

Best Practices to Hire The Best Truck Drivers

[Running a successful business](#) is one thing. Finding competent and committed employees to promote that endeavour is another. The American Trucking Association reported that the average truck driver turnover in 2013 was 96 per cent for larger fleets and 82 per cent for smaller fleets.

With reasons beyond an employer's control—declining talent pool, economic growth increasing industry demand and competition from other sectors—how do you find and recruit the best truck drivers?

Consider these industry best practices in your hiring process:

Mandatory Hiring Policy

[Know and understand any state and federal rules](#) pertaining to interviewing and hiring new recruits. The Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations stipulate that employers must retain a qualification file for every driver. This includes medical exams, motor vehicle records (MVR), road test certificates and yearly driving evaluations. A formal hiring policy will help to ensure both your business and government requirements are being met.

MVRs are a form of Insurance

A driver with a suspended license or a poor driving record can be a bad risk for your business. Investing in the cost of a background check will be far less than the price of any accident. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates the average cost of motor vehicle accidents to be from \$16,000 to over \$500,000 against the business, depending on injuries or fatalities. Potential hires should have at least three years of clean driving and MVRs should be checked annually.

Interview with Intent

Communicating your company's safety practices and policies at the outset of an interview lets an individual know what is valued and for what he or she will be held accountable if hired. Questions regarding driving history, steps to improve skills and distracted driving can all reflect a candidate's attitude towards safety and other behavioural concerns. When you're ready to choose your new staff member, be sure to balance best driving habits with best overall fit for the position.

Customize Your Process

One size does not fit all. Some companies set a five-year minimum clean driving record, request insurance approval and conduct road tests and drug screening as part of their hiring standards. You may also want to provide training specific to your business before putting someone in the driver's seat. Starting a new candidate on a part-time trial basis can help to determine if he or

she will mesh well in the environment.

Network Before The Need

Even if you're not ready to hire, make a point of connecting with those who come recommended by people you trust and respect. Lou Adler, CEO and best-selling author *The Essential Guide for Hiring and Getting Hired*, states that, "those who consistently hired the best people spent more time with the candidates before, during and after the interviewing process." It's an opportunity to build rapport and you'll be a step ahead when the time is right.

Recognize Potential As Well As Experience

The Bureau of Labor Statistics states that with an average age of 55, many commercial drivers are approaching retirement. So, it stands to reason that many drivers will now be new to the industry with little to no experience. While experience does have its place, recognizing potential is important as well. Someone with a reputable personality who can be groomed to fit your company's culture with good habits can be a valuable hire for the long term.

Building a solid team of the best truck drivers takes time and energy. But with the right hiring practices in place, it won't feel like a long haul. Everyone benefits and your company will [be prepared for the future](#) as industry demands change.