



**Session 5
Paper (b)**

ADVANCED DRIVER TRAINING FOR THE FOREST INDUSTRY

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INTRODUCTION

There are three key ingredients most companies are seeking, whatever their industry, irrespective of their location. Businesses want improved economic performance, improved safety for all of those people that they come in contact with and for the public to hold a perception that they are an honest, ethical and law abiding organisation. These ambitions and goals are not new - they are universal, spanning all industries, all nations and all cultures. We all want to be recognised as a leader in our respective field.

The impact that training can have in assisting, and indeed creating the "right environment", to achieve these goals cannot be under estimated. We continue to spend considerable sums of money on the latest trucks and trailers to provide services, and in most cases spend a very disproportionate smaller amount on training our people, on how to utilise the

new technology to it's optimum performance.

It is indeed an indictment that the transport industry, across the world and across most industry sectors, continues to view driver training as a low priority, low value investment activity, that can be ignored by most, and implemented by a few when the business climate permits. This is of course after many other so-called more deserving claims for expenditure have been met, including corporate golf days, overseas trips to look at a few transport operations whilst en route to the South of France or the Greek Islands, upgrading of the corporate executive car fleet and attendance at various "industry" conferences in exotic locations, which have a program dominated by golf, tours, dinners, entertainment and add on tourist packages.

Certainly in Australia, there is extensive discussion on the merits and values of investing in driver training by a large number of transport operators - it is indeed a source of much concern that the rhetoric is not matched by action. The Keating Government in 1992 introduced a scheme of a Compulsory Training Levy on all businesses which required them to spend a minimum percentage of their payroll on training. There was a large growth in the corporate executive conference market, particularly in locations such as the Gold Coast, Cairns, the islands of the Great Barrier Reef and many other equally pleasurable destinations. This initiative, hailed by the Government of the day as one of their

key planks in job re-training, upskilling and a basis to make Australia more world competitive, lasted less than eighteen months.

The short answer is, that if the owners of businesses do not see the value of training, it will not occur. The failure of the Keating Government Minimum Training Guarantee Scheme clearly identified that this activity cannot be legislated into industry. The players in the industry have to believe that training is an important factor in their success, and actually sit down and develop appropriately tailored training programs for all of their people

ECONOMIC ISSUES

There is a continual competitive and intense pressure on market prices for all goods and services. The transport industry is not immune to this process and the challenge of reducing costs always has a very high and sharp focus. The role of the driver is not to be underestimated in managing the operating costs of vehicles. The key cost areas that are directly impacted by driver behaviour include fuel, tyres, repairs and maintenance and vehicle life, as well as the cost of accidents and insurance premiums as well as workers compensation premiums.

The growth and improvement in new heavy vehicle technology over the past

decade or two has been spectacular. In the early 1980's a new engine, or a new truck launched in the USA would take six months to reach Australia and New Zealand. Today this a very different situation. Indeed you have had the newest cab-over Freightliner in New Zealand for some six months before we will see it in Australia. New truck technology is being released simultaneously across the world markets, and we see drivers being required to often "step up" to a much more sophisticated operating environment. The longer a vehicle is retained before being replaced, the larger the "step up" is into the new replacement vehicle.

This has caused a total change in how drivers handle new technology. We have moved on from 3000 rpm oil burning lorries from the United Kingdom and the low torque US trucks, that only seemed to operate effectively by “giving her plenty!”.

With high torque engines geared to optimise on road performance at low

Fuel Consumption

Research into fuel consumption in USA and United Kingdom was identified in a report by the OECD Steering Committee for Road Transport Research in 1996, indicated that drivers can affect fuel savings of up to 20 per cent through a change in their driving habits and practices. There is evidence from

Tyres

There is very little research into the impact of driver training on tyre life. Some individual companies in Australia have measured the changes in tyre costs and have reported savings up to 12%. However, any transport operator will be

Repairs and Maintenance

Similarly there has been very little published research into the cost of repairs and maintenance pre and post driver training programs. Individual companies have reported savings of between 7% and 12% after drivers have been through a comprehensive Advanced Driver

engine revs, drivers have had to understand how to operate these new vehicles in a totally different way.

Failure to understand how to drive a modern heavy diesel truck not only causes under performance, but increases operating costs significantly.

individual transport companies in Australia that whilst the average savings are more in the order of 5% to 10%, these can be very significant with total fuel costs running at more than \$A40 million per annum for some of the larger long haul operators.

able to tell you what the cost of tyres are when a driver operates his vehicle poorly, returning to the yard with extensive and continual wall damage and tread scrubbing!

Training program. The new techniques that are taught are too numerous to discuss in this paper, but issues of speed, engine revolutions, weight to power ratio, gear shifting, and running in the optimum power band at the lowest engine speed are all contributors.

