

Inside Fleet Management

A comprehensive guide to managing
your commercial vehicles



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1.0 Introduction

What is Fleet Management?

In practice, fleet management can take on several forms often dependant on the size of your business or its fleet. Simply put however, fleet management is the organisation and coordination of commercial vehicles.

The logistical side to fleet management varies from company to company, whether that is a one-man band keeping their van on the road, or a large corporate organisation orchestrating its fleet of company cars.

Nevertheless, the principles and objectives surrounding fleet management remain largely the same.

No matter what size a company's fleet, the aims are simple; keep costs low, efficiency high and your vehicles moving.

Throw into the mix the duty of care you have to keep any drivers you may employ safe, and it's not difficult to see why fleet management can be an all-encompassing task.

A vehicle off the road can cost businesses up to £500 per day*. Good fleet management can help you minimise or avoid vehicle downtime altogether.

The cost of running a fleet affects a fleet of one as much as it effects a fleet of 100 and meticulously monitoring the money your business spends on keeping its vehicles on the road is a large part of a fleet manager's role.

This white paper will address the ways in which companies both large and small can carefully study the way its vehicles are managed and will help you consider ways to keep fleet costs down and your vehicles well-organised.

Keeping on top of your fleet isn't easy and a keen eye for organisation is required in order to keep a fleet on the road. There is a lot to consider when running business vehicles, this

white paper aims to break down the extensive list of fleet management essentials and help guide you to a more efficient and rounded fleet management process.

When your business relies on its vehicles being on the road even the simplest of tasks such as ensuring they are road legal, or ensuring company car tax is paid where appropriate, cannot be overlooked.

We'll take you through the fundamentals of setting your fleet up right as well as the more sophisticated solutions available to fully optimise your fleet beyond the basics of keeping it on the road.



2.0 Fleet Management Basics

Managing your fleet

It could become very easy for a fleet manager to allow the basic logistics of keeping their fleet running to consume all of their time.

In order for a fleet to run as effectively as possible, a fleet manager's workload must be managed in such a way that allows them time to analyse their fleet in more detail and work on fleet strategy.

For this to be a reality, keeping on top of the basics needs to be a quick and efficient process which is easy to manage.

It's important for the simplest of fleet management tasks to become part of a routine and become almost second nature. When this is the case, you'll start to find you have more time to explore what more you could be getting out of your vehicles.

Becoming bogged down with the basics can not only eat into the time you spend optimising your fleet, it can also cost you time and therefore money.

We've outlined three FREE ways that you can set your fleet up for success.

These tips will help you keep a close eye on the day-to-day operation of your commercial vehicles without stealing away large chunks of time in your working week.

1. Keep a fleet log

As with your personal vehicles, your business vehicles need to have a valid MOT, vehicle insurance, up to date service history, breakdown cover and any other appropriate cover for running a vehicle.

It's incredibly important to keep on top of these dates and details for your fleet.

Should you miss an MOT for example, you risk a vehicle being off the road, or worse, you or your drivers unknowingly operating in an illegal vehicle.

Having physical (and/or virtual) records of these details for each of your vehicles will not only help you stay on top of expiry dates and maintenance of your vehicles, it is also free to do.

Keeping a vehicle log containing such information as in the template on page 9-10 will ensure you are up to date with all your vehicle's essential administrative processes and minimise the time you spend hunting down documents or email trails to find out when your vehicle essentials are up for renewal.

Whilst a log like this will provide you with a great reference point to check your vehicle's information, you can easily go a step further to ensure you never forget a date.

Adding your vehicle's MOT, insurance, service due dates etc to an electronic calendar means you can set up alerts to inform you when you need to act.

If you are an RAC member, you can activate your **Business Club** account for FREE.

Business Club allows you to enter vehicle details for your fleet and store information all in one place. In addition, RAC will notify you as and when action is required on one of your vehicles.

In addition to key dates and basic checks, you may choose to add to your records any information about the vehicle's health, such as when it last had new brake pads, or the last time the engine oil was changed.

A thorough vehicle health record can be a simple way to save on maintenance costs and vehicle downtime as you may be able to analyse your logs and pre-empt any major work your vehicles may need to undergo.



