

# INVESTING IN HUMAN CAPITAL TRAINING FOR THE SMALL BUSINESS

## The Trucking Owner-Operator

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand how safety and security compliance impacts driver training
2. Examine websites which utilize technology to train drivers on the application of technology.
3. Learn how Satellite Radio reaches out to these road warriors

### THE INDEPENDENT OWNER-OPERATORS

The past year has been extremely challenging, to say the least. The year ahead will challenge us as well but our resilience will provide the means we need to move forward. Adjustments are being made by stakeholders in the logistics and travel industries. That doesn't mean we will all be winners in 2010. Far from it, as there will also be losers. So what will be the key(s) to being a winner or a loser, especially small businesses providing logistics services? Let's focus on one segment under great pressure, our truckers.

Trucking is segmented. There are giant mega truckers such as YRC and mid-sized firms such as Wabash Valley Trucking of Texas. But the largest segment is owner-operators, the individuals who risk their assets every day on the road. They are a strong group and they support each other. As stated on [www.ooida.com](http://www.ooida.com):

The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association is the international trade association representing the interests of independent owner-operators and professional drivers on all issues that affect truckers. The nearly 160,000 members of OOIDA are men and women in all 50 states and Canada who collectively own and/or operate more than 240,000 individual heavy-duty trucks and small truck fleets.

Despite weakness in the economy, there remains relatively good demand for drivers. Drivers still leave one company and go to another to improve wages or conditions. Compensation increases have leveled off as trucking revenues have come under pressure. As the economy begins to

move upward, the movement of truckers will increase rapidly. The nation will again see severe driver shortages, which will impact the economy by raising the costs of shippers, be they military or commercial.

Pressure will remain strong for drivers to meet safety and security compliance standards. There are significant requirements for driver training to insure compliance with commercial driving regulations, hazardous materials movement and security mandates which seek to insure knowledge and observance of Transportation Security Administration regulations.

### TECHNOLOGY IS USED TO TRAIN DRIVERS ON NEW TECHNOLOGY

But for the independent owner-operator, their truck is their business. Their truck is their office. These truckers learn from the road of hard knocks. But today, technology has exploded for truckers, bringing efficiency into their business. Truckers must learn to use this technology from a variety of sources, offered by vendors, training institutes and others. Utilization of technology is not only the objective of the training, but technology is also the enabler in this process. Here are some examples:

**[www.roadsidehazmat.com](http://www.roadsidehazmat.com)** – Roadside Hazmat is designed to help truck drivers, carriers and shippers and other ground transportation professionals understand the USDOT hazmat regulations. If you transport hazmat you know that the hazardous materials regulations (HMR's) are full of exemptions and changes in the blink of an eye! Roadside Hazmat is a technology company used by drivers to help stay on top of the world of highway hazmat transportation. A series of web-enabled training is accessible to individual drivers.

**[www.truckershelper.com](http://www.truckershelper.com)** – The Truckers Helper, LLC is a leading provider of business management software and web-based services for the trucking and transportation industry. Its products and services, including the Truckers Helper, seek to simplify trucking business management,

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

accounting and operations. The Truckers Helper is an integrated, real-time ERP (enterprise resource planning) systems offering tools to manage your trucking business. Training is web enabled.

**[www.truckstop.com](http://www.truckstop.com)** – Internet Truckstop has automated services which help truckers by finding loads, optimizing stops and gaining expertise in the use of technology to operate the trucker's business. Their online magazine contains information on technology oriented means to acquire tools which improve the competitiveness of their business. Using Internet Truckstop's web service, shippers, carriers, brokers and others communicate in real time to improve truck utilization and reduce shipping costs. Using these same web based services, Internet Truckstop provides training to truckers to maximize their utilization of these tools.

**[www.davenemo.com](http://www.davenemo.com)** – The Dave Nemo show on Sirius Radio, uses satellite radio to communicate with the nation's truckers on the move. Satellite radio is an ideal solution for trucking professionals whose life is the road. Among the features provided by this show to support truckers and improve their knowledge are: Canada Calling, with news and views from Canada's leading Truck Owner/Operator group, OBAC; Safety, Compliance and Common Sense with transportation safety consultant Rick Gobbell who talks with listeners about compliance and safety issues; The Business Of Trucking with CPA John Turner talks with listeners about taxes, finances and everything business; Fitness Friday gives advice, information and encouragement to drivers on health, exercise, diet, and time management.

### DRIVERS' KNOWLEDGE SUPPORTS THE SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

For all drivers, as well as other trucking professionals, it is important to maintain their knowledge of regulations, to understand tools that save expenses and maximize revenue opportunities. And it is important for drivers to look toward their future to prepare for whatever changes their industry may encounter. That means

*continued on page 32*

*continued from page 28*

understanding their role in the supply chain, understanding the needs of their customers. Good owner-operators understand this. If they didn't they wouldn't remain in business. But the traditional relationships of working with large companies who controlled many of the assets and facilities in their business is changing to large companies controlling a process which involves many external stakeholders. Drivers will seek to educate themselves

in these changes, through formal university degrees, certificates or other outlets, to complement their training in compliance.

Within the world of defense transportation, decision makers will expect more from the owner operator. It is up to this group to deliver what their customer wants and to deliver value. Training and education will be an enabler of their success. **DTJ**

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