I can recall listening to a group of experienced drivers at the DECA Shepparton complex who were at the end of a week long intensive advanced driver training course. The instructor was advising the group how they went and what changed during the week. On Monday, each driver had driven around a particular route and on Friday they drove around the same route again. Details were gathered on a whole range of issues

including fuel consumption, engine speeds, and so on. One measure remained very clear in my thoughts - the number of gear changes between Monday and Friday for the same route. The drivers, on average, reduced the number of gear shifts on Monday from 38 to 25 on Friday - a 34% reduction in gear shifts, which not only reduced fuel consumption but reduced the wear on the drive line.

Accidents and Insurance Premiums

There can be little doubt that drivers play a significant role in accidents. The 1996 OECD Steering Committee Report for Road Transport Research found that whilst heavy vehicles appear to be under-represented in traffic accidents, they seem to be over-represented in casualty accidents.

Research into causal factors indicate that driver error is a significant contributor and further investigation reveals that the key issues of driver impairment by fatigue and lack of training are prevalent in many cases.

These findings are supported by an earlier (1990), more in depth study in New South Wales, Australia conducted by the Federal Office of Road Safety of the Australian Commonwealth Government, Transport and Communications Department. Whilst a number of the contributing factors in the area of road conditions were apparent, there was a high proportion of causal factors of excessive fatigue and driver

behaviour issues including speed, inattention, inappropriate evasive action and poor driving techniques.

Individual transport companies have reported reductions in the number of accidents following the introduction of Advanced Driver Training programs ranging from 32% to 70%. Many transport companies have very high excesses and premiums. One such company reduced their premium from \$A1.8 million to \$A650,000 in three years. Clearly the future survival of this particular company depended upon its ability to reduce the cost of accidents.

The cost of Workers Compensation in the transport industry is extremely high. The premiums paid in Australia rank second only to the mining industry and attract an average premium of more than 10% of the payroll. In some excessive cases, premiums have reached 30% of the total payroll.

SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE

We all go about our daily business and personal activities expecting that we will be in a safe environment at all times. People cause accidents - not vehicles. We

Road Crashes

The biggest single cause of death and injury at work in Australia is road crashes. More than 50% of work related deaths are as a result of vehicle crashes. Additionally, the majority of serious injuries and absences from work are as a result of vehicle crashes. A very large proportion of crashes are avoidable. I doubt that it is very different here in New Zealand.

The focus on safety by Government, enforcement agencies and the public has

Injuries in the Work Place

The focus on accidents is very clearly road accidents. What about the impact of accidents that occur during the course of a drivers normal activities that does not involve driving? Accidents during loading and unloading are very high with drivers experiencing many injuries, some very serious. They include lacerations and hand injuries when securing loads, back and neck injuries from falling off loads - with many of these resulting in permanent damage - back and knee injuries caused by jumping from trailers and truck cabins, strains and sprains to limbs through poor lifting techniques - and the list goes on.

Accident Compensation costs are only one part. The cost of pain, suffering and trauma along with the diminution of the

expect that all other road users will operate in a safe and law abiding manner at all times- the way we conduct ourselves on the roads.

caused a major shift in attitudes of drivers and operators in Australia over the past eight years. The road transport industry has had a "cowboy" reputation for many years and in some sectors that culture had become an important ingredient in being accepted by ones peers. Today in Australia the "cowboy" is becoming an endangered species with employers and their clients insisting on substantially improved performance on the road.

quality of life experienced by many injured workers is almost immeasurable. What impact is there on a driver and his family who is a paraplegic after falling from a loaded trailer? The employer and the industry lose the use of the skills and benefits of an experienced driver who, after rehabilitation faces the daunting task of attempting to develop a new set of skills in order that he/she, can again take their place in the workforce in a meaningful and contributing way. It is a fact that most transport operators do not have alternative jobs for injured employees, tasks that have "light duties" are difficult to find and in many cases the employee is ill equipped to handle office tasks.

This does not mean employers should not make every effort to provide alternative meaningful employment to injured workers. The process of getting people back to work is critical to their future. The primary goal must be to prevent the

injury in the first instance by operating in a safe environment and training people on how to conduct themselves in ways that avoid these long and painful rehabilitation programs.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Any politician will tell you that there are no votes in trucks. The public generally do not understand trucks and see their presence on the road as an intrusion into the domain of the car, motorcyclist, cyclist and pedestrian. Most companies and organisations want to be held in high regard by the community and the public. We all seek to be labelled "a professional" in our respective fields. The public and the commercial world judge the transport industry by the experiences they have on and off the road.

