as details on how to use the website it had set up to get quotes and further information."



VEHICLE HANDOVERS

The Rugby Football Union took delivery of 90 Mini Countryman models last year for use by its community coaches.

These were handed over at two events: one was at the Cunard Terminal at Southampton docks, with the other at Thorne, the BMW and Mini distribution centre in Doncaster.

"At these handover days we demonstrated the cars to the coaches," says Alisha Bird, fleet co-ordinator at the RFU.

"We had support from the retailer that handles all our new orders. We did some history about the vehicles and a BMW and a Mini specialist came in and told them more about the functions of their new cars."

The handover days also proved an ideal opportunity to get the fleet department's message across to the drivers. "We demonstrated what an asset the car was for them to be able to do their job and what it represented as a financial asset to the RFU," says Bird.

"We told them about our accident stats, showed them some of the worst photographs we could find, how much the repairs cost, what that represents to us as an organisation and what, if we were able to save that money by reducing the cost of the incidents, they could achieve in their own roles with that money.

"It wasn't just a case of taking the keys back from the drivers and giving them another set of keys."



"Companies have a duty of care to their employees to provide them with health and safety information"

*Peter Shields,
Cheshire Fire and
Rescue Service*



EMAIL

The nature of Miller's Vanguard's business means fleet manager Nick Webb doesn't see all of the food industry equipment supply and maintenance company's drivers very often. "Email is the easiest way of reaching most people in one go," he says. "If you use the telephone you can reach one person if you're lucky, which means you've got to replicate it 250 times to have the same reach.

"The other upside with email communication is you not only get to the guys who drive company vehicles, you can contact all employees, so we are not just talking about those with company vehicles, we can communicate a general ethos of driving a vehicle whether it be in private life or for business."

Webb tailors his messages depending on the staff he sends emails to, while he also varies the topics to ensure drivers do not lose interest in the bulletins and simply delete them without reading.





SOCIAL MEDIA

REL Marketing has embraced Yammer, a social media platform specifically designed for business use, to communicate with drivers.

Its fleet team uses it to send out road safety messages as well as news such as the abolition of the paper counterpart to the photocard driving licence, which appear on the home screen when drivers first log into the platform.

"It's been really good for raising the profile of the fleet department," says David Millar, procurement manager at REL Marketing.

"But what I don't want to do is become a nuisance to people. We want to give messages to drivers, but we don't want to pester them."

One example of how using Yammer has proved effective is when the company used it to address concerns over diesel particulate filters (DPFs).

"We sent out a message about the DPF warning light because we had a number of issues with drivers plodding round town and choking up the DPF filters – it's expensive to get them regenerated or replaced," says Millar.

"We asked 'ever wondered what this symbol means?' with a picture of the DPF warning light, and then we explained what it means and what they need to do to get rid of it.

"We had a number of responses like 'we never knew what that meant, we appreciate that'. Drivers enjoy reading that sort of stuff because it affects their day-to-day lives."



SPECIFIC EVENTS

Events such as Brake's annual Road Safety Week, which takes place each November, can be used by fleets to engage drivers.

More than 10,000 organisations and individuals registered to take part in Road Safety Week last year.

"It's the UK's biggest road safety event, it's a huge thing to take part in," says Ellie Pearson, engagement officer at Brake.

"People do internal things but a lot of people are going out into schools, running community events, working in partnerships with local emergency services to do some really great events that benefit more than just their organisation."

Other major events, such as this year's football European Championship, can also be used as a "hook" says Will Murray.

"Big sporting events can have a massive impact on road safety," he says. "In America, the Superbowl has a big effect. For example, the collision rate among supporters of the losing team is always higher."



"Showing someone who has real-life experience of losing someone makes it inescapable"

Graham Telfer, Gateshead Council



VIDEOS

Gateshead Council has found that videos can be a high impact method of communicating safety issues to drivers.

"It doesn't matter what walk of life you're from, 20 minutes after sitting in a classroom listening you just switch off," says Graham Telfer, fleet manager at Gateshead Council.

"We use videos produced by Brake in which someone has unfortunately experienced a road accident, whether a family member or themselves.

"That changes the mindset of even the most hardened driver. Showing someone who has real-life experience of losing someone makes it inescapable that it is a situation someone could find themselves in through their actions.

"The videos from Brake, such as *Too Young to Die*, work extremely well."

