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Driver Safety Training – How To Make it Stick

Does your company spend a lot of time and money training drivers on safety only to have some of them break the rules and cause an accident? Do you ever wonder why your training “takes” with some drivers and not with others? Would you be willing to add a simple step to your driver recruiting process that would dramatically improve your training results?

The secret to reducing highway accidents is to focus more on the “who” (driver) than the “what” (training). It’s all about job fit, which begins during the hiring process.

Stephen Covey and thousands of other successful business and community leaders tell us if we want to improve what we do, we must begin by improving who we are. He calls it “sharpening the saw.” You can be a more successful transportation company by hiring better quality drivers – those whose “safety saw,” so to speak, is already sharpened.

You want to hire and retain drivers who don’t have to be trained to be cautious and follow rules. You want drivers who are already there – who are careful and safety conscious by nature.

If you hire drivers whose nature is to be impatient and hot headed; who get a rush by taking risks and breaking rules, you can train them till the cows come home, but they’re likely to cause an accident eventually. That’s because we’re all driven more by our own inner voice than the voice of a trainer or manager telling us what to do. This is especially true when we’re under stress.

On the other hand, if you hire drivers who’d rather crawl in a hole and die than break a rule or make a mistake, then you’re well on the road to reducing accidents even if you do no training at all.

Doesn’t common sense tell you this is true? Better still, research and experience prove it to be true.

But how do you know – for sure – that you’re getting a naturally cautious driver instead of one with a short fuse that can blow up on the highway? There’s only one way that I

know of and it doesn't happen in the job interview. It takes place when they're filling out your job application.

The University of Michigan did a study which concluded that "the job interview is (only) 14% accurate." That's because drivers – and all other job applicants – wear a "mask" during the interview. They tell you what you want to hear, which may or may not be true. As Stanley J. Randall said, "The closest to perfection a person comes is when he fills out a job application."

The only way to know if you're getting a potentially safe or unsafe driver is to assess your applicant's behavioral style and values. Research shows that people with a particular natural behavioral pattern and certain values are the best – and only – drivers you should trust behind the wheel of your vehicles. The assessments will also show you which drivers you should advise, "Don't call us, we'll call you," (and then don't).

Successful companies have learned that assessing job applicants is the best way to hire the right person for the job. And as Jim Collins writes in his book *Good to Great*, "People are not your most important asset. The RIGHT people are."

Hire the right drivers and you'll drive profits up and accidents down. You'll also get a bigger return on your training investment.

Business management performance software identifies driver behavior, attitude, and personality type, which The Estes Group's clients use to improve employee recruiting, increase employee retention, and reduce employee turnover. Annette Estes is a Certified Professional Behavioral and Values Analyst, Coach, Trainer, and Behavioral Safety Consultant. Freight shipping companies are invited to subscribe to her free Hire Safe Drivers newsletter at <http://www.hiresafedrivers.com> and order her eBook *Safety RULES! How To Build a Fleet That Will Drive Profits Up and Accidents Down* at <http://www.hiresafedrivers.com/safetyrules.htm>

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