All of us have experienced the effects of the operation of a discourteous, law

breaking or dangerous truck and have quickly identified our attitude towards the road transport industry. Courtesy to other road users, operating within the law, particularly speed limits and recognition of the rights of other road users are all important contributors to creating the right public image on the road. Just having the licence to drive is not enough. Interaction with clients, the cleanliness and quality of the vehicle, loads that are secure and tidy, a clean and well presented personal image are all key factors in creating and portraying that elusive image of professionalism.

The Changes in Public Perception in Australia

In 1989 I addressed the now defunct Australian Road Transport Federation at their annual convention. The relationships between the Government agencies and the transport industry was at a very low ebb at that time. The communication process between the two parties appeared to be conducted almost exclusively through the media, with both parties lobbing hand grenades at each other.

In essence, neither party was inclined to even attempt understand the others point of view, and the resulting fall out, fuelled along by a very vigorous and active rail lobby, was that the public had a strong

dislike for trucks. That is not to suggest that the transport industry was absolved of any responsibility in creating the extremely poor public image they had. It is certainly true that the transport industry contributed greatly to the creation of their own image through excessive speeds, overloading, tailgating, intimidation of other motorists and a rising accident rate.

How was this changed? The catalyst to get some reasonable and responsible dialogue underway was the need for the industry to convince the Victorian Government to permit B-doubles to operate in Victoria which was prohibited

until 1991. In 1990 a process of consultation with all other stakeholders and a major program of educating the public began.

The industry had to prove it was capable of operating in a responsible manner and within the law. B-doubles did arrive in Victoria eventually but along the way the dormant Victorian Road Freight Advisory Council was reconvened with a much sharper focus, the transport industry and Government began communicating on a reasonable, responsible basis and the process of consultation and cooperation had begun.

The then newly established Road Transport Forum took up the challenge of communicating with, and establishing relations with the Federal Government. Having secured a degree of trust between each other, both the industry and Government began to address the image of the industry in the public arena. The process was slow and at times exceedingly frustrating. The public had lived with a transport industry that for so long had an image of what seemed to be total irresponsibility. Gradually the educational process began to have an effect. The education was of course the industry educating its own members, players and drivers to improve their image as well as educating the politicians, Government and the public.

The industry in Australia has indeed come a long way since those dark days in the late 1980's when front page news in the daily newspapers had headlines such as "Trucks Kill" "The Juggernauts are Coming", "Speeding Trucks Cause Deaths" and many others.

In 1993/94 the Road Transport Forum commissioned research into "Population Knowledge Of and Attitudes Towards The Road Transport Industry". The key comments and findings were in some cases conflicting but nevertheless the attitudes towards road transport had improved considerably since the early 1990's. The most consistent comments about trucks were

- "there are too many trucks on the roads"
- "trucks cause a lot of exhaust and noise pollution"
- "trucks are very modern and technologically 'state of the art' machinery"

Whilst people believed that the road transport industry is "competitive" and "essential", a surprising 65% rejected the idea that "all goods we use are transported by truck". Public perceptions of truck drivers were generally sympathetic and the vast majority agreed strongly that:

- it takes a great deal of skill to drive a big truck
- truck drivers work very hard
- they are put under too much time pressure in order to stay in business

But there was little real knowledge of truck driving and a perception that driving was a skill rather than a profession. The public generally supported Government controls over the industry and had some doubts over any relaxation through industry self-regulation.

Today there are many joint initiatives undertaken between Government, industry, truck drivers and the Union.

These organisations have jointly run two Industry Safety Seminars in the last twelve months which have had attendances in excess of 400 on each occasion. Many of those attending are truck drivers along with operations personnel, as well as Government, Industry and Union representatives. The

Victorian Road Freight Advisory Council holds a series of regional forums each year where local transport operators, manufacturers and the local community can participate in an open forum, making their contribution to the better understanding of road transport in the wider community.

WHY UNDERTAKE DRIVER TRAINING?

Much of this has been covered in the earlier part of my address. However it is useful to examine some actual cases where the benefits of Advanced Driver

Training have been measured. These cases are drawn from DECA Australia who have worked with these companies for varying amounts of time.

Finemores Transport

Finemores Transport entered into a long term commitment to invest in Advanced Driver Training for their 900 drivers. This investment is in the order of \$A800,000 per annum and is one that Finemores claim is producing results. In summary the results experienced, as reported by Finemores, are as follows:

- Accident Costs Reduced by 32.7% in the first year, 30.9% in the second and a further 30% in the third year
- Fuel Consumption is down by an average of 5% - this the potential to reach 10%
- Repairs & Maintenance Costs are down by 7%
- Incidence of speed violations have reduced
- They receive more compliments than complaints about their trucks

on road behaviour through their dedicated Toll Free Public Reporting telephone number

- Driver turnover has dropped from 20% to less than 10% over the past 2.5 years

These results are not only impressive but vital to the continuing financial growth of their business. They have a number of large contracts in the automotive sector and in line with the reduction in car tariffs in Australia, one of their contracts requires Finemores to reduce their charges to the customer at an equal rate of 2.5% per annum over the three year contract life. Clearly Advanced Driver Training is contributing to their ability to meet that challenge.