Thames Water has produced a video – available on the company's intranet – to show drivers how to complete daily vehicle checks.



POSTERS

Posters and leaflets can be a simple but effective way to get a fleet's message across.

Gateshead Council displays them in all its depots and buildings. They cover topics such as speed, tiredness and drink-driving, as well as guidance on daily vehicle checks. Kuehne + Nagel UK uses posters to get employees' families involved in road safety.

"We have a children's drawing competition that we run on a safety theme every year," says Astrid van der Burgt, national road risk manager. The children of all our drivers and colleagues are invited to take part and the best 12 get converted into road safety posters for the next year.

"It's about having that conversation with your children about road safety: you tell your children you've always got to wear your seatbelt and if you tell them that there is no way that you are going to get into a car with a child in the back and not wear your seatbelt. Hopefully it will become a habit and you will do it at work as well."



eDriving FLEET: minimising your road risk

Virtual Risk Manager helps organisations with sustained compliance, collision reductions, cost savings and corporate social responsibility

Even with the new safety technology in modern vehicles, driving remains a dangerous business. World Health Organisation data identified 1.3 million global road deaths annually. Many are work-related, with massive costs for individuals, employers and society.

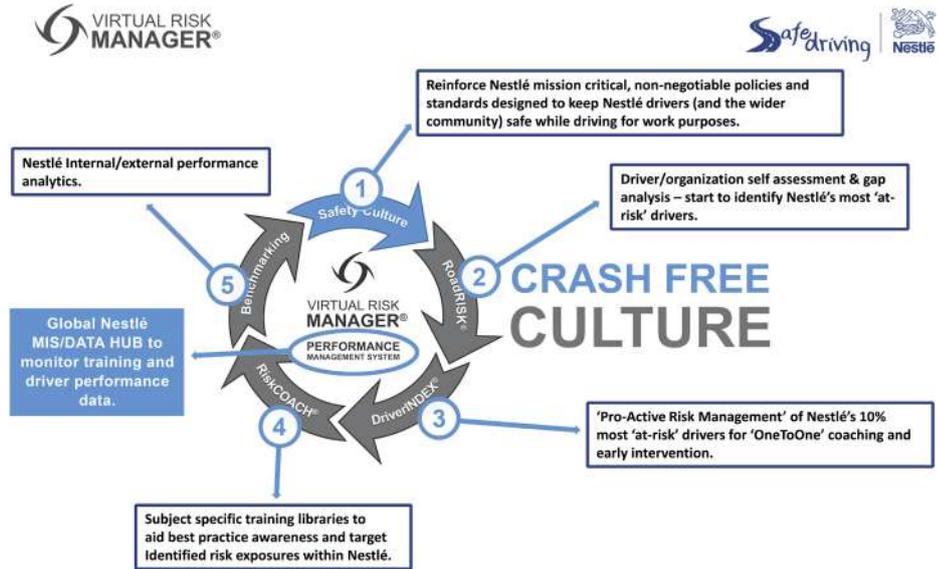
To make greater strides in improving road safety and lowering these terrible costs, we need to use technology not just to build safer vehicles, but also manage our drivers better. As Celia Stokes, CEO of eDriving, advises: "To make society a safer place and at the same time lower fleet operating costs with more predictable insurance rates, you need sharper focus on managing and engaging drivers." Indeed.

The recent acquisition of Interactive Driving Systems and Mentor eData by eDriving leverages advances in telematics, data analytics and customisable training to make unprecedented gains in driver engagement, management and coaching.

Improving safety has for years been our driving force. eDriving is a leading provider of state driver education in the US with more than 10m customers to-date. Interactive Driving Systems is a global provider of proven fleet driver safety management solutions. The Mentor eData consumer-focused telematics app and analytics platform predict risky driver behaviours and provide actionable insights.

The newly formed eDriving FLEET brings together three complementary technologies, skills sets and markets, letting us do more together to improve road safety than we could ever hope to achieve separately. It is a true game changer, with many areas of opportunity:

● **More robust research and databases.** Merging our separate databases allows for



"Our global company engages more than 700,000 fleet drivers in 97 countries, serving Fortune 500 firms"

vastly improved analytics on driving behaviour and crash scenarios.

