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

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 for long haul and delivery drivers) is reaping benefits. “Our turnover is
how our top driver scored in our met-
rics compared to our low performers,
which continues to go down. Plus, the cost and
the cost and
time spent interviewing candidates has
be reduced in half,” he says. “Before
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 as-
essment test would give them more
information and a better compatibility
match at the front-end. “In research-
ing the company, I saw that they were
working with an impressive list of
truck drivers, 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 confi-
dence.”

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
can 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 assess-
ment dramatically streamlines the
hiring process (by up to 75 percent)
and enables carriers to quickly and ef-

ciently 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 outstand-
ing drivers who are new to the industry
(recent CDL graduates).

After 18 months of using the as-

essment, Singleton says the company
is reaping benefits. “Our turnover is
down more than 35 percent, and it con-
tinues 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 candi-
dates and we interview just five.

“We’re also now hiring drivers
fresh from CDL school and our reten-
tion 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 mem-
bers 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.”