

FleetNews

Special report



July 2025

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Winning stakeholder hearts and minds is key to successful introduction of new ideas

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How fleet decision-makers can avoid drowning in a tsunami of data



PROCUREMENT

Choosing the right supplier can be a complicated, but vital, process

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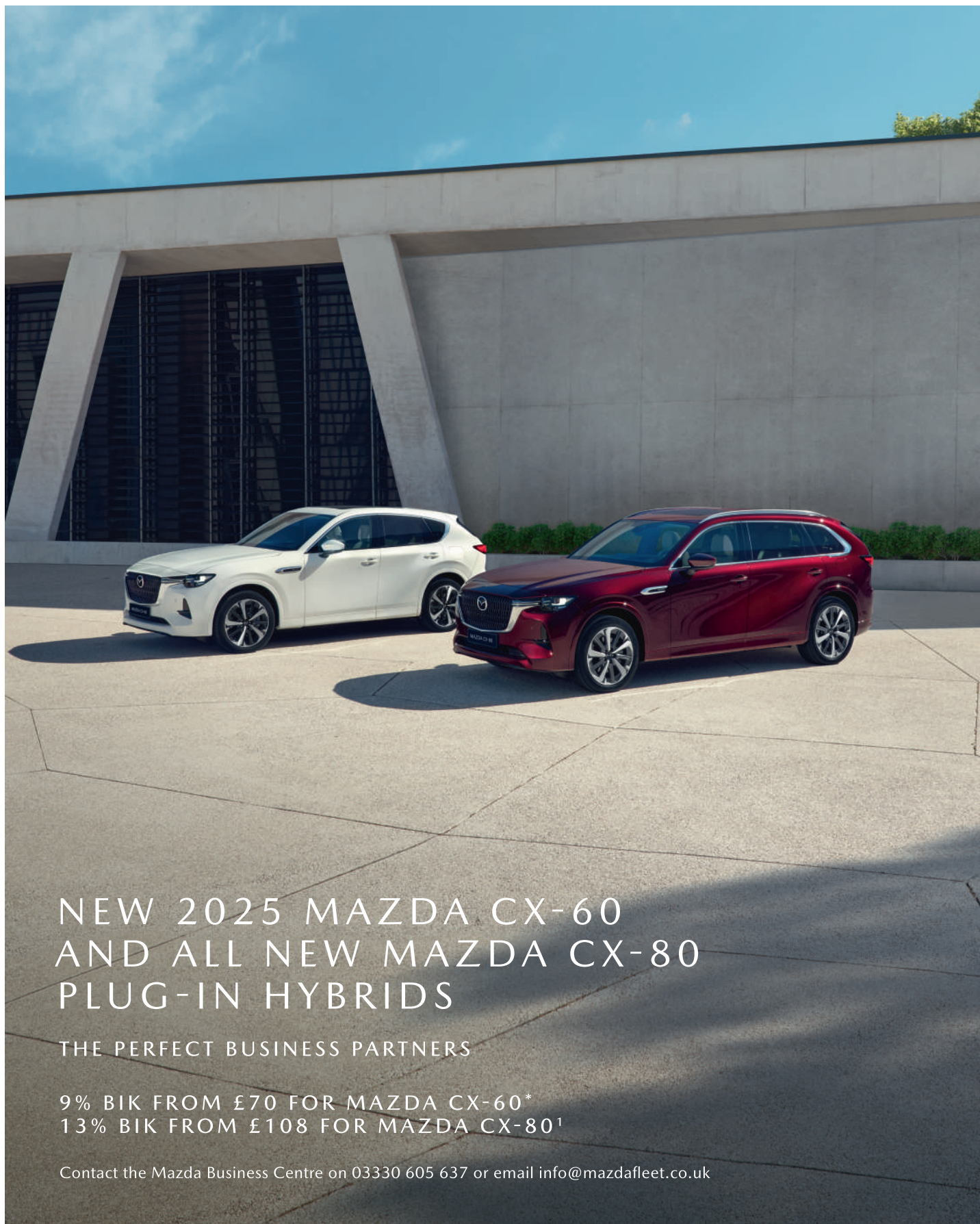
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WELCOME

There are two primary elements to the role of the modern fleet manager: leadership and operational.

Leadership is concerned with strategy, planning, vision, engagement, motivation – everything that ensures the future success of the business.

The operational side is partly about implementation of the plans that help to achieve the strategy, but also about simply dealing with the day-to-day running of a fleet – vehicle issues, driver queries, reporting to key stakeholders etc.

It's a difficult balancing act, a tricky drain on time and resource, which can be eased if you are running a fleet team where operational responsibilities can be delegated, of course.

In this report, we look at some key elements that cover the full gambit of the fleet manager role, from handling change management and the role of data, to procurement strategies, to the practical elements of implementing and running a salary sacrifice scheme and how rental can play a key role in cost and carbon reduction plans.

Cadent's Lucy Stuart, Network Rail's James Rooney, Openreach's Abby Chicken and Sureserve's Stewart Lightbody are among the fleet leaders providing insightful advice about how they implement and manage change.

Enjoy the read.



Stephen Briers,
group editor,
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CONTACT US

Fleet News, Media House, Lynch Wood,
Peterborough, PE2 6EA

EDITORIAL

Group editor

Stephen Briers 01733 468024
stephen.briers@bauermedia.co.uk

News editor

Gareth Roberts 01733 468314
gareth.roberts@bauermedia.co.uk

Features editor

Andrew Ryan 01733 468308
andrew.ryan@bauermedia.co.uk

Content editor – vehicles

Matt de Prez 01733 468277
matt.deprez@bauermedia.co.uk

Content editor – B2B

Tim Keogh
tim.keogh@bauermedia.co.uk

Head of digital

Jeremy Bennett 01733 468655
jeremy.bennett@bauermedia.co.uk

Managing editor, B2B

Mike Roberts
mike.roberts@bauermedia.co.uk

Photos istock

PRODUCTION

Head of publishing

Luke Neal

Production editor

David Buckley

Head of project management

Leanne Patterson

Project manager

Rosanna Readfern-Gray
b2bpm@bauermedia.co.uk

ADVERTISING

B2B commercial director

Sheryl Graham 01733 366467

B2B commercial manager

Kelly Crown 01733 366364

Key account directors

Emma Rogers 01733 979570

Account manager

Mark Wilde 01733 979341

Telesales/recruitment

01733 468275/01733 468328

EVENTS

Event director

Chris Lester

Awards director

Sandra Evitt 01733 468123

Event manager

Kate Howard 01733 468146

Senior event planner

Hayley Bradshaw 01733 979467

Exhibitions director

Katie Gordon-Hill 01733 468289

PUBLISHING

Group MD commercial

Nicola Bates

Publisher – automotive & transport

Holly Jerram

CRM & marketing manager

Lauren Annis 01733 468295

Marketing coordinator

Jess Maguire

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Five key steps to mastering change management

Change management is increasingly becoming a key skill for fleet decision-makers with the need to introduce new technologies and strategies growing. *Andrew Ryan* reports

Change is one of the few constants in modern fleet management, with the need to introduce new technologies, strategies or other operational improvements seemingly never-ending.

But this is often easier said than done, given that many line managers and drivers will not welcome with open arms any changes to long-established working practices.

Some of the fiercest resistance is shown to technologies which will ultimately have huge benefits for the drivers and organisation, such as electric vehicles (EVs) or in-cab cameras, meaning the modern fleet decision-maker needs to add change management to their increasing skill set.

"Something I speak about a lot is that many fleet decision-makers and their teams are becoming change professionals more than fleet managers," says Aaron Jarvis, associate vice-president, sales and business development, UK & Ireland at Geotab.

This is reflected in the increasing numbers of people being appointed from outside the traditional fleet sphere into fleet decision-maker roles.

These include Rob Simister, director of fleet operations at Centrica, who has a background in video game development, marketing, telecommunications and automotive, and Lucy Stuart, who worked for Cadent in a variety of project manager,

transition and risk management roles before becoming its head of fleet and logistics.