- **Wider range of state-of-the-art technologies.** Our companies perfectly complement each other with telematics, apps, website, libraries and analytics, allowing us to better customise our training programs, and deliver state-of-the-art, multi-platform materials catering to different learning styles, cultural and age differences.
- **Improved predictive modeling.** We are able to more quickly make advances in predictive modeling solutions, to identify the management and driving behaviours most likely to result in crashes, so we can effectively prevent the next collision before it happens.
- **Improved data security.** Our combined operations also let us provide more robust global privacy and data protection framed by ISO27001, which are critical for building trust.

● **More choices.** We will, for the first time, be able to provide sophisticated, interactive virtual coaching, and online training and certification options for teens, parents, contract drivers, corporations, insurers, vehicle suppliers and more.

● **Unmatched scale.** Our global company, with 430 employees, provides training and certification to 1m customers in more than 30 US states; engages more than 700,000 fleet drivers in 97 countries; and serves several global Fortune 500 companies such as BT, Nestlé, Zurich, Bosch, Vodafone, GSK, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson, as well as major statutory bodies such as Transport for London and Royal Mail.

In merging our operations, our ultimate goal remains unchanged, though our potential for meaningful impact increases substantially. We want to ensure that everyone returns home safely, every day.

The best way to not get hurt or killed on the road is to avoid the crash in the first place. Our mission is to continue working towards making your crash-free culture a reality.

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Gaming the system for better fleet performance

Using smartphone apps to 'gamify' tasks can improve driver behaviour and productivity. *Andrew Ryan* reports

NEED TO KNOW

- League tables and rewards are a form of gaming
- Growing smartphone ownership makes gaming easy
- Gamification makes onerous tasks entertaining

The term 'gamification' may conjure up different images depending on your age. For some it may be groups of teenagers huddled around a Pac-Man or Space Invaders game in their local arcade, or adolescent boys locked in their bedrooms playing the latest 'shoot-em-up' on their consoles.

But in the modern business world, gamification is a tool which companies are increasingly using to improve employee or business performance, and which has implications for fleet operations too.

Fleets have long used gamification techniques to influence driver behaviour, with the publication of league tables and rewards for best performers, although it is not often described in that way.

The new factor is that digital technology and the spread of online gaming have made it easier to gamify processes.

"The term 'gamification' is not a helpful one," says Gary Browning, CEO of HR and people management consultancy Penna. "We understand gaming to be typically associated with activity for individual amusement; games played on Sony Playstations, for example.

"Gamification is simply a means of tapping into the psychology of gaming, with the aim of motivating individuals to complete tasks in a fun, rewarding and engaging way.

"Have you redeemed rewards? Or used an app to track the distance you've just run? If the answer is yes, you're engaging with gamification, probably without realising it."

Deloitte's Mobile Consumer 2015 research found that last year 76% of UK adults owned a smartphone, while at its peak Candy Crush recorded almost 100 million daily users and more than one billion games a day.

These figures show the vast reach of smartphone technology, although research carried out by Penna found that one reason companies were reluctant to introduce gamification was their perception of who plays games, on what device, and for how long.

When questioned on who plays the most games, 90% of the HR directors surveyed chose the wrong answer, with

76%

of UK adults own a smartphone, according to 2015 research

100m

people a day played the game Candy Crush at its peak

67% believing it was men under the age of 20 – the correct answer was women over 45.

This ability for gaming to straddle age groups and sexes demonstrates the potential of gamification in fleets, says John Cameron, general manager of Trimble Field Service Management.

"The power of popular games captures the lives of people from all walks of life," he adds.