It may often get overlooked when it comes to fleet management but building and maintaining good relationships with local MOT and service providers, or automotive garages and suppliers can help you keep your costs as low as possible as and when your vehicles encounter any issues.

The importance of having a good relationship with your local tradespeople should never be underestimated.

It is tradespeople who can determine how costly – in terms of both time and money – any problems with your vehicle are going to be for your business.

It is important to note where your nearest and most reliable automotive garages are and what services they can provide for your fleet early on in your role.

In the world of fleet management where there is a lot of administrative processes to keep track of, a garage which offers the full suite of

MOT, servicing and vehicle maintenance is always a huge plus, but if that is not possible within a sensible distance from your organisation, don't be afraid to shop around.

As well as the garage itself, it is a great idea to get familiar with those who work there.

Even when there is nothing wrong with your vehicles you will still need regular MOTs and services carried out. A solid relationship with your local mechanic could result in lower prices and a higher care and attention in the work performed on your vehicles.

Equally as important is the ability to be able to book your vehicles in speedily for any emergency work where required.

Good working relationships with local tradespeople and businesses can assist you in doing just that, and having your vehicles fixed and returned to the road as quickly as possible.

Trust is hugely important between a fleet manager and their mechanic, particularly when the company relies on its vehicles being on the road.

Something like the RAC's *Approved Garage Network* can go a long way when it comes to

picking a trustworthy, reliable garage for your business vehicles.

3. Vehicle Tracking

Managing driver schedules can be a tricky task, especially where there are a lot of drivers to organise.

Nonetheless, even in smaller fleets a fleet manager cannot hope to control their drivers' schedules and hit delivery or service targets without being fully aware of their vehicles' schedule.

Knowing which vehicles in your fleet are available, and when, is critical when it comes to arranging which drivers are required to work at what time and whilst vehicle tracking solutions are available on a paid basis, (some of which will be discussed later in this paper) you can always exhaust the free options before you look for something more sophisticated.

When it comes to drawing up a delivery rota or managing drivers time, similarly to other industries, a fleet manager must know what resource they have available, so they don't over promise, or risk inefficiencies in their fleet.

There are many options when it comes to the being mindful of your assets' whereabouts.

Quite simply, a tracking sheet – similar to that you might produce for your drivers – can easily help you visualise how many vehicles are in use or unavailable and therefore how much use you can realistically get out of your vehicles.

A simple weekly vehicle usage table could be sufficient for a fleet manager to get a grip on their vehicle's movements that week.

This could contain as basic information as the vehicle, proposed departure and arrival times and locations, driver name and estimated mileage.

Successfully arranging your vehicles is a great starting point for efficient fleet management and effective driver management too.

Once your business has vehicles associated with it, effectively there is a fleet to manage and whether it's 2 vans, 20 cars or 200 taxis it's incredibly important to walk before you run.

Telematics and vehicle tracking products such as RAC connected solutions are available in addition to the free methods outlined above – but we'll talk about these later in the paper.

Find out more specifically about [RAC Telematics here](#).

Commercial vehicle information log

Company name:	
No. of vehicles:	

Vehicle Information			Vehicle Maintenance/Dates			
Vehicle make	Vehicle model	Reg No.	MOT renewal	Insurance renewal	Breakdown cover renewal	Last serviced
Comments:			Comments			
Comments:			Comments			
Comments:			Comments			

3.0 Protecting your Fleet

3.1 Fleet Insurance



Just the same as with your personal vehicles, business vehicles need to be insured. Depending on fleet size and usage, your insurance needs will unsurprisingly vary.

Before committing and purchasing insurance it's important to understand and assess your insurance needs, but also to consider whether those needs are likely to change in the foreseeable future.

More often than not, it will be cheaper to purchase specialist fleet insurance for fleets containing multiple vehicles as effectively you are rewarded with discount for covering all of your vehicles through one insurance provider.

Nonetheless, it can't harm you to shop around – particularly for fleets of five or less.

However, bear in mind that fleet specific insurance is not only likely to be a cheaper way to insure multiple vehicles within your business, but can also reduce the administrative processes that go hand-in-hand with vehicle insurance.