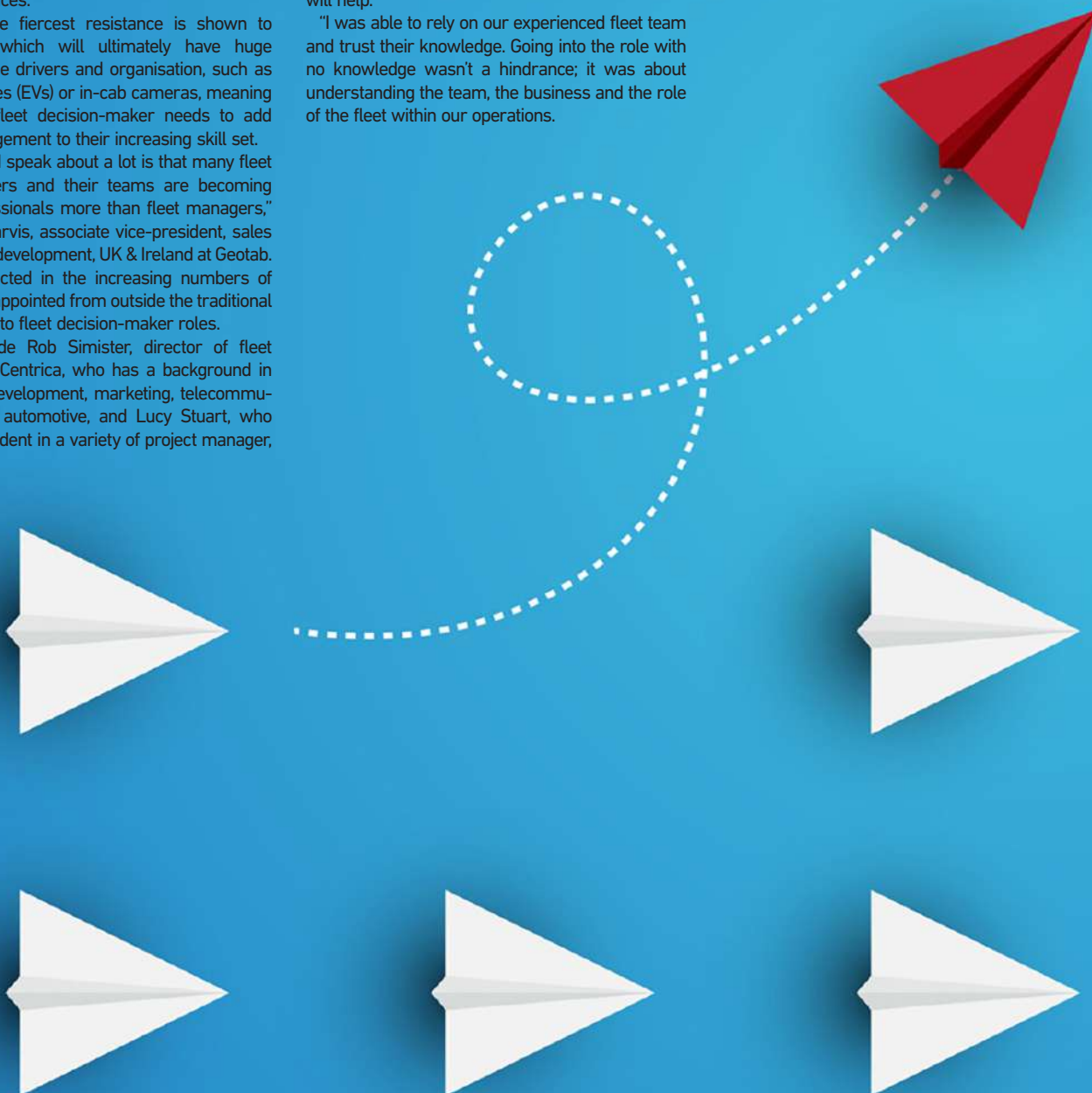
"I realised it wasn't knowledge of fleet processes that was required, but the other skills I have such as stakeholder engagement, leadership and project management," says Stuart.

"I know Cadent and I understand the areas to improve and where my project management skills will help.

"I was able to rely on our experienced fleet team and trust their knowledge. Going into the role with no knowledge wasn't a hindrance; it was about understanding the team, the business and the role of the fleet within our operations.

"It doesn't matter if it's fleet, property or operations; you simply have to understand the challenges and the organisation's key goal, which, for Cadent, is to keep people safe and warm in their homes while saving the planet."

Change management best practice is often broken down into the five Cs – clarity, communication, collaboration, culture and commitment.



1

Clarity

Clarity is the foundation to any successful change initiative and involves making it clear what the transformation is and why it is being made.

While some line managers and drivers will readily accept change – as evidenced by the enthusiasm towards electric vehicles by early adopters – many more are suspicious of it, particularly if it affects long-established working practices.

This reluctance can be minimised if employees understand why the company needs to evolve and what the change will achieve, as well as how it fits in with the organisation's broader strategic goals.

By aligning leadership and teams on a shared vision, the company can reduce uncertainty and rally employees around a common purpose.

"Start with a very clear, very comprehensive well-defined policy which covers all the aspects of the fleet operation it needs to," says Scott Chambers, corporate sales manager at Athlon.

"That gives you a base level to manage the driver population."



2

Communication

If clarity sets the foundation for successful change management, then communication is the heartbeat that keeps an initiative progressing.

To gain effective buy-in, fleets need to be consistent and proactive in how they message drivers, says Nigel Lawrence, strategic partnerships director at Applied Driving.

"It requires a top-down approach that is championed at a senior level and then focused at line management level to ensure communications are clear and inclusive for all, so drivers feel managed and supported," he adds.

"Not all organisations have a fleet manager, so messaging may come from multiple areas of the business, including HR, H&S and facilities.

"By creating a single stakeholder group, responsible for devising, implementing and leading the strategy, it is possible to create a programme of messaging that is delivered seamlessly and is inclusive for all."

The messaging can also be tailored to specific

groups to increase the likelihood of winning buy-in.

"Find out what resonates with drivers, because you are trying to win their hearts and minds," adds Lawrence.

"It's fine to share information about headline costs, incidents and impact to the bottom line, but is this really focusing on what is important to the driver?"

Openreach carried out research among staff to find out what issues they cared about. "We did some focus groups internally a few years ago and one of the biggest motivations was air pollution, especially in busy urban centres," says Abby Chicken, head of sustainability at Openreach. "They were willing to do something to stop that."

IMPORTANCE OF EMPATHY

Stewart Lightbody, head of group fleet at Sure-serve, adds that empathy is really important when communicating.

"I remember the start of my EV journey, going back a number of years," he says. "I didn't necessarily see the value. I could see the direction of travel, but I didn't understand why. So I had a go. I had a plug-in hybrid, used it properly every day and kind of lived and breathed it.

"That way, you can almost guess where people who are reluctant about EVs are going to come from. You know what the questions are going to be, what the blockers are going to be, because mine were no different.

"This doesn't just apply to EVs. It could be embracing telematics data to improve driving, for example. I've always described questioning people's driving behaviours as insulting someone's firstborn child – because they've passed their driving test, some people feel you can't tell them how to drive.

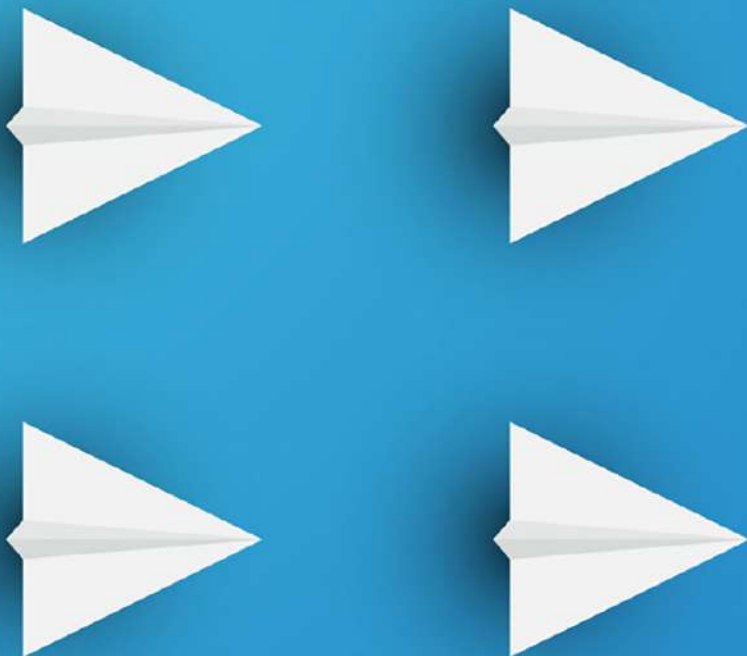
"I can say there might be a different way. They might want to try this, or slow down here."

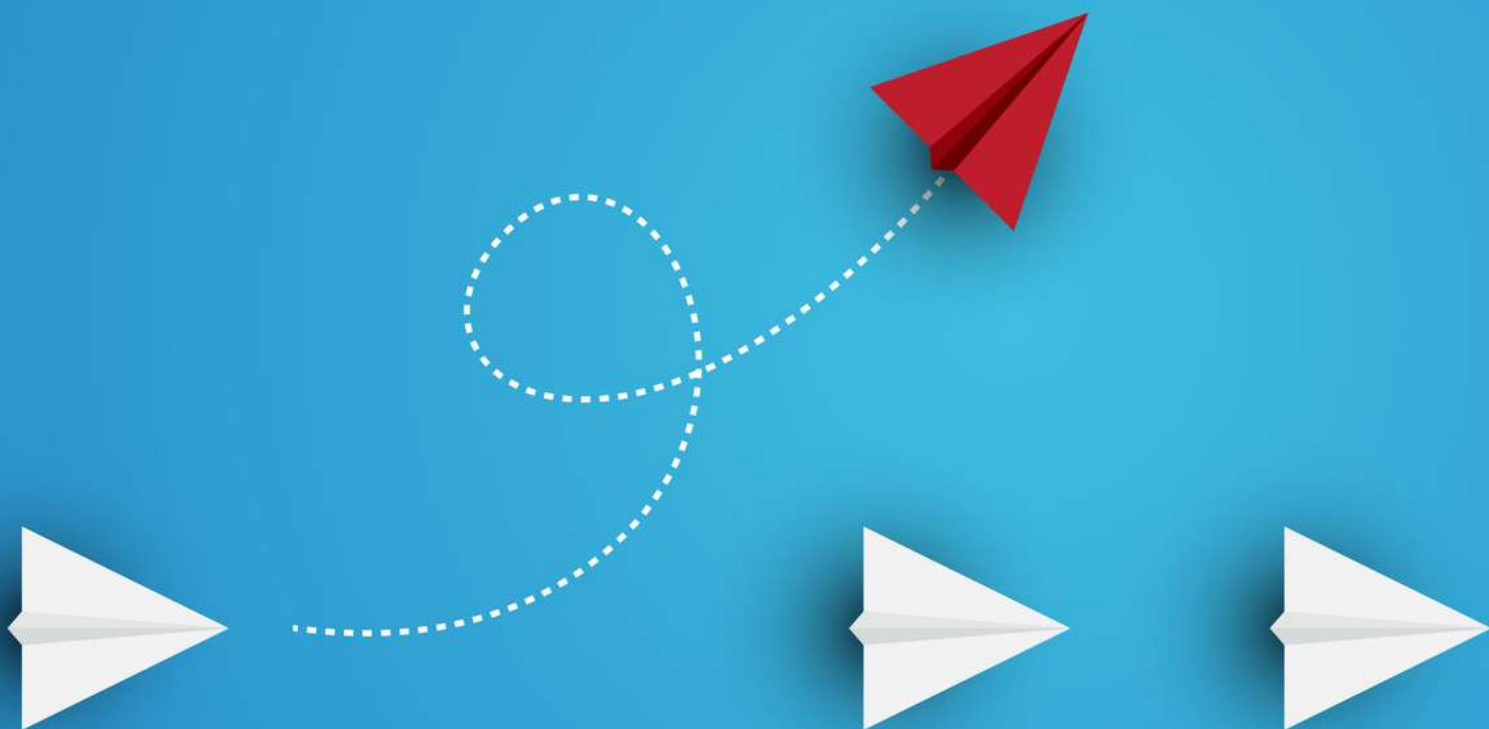
Organisations should be flexible in how they communicate and in what format to gain the maximum engagement.

