Planning a Successful Electronic Logging Device (ELD) Implementation

This blue paper provides important information that fleets can use to plan a successful ELD implementation, ensuring compliance with the new law for tracking hours of service (HOS).

Current summary

In anticipation of the Electronic Logging Device (ELD) mandate being signed into law and becoming effective in late 2016, fleets are investigating technology solutions for becoming compliant. While focused on choosing a provider/system that automates hours-of-service (HOS) tracking, fleets should be mindful that creating an implementation plan is the key to successful adoption and use and ultimately full compliance with the law.

The following recommendations are based on proven techniques that PeopleNet has used to help hundreds of fleets successfully implement a variety of new technologies and optimize their return on investment (ROI).

Set the stage by making the ELD law your fleet's law

Standing behind the new ELD law demonstrates that your organization truly wants to be part of the solution that will help reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities involving large trucks. Holding drivers responsible for their part keeps them from being part of the problem and ensures that your fleet is adhering to the highest safety standards—to protect your drivers as well as the public that shares the nation's roads with them.

Sharing these sobering statistics with your drivers helps them understand why the law is changing:

- Three million truck drivers operate their vehicles alongside millions of people every day.
- Almost four hundred motorists and truck drivers are killed in large truck crashes every month.
- Over 500,000 citations were issued for violations of "hours-of-service rules" last year.
- One third of fatalities and injuries from large truck accidents are related to fatigued truck drivers.

As is the case with all change, some drivers who may find the conversion to an electronic system difficult will maintain that the new ELD law harasses safe, hardworking truck drivers, and invades their privacy. After all, filling out a paper logbook is all that the majority of veteran drivers may know. They have always self-monitored their driving time, but it is prone to human error and allows easy falsification. The results have been proven – too many violations, too many tired drivers, and too many crashes.

When drivers understand how the ELD system will benefit them personally, change understandably becomes easier to embrace. First and foremost, contrary to popular belief, some ELD systems actually afford drivers *more* drive time, since they track hours of service

(HOS) by the minute vs. 15-minute increments. In addition, roadside inspections will be much faster. Tracking HOS with an ELD helps drivers avoid stiff financial penalties under the CSA (Compliance, Safety Accountability). Further, a reduction in accidents lowers insurance premiums, which helps the company's finances and therefore supports job security.

How you further position the ELD system chosen by your fleet will depend on whether it is a single-function ELD system with limited capabilities or a more comprehensive event onboard recording (EOBR) solution. If your ELD system is limited to HOS-related capabilities, then the previously discussed staging works. If your fleet has opted for a system that addresses a wider range of issues (speed monitoring, engine fault code monitoring, speed alarms, fuel consumption and more) to meet a broader range of safety and performance goals, then more detailed communication is recommended. Your drivers need to understand the vision and how the new ways you're asking them to do things fits into achieving goals and objectives.

No matter what kind of system you choose, you get one chance to implement it, so do it right. Don't risk your project's success by straying from the tried-and-true formula outlined in this blue paper.

Create a roadmap

The detailed implementation plan you create reflects leadership's vision for the project. It is essential for success in moving the organization through a major cultural change from manual to electronic—whether the implementation happens all at once or incrementally in phases. Piecemeal plans that don't encompass the project's vision could lead to mistakes and false starts.

The details of the plan should include each task on the day it is to be completed and who will be accountable for the task—start to finish. The more complex an implementation is—whether there are 50 or 250 tasks—the greater the need for adherence to the game plan. Detailing the project helps keep it on track budget wise, time wise and resource wise.

Create a cross-functional team to own the program

This is the playlist of who will be completing the tasks you've detailed in your roadmap. This team consists of representatives who are responsible for diverse functions that are critical for the implementation. Make them accountable for the project's success, as well as reporting progress on scheduled intervals throughout the implementation:

- Management Representative –This person is responsible for the overall success of the implementation program. By confirming management's commitment to the project, this representative fosters support throughout the organization. This executive sponsor and cheerleader understands the company's vision and is typically the vice president of strategic planning, operations, or whoever heads up the safety/compliance effort.

- Operations Representative – This person is responsible for planning, dispatch and driver activities; in other words, ensuring day-to-day use of the technology. It is critical that this person buy into the vision since their personnel must live with the results that the

implementation ultimately generates. Users must understand that ELD is *not* optional; it's the law.