Keeping all of your vehicles restricted to one insurance policy can work in your favour when it comes to ease of management.

As well as fleet size impacting your insurance needs, the frequency at which your business vehicles are used can also factor into what sort of insurance policy you might suit you best, and the options are endless.

If you are running multiple taxis, constantly on the road, you may need public or private hire insurance.

In comparison, if you have several vans which often carry goods rather than providing a service, you'll want to contemplate coverage which extends to the transportation of goods or products.

Fundamentally, no matter what your commercial vehicle is used for, there will be a policy suitable for you.

Another consideration is whether to take out an 'any driver' policy or an 'any vehicle' policy.

The advantage of an 'any driver' policy is that should you consistently have drivers driving more than one of your vehicles or you regularly employ new drivers in your company, they will be covered to operate whichever vehicles you include on your policy.

Alternately, with 'any vehicle' cover, forgetting to add your latest vehicle to your insurance policy would not necessarily invalidate any claim you make if that vehicle was involved in an accident – so long as the driver involved was covered on your policy.

The endless options can easily leave you overwhelmed with choice. Many insurers however, will offer smaller fleet policies which may have much simpler conditions of use, so it is equally important to not be swept away by the volume of options available and stick to the cover you need.

Larger business with broader insurance needs may benefit from an insurance broker, which is commonly used to assist in the decision-making process.

In short, insurance brokers are specialists who can help you assess your insurance needs and present to you your most appropriate and cost-effective options.

This will of course, come at a cost but can be a helpful option, particularly where you are not confident in picking the right cover for your fleet.

3.2 Breakdown Cover

As well as insurance, it is vital to ensure your vehicles are covered in the case of a breakdown.

Vehicles displaying company logos, carrying trade tools or affiliated with a business in any other way will generally be refused service by most breakdown providers if they are on a personal level policy.

Confirming that your *business* vehicles have *business*



fleet manager who doesn't wish to leave their drivers high and dry in the event of a breakdown.

A vehicle off the road can cost a business up to £500 per day* so ensuring you have the right cover is so having the right cover is essential.

As well as refusal of service, incorrect cover on business vehicles means you'll likely miss out on some of the perks available with business breakdown cover.

In the same way as a fleet manager needs to assess their fleet insurance needs, it is also important to assess what level of breakdown cover is required to help keep your business moving.

Most breakdown providers will offer a basic at home and roadside service which will entitle your vehicle to cover at your registered business address should it fail to start, and to roadside assistance (and recovery to a garage

within a restricted radius) should you breakdown.

Traditionally, this is the lowest level of cover offered by breakdown providers and is often made more comprehensive by the addition of a recovery service which stretches UK-wide rather than within a restricted radius of the breakdown site, allowing your vehicle to be taken anywhere in the UK if it is not fixable at the roadside.

Both of these services are similar to that of a personal breakdown cover policy. However, some providers will offer business customers optional extras which can help to keep your commercial vehicles on the move.

'Onward travel' is one of those extras and in the event of a breakdown will help your driver and specified number of passengers get to a chosen destination should the breakdown provider be unable to get your vehicle moving again.

RAC offer van-for-van replacement with Onward Travel so if your van breaks down and

we can't fix it at the roadside, we'll give you replacement to keep your business moving.

Cover across Europe is also a helpful add-on often made available for business customers. If your business vehicles are regularly used elsewhere in Europe, this service could help you make a considerable saving should your vehicle have trouble while overseas.

As with vehicle insurance, you will often find that breakdown providers can offer fleet discounts depending on number of vehicles and similarly to insurance, keeping all of your commercial vehicles on one policy can come in handy when it comes to renewal.

Although cover levels vary, as does the price of cover depending on where you shop, taking time to select the right one for your vehicles can save you a lot of unnecessary problems in the event of a breakdown.



4.0 Employer's Duty of Care

Before focussing on strategy, it is important to put employee well-being to the forefront of your mind.

Any employer has a duty of care over their employees and this is true of fleet management also.