Bulletins sent by digital means are highly effective, but some drivers, especially in operational roles, may not have access to email. Therefore, face-to-face talks may be appropriate to ensure that messages are shared to all.

"Communication should ideally be shared monthly, but be prepared to be flexible with your communication so as not to disengage by, for example, sending too much information," says Lawrence.

"Be prepared to communicate with your workforce to measure quality of engagement and encourage ideas to keep things fresh."





3 Collaboration

Collaboration is essential when it comes to implementing change. This should involve all stakeholders, while it is also useful to ensure drivers' input on current policies – as well as suggestions for change – are considered.

"Wherever possible, get buy-in from drivers in the decision-making process," says Scott Chambers, corporate sales manager at Athlon.

"To some this might sound very scary but, actually, if you do that, you're more likely to get a successful outcome with more driver buy-in and engagement."

Working groups which include drivers and other stakeholders are an important tool to make operational improvements.

Many organisations, for example, use them when

ordering and fitting out new vans to make sure they are fit for purpose.

Even if a driver's suggestions cover what may seem like minor points over the positioning of interior lighting or shelving, they are likely to have operational benefits.

Drivers who are enthusiastic about change can be used to speak to their more reluctant colleagues to win them over.

It is relatively common for fleets to appoint drivers as EV champions and they can reassure other employees about the technology to build confidence in it.

One of these is Network Rail. "Find someone who has an EV and loves it because their infectious spirit means they will talk to others about it, they'll take people out in it," said James Rooney, head of road fleet at Network Rail.

"This helps to knock down any fear because they've been exposed to the technology."

One of the biggest facilitators to Openreach's electrification roadmap has been the positive feedback from drivers; once they are behind the wheel, they are happy with the experience.

"It has been far more influential for an engineer to say 'I didn't really want the EV, but I would never go back because it is more convenient, it's nicer to drive, I've got Apple CarPlay, I can heat the cab from my phone in the winter,'" says Chicken. "That gets more people on board than I ever could."

Some organisations also harness drivers' competitiveness through gamification to encourage a change in behaviour.

This is usually for driving behaviour and is done by using telematics data to produce league tables, with prizes – such as gift tokens – given to the best-performing or most-improved drivers.

"The gamification ethos is to provide visibility and transparency that encourages competitiveness and creates a positive environment, rather than one based on blame and punitive actions," says Lawrence.

Kelly Group has done this through the creation of its elite driver club, which uses telematics data to identify and reward its best-performing employees.

"We score drivers 0-100 on their performance and anybody who is at 98 or above every day for six months joins an elite driver club," says Dermot Coughlan, fleet director at Kelly Fleet Services.

"They have kudos. They get a jacket, a backpack and some other gear and a lot of people want to be an elite driver. We have a draw for everybody who has been in the elite driver club for the past month so someone in that group will get £1,000.

"Every six months we have a bigger prize, which could be a weekend away or similar. The cost of it gets offset by the savings we make through better driving – it pays for itself."





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5

Commitment

The final pillar, commitment, is about ensuring that leaders visibly champion the change and provide the necessary resources to make it happen. It starts at the top. Without leadership buy-in, even the best-designed initiatives can falter.

This may be senior staff taking part in driver training programmes or having telematics installed in their company car as part of a wider programme.

One notable example has been Steve Openshaw, group fleet manager at Eric Wright Group, who decided to lead from the front when his employer was beginning its electrification journey several years ago.

To demonstrate that it was possible to live with an electric vehicle with a range of around 120 miles, he operated a BMW i3 range-ender for 48,000 miles, using just 30 litres of petrol.

"I am showing drivers what these cars can do," he told *Fleet News* at the time. "You get some people saying you can't go anywhere with them, you can't do anything, so I am showing day-to-day that you can live with them."

This proved to be the springboard for widespread EV adoption; on its fleet of 500 vehicles, only 17 diesel and four petrol models now remain. The remainder are either fully-electric, plug-in hybrids or mild hybrids.

Again, this works for other initiatives other than EVs. When Clarion Housing Group was installing forward-facing dashcams in its vans, fleet and environmental manager Colin Hutt also had one fitted to his car.

"This meant I knew exactly how it works, so when drivers were moaning to me about it I could say 'well, actually, no, it doesn't work like that because I've got one and this is how it works,'" he says.

4

Culture

Culture plays a pivotal role in determining whether a change initiative will become successful.

In organisations with adaptable cultures, change often feels natural and fluid, while organisations which are dominated by no clear purpose and rigid processes can find it feels like an uphill battle.

Clearly stated cultures can positively influence drivers in subtle ways. For example, when employees of an organisation with a robust safety culture understand that their employer prioritises their well-being over everything else, it can foster a sense of responsibility and loyalty.

"Fleet safety goes beyond having a safe, well-maintained vehicle fleet," says Ross Moorlock, CEO of road safety charity Brake.

"We see really good examples where road safety has been embedded not just across processes and procedures, but across the culture of the organisation and the clear benefits that brings in tangible results; fewer crashes, fewer injuries and significant savings."

Lesley Slater, CCO at Athlon, says cultures must be imposed from the top down.

"If the tone at the top is correct and the communication works well throughout the organisation, then an organisation can instil and develop a good culture," she adds.

This allows widespread acceptance of the culture and any changes, helping overcome any reluctance from drivers to accepting new training regimes, policies or responsibilities.

The profile of a culture can be elevated both internally and externally by formally incorporating it into an organisation's stated values.

Balfour Beatty conceived its Zero Harm terminology in 2008 as a succinct way to define its risk



management strategy and has since implemented a series of initiatives which have resulted in a 65% cut in at-fault incidents across cars, LCVs and HGVs since 2011.

Many other organisations have adopted the same or similar 'Zero Harm' terminology to embed safety into their company operations.

Univar Solutions, for example, has 'serious about safety' as one of its five universal values. The others are 'we do what we say', 'where people matter', 'valuable to others' and 'together we win'.

Company values can also cover other parts of the fleet operation, such as electrification.

One of DPD's four pillars under its 1-2-3-4 Strategy, which is used to shape how it goes

about its day-to-day business, is for the company to be the UK's leader in sustainable delivery.

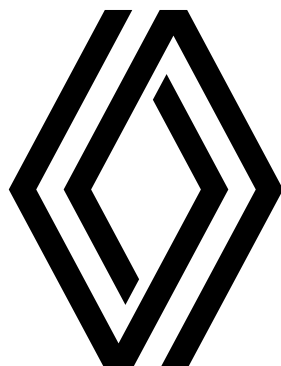
This includes the target of being fully net zero by 2040, validated by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi).

"These aren't empty words," says Olly Craughan, head of sustainability at DPD UK.

"We have a 2030 target to reduce our emissions by 43% (baseline 2020).

"As part of our parent group, Geopost, we're fully validated by the SBTi, which means they've looked at our plans in detail and determined that they're realistic."

Currently, 38% of DPD's fleet is electric, with the company making 42 million EVs so far this year.



RENAULT E-TECH ELECTRIC VAN RANGE

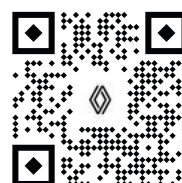
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How to avoid drowning in data

Find the answers to cleaner, cheaper, safer and more efficient fleet operations in the tsunami of data heading your way, while complying with a complex set of rules and regulations.

Jonathan Manning reports

Fleet decision-makers could be forgiven for casting covetous eyes at NASA's Mission Control Centre, with its banks of screens and monitors and teams of analysts scrutinising a relentless flow of data for insights and anomalies.

Even modest-sized fleets now receive a tsunami of data from leasing companies, fuel card operators, electric vehicle charging operators, dealers and fast-fits, insurers and accident management companies, while generating and transmitting gigabytes of data daily from connected vehicles and telematics systems.

