

CULLING TURNOVER: PRE-EMPLOYMENT ASSESSMENT TEST HELPS BESTWAY EXPRESS FIND AND KEEP THE RIGHT DRIVER



For many fleets, the cost of driver turnover is a cost of doing business. But for those in the know, staying ahead of the curve – and competition – by lowering driver turnover rates means a healthier bottom line and increased profits.

“Absolutely,” agrees Curt Singleton, director of safety and HR for Bestway Express, which operates more than 270 trucks while employing more than 260 drivers. “With the cost of turnover pegged in the thousands of dollars for fleets, any double-digit decline in the fleet turnover rate, over the national

average, means a hefty increase to the bottom line.”

A recent ATA survey noted turnover for long-haul drivers at about 90 percent. “What’s more, fleets we’ve surveyed show that 50 percent of new drivers coming out of driving school leave or are let go in the first 60 days of employment,” said Mark Tinney, president of Gig Harbor, Wash.-based JOBehaviors. “Those are frightening statistics.”

Bestway Express, located in Vincennes, Ind., knows those statistics well. “When I joined the company

2-1/2 years ago, the company was experiencing turnover in the 90 percent-plus range,” said Singleton. “At that time, we only hired experienced drivers and we were spending a lot of time and money in the hiring process – including doing criminal background checks. Even if a candidate looked ok on paper, we often found they didn’t have the right attitude. We had a mix of about 50/50 when it came to finding what we considered a good driver. We had metrics in places – such as safe operation, customer satisfaction, on-time delivery, compliance with regulations,



and how they treated our vehicles. So how our top driver scored in our metrics compared to our low performers, was quite evident. We felt we needed to do a better job of getting the right drivers in our doors and that's when we started looking for a tool that could help us dig a little deeper to find the best drivers from the get-go."

Ultimately, Bestway determined the JOBehaviors job compatibility assessment test would give them more information and a better compatibility match at the front-end. "In researching the company, I saw that they were working with an impressive list of trucking companies, and they offered a risk-free, no-cost evaluation period," recalls Singleton. "So we gave it a try, first with some new applicants, then by testing our current pool of drivers to see if they ranked them the same way we did. And in that test we found they pegged our top drivers 80 percent of the time. That gave us a lot of confidence."

The assessment is based on an in-depth job analysis with outstanding drivers (there are separate assessments

for long haul and delivery drivers) who excel in what they do for a living. Nearly 500 specific behaviors related to the job were identified and woven in to the assessment.

Results are based on a percentile equivalent that places each candidate in relation to all who have ever completed the assessment with a 1 through 5-star rating.

"We recommend that only candidates scoring 3-stars and above be scheduled for interviews," says Tinney. "The higher the star rating, the more behaviors a candidate holds in common with known top-performing drivers."

According to Tinney, the assessment dramatically streamlines the hiring process (by up to 75 percent) and enables carriers to quickly and efficiently identify individuals with the highest potential for a long successful career as a driver. The tool not only identifies experienced drivers, but is increasingly used to identify outstanding drivers who are new to the industry (recent CDL graduates).

After 18 months of using the assessment, Singleton says the company

is reaping benefits. "Our turnover is down more than 35 percent, and it continues to go down. Plus, the cost and time spent interviewing candidates has been reduced in half," he says. "Before using the assessment we'd interview 10 candidates to find one driver. Now the assessment identifies the top candidates and we interview just five.

"We're also now hiring drivers fresh from CDL school and our retention rate with those drivers is at 75 percent, which is huge and far better than the industry average."

While reducing turnover saves the company re-hiring dollars, Singleton says the top performing drivers he's now hiring are also safer, more careful with equipment, and have an interest in seeing the company succeed. "They're not just drivers, they're team members with our company," he says. "Our number of claims has been reduced by 12 percent; our drivers are hitting their fuel economy numbers (tracked by PeopleNet data tracks); and we're getting positive phone calls about our drivers from our customers." |