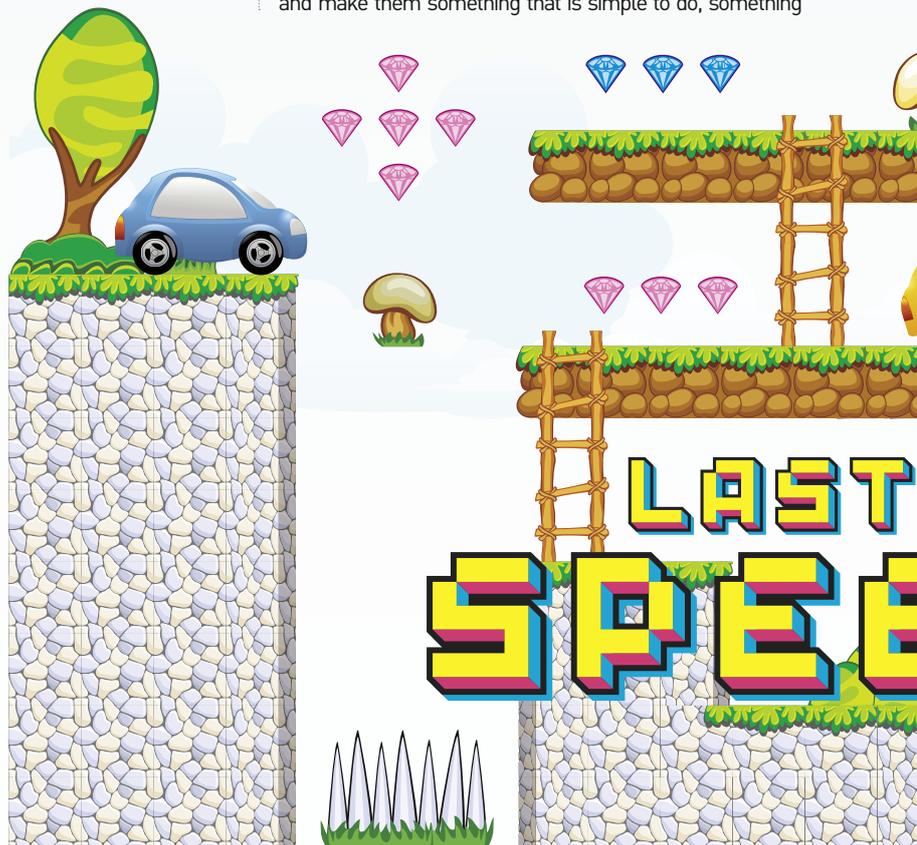
"Owning a smartphone or a tablet is a staple in many of our lives today and downloading apps, particularly gaming apps, is becoming ever more frequent."

Paul Foster, director of solutions engineering at Telogis, adds: "People at the older ends of the spectrum get the fact straight away that this kind of approach takes away a lot of the hassle from their day-to-day work."

This means van drivers, for example, will be able to spend more time focusing on their job than doing onerous administration work, he says.

Unlike smartphone games which may involve catapulting Angry Birds into pigs, or joining three brightly-coloured jewels to the sound of jaunty music, most business gamification apps work simply and discreetly to encourage employees to complete tasks.

"Gamification aims to take the drudgery away from tasks and make them something that is simple to do, something



"Gamification is a means of tapping into the psychology of gaming"

Gary Browning, Penna

THE THREE PHASES OF IMPLEMENTING GAMIFICATION

Source: Telogis

PHASE 1

ESTABLISHING YOUR MISSION

A business without a mission is like a ship without a rudder. Objectives may include reducing speeding incidents, hours of service violations or harsh braking.

Keep your objectives as specific as possible. No sport would ever become popular if the goal was vague, moved regularly or unclear to the players.

No matter what the objectives are – increasing productivity, decreasing fuel costs, improving driver safety or increasing asset utilisation – the secret to achieving them is keeping them specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.

PHASE 2

ALIGN YOUR MISSION OBJECTIVES

To make sure you stay on track to achieve your objectives, you need to check your alignment. This means reviewing your objectives to check they align with how you operate as a business.

For example, if your company puts more emphasis on working as fast as possible without respect for safety, then setting an objective to reduce speeding won't align.

Get company influencers (normally managers or supervisors) involved and review your objectives with them.

It's important they are onboard with the new objectives: they will play an important role in influencing others and ultimately help achieve a successful outcome.

PHASE 3

DEPLOYMENT

The size of an organisation will determine the scale of your deployment planning. Small companies may only need brief training that includes a quick-start guide to explain how it works and instructions on how to download, install and log in to the app on their mobile device.

Large businesses may benefit from tailored implementation.