In an industry with such heavy reliance on the performance of vehicles, the duty of care held by a fleet manager is one which should be addressed in detail and clearly communicated to all those it affects.

However, through risk assessments, sensible health and safety policies and all-round vigilance when it comes to implementing the appropriate protective measures for drivers

and other employees, a safely functioning workplace is easily achievable.

So what considerations need to be made to effectively step up to your duty of care?

4.1 Risk Assessment

As a fleet manager it's imperative to understand that the vehicles you are in charge of are actually deemed to be 'workplaces' under the Health and Safety at Work Act, therefore they must be maintained to a proper standard in order to protect your employees from undue risk.

Risk assessing your fleet vehicles and processes is a great way to get familiar with any

potential risks to your drivers' safety and eliminate those risks.

Conducting thorough checks of your vehicles and detailing vehicle condition and health can help eradicate any avoidable risks and bring to attention any glaring issues with your fleet itself.

Although identifying risk is crucial in taking your duty of care seriously, arguably just as important is maintaining good communication with your drivers.

If a fleet manager is aware of any issue with one or multiple fleet vehicles, drivers should be informed clearly, particularly where the issue is not one which renders the vehicle unusable.

As well as vehicle health, driving practice itself poses many credible threats too.

All driver training should be risk assessed and monitored to ensure best practice driving is being actioned within your fleet, and immediately dealt with where it isn't.

4.2 Health & Safety

Whilst an initial risk assessment is the best way to set your fleet up correctly in the first instance, ongoing health and safety measures need to be applied to confidently run a safe fleet.

As vehicles are by the letter of the law, working environments, regular vehicle checks – on top

introduced to guarantee that your fleet vehicles are not endangering your drivers.

This could take the shape of monthly checks on the basic levels of vehicle health such as tyre pressure, oil levels or braking performance.

Although drivers are ultimately responsible for their own driving behaviour it is the employer's responsibility to ensure the vehicles themselves are roadworthy and well-maintained.

Strict rules about loading weight, or passenger restrictions for example, should be clearly outlined to employees and repercussions enforced where the rules are breached.

In addition, where vehicles are used for deliveries or similar, health and safety training surrounding lifting heavy loads, or how to properly enter and exit larger vehicles should be carried out for all employees.

As well as being a responsible habit to get into, enforcing rigid health and safety measures can help you in incidences of driver accidents or injury as it can help determine whether or not your business is doing all it can to protect its employees.

4.3 Driver training

Thorough driver checks – particularly when hiring or contracting new drivers – are crucial in fleet management to ensure only competent and qualified drivers are operating your vehicles.

Under an employer's duty of care, employing inept drivers to operate your vehicles could easily be deemed negligent as you are not only endangering the unqualified driver themselves,

but other road users they encounter while driving your vehicle.

In addition to basic checks such as licence limitations and medical checks to identify skill level and physical risk, driver training and assessments should be implemented by fleet managers to confirm their drivers operate to an agreeable standard.

As well as competency training, periodic testing should be carried out such as regular eye-tests for drivers to ensure that any preventable risk of accident is quashed before it materialises into a serious issue.

Enforcing such checks should be part of the fleet manager's role and a company's drivers should be fully aware that such testing and training are part of the employment conditions under which they work.

As well as physical well-being and performance competency reviews, drivers should be consistently reminded of commonly breached rules of the road such as; phone use while driving, driving while under the influence of alcohol or other substances, and speeding.



5.0 Optimising your Fleet

Ensuring your drivers are operating within the law, are physically fit to be on the road, and hold the appropriate qualifications, licence, or skill to do their job safely all contributes to an employer successfully executing their duty of care.

Ensuring that your fleet is organised well from the outset can really increase how efficient it is in operation and in turn can save you unnecessary costs.

While the tips outlined so far are free to implement and will help you set up the beginnings of a great fleet management process, in reality there are costs associated with managing a fleet which can't be so simply reduced through good organisation.

There are a number of solutions available to fleet managers which can help optimise how a fleet is ran and help the business make the most from its vehicles.

Although these solutions can range in cost and application, they can pay dividends when it comes to keeping overall fleet costs down and keeping your fleet efficient.