The twin dangers of data overload and decision distress are real, as the sheer volume of information threatens to overwhelm fleet managers.

Yet, this is a risk that cannot be ignored, given the legal importance of compliance with regulations covering data capture, processing, storage and security, plus the growing menace of cyberattacks.

Fleets that fail to rise to the challenge face the prospect of eye-watering fines, reputational damage and operational catastrophe.

However, if 21st century technology can feel like a curse, it can also be a blessing.

Bobbing in this ocean of data are the answers to cleaner, cheaper, safer and more efficient fleet operations.

The challenge is to cut through the cacophony, and focus on what really matters – the data that signals immediate action is required, and the data that provides evidence-based measures of progress towards longer-term objectives.

The encouraging news is that the rapid development of machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) is helping fleet decision-makers to access, navigate, cross-reference and analyse data fields that have never previously been combined.

Fleets that harness this information successfully could revolutionise their environmental perfor-

mance, driver safety, vehicle uptime and residual values.

Today, however, many fleets are still juggling multiple IT and software systems, including basic spreadsheets, to manage data from multiple sources, says Neil Avent, CTO of FleetCheck.

And this tends to leave data anchored in siloes, which makes it difficult to exploit its full potential.

If HR and finance departments deserve dedicated software, then so too do fleets to consolidate workflows and provide a complete picture of their operations, says Avent.

To overcome barriers to securing this IT investment, he suggests fleet managers align fleet goals with wider business objectives, such as cost-saving or environmental commitments.

"Fleets also need to advocate that they are operationally important to the business and hold data that needs to be secure," he says. "Fleets don't want to be the weak link in a company's functionality or security."



QUALITY OF DATA IS KEY

All data analysis depends on the quality of data, or as one IT director put it, "put *expletive* in, and you'll get *expletive* out".

With manual data entry more vulnerable to human error, the solution to better data integrity lies in automated inputs from APIs (application processing interfaces).

Avent advises fleets to include supplier API capabilities in tender documents, and to check whether suppliers charge for this facility.

"There's one fuel card company and a tachograph firm that charge every time we pull in their data," he adds.

APIs import data in a one-way flow from supplier platforms to fleet IT systems, but there is a difference between import and integration.

An import brings data from a single source into a system, whereas integration combines data from multiple sources.

This facilitates cross-reference verification, so while an import might record that a vehicle has, for example, received four new tyres, an integration could challenge this data if the same vehicle had received four new tyres the week before.

With seemingly limitless data available, fleet decision-makers have to select which information to capture, store and analyse, says Sarah Kennell, UK sales manager at AssetWorks.

"It really comes down to what supports day-to-day operations and compliance," she adds.

"So, we're talking about things like vehicle availability, planned versus reactive maintenance, fuel usage, driver performance and overall running costs."

To paraphrase George Orwell, all data is equal, but some data is more equal than others.

"If a data point doesn't help decide or prompt an action, it's probably not worth your time," says Kennell.

A good place to start is aligning data metrics with operational goals.

"As a fleet manager, are you focused on reducing fuel consumption, improving driver safety, achieving sustainability targets or optimising maintenance schedules?" asks Beverley Wise, regional director for Webfleet.

"Pinpoint the KPIs (key performance indicators) that support these objectives and work backwards to determine the data needed to inform them."

This data then needs to be displayed in a meaningful way, so it is instantly actionable.

"If a fleet team is spending hours pulling together reports or struggling to decipher dashboards, it's a sign the data display isn't working as it should," she says.

"A fleet management platform should be designed to make insights instantly usable. Whether it's vehicle health, fuel trends or delivery delays, the system should present information intuitively, allowing fleet managers can make faster, more informed decisions."



◀ AIM FOR CLARITY

The unique individual priorities of different fleets dictate the data displays and KPIs they select for their dashboards, but the goal should be clarity, not complexity, says Wise.

"KPIs should be surfaced at-a-glance, with the ability to drill down when needed," she adds.

This highlights the need to separate trend data from urgent alerts.

A traffic light system that tracks categories such as average fuel consumption, CO₂ emissions, idling time or accident numbers on a weekly, monthly or annual basis needs to be twinned with notifications for more pressing issues, such as a vehicle experiencing undue delays in a workshop.

This requires fleets to know where to set their thresholds for acceptable performance levels.

Be too ambitious with fuel consumption figures, for instance, and the software will identify every driver as having a heavy right foot; be too modest and dashboard lights will all be green, thereby missing opportunities to improve.

"Data is not the most important thing, it's what you do with the data that matters," says Nigel Allsopp, fleet account director at BT Group.

"Having a really good set of data is only effective if you have the principles, the policies and the procedures to put around that.

"I want to know what I've got to do differently today or tomorrow. It's trying to articulate that data into an outcome for the business."

Building on this theme, Ray Verschoye, head of transport compliance at Circet, says fleets have to capture data consistently in order to measure their progress towards their goals.

"You've got to be able to show what your plan is doing, why you're doing it, and how it's working," he says.

"Everything needs to be trended. The question is then, what made the difference from last month to this month? And how can we use that information to be even better next month?"

Verschoye emphasises the importance of creating dashboards that engage colleagues who only have a tangential interest in fleet, from project managers to boards of directors.

Some metrics may be specific to the fleet, but vehicle downtime that damages business operations, and budgetary inflation that impacts the corporate P&L have company-wide relevance.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

As more data fields enter the fleet arena, AI is helping fleet managers to investigate the information at their disposal for valuable insights, building bridges between data siloes that were formerly isolated from one another, and producing ever-richer insights.

Alphabet's AI Assistant in its fleet reporting system can access more than 800 unique data fields, enabling fleets to interrogate their data with simple prompts for deeper insights.

"DATA IS NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING, IT'S WHAT YOU DO WITH THE DATA THAT MATTERS. HAVING A REALLY GOOD SET OF DATA IS ONLY EFFECTIVE IF YOU HAVE THE PRINCIPLES, THE POLICIES AND THE PROCEDURES TO PUT AROUND THAT"

NIGEL ALLSOPP, BT GROUP

A fleet looking to electrify its operations, for example, might want to know all vehicles that cover fewer than 150 miles per week whose contracts are due to expire in the next six months. Yet, a glance at the types of questions asked of the system in its first few months reveals how fleets' current management information can be disparate and difficult to access.

The most commonly asked questions query how many cars and how many LCVs are on the fleet, followed by an overview of powertrains on fleets and average CO₂ emissions.

These early enquiries are merely scratching the surface of how AI is primed to transform fleet management.

Cross-referencing engine diagnostic data with maintenance logs and breakdown incidents, for

example, paves the way for truly preventative maintenance or targeted safety interventions.

"We apply machine learning AI to proactively highlight anomalies and automatically surface insights," says Aaron Jarvis, AVP EMEA at Geotab.

"This includes identifying potential battery failures by analysing voltage patterns, or spotting repeated hard braking events before they lead to costly collisions."

Importantly, the technology identifies these insights automatically, allowing fleet managers to act proactively rather than be constantly digging through data.

The security of this detailed data has become a pressing concern in the wake of several high profile cyberattacks on businesses such as Marks & Spencer, Harrods and the Co-op, in which customer profiles were stolen.

To avoid being a weak link in an organisation's cyber defences, fleet data needs to be end-to-end encrypted, and protected by internal controls and advanced security protocols to ensure only verified, authorised personnel can access sensitive information, says Jarvis.

He recommends that, when vetting suppliers,



fleets should look for firms with ISO 27001 certification, the globally recognised standard for information security management systems.

"But security is not a one-time certification, it's a continuous process," says Jarvis.

"We constantly advance security and monitor for new vulnerabilities, provide regular firmware updates to our devices, and ensure all staff are trained in security best practices. As the volume and complexity of data grow, the ability to manage that data responsibly, compliantly and securely is paramount.

"It is the absolute backbone of trust between a fleet and its technology provider."

PERSONAL DATA

Fleet data can be highly personal, identifying where an employee lives, their driving licence details, and linking through to payroll information for benefit-in-kind tax purposes.

Combine this with journey data that might reveal sensitive information, such as places of worship, as well as video from front- and driver-facing cameras, synced phone contact lists, biometric fingerprints,

and telemetry on detailed driving behaviour, and vehicles have become mines of data.

Preventing these mines from becoming minefields, as data is shared with manufacturers, insurers, app developers, marketers, and even law enforcement, demands compliance with a raft of rules and regulations, says Jonathan Armstrong, Partner at Punter Southall Law.

"Those operating in the car tech ecosystem must comply with multiple overlapping laws, including the UK Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR, EU GDPR, ePrivacy regulations, and the UK's Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR)," he adds.

And if the alphabet spaghetti of acronyms has your eyes glazing over, the risk of stiff financial penalties for non-compliance – fines of up to €20 million (£17.25m) or 4% of global turnover – should bring them back into focus.

Guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office is clear: "When the private use of a work vehicle is allowed, monitoring during private use will rarely be justified", while the European Data Protection Board's (EDPB) 2021 guidance on

connected vehicles "reinforces that organisations must minimise data collection, avoid constant tracking where possible, and ensure all processing is grounded in a lawful basis", says Armstrong.

Under Article 32 of the GDPR, for example, organisations must implement "appropriate technical and organisational measures" to secure data, he says.

"These include encryption, access controls and regular penetration testing. Adherence to standards such as ISO/SAE is critical for assessing and managing risk," adds Armstrong.