- Technology Representative – This person is responsible for network connectivity and all third-party applications that support the end-to-end system. Operations relies on this person to ensure the technology performs at a high level day in and day out. For fleets leveraging their ELD solution to gain efficiencies across their operation, it is important to maintain the perspective that operational improvement is driving the use of technology, rather than technology driving operational processes.

- Maintenance Representative – This person is responsible for management of onboard computer (OBC) inventory, installation and service. Be sure to include access to the engine control module (ECM) that enables generation of truck and driver performance data such as fault codes, MPG and other safety indicators. In turn, this data provides management valuable information to make better fleet management decisions, achieve ROI, and ensure ELD compliance.

- Finance Representative – Fleets implementing a more sophisticated ELD solution to help them achieve greater performance rely on this person to manage and issue analyses of key performance indicators (KPIs), such as scorecards, dashboards and other measurement tools, and comparative progress reports. Determine five or six measurements of success for your operation, and rely on your provider to identify the source of the data to support these KPIs and deliver accurate scorecards.

- Driver Manager Representative – This person is responsible for driver adoption and use by managing training, peer communication, and other initiatives that create successful use of the technology from day one. Driver support is key to compliance with the ELD law.

There's one more member of your team who plays a key role in making your implementation a success—your technology provider. This person is the mortar that cements the various representative bricks to ensure that a solid foundation is being built. You should feel confident that the provider you select will not only meet your expectations, but deliver results fueled with ROI as a true partner.

Proven techniques to make your implementation team successful

Here are some proven techniques to help each member of your implementation team succeed; they have been used in hundreds of successful PeopleNet implementations:

- Management Representative – Communicating early and often cannot be overemphasized. Think of it as a mini-marketing campaign to sell the project's success. Communication objectives are: generate excitement, remove doubt, create the expectation for a positive experience.

  While your messages may be similar during the process, using a variety of media such as posters, emails, newsletters, and intranet can help make them be different, as does mixing text graphics and infographics. A live presentation by your supplier/partner in

which successes with their other customers are discussed will let your organization know you're working with the right firm. It will also give the firm a face.

- Operations Representative—Paint a picture of what the typical workday will look like and how it will change for the better. Describe how much easier life will be when a few keystrokes replace the time-consuming manual process of maintaining paper logbooks. As with any culture change, be conscious of apprehension and take every opportunity to try to alleviate fear.

  Assure those whose work will be impacted that they will be able to redirect the time they save to more important tasks that will help the organization and enhance their personal value to the organization. For drivers, this could mean getting home to their families sooner.

- Technology Representative – Although this is your domain, embrace the provider as an extension of your team. As your partner, the provider can enhance your domain. Challenging your ally to prove their "stuff" will help ensure that your users will experience impeccable service.

- Maintenance Representative – Make sure your supplier is able to train and certify your technicians, so they can install the new system if that is part of your procurement agreement. Provide them access to your supplier's technical support resource for fast and reliable service. Also conduct a pre-installation that establishes an approved model for the larger-scale implementation.

- Finance Representative – If your ELD solution offers more than the basics, make sure you know what the *exact* ROI is before you ever start the project. Accept nothing less than a detailed description that reflects your organization's specific operation and how your bottom line will be impacted. Know when to expect ROI before the implementation starts. Monitor progress closely and report to management every week to ensure visibility and a clear path to any issue resolution that may be required.

- Driver Manager Representative – Since automating HOS tracking is particularly sensitive, building a network of driver ambassadors who represent each location different ages, and levels of experience is a strategy that can strengthen adoption. Train them first and leverage their newly acquired ELD expertise as mentors for other drivers. Hearing positive opinions about the new technology from their own peers becomes irrefutable testimony. Driver-to-driver communication spreads like wildfire; if the news is good, the impact is priceless. Every driver in your fleet should be successful from the start.

  Your technology partner should provide training videos (online and/or DVDs) and training assistance. Provide printed in-cab driver instruction materials, so drivers can be successful the first time they use the new technology. Materials should include manuals and abbreviated "cheat sheets".

One chance to do it right

It's critical to define the project by expected outcomes rather than a generic "technology integration". People want to know how the new technology is going to work, why the company is investing in it, how it will improve financial outcome, how it will impact operations, and how it will improve service to customers. Keeping information flowing and answering all questions about these issues eliminate surprises and mystery that can undermine adoption and success. Bottom line? That *is* the bottom line.

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