

WORLD MILLWORK ALLIANCE

# MILLWORK & MORE

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*Connections that Matter.*



# THE CHALLENGES OF BEING A TRUCKING COMPANY: HOW DID YOU GET HERE?

In the darkness of the morning, the truck engine turns over, emits a long sputtering sound but won't start. Your phone buzzes with a text from your new driver saying he's sick and won't be in today. An email in your inbox reiterates that the new truck you ordered will not be in for "several more months." Your daily calendar reminds you that the person rear-ended by your temp driver is moving forward with litigation. You know in those movies, when things are going crazy and you hear the record scratch, everything freezes and someone says "Yup, that's me. I'll bet you're wondering how I got here." If your company is running a private fleet, you may very well be wondering how you got here.

## How Did You Get Here?

If you think back to the beginning, it's likely you remember the excitement and energy around creating a high-quality millwork product. You focused on making it better, more cost-efficient and with a design that your customers loved. You analyzed your product designs and manufacturing processes down to the very smallest detail to ensure quality. You invested in talented people to take your products to the marketplace. And with a quality product, great people and a scalable manufacturing process came success—and growth.

Ironically, growth can be a very dangerous time for a business, and it brings with it responsibilities you may not have considered in detail at the outset: hiring challenges, legal

issues, real estate acquisition and distribution, just to name a few. At the outset of your growth, ironically, your decisions on transportation may have come quite easily. You just needed one or two trucks to make your deliveries. You'd just hire one or two people to make sure you had flexibility and control of your deliveries so you could provide the very best in customer satisfaction. And with that approach in mind, you went out and sourced your first delivery truck.

Remember that record scratching? And that question of "How did I get here?" Well, there's your answer. With that first truck acquisition, like it or not, you made the business decision to be a trucking company. And with that initial decision, came the complexities that you face today with hiring drivers, sourcing equipment, containing costs, and more.

**As a trucking company, in addition to being a millwork company, that means your commitment to driver recruiting and retention has to be increased.**

**The Challenges of Being a Trucking Company:  
>> Where's My Truck?**

When it comes to transportation, one obvious challenge right now is truck availability. Specific to your business, when you consider that new truck on order (the one that won't be in for "several more months"), think about how your company compares in size and buying power to other companies with trucks on order from the same manufacturer. The truth is you're competing with large fleet buyers across all industries, fleet leasing companies, truck rental companies and 10,000 other companies like yourself. If you're not in the top tier in terms of purchasing vehicles, your truck order is likely going to be pushed down the list.

**The Challenges of Being a Trucking Company:  
>> Where's My Driver?**

Driver recruiting and retention is the other main challenge in the transportation world right now and overcoming it won't be getting any easier. As a trucking company, in addition to being a millwork company, that means your commitment to driver recruiting and retention has to be increased. That could take the form of an investment in an outside recruiting service, an investment in job board listings, and/or an internal investment in human resources to handle the ongoing challenge. If your company chooses the internal investment, be sure to learn about and leverage the latest methods including hyper-local recruitment and geo-fenced social media advertisements. Also, be sure to actively market to passive job seekers, not just active job seekers.

**The Challenges of Being a Trucking Company:  
>> How Many Checks?**

In moving from the obvious to the less obvious challenges of being a trucking company, let's look at the inter-woven administrative side of writing the checks necessary to support your fleet. Those checks would include fuel, maintenance, leasing, repairs, driver payroll, insurance, tires, truck rentals, temp drivers, recruiter services, hiring ads, job board listings, background checks, interviews, drug screens, uniforms,



in-cab technology, sign on glass technology, accidents and legal fees. That's a lot of checks and a good amount of internal time spent (administrative, vendor relations, accounting, accounts payable) managing the effort in an ongoing basis.

**Conclusion**

As you think about that record scratch and your business, it really does come down to a question of core competency and focus. If you've made the decision and the investment into managing your own trucks—and it doesn't affect your core competency—then you can continue to face the challenges of the transportation side of your business. Conversely, if you've reached the point of moving away from a private fleet be sure to look to partner with a transportation company that understands your business goals and aligns with your culture.