And the crossover of data protection with e-privacy rules adds further complexity.

"Connected vehicle technology is revolutionising transport, but it comes with real and rising privacy and compliance risks," he says.

Fleets and organisations across the automotive ecosystem have to act decisively, as class actions, regulatory scrutiny and consumer awareness grow.

"With the right controls, transparency, and accountability, compliance can be achieved without stifling innovation. But those who ignore the risks do so at their peril," says Armstrong.

A Force for good:

Driving down fuel costs with Kent Police & Essex Police

Public sector fleets, including emergency services, are under increasing pressure to cut costs while preparing for a zero-emissions future.



As one of the UK's largest professional fleet categories, they face challenges that mirror those in the private sector—rising fuel prices, complex operations, and decarbonisation goals—amplified by ongoing budget constraints.

The transition to electric vehicles (EVs) presents a compelling opportunity for cost reduction and operational resilience. Yet for many, the upfront investment is a hurdle. So how can public sector organisations start the journey to electrification without derailing existing services?

Kent Police and Essex Police, with over 1,600 vehicles, including 85 EVs, offer a real-world answer. Both forces needed an approach that would deliver immediate savings and long-term sustainability. Enter Allstar.

1. Start saving today

Allstar's Discount Diesel network gave Kent Police and Essex Police access to cost-efficient fuel sites, enabling instant savings without disrupting operations. Drivers were educated to locate and use these forecourts, and within six months, the cost-saving behaviour was fully embedded. Allstar Chargepass®, meanwhile, provided a seamless experience across internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, as well as its growing number of EVs,

consolidating payments and streamlining operations.

Allstar's extensive UK coverage—including a fuel site within a mile of every police station in the area—ensured minimal disruption, while digital tools supported spend tracking and emissions reporting.

2. Data will justify the expense

In the five years since Kent Police and Essex Police forged their relationship with Allstar and started using the Discount Diesel network, **they saved more than £60,000 per year on fuel**—money that has enabled them to further invest into the workforce.

More than just saving money, the forces gained vital visibility into its operations. Allstar Online (the online management and reporting tool) offered enhanced management information and enabled deeper reporting on factors such as fleet status and carbon emissions, helping the forces with their transition to a zero-emission fleet.

3. Your drivers will thank you for it

Fleet payment solutions aren't just good for the budget—they're better for the driver. Drivers will need to spend less time on admin and they won't need to save and submit expense receipts for fuel or charging.

Setting the public sector up for now and the future

Kent Police and Essex Police's journeys show what's possible with the right partnership. Through Allstar, it has reduced costs, streamlined operations, and are both also futureproofed with a solution that is already supporting their fleets' needs.



The needs of a police force...are unique, but Allstar has always made the effort to understand and actively help us overcome challenges when they present themselves.

Tony Petts, Transport Services Fleet Manager, Kent Police and Essex Police Transport Services.



As more public sector organisations consider electrification, this model offers a clear path forward: start where you are, lean into data, and empower your drivers. With Allstar, the switch to EV isn't just achievable—it's already underway.

Learn more about how Allstar Chargepass is a single, scalable solution that could help your fleet. Scan to find out more or search Allstar Chargepass®.





PRACTICAL STEPS FOR DATA COMPLIANCE

Jonathan Armstrong, partner at Punter Southall Law, outlines the measures fleets should implement to comply with data rules and regulations.

1. DPIAs – carry out a Data Protection Impact Assessment to identify and mitigate privacy risks, particularly when rolling out new technologies or those involving large-scale monitoring. This may be done alongside an AI Impact Assessment.

2. Data protection by default and by design – design all technologies with privacy in mind. Default settings should be the most privacy-protective.

3. Accountability – ensure clear internal policies and procedures are in place to support the use of these technologies.

4. Controller/processor status – identify all relevant parties as either data controllers (joint or independent) or processors for each processing activity.

5. Transparency – provide clear, accessible information about personal data use, including the identity of the controller, purposes of processing, retention periods and data sharing. Tailor this to the technology used – e.g. through sale or lease contracts, service agreements,

maintenance manuals, on-board computers ('just in time' notices), stickers, or QR codes.

6. Data minimisation and retention – only collect the minimum data necessary for your purpose and retain it only as long as needed. Generally, avoid collecting real-time location data or continuous video, and use anonymised data where possible.

7. Accuracy and control – where appropriate, provide individuals with options to update or delete their data.

8. Purpose limitation – ensure data collected for a specific purpose isn't used for incompatible purposes. For example, data collected for maintenance should not be used by insurers to:

- Enrich driver profiles
- Set custom pricing
- Offer behaviour-based insurance
- Investigate accidents

9. Security – apply robust access controls and other measures to prevent data loss or unauthorised access. Safeguards should also protect individual driver data in shared vehicles.

10. Lawful processing – ensure all processing has a valid legal basis. If relying on consent, it must allow individuals to activate processing themselves and include easy withdrawal options. If relying on legitimate interests, carry

out a Legitimate Interests Assessment (LIA) to balance organisational and individual interests.

11. Sensitive or criminal data – if processing special category or criminal data (e.g. location data that reveals religion or sexual orientation, or fraud tracing), ensure an additional legal condition is met.

12. Third parties and data sharing – ensure that all:

- Data sharing with other controllers must have a legal basis and be documented in a data-sharing agreement outlining responsibilities.
- Processing by third-party processors must be governed by a contract with the required terms.
- Systems should be in place to handle third-party and law enforcement data requests.

13. Data subject rights – ensure individuals can exercise their rights, including access and objection to processing based on legitimate interests. For example, dashcam footage should be provided within one month (unless exempt), and may need redaction to protect third-party data.

14. Consent – under the ePrivacy Directive/PECR, organisations accessing data via public communications services may require GDPR-standard consent. This applies regardless of the GDPR legal basis relied on.



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Five tips for perfect procurement

Choosing the right supplier can be a complicated process, but it is vital to ensuring the effective and efficient running of a fleet. *Andrew Ryan* looks at how to achieve this

Fleet procurement is not the cut and dried process where a buyer simply negotiates a price for a product and gets it fixed for a couple of years.

There are many elements, most of them variable, which makes the task a complex exercise requiring expertise and insight.

"Too often fleet is viewed as just another commodity purchase, with the focus solely on price," says Simon Staton, client management director at Venson Automotive Solutions, which published its Tackling

Fleet Procurement Challenges Head-on white paper earlier this year.

"Unlike buying office stationery, for example, fleet procurement is a financial deal that often involves vehicles or a range of in-life services. It's certainly not black and white.

"It is crucial that anyone involved in the procurement process fully understands what they are buying, and that the variables that make up the price are dynamic and can change during the life-time of a contract."

There may be many reasons why a fleet would put a contract out to tender. These include searching for a new supplier, their business operations may mean they are obliged to go out to tender, they could be benchmarking the market or seeking leverage with an existing supplier.

A well-run tender process gives a fleet an oppor-

tunity to find the right long-term partner, one that understands the company's objectives, provides transparent and sustainable pricing and fits with their culture.

Procurement processes will differ between organisations and will depend on business model, company size, location, company structure, human resources, budget and spending, but there are some common factors between all of them.

Overleaf, we outline the five key steps needed for a successful process. ➔





James Starling, Business
Services Director at The AA



Always ahead: driving electrification forward

As the UK's fleets move towards a net zero future, the journey to electrification is well underway. But it's far from straightforward. From inconsistent infrastructure to changing regulations and driver uncertainty, fleet managers are navigating a complex transition.

At The AA, we understand these challenges because we live them too. With more than 3,000 vehicles in our own fleet and frontline experience of supporting thousands of businesses, we know what it takes to keep things moving.

That's why we've invested in smarter solutions, like Vixa Pro: the data-driven platform that uses AI to predict maintenance needs and reduce vehicle off-road time. It's helped cut downtime by 40% across our own operations. This is just one way we're helping fleets stay efficient while driving towards sustainability.

But we also know tech alone isn't enough.

The shift to electric needs real-world support. We're pleased the Government has announced discounts for some new EVs costing less than £37,000, more support for cross pavement charging gullies and better signing of EV hubs on the motorway and strategic road network.

We'd like to see some other practical changes too, including VAT cuts on public charging, battery health passports to support the second-hand market and more accessible infrastructure. When drivers feel confident, adoption follows.

Whether you're just starting out or scaling up your EV journey, we're with you every step of the way. To explore this further, read our Yellow Paper on intelligent fleet management and follow us on LinkedIn to stay connected with the latest insights and ongoing news.



Paul Holland, Managing Director
for UK/ANZ Fleet at Corpay, including
UK brand, Allstar



Allstar helps operators to stay on the road

The challenge for any modern-day fleet is staying in control of its operations. But how is this achieved when there are complexities and variables impacting almost every decision a fleet manager needs to make?

The fuel and electric vehicle (EV) space remains in a state of flux, shaped by macroeconomic uncertainty, global policy shifts and rapid technological advancement. One of the persistent issues in the market is the volatility of energy and fuel pricing. At the same time, stricter emission regulations and clean energy mandates are pushing fleet operators to modernise and turn to the latest technologies to support them in maximising efficiencies and convenience while their drivers are on the road.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and fleet technologies are playing a central role.