Shell Company of Australia

The relationship between DECA and Shell dates back for more than 15 years and the Advanced Driver Training program used, is one that has been specifically developed for Shell to address their specific needs. The current

program is up to Phase Four and the outcomes experienced by Shell include:

- Fuel Consumption reduced by 10%
- Accidents Reduced by 45%
- Repairs and Maintenance Costs Reduced by 12%

Van Berkel Plant Transport

This company is a relatively small specialist transporter of plants from growers to retail nurseries. They had a significant problem with a number of accidents that appeared to be fatigue related, which in turn caused a high staff turnover. The benefits of their Advanced Driver Training program was:

- Accidents Reduced by 50%
- Less Fatigue and Tiredness
- Lower Staff Turnover
- Fuel Consumption Reduced by 9%
- Repairs and Maintenance Reduced by 12%

Stevensons Transport

This company is a specialist Bulk LPG transporter who had an increasing accident rate with a high number of roll overs. Their insurance company strongly recommended that they undertake a well structured Advanced Driver Training program to ensure that they could remain in business and insured. After all drivers had participated in the first program, Stevensons found that:

- Roll Overs were eliminated - in fact they have not had one since the program began
- Accidents (other than roll overs) Reduced by 70%
- Fuel Consumption Reduced by 7.5%
- Repairs and Maintenance Reduced by 10.5%

Ford Motor Company of Australia

At their Melbourne operation, Ford employ 71 drivers operating articulated and B-double vehicles between their component manufacturing plant in Geelong and their assembly plant at Broadmeadows. A company that is committed to training across all areas of their business, they believed that there were benefits to be secured from an

Advanced Driver Training program. The results enjoyed by Ford were:

- Fuel Consumption Reduced by 9%
- Repairs and Maintenance Costs Reduced by 11%
- Accidents Reduced by 67%

APPLICATION TO THE FOREST INDUSTRY

Whilst there has been little specific Advanced Driver Training undertaken in the forest industry in Australia, apart from the logging truck drivers employed by Finemores, one must remember, that the forestry industry in Australia is nowhere near the size you have in New Zealand. The benefits of Advanced Driver Training programs have been identified during the course of my presentation but it is worthwhile to summarise these at this time.

The benefits are substantial, but are not limited to the following:

- substantial savings in fuel consumption which reduces costs and preserves our fuel reserves
- reduced maintenance costs
- reduced number and severity of accidents
- lower insurance premiums
- reduction in lost hours of work through injury and road trauma
- extended life of transport equipment
- improved employee performance, confidence and self esteem
- increased productivity in the workplace
- improved image on the road, particularly when identified with specific clients
- improved compliance with the road laws and regulations

- improved relations with the enforcement authorities resulting in less on road delays
- improved public image

There is no reason why these same benefits will not apply to the transport of forest products in New Zealand. A comprehensive review of the training needs and specifically developed programs to meet those needs, will do much to improve the flow of material for the forest to the market place. Advanced Driver Training programs do not come "off the shelf" - they are developed specifically for each operator to ensure that they do meet the identified needs.

The benefits for each business can be calculated with some accuracy. Research by DECA in conjunction with a number of leading insurance companies in Australia has provided the base data to develop a simple calculator process that can be driven on your PC. You will find a copy of this in your conference satchel with the compliments of DECA. The details that you can calculate are identified in the following table. It will allow you to determine the benefits that are available to you based on the actual costs you have incurred.

WORK SHEET FOR BENEFITS/SAVINGS OF TRUCK DRIVER TRAINING

COST AREA	COST LAST 12 MONTHS	SAVINGS	NET SAVINGS NEXT 12 MONTHS
FUEL		5%	
MAINTENANCE		5%	
INSURANCE PREMIUMS		15%	
CRASH EXCESS PAYMENTS		25%	
REPAIR COSTS		25%	
CLIENT LOAD LOSSES		30%	
LOST WORK HOURS - ALL CRASHES		50%	
VALUE OF LOST WORK HOURS		@ \$ PH	
OPPORTUNITY COST Contribution per lost work hour/day		@ \$	
MEDICAL EXPENSES		50%	
ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS - average per crash		\$500	
HIRE OF VEHICLES		25%	
TOTAL SAVINGS			\$
NO OF DRIVERS TO BE TRAINED			
NET SAVINGS IN NEXT 12 MONTHS			\$

NOTE: Savings based on information supplied by DECA clients and their insurance companies