This section will explain what some of these solutions look like and how you can apply them to your fleet.

5.1 Fuel Card

Fuel consumption is a given when managing vehicles, so it is a fleet manager's duty to keep an eye on any overspending when it comes to fuel.

Introducing fuel cards to your business vehicles is a great way to monitor fuel consumption and in turn, how much fuel is costing your company.

Fuel cards – just like a credit or debit card – can be used by your drivers to pay for fuel, and often hold the added benefit of offering you discounted fuel rates at selected participating filling stations.

Drivers can use the card to pay for fuel at stations of your choosing, where fuel cards are an available payment method, enabling you to control where your drivers fill up – a

particularly useful feature in a time when fuel prices can be volatile and wide-ranging.

In addition to saving on fuel prices, fuel cards also eradicate the need for fuel-based expense claims and the administrative process that therefore follows.

Allowing all of your fuel costs to be managed on one platform, or in one place can be a real time-saver and could free you up to focus your time on other aspects of your fleet.

If your fleet vehicles are used regularly a fuel card will almost certainly prove of value

Monthly card fees are usually very low so as long as you use your fuel cards often enough, the saving will outweigh the costs, as well as removing the nuisance of fuel expense claims.

5.2 Telematics and tracking

For businesses running a number of vehicles, telematics solutions can help you reduce business costs, boost driver safety, support the need to provide duty of care and improve customer service – all by installing a small box in your vehicles

Telematics gives you the opportunity to analyse in far more detail just what you are getting out of your

vehicles, allowing you to make more well-informed decisions when it comes to your fleet.

Through telematics technology, a full vehicle health check is available at the click of a button.

Telematics solutions usually allow you to log on and analyse a range of data recorded straight from your vehicles using a diagnostics box.

Monitoring the efficiency of your vehicles and identifying any potential vehicle faults before they happen can significantly lower the running costs of your fleet, as well as alerting you to any impending vehicle downtime.

As well as tracking the performance of the vehicles themselves, telematics can also provide data on driver behaviour, enabling you to highlight and feedback any issues or misconduct as well as good examples of driving best practice among your drivers.

In addition to providing you with the ability to watch over your drivers' behaviour from a performance perspective, telematics also allows you access to the kind of driver data that can assist you in carrying out your employer's duty of care.

As a basic feature, most telematics solutions will come with GPS technology, meaning you can track the real-time location of your vehicles 24/7.

Although this has historically been seen as a 'big brother' approach to fleet management, it can actually be used to make your fleet as efficient as possible.

By tracking the location of your vehicles, you can determine if drivers have taken the best or quickest route and can also feedback to drivers on any traffic incidents, enabling you to re-route your drivers where necessary.

RAC offers a full suite of connected solutions, including telematics so you can keep a close eye on your business' vehicles.

Our real-time reporting and *award-winning** technology can be used to proactively maintain your vehicles rather than reactively fire-fighting when your vehicle encounters any problems.

It is important to make your drivers aware of any vehicle tracking and clearly lay out what data you are collecting and what for.

Failure to do so could not only disgruntle drivers who feel like they are being intrusively watched, but could also become an invasion of privacy, particularly where personal use of business vehicles is occasionally permitted.

Handily, with developing technology in the industry, some telematics providers products – including the RAC – come with an option to switch between private and business mode which effectively switches off tracking when a vehicle is being used on personal time.

Further to vehicle health, driver behaviour and real-time location tracking, telematics solutions can also provide you with the necessary data to reduce your insurance premiums, another cost-saving pro to introducing telematics to your fleet.

Telematics can be a sophisticated tool to add to your fleet's arsenal, however, it is important for you to plot exactly what you want to gain from analysing fleet performance before you choose a solution.





6.0 Filling the role

What makes a Fleet Manager?

Fleet management is not always a single role. Dependant on the size and scale of a business' fleet, management responsibilities may come under a wider office management position, or a logistics role.

In many SME's the fleet manager is not always labelled as such and particularly with smaller fleets or even one-man-bands, it doesn't always make sense to hire a full-time employee just to look after the business' vehicles.

Typically, the larger the fleet, the more likely a business is to have a full-time fleet manager in place.