AI is being used to optimise energy use, streamline maintenance, and manage mixed ICE/EV fleets more efficiently. Predictive analytics help reduce downtime and extend asset life, while telematics and IoT (Internet of Things) integration offer real-time monitoring and smart routing. Also, AI is increasingly used to forecast energy demand and charging schedules, minimising peak-hour costs.

These modern technologies are playing a key role, but there is another vital element that helps them simplify, reduce costs and retain control...of the controllables. [Allstar Chargepass®](#) is the UK's only single card payment solution that does it all: fuel, public EV charging, home charging, reporting, controls and so much more. No matter the mix or make up of their fleet, Allstar helps operators stay on the road.

1

Do your homework

It is important for a fleet to build a relationship with potential suppliers before the formal tender process begins.

"They should get to know the providers they are considering," says Christopher Caddick, head of business development at JCT600 Vehicle Leasing Solutions. "Understand their culture, meet their people and test the working relationship before the process begins."

"Cultural fit, mutual trust and confidence in a partner's approach can be as important as price."

"A tender process entered into with little prior understanding between the two parties often leads to misalignment, disappointment and missed potential on both sides."

A high-level understanding of the marketplace is also needed by the fleet decision-maker if the right suppliers are to be asked to tender.

Important information which can be used to identify suitable suppliers can be garnered from the fleet press – particularly *Fleet News* – as well as talking to peers, attending Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) meetings and industry networking.

The fleet should also involve the incumbent provider and discuss with them the reasons for the tender exercise, such as any procedures that could be improved on and new services required.

"It is therefore a good idea that a pre-qualification stage embracing a request for information (RFI) from potential suppliers should then be weighted and scored to enable a shortlist to be compiled who will then respond to the formal tender document," says Venson.

"Such research will result in a targeted tender



exercise being carried out involving potential suppliers that are likely to be able to deliver, with those that have failed to impress having been screened out."

David Savage, chief revenue officer at Lightfoot, warns skipping market research or early-stage trials can be a costly oversight.

"With many providers offering similar-sounding features, it's critical to validate real-world performance, measure driver engagement, assess cultural alignment and confirm ROI," he says.

"The best outcomes occur when the tender process is treated not as a transaction, but as the beginning of a long-term partnership."



2

Be clear on what you want

One of the most common – yet avoidable – mistakes made during a fleet procurement process is a lack of clarity on objectives/scope, says Caddick, of JCT600 Vehicle Leasing Solutions.

"Organisations need a clearly defined set of objectives or a detailed understanding of what matters most, not only in fleet, but in the wider context of their business strategy," he adds.

"Without a clear scope of services, key performance priorities and a structured set of questions, the responses received are unlikely to be aligned with the business's true needs."

"The format of the tender questions is also key as it can lead to inconsistent responses, making it difficult to benchmark providers effectively or make informed decisions."

It is crucial to involve a range of personnel in the procurement process as they can give vital insight to ensure an appropriate document is compiled.

An organisation's procurement department may well take the lead in the process, but the input of the fleet team is vital.

"We have found some tender documents to be concise, to the point and generally well-written," says Venson. "However, others have been written by people with little to no knowledge of either the fleet their organisation operates or the wider fleet market."

Know what you want and articulate that clearly. Asking a potential supplier to respond to precise operational scenarios enables them to fully detail the actions they would take and gives the opportunity to compare and contrast in the real world.





Determine what value means to you

"One of the crucial points to remember is that value for money should never be mistaken for the lowest price," says Staton, of Venson Automotive Solutions. "There's so such thing as a 'golden deal'."

"It is essential to think of the contract in its entirety, taking into consideration factors such as rate creep, including end-of-contract charges and damage waiver fees.

"Additionally, there's a need to account for current and emerging technology to be factored in.

"Fleet decision-makers should always opt for transparency in a contract that considers long-term value, rather than short-term gain."

Prizing price above all else will mean numerous critical elements will be ignored, warns Savage, of Lightfoot.

These could include warranties, support or performance guarantees, ultimately costing more over the contract's lifetime.

"Often a solution that appears more expensive initially can deliver two to four times the ROI," he adds.

"Another pitfall is focusing too heavily on product features rather than tangible value and outcomes a solution can deliver.



"We frequently see tenders that are overly price-driven. Cost is always a factor, but an excessive focus on upfront pricing can push fleets towards commodity solutions that lack long-term value."

Staton recommends that when scoring a tender, price should account for no more than 40% of the score. Allocating a greater proportion makes price too important.



Assessing tenders takes a balanced view

How organisations weigh up the importance of the different factors such as value for money, quality, reliability and service, will depend on business priorities and strategy.

Taking a full balanced score card approach, appropriately weighted and measuring key criteria including capability, risk, financial stability and ESG issues as well as value for money and price will, if done properly, ensure that the organisation with the highest score will win the contract.

As mentioned in the previous section, when evaluating a tender, price should account for no more than 40% of the score. Weighting the tender more than 50% for price – unless it is a very simple commodity – is missing a trick and making price too important.

Staton says some suppliers are prepared to pay a 'signing on fee' or a so-called 'golden hello' to win fleet business, but leasing and fleet management companies offering such incentives are likely to retrieve the cost of any such payment during the lifetime of the contract.

"There is not a lot that is 'fixed' in a vehicle leasing contract," says Staton. "In short, nothing is 'free' and the reasons that vehicle leasing and fleet management companies offering such incentives will find for changing prices are all legitimate.

"Procurement managers and their colleagues may award a contract believing that they have locked down a deal and secured a golden hello, but it will invariably prove to be a false economy.

"It is critical that, if quotes obtained are out of line with the market, then the question that must be asked is 'why?'.

"If the price is considerably lower, the answer is



almost certainly that a supplier is attempting to buy business at a price that will be unsustainable across the lifetime of the contract.

"As a result, the perceived saving will evaporate and will, likely, become a cost."

Fleets should provide a clear and consistent pricing matrix to enable like-for-like comparisons, but also to promote transparency in understanding the full cost of the services being proposed, says Caddick, of JCT600 Vehicle Leasing Solutions.

"From that point, they need to ask when each pricing component might be subject to change, why and under what conditions, and contract on that basis," he adds.

"This helps to guard against headline rates that

look attractive initially, but are not sustainable or reflective of the long-term costs."

Other key characteristics which should be looked for when considering tenders are capability, risk, financial stability, ESG issues, speed of response and flexibility, and clear communication.

The final shortlist should contain no more than four suppliers, says Staton. This means focus can be given to obtaining full and final offers from the companies deemed best-in-class to supply the required services.

Having assessed tender responses, it is important organisations contact the shortlisted suppliers as it gives them the chance to clear up any ambiguities and reshape their answers if necessary.



“Effective monitoring needs to be proactive, structured and linked to a set of KPIs”

DAVID SAVAGE



Monitor and review contracts

It is important to have mechanisms in place to ensure that what has been agreed to is supplied to the required standard for the duration of the agreement.

“It can be surprisingly difficult to track contract performance over its full life cycle – particularly when automation and workflow tools are in place,” says Lightfoot’s Savage.

“In many cases, automation streamlines day-to-day operations, but also risks creating complacency. When everything seems to be running smoothly in the background, it’s easy to assume performance is on track – until a problem arises.

“Effective monitoring needs to be proactive, structured and linked to a set of KPIs (key performance indicators).

“These should extend beyond compliance and cost, encompassing service levels, driver engagement, environmental impact and operational efficiency.”

These KPIs should support SLAs (service level agreements) that both parties are happy with and,

although they need to be reasonable on both sides, they also need to have teeth and sanctions for failures to perform to agreed standards.

It is important to manage any fleet/supplier relationship through regular meetings and ongoing email or telephone communication as a collaborative partnership will help both parties plan effectively for future needs.

“What is really important is regular open and honest dialogue, to build trust and provide the right environment to work together, as the best outcomes happen when both parties view each other as strategic partners,” says Caddick, of JCT600 Vehicle Leasing Solutions.

“Monitoring is only one aspect. The other is how working in partnership together throughout the contract is an opportunity to continually ask ‘can we deliver this better?’ and challenge the status quo together, explore innovations and adapt to the changing needs of the business and the market.”

Caddick adds the real value in monitoring service delivery lies not just in protecting performance, but in enhancing it.

“A structured, transparent and collaborative approach ensures the contract remains live and dynamic, helping both fleet and supplier grow and improve together,” he says.

“Ultimately, the goal is not just to deliver the service, but to evolve it.”



Tim Smith, Chief Strategy Officer, Keyloop

Unlocking fleet potential with Keyloop Fusion

Welcome to this special feature on the UK fleet sector – a pivotal space in today’s evolving automotive industry. At Keyloop, we understand that success in fleet retailing hinges not just on what you stock, but on how strategically you manage that stock. In a sector driven by scale, margin and precision, the need for connected, intelligent systems has never been greater.

That’s why we’re proud to introduce Keyloop Fusion – a next-generation Automotive Retail Platform that empowers retailers to operate smarter across every stage of the vehicle lifecycle. Within Fusion, our Vehicle Hub, part of the Supply domain, offers a powerful solution to one of the sector’s most pressing challenges: fragmented, outdated inventory systems.

By giving retailers a single source of truth, Keyloop Fusion allows for real-time visibility, intelligent orchestration and seamless data flow across all touchpoints. Culminating in faster decision-making, reduced holding costs, improved customer experience and, ultimately, greater profitability.

In an industry where inefficiency is no longer affordable, Fusion is not just a product; it’s a new standard. Whether it’s anticipating demand, optimising pricing, or reallocating stock based on regional dynamics, Fusion transforms your inventory from a static asset into a strategic advantage.