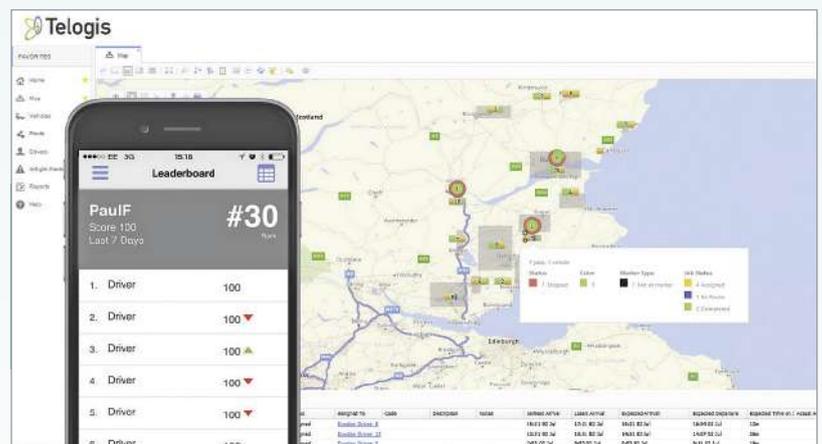
For the game element to be most effective it needs to be 'refereed'. This means monitoring results and rewarding the best performances.

that people want to do and not make it onerous or intrusive," says Foster.

"If you can get people using systems properly and engaging them properly you can then start to drive all sorts of behaviours, which is not only going to help you with your business but is also going to help the target audience as well, so it boils down to all-round productivity and general well-being."

Many organisations look to improve driving behaviour by installing telematics in their vehicles, but Cameron says fleets often struggle to reap its full rewards as drivers may not always be fully engaged and motivated to improve their driving performance, mainly due to a lack of interest or incentive.

To counter this, Cameron has found that many fleets have begun to combine telematics data with gaming techniques to develop driver safety mobile apps.



ABOVE: Telogis Coach gamifies safe driving



"A driver safety mobile app typically records any extreme manoeuvres such as harsh acceleration, braking, turns and speed, the data of which is provided directly to the driver and sent back to the back office for analysis," he says.

"Gamification is integrated in the form of a scorecard that employees can use to record their driving performance.

"Although the recordings can be both personal and impartial it is the direct feedback that incentivises drivers to compete against themselves, and each other, for the best scores."

Foster adds: "You don't necessarily have to make it driver against driver. You could make it shift against shift, or depot against depot and this will make it more game-like."

"This takes using telematics further away from the bad old days of 'big brother, we're watching you'. It's far more to do with 'we are all in this together, here's where we see you are, here's where we need you to be'."

He adds: "If you can measure things like how you drive the vehicle and make that into a game, then why can't you also do that in overall terms of productivity? For example, how many deliveries do you complete successfully? How many times a week do you get to your first customer late? That kind of thing can be brought into this as well."

Many smartphone games have limited lifespans as their novelty wears off, but Cameron says fleet apps can reinforce focus over the long term by incorporating tips based on an individual's driving performance.

"For example, if speeding is proving to be a problem, the app will explain that higher speeds will result in longer stopping distances and excess fuel use, therefore negatively impacting on their overall driver safety score," he adds.



How drivers can help to unlock fleet savings

Seeking and using driver opinions when determining a fleet policy or vehicle specification can have far-reaching effects. *Andrew Ryan* reports

NEED TO KNOW

- Regular working groups recommended
- Drivers educate managers on day-to-day operations
- Engagement helps with implementing solutions

When NHS Blood and Transplant wanted to determine a national specification for its vehicles, it put the drivers at the heart of its decision-making process.

The organisation created a vehicle working group, including driver representatives, to determine clear, fit-for-purpose standards.

Fifteen years later, the group's work has proved so successful that little change has had to be made.

"Because we feel we managed that process so well and the involvement with our drivers was so good, we now only have to tweak the specification as we go along," says Larry Bannon, fleet manager at NHS Blood and Transplant.

"We have about 12 different specifications on our fleet and we tend to meet only once every two years or something like that when it's time to look at making changes to a certain specification."

This process also improved the relationship between drivers and the fleet department, as well as making it easier to achieve buy-in for changes.

"Having the working group means we are addressing one of the values of our organisation in that we want to encourage the involvement and inclusivity of everybody in

the decision-making process," says Bannon. "Another benefit is that when we look to implement an element that's different to the usual specification, its implementation goes a lot more smoothly because driver representatives who have been able to feed into that change have also been able to feed back to the workforce.

"We have 300 drivers and a turnover of 10%, so we have 30-odd drivers who join us every year.

"New drivers will come in and ask 'why are we doing that?', and when we tell them it's because that aspect has been developed in collaboration with drivers it becomes easier to sell that to them.

"If we didn't have these groups, and initiatives were just being imposed by the fleet department, then the challenge from the drivers will be 'well, you don't drive these vehicles, you don't know what we do on a daily basis.'"