Nonetheless, if a company has a commercial vehicle, in essence it also has a fleet manager.

An effective fleet strategy is key in defining your company's fleet management approach and equally important, is having the right person to lead and deliver that strategy.

Whether you employ a fleet manager, are looking to, or are a fleet manager yourself; there are a handful of key skills and qualities that you should look out for.

We've put together a list of the top 5 key skills and qualities any fleet manager should sharpen in order to consistently perform at the top of their game, and here it is:

1. Organisation

The best fleet managers must have the ability to juggle their workload.

Even where fleet management is a full-time position and other job responsibilities don't

intervene, it is still crucial for a fleet manager to effectively prioritise their to-do list.

With larger fleets, many vehicles will be at different stages in terms of maintenance.

Whether it's insurance renewal dates, expiry dates for MOTs or servicing, or replacing dated vehicles altogether – knowing exactly which vehicles need what attention is key to keeping your fleet ticking over.

Ensuring your vehicle(s) are road legal, properly fuelled and fit for purpose takes good organisation and even then, is sometimes only half the battle.

Add driver management for companies who have such requirements and organisational skills become more and more essential to managing a fleet effectively.

2. Adaptability

Cars, vans, taxis, minibuses (or any other commercial vehicle that make up your fleet) like any machine, can malfunction.

A vehicle breakdown or fault is rarely a predictable event and whilst there are measures a fleet manager can take to reduce and prevent certain vehicle issues, – some of which will be picked up later in this paper – just like our personal vehicles, our commercial vehicles are unlikely to remain mechanically flawless until the end of time.

If you do experience a breakdown or your vehicle is unexpectedly side-lined, the ability to react quickly, calmly and effectively can seriously minimise how long your vehicles are out of action for.

A fleet manager must be capable of thinking quickly on their feet and should have a contingency plan for emergency situations.

3. Personability

Being a people person is a skill applicable to most jobs, but as a fleet manager being courteous, friendly and approachable is particularly important in performing well in your role.

Fleet managers will often deal with drivers, business stakeholders and local suppliers and mechanics during their role.

Managing close relationships with these groups, as well as any other colleague who is involved in the business' vehicle management can help make the fleet management process all the more seamless and could even help save on costs.

As a fleet manager, you should make a conscious effort to build your book of contacts as this will go a long way when your vehicles need some professional TLC.

Despite the primary focus of a fleet being its vehicles, fleet management is ultimately a people business and will continue to favour someone who earns the respect and attention of their drivers as well as earning the trust and recognition of their senior stakeholders.

4. Communication

In a similar vein to organisation and personability, effective communication skills are fundamental in running a fleet.

Strong communication will help a fleet manager to arrange drivers appropriately, efficiently explain the requirements of their fleet to senior stakeholders or properly describe vehicle issues to a local garage or mechanic.

In real-time, clear communication is imperative in helping redirect driver routes or translate any known vehicle issues to that vehicle's driver, helping avoid unnecessary delays or accidents.

In addition to helping a fleet manager with drivers, being a good communicator will also benefit a fleet manager when negotiating with vehicle insurers, or mechanics, or even describing emergency situations to a breakdown provider.

5. Attention to detail

With so much to consider in a fleet management role, attention to detail and thorough planning is a crucial skillset required to be successful.

It can be easy to get lost in insurance or breakdown renewal dates, service histories and MOT expiry dates, particularly when operating a large fleet.

Add to this company car tax, driver privacy laws, or fuel expenses and the level of detail involved can be overwhelming.

Failing to pay enough attention to detail can be extremely costly as it could result in unnecessary vehicle downtime due to an expired MOT certificate, or a missed delivery due to an improperly planned driver schedule.



7.0 Fleet Management Strategy

Building your Strategy

Having outlined many of the core components of fleet management, let's look now at how they can be used to form a fixed fleet management strategy.

When the organisation and optimisation of a fleet comes together into one realistic and deliverable plan, a fleet manager can record actual measurable data to understand if their fleet is working to its full potential or to identify room for improvement.