Thank you for joining us as we explore what’s next for the fleet sector. We invite you to discover how Keyloop Fusion is powering the future of automotive retail.

Register for our free webinar at keyloop.com/events/vehicle-hub

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Andy Wolff, Commercial Director – Corporate

Zenith bolsters customer service provision

Zenith, the UK’s leading independent leasing, fleet management and vehicle outsourcing business, has reinforced its ongoing commitment to customer service by becoming a Trusted Advisory Member of the Institute of Customer Service (ICS).

The membership will provide Zenith colleagues with further training and development opportunities, to help them deliver customers with a best-in-class service experience. Zenith will also have access to the institute’s benchmarking tools, allowing the company to measure success, advance its customer service strategy and benchmark its own performance against other organisations across the UK.

Becoming a member of the ICS continues Zenith’s ongoing investment to advance its overall customer experience. This includes the recent implementation of a new service hub model for Zenith’s Corporate customers, and upgrades to the company’s technology platforms.

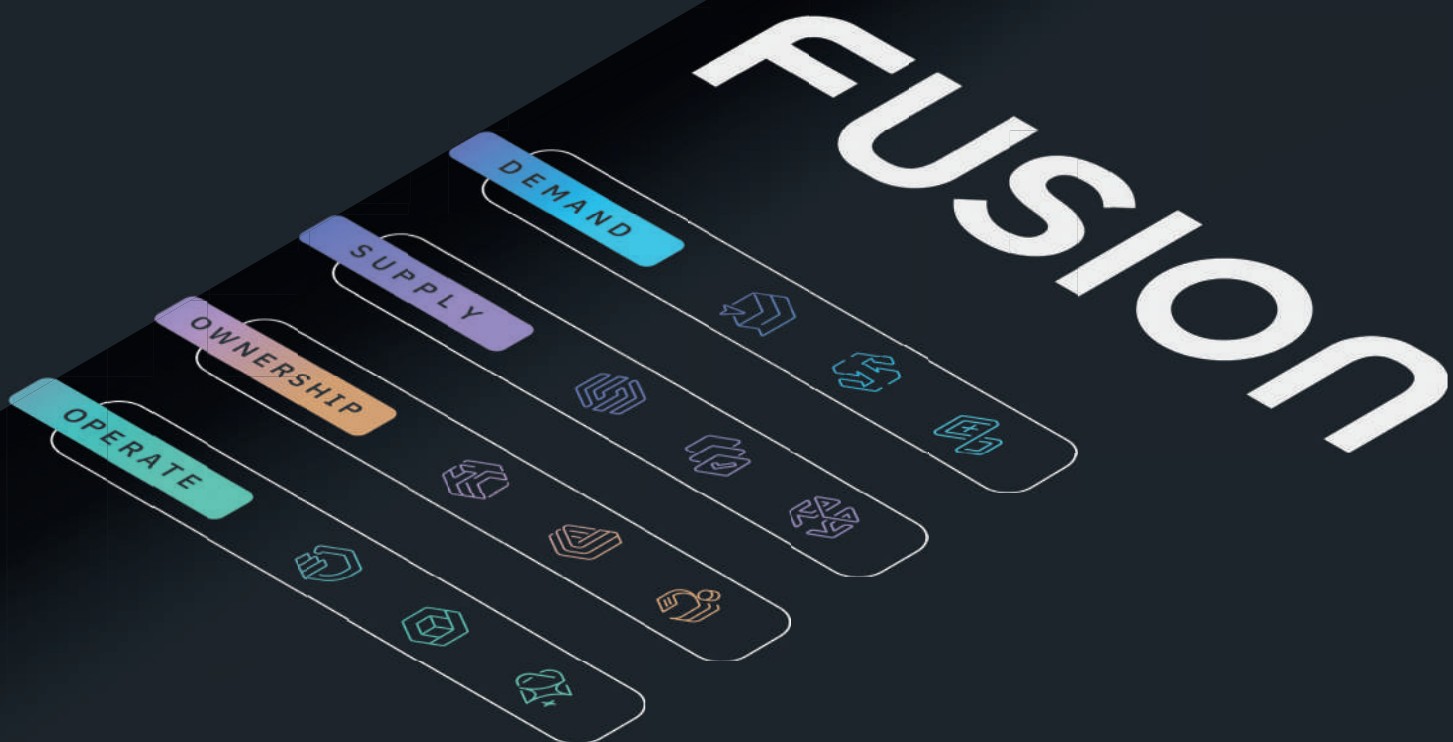
These improvements have resulted in a four-point increase to Zenith’s overall customer satisfaction scores, which now sits at 83% – ahead of national average and five percentage points ahead of the automotive sector.

Andy Wolff, Commercial Director of Zenith’s Corporate division, said: “At Zenith, our goal is to put the customer at the heart of everything we do. Our high customer satisfaction scores and strong performance KPIs demonstrate that we’re delivering in this area. However, we are always looking for ways to improve and being an Institute of Customer Service member will provide us the opportunity to learn from other members, continue to develop our own colleagues, and ultimately, help advance our customer service offering.”

Zenith
Intelligent Vehicle Solutions

Embrace efficiency.
Ignite loyalty. Propel profits.
The Automotive Retail Platform is here.

Experience-First delivered through technology.



Driving profitability through precision: How smarter inventory management is transforming the automotive landscape

In today's fast-paced automotive landscape, success no longer hinges on simply having the right vehicles in stock. It's about having the right stock, at the right price, at the right time – requiring more than instinct and experience. Dealers are under increasing pressure to anticipate demand, optimise margins, and deliver an exceptional customer experience, all while navigating fractured systems and disjointed data.

At Keyloop, we believe that the future of automotive retail lies in seamless connectivity and intelligent automation. That's why we've developed Fusion – the Automotive Retail Platform, made up of four domains: Demand, Supply, Ownership and Operate – covering every stage of the vehicle lifecycle. Totally composable and improving the automotive ecosystem for dealers and consumers, Keyloop's Fusion is revolutionising the way automotive retail operates.

A single source of truth

The traditional dealership tech stack is often a tangled web of systems that don't speak to one another. This fragmentation leads to inefficiencies, from rekeying vehicle data to inconsistent pricing and avoidable delays.

These operational gaps drain internal resources and erode consumer trust at the point of sale.

Our supply solutions address this challenge head-on by providing a single source of truth for vehicle inventory. With real-time access to centralised data,



retailers can view, manage and optimise their entire stock, from acquisition to sale, with total confidence and accuracy. The result is a dramatic reduction in human error, improved operational consistency, and increased speed to market.

Real-time insights, real-world impact

Retailers need real-time insights into their inventory's position. From knowing exactly where each vehicle is in the pipeline to adjusting pricing in response to shifting market conditions, dealers can act faster and more strategically.

With enhanced data visibility, you're no longer reacting to the market – you're anticipating it. Whether it's proactively managing slow-moving units or reallocating vehicles based on regional requirements, improving the way the supply chain operates transforms your inventory from a static asset into a dynamic lever of profitability.

Intelligent orchestration for maximum value

One of the most profitable opportunities is its ability to support intelligent vehicle orchestration. With a complete, 360-degree view of all inventory, dealerships can make smarter stocking decisions, reduce vehicle holding costs, and safeguard profitability. It's about

ensuring that every vehicle on your lot, or in your pipeline, is working for you, not against you.

By breaking down data silos and enabling precise forecasting, consumers can be offered more choice, better pricing and a more seamless buying journey. As we know, good experiences drive brand loyalty, subsequently reducing the need for expensive acquisition marketing.

New standard in inventory management

As automotive retail continues to evolve, the margin for inefficiency is shrinking. It's no longer enough to manage inventory reactively, retailers need tools that empower them to operate with clarity, consistency and control.

Sitting within the Supply domain, our new product Vehicle Hub, means dealerships can finally unlock the full potential of their vehicle inventory. It's not just about stock – it's about strategy. It's about turning operational complexity into a competitive advantage.

keyloop™

[Click here to learn more](#)



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A SPECIAL REPORT BROUGHT TO YOU BY **FleetNews**

HOLMAN – REDUCING VEHICLE DOWNTIME WITH PROACTIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING AND A WORLDWIDE NETWORK

In association with

Holman



The schedule of a modern fleet is very finely tuned. So, any delay or interruption can be a significant cause for concern. A single vehicle off-road (VOR) has the potential to have critical implications. From the moment that vehicle is declared VOR until its return to operations, a driver is at risk of being unable to carry out their tasks, with a negative impact on the fleet and customer(s) alike. Minimising vehicle downtime is, therefore, a sector-wide priority.

Responding to this challenge, fleet management and funding company, Holman, has achieved a significant reduction in vehicle downtime with a record low of 2.24 days in August 2024 and an average VOR time of 2.63 days in the past year – establishing a new benchmark in fleet uptime.

Holman's UK head of operations, Dominic Hutchinson, spoke to *Fleet News* about how the brand has achieved this record, and what his company's achievements mean for modern fleets.

SIGNIFICANCE OF VEHICLE DOWNTIME

Hutchinson sees the importance of vehicle downtime as simple, but crucial, in terms of its impact on his fleet customers.

"Ultimately, it comes down to the utilisation of the fleet," he explained. "We have a lot of customers with really bespoke needs."