Initiatives like this highlight how important it can be to involve drivers in policy changes that affect them: NHS Blood and Transplant is not alone in using driver feedback in this way.

British Gas, for example, involves its engineers in vehicle selection and specification.

It has vehicle user groups to define each vehicle and racking specification, and actively communicates total cost of ownership so engineers understand the procurement processes.

Catering industry kitchen appliance provider Hobart UK last year sought the opinions of engineers at its annual roadshow and their feedback led to a change in vehicle racking design to make their jobs easier.



CASE STUDY: MILLER'S VANGUARD

Food industry machinery supplier and engineer Miller's Vanguard has implemented a number of changes after seeking driver feedback.

Fleet manager Nick Webb says one example of this came after the company received a new batch of vans.

"When we originally took on our vehicles, they had racking it them," he says.

"They had three shelves, and the historical lighting from manufacturers is a light in the roof which illuminated the top shelf, yet in the dark it doesn't light the bottom two.

"One of our engineers came to me and asked if we could do something about it."

Webb met the engineer and they redesigned the lighting system, with the improved illumination now standard in all of the company's vehicles. "When the side or back door is now opened, the cargo area is

all lit up," says Webb. "I then told all the guys that the reason they've got the new lighting was because of Jason's idea.

"Communication has to be two ways. If the drivers want to, they can contact Jason directly and tell him what a great idea it was and they know that, as a business, we value their opinion."

Webb says the company also supplies all vans with spare light bulb kits following feedback from a driver.

"All drivers have to perform daily vehicle checks and one of the guys asked what they do if a bulb is out," he says.

"He made the point that if we expected him to drive to buy a new bulb that we were asking him to drive illegally, so we bought spare bulb kits.

"We sent them out to the drivers at the same time as a tyre tread gauge, because if you want them to check the tyres, you need to give them the equipment to do it."



"If you want drivers to check the tyres, you need to give them the equipment to do it"

Nick Webb, Miller's Vanguard



"Drivers are a fleet manager's eyes and ears on the road," says Geoffrey Bray, chairman of the Fleet Industry Advisory Group.

"Fleet decision-makers that fail to involve drivers in the decision-making process cannot possibly know what the day-to-day operational impact of any decisions may be."

It is the drivers' extensive first-hand experience of vehicles and processes which makes it vital not to underestimate the importance of their feedback.

"In our opinion, the drivers' views are just as important as those of other stakeholders such as HR, finance and senior management," says Peter Eldridge, director of the Institute of Car Fleet Management.

"Consultation should take place before and during the development of a policy and fleet managers should gain user feedback on a regular basis."

John Pryor, chairman of fleet operators' association ACFO, says fleets should seek driver engagement not just when determining the specification of new vehicles, but throughout a car or van's life, including when it requires maintenance.

"If poor service is delivered by a garage it may be that the fleet manager and therefore the business is left in the dark unless driver engagement and communication is encouraged," he says.

"Ensuring top class service, maintenance and repair is received can help improve business efficiency."

Bray adds: "In terms of the way a vehicle performs in life and interaction with frontline suppliers such as fleet management companies and repair garages, drivers' views should be actively obtained and taken

"Drivers' views are just as important as those of other stakeholders"

Peter Eldridge, Institute of Car Fleet Management

into consideration when reviewing and potential changing policies."

The ICFM feels that having a dedicated stakeholder team with driver representation is critical.

"That team could be two people but it could be 20 people, it depends on the size and complexity of the business, but we believe that is absolutely vital," says Eldridge.

Bray says it may not be possible to engage individually with each driver in a large organisation, but agrees that one way to improve two-way communication would be to form drivers' representative groups.

"All employees should feel that they can at least communicate by telephone or email with the fleet manager and their views will, at the very least, be listened to," he adds.

Bannon has found that embracing driver involvement has helped produce a relationship where employees are comfortable offering suggestions away from the vehicle working group structure.

One recent example was when a driver pointed out that the illuminated button inside a vehicle's cabin which operates the blue lights was too bright.

"It was a distraction, particularly when it was dark outside, so it was a case of looking at what illumination was in there and putting it right," says Bannon.

"Little things like that can irritate so we try to address them. The vehicles are our drivers' offices as they are in there every day: if there was something in my office irritating me, I'd do something about it.

"Our relationship with the drivers has enabled that one-off type feedback instead of having to wait for a meeting."