As with many of the contributing factors which feed into your fleet strategy, the strategy itself will always depend on the size of your business, volume of business vehicles and the purpose and usage of those vehicles.

Nonetheless, the key themes to building your strategy remain similar and can be broken down into four simple steps.

1. Align with your Business

Running a fleet requires budget and will in most cases entail a fleet manager feeding back to other stakeholders on a fleet's budget requirements, and in turn its performance.

In order to be genuinely effective in the management of your fleet, you must link your goals and aims to the overall priorities of the business.

For example, if your business' focus is on cost saving, your strategy may heavily involve exploring the free or inexpensive options relating to fleet management. Alternatively, if your business' focus is on using hard and fast data to optimise each department, your strategy may include extensive use of telematics.

Without knowledge of your company's vision, the creation of a fleet strategy which aligns with the business can't be properly achieved.

This applies even to a one-man-band such as a self-employed electrician. If an electrician's van is central to being able to operate effectively you may focus on ensuring it is covered in any circumstance but may not be as focussed on fuel efficiency or tracking its location.

2. Get user input

In addition to aligning your strategy to the business, a fleet manager should also consider the fleet's users.

As with any other form of strategic planning, each of the pawns in the overall master plan need to know where they stand and what their role is – the plan needs to work for them too.

Gaining input on your fleet's best practices from your fleet's drivers is a vital part of building your overall strategy.

Involving fleet drivers in the planning process will help ensure that all who are involved in running and maintaining an efficient fleet, are singing from the same hymn sheet and will help contribute to the smoother operation of your fleet.

3. Make your strategy measurable

Before becoming carried away with the possibilities of what your fleet could deliver your business, it is vitally important to confirm what measurables need to be in place to track the success of your fleet.

The success of a fleet can be measured in both terms of the money it saves or delivers, and the use, efficiency and productivity your fleet bears for your company.

Each business will be different in its fleet requirements, so as a fleet manager incorporating the right key performance indicators into your fleet strategy will help you when it comes to reporting on its success.

4. Carry out regular reviews

Often reviewing your fleet management strategy might seem as if it is a task to be done at the end point of existing plans.

However, including regular reviews in your strategy may help you to not overlook if and when change needs to be initiated to get more out of your fleet.

If there are inefficiencies in your fleet or if your fleet consistently underperforms, the only way to rectify the issues causing this underperformance, is to identify them first.

Reviewing your fleet strategy regularly (and therefore including reviews in your fleet strategy in the first place) can help keep you on track and ensure your fleet is delivering what you want it to for your business.

8.0 Key Takeaways

- Fleet management is a people business. The best fleet managers are personable, organised and great communicators, so whether you're looking to hire, or are a fleet manager yourself; consider these qualities to be the most important.
- Don't break the bank unnecessarily. Exhausting your free and low-cost fleet management options is a great way to get familiar with your fleet. Simple templates and record keeping is an easy way to get your fleet in order without burning through budget.
- An employer's duty of care should be number one priority. The duty of care an employer has over its employees should not be taken lightly, particularly in fleet management where the risks associated with driving are ever-present. Regular risk assessments, health and safety checks and strict driver training can help keep your employees safe.
- Insuring your vehicles can be confusing. There are so many insurance options for your business vehicles so pay significance to really assessing your needs and shopping around before you commit. Don't be afraid to seek help if you need a professional opinion.
- Business vehicles need business breakdown cover. If your vehicles are used for business purposes, make sure your breakdown cover reflects this, otherwise you risk refusal of service as well as missing out on business perks offered by business breakdown providers.
- Invest in fuel cards. Particularly relevant for regularly used business vehicles which cover a lot of miles, a fuel card can give you greater control over the fuel consumption of your fleet helping you to keep costs down when it comes to filling up.
- Invest in telematics. Monitoring vehicle health, driver behaviour and real-time journey times and locations can assist when it comes to analysing the efficiency of your fleet, as well as pre-empting costly vehicle downtime.
- Produce a firm fleet management strategy. Ensuring you have a written, clear strategy when it comes to your vehicles is what drives a successful fleet. Align your strategy with other business goals and consistently revisit and review your strategy to keep your fleet on the right track.