He quoted examples of fleets that require specialised vehicles such as an ambulance or hearse. "You can't just give them a courtesy car and say 'go about your business'. It's just not viable."

Through its work to reduce vehicle downtime, Holman is demonstrating its capabilities as a provider that responds to the priorities of its customers – a familiar and proven approach when one considers the brand's history.

A TRUSTED BRAND

Founded in 1924, Holman has been helping fleets for more than 100 years across the globe. Hutchinson explained the brand's reach, and the importance of its long-standing family leadership.

"Fundamentally, Holman is still a family-run business," he said. "Our Chair is Mindy Holman, and we are a US-owned company. We also have large operations in Canada, Mexico and Germany."

Holman approaches fleets with a Buy-Drive-Service-Sell offering – providing assistance across the entire lifecycle of its vehicles. But Hutchinson was quick to point out that the organisation does not have a 'one size fits all' strategy.

"We have robust processes, but it's all about knowing and having a relationship with the customer," he added.

Instead, Holman embraces a customer-focused approach that prioritises clear communication and understanding each customer's needs.

"Our teams really want to understand what is important to a customer," said Hutchinson. "They work with them to learn what their key drivers are. We see times where having vehicle availability is the number one priority, not the cost. At other times, the priority might be compliance – at any cost."

Flexibility was listed by Hutchinson as a key element of Holman's strategy, and a real strength when working with fleets.



He said: "We focus on continuing to be agile enough to be able to react to different customer needs. Our customers have customers, and understanding the demands of all parties is the important piece for us. It's about knowing those demands, not just assuming what's important, asking the question."

This flexibility is only possible thanks to the level of expertise that is present across Holman's operations. Hutchinson explained that members of the downtime control team collectively have more than 100 years of technical experience. They work more as problem solvers than downtime controllers – able to engage with customers through transparent conversations that foster real trust and unique relationships.





"All team members actively engage on a daily basis with customer fleet teams, offering solutions. Often we're in this scenario... there are these solutions and maybe two or three different options will be on the table. Normally, we understand that you'd want to do this, but in this scenario, if you did this, this would be the best outcome – that's the important bit."

This approach, with clear and transparent conversations, empowers Holman's fleet customers and allows them to make informed decisions about their VOR experience with repair options that balance cost and speed.

Once a decision is made, fleets can rely on Holman for a range of repairs – with straightforward ones expedited by its dedicated downtime controllers, and a specialised team is on hand to resolve any complex issues.

The company's tiered downtime management approach ensures rapid response and escalation for complex vehicle repairs, maximising efficiency and minimising disruption for customers.

NETWORKING FOR SUCCESS

When working to get a vehicle back on the road, it is crucial to have the right parts available. This can be a complicated enough issue when repairing a new or widely available vehicle, but becomes an increasingly difficult prospect when working with older or more specialised models in critical and time-sensitive VOR moments.

"Parts supply has always been a bit of a challenge," confirmed Hutchinson. "Some fleets have vehicles up to 20 years old that we've got to look after."

To address this issue, Holman has established a network of 2,000 suppliers; creating connections to ensure that parts can be obtained from all over the globe where necessary.

"We source parts from Australia; we've worked with OEMs to get parts shipped from the US; we've sourced sensors from Lithuania; and we'll work with different parts suppliers who are holding stock."

This supplier network allows the Holman team to source parts for vehicle models that do not originate in the UK.

"We're happy to import something from a different country to make sure we get a vehicle back on the road for our customer," explained Hutchinson. "That's



"WE SEE TIMES WHERE HAVING VEHICLE AVAILABILITY IS THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY, NOT THE COST. AT OTHER TIMES, THE PRIORITY MIGHT BE COMPLIANCE – AT ANY COST"

**HOLMAN UK HEAD OF OPERATIONS
DOMINIC HUTCHINSON**



really the crux; trying to consider what you would do if it was your vehicle. We are all aware that if it was your vehicle off the road, you'd be scouring to find the exact part you need."

Holman's multinational status also allows its various teams to take advantage of any relevant innovations or learnings that occur within any arm of the organisation.

Hutchinson said: "There's a dedicated team based in the US that is constantly focused on innovation, and we all share best practices and common systems. There's consistent investment into how we operate and work. We've got great global support."

MORE PROACTIVE

This level of support from the wider brand enables Holman's teams to look beyond the day-to-day repairs and act in a more proactive manner.

"We will buy parts if we manage to source a replacement. Then we take the old one, get it refurbished and keep it in stock – building up a specialist range."

Hutchinson noted that this level of proactivity allows Holman to prioritise its customer-focused approach as a solution provider for modern fleets.

"We're trying to proactively recognise issues that are coming along. We've got some great data-driven insights using our system as well, so we don't wait for a problem to land on a customer's doorstep. Instead, we identify it, find a solution and put that in place," he said.

Holman's methods have allowed its fleet customers to benefit from increased vehicle availability, with the brand's improvements delivering more than 240,000 extra operational hours to its customers per year and savings of more than £15.5 million.

"Ultimately, they can do the jobs that they are actually there to do," Hutchinson commented. "We're often seen as part of their operation. We understand it and, therefore, they can do what they're there to do."

The fleet sector is continually evolving, and Holman will develop its services

and areas of expertise to best provide for its customers. Hutchinson discussed how the company has already put steps in place to be well positioned to help fleet customers in their transition towards electric vehicles.

"The industry's facing probably the biggest changes since we went from the horse and cart to a Ford-launched motor vehicle. Really, this is the biggest shift we have ever seen, and we can't just stand still," he added.

Holman runs extensive and tailored training courses to ensure that its employees have the tools to best assist customers.

"We have sent everyone into a workshop to understand how an EV works, and not just technical people. We work with the industry to understand what's coming down the line then liaise with a training provider to build learning materials around it – then we train our staff."

In this example, Hutchinson confirmed that even Holman's contact centre staff were trained – six months ahead of any customer queries – to enable them to discuss EV problems and other industry issues.

ELECTRIC GUIDANCE

Putting its EV expertise into action, Holman has significantly assisted its fleet customers in their electric journeys.

Across its customers, the brand has facilitated a 45% increase in electric cars and a 500% rise in electric vans across its managed fleets.

The brand assesses fleet readiness for EVs and guides its customers on selecting electric alternatives and installing charging infrastructure. All of Holman's technical teams are EV-certified and can advise or help across an EV's lifecycle.

Holman's commitment to its customers is on full display through its work to reduce their vehicle downtime. The brand utilises a winning combination of worldwide networking, expert facilitation, and the expertise of its teams – thereby fulfilling the needs of each fleet customer and maintaining its long-running position as a trusted solution provider for the entire sector.



CASE STUDY: MWH Treatment

The business of any fleet can only be performed if it has vehicles on the road. While problems with vehicles are to be expected and can sometimes require a vehicle to spend time off-road, a fleet's productivity and finances can be severely impacted by extended vehicle off-road (VOR) instances.

With 550 cars and 150 LCVs in daily use, water infrastructure provider MWH Treatment requires low VOR times to remain productive and deliver its services effectively.

"If we've got a vehicle out of service, our jobs can't continue. It means a big delay and impacts the delivery of the task," explains MWH's fleet & employee benefits manager, Leah Lindsay. "It may seem surprising, but one day of a vehicle being off-road can cost us anything between £400 and £500 in downtime."

From 2018, MWH Treatment has worked with Holman as its vehicle maintenance provider. Since taking on Holman's services, MWH's average VOR time has been reduced from 4.7 to 0.9 days. Lindsay credits this to the methods Holman has introduced – combining communication and time management to great effect.

"They're really strict about sticking to timescales, providing communication between the garage, the driver and ourselves, and giving us as much information as they can at any time."

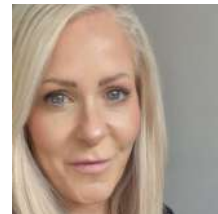
The use of data as a tool to encourage proactive problem-solving is also a practice that Holman has introduced to MWH.

"We were very reactive before, where we would have a vehicle off-road, and then it would go back on the road and then be off the road again. Holman is really good about providing us with insight, supplying us data which shows a problematic vehicle. We can identify that vehicle before we've even got to the point of it actually costing us money. We have a complete review every month with Holman, so we can see our data, it's really visible to us, and we can identify potential problems before they actually occur."

Lindsay also commented on how Holman has proved itself a constant and steady partner.

"From my point of view, I deal with probably in excess of 20 different suppliers, and I can honestly say Holman is always there. It's really hard given we have such a complex fleet."

And regarding consistency? "If you have an account manager change every six or 12 months, you've got to then rebuild that relationship. They've got to learn about your company and fleet and that can be difficult. Holman provides a very robust, consistent and professional account management service."



"THEY'RE REALLY STRICT ABOUT STICKING TO TIMESCALES, PROVIDING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE GARAGE, THE DRIVER AND OURSELVES, AND GIVING US AS MUCH INFORMATION AS THEY CAN AT ANY TIME"

MWH TREATMENT FLEET & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS MANAGER LEAH LINDSAY

SALARY SACRIFICE: GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

With no signs that the growth of sal/sac is slowing, *Catherine Chetwynd* looks at how fleet decision-makers can make their scheme a success

Salary sacrifice (sal/sac) for electric vehicles (EVs) is one of those rare situations which seems to provide a win-win for all parties involved.

It gives eligible employees cost-effective access – inclusive of servicing and insurance – to low-emission cars, while employers are either using it to improve staff benefits or replace perk cars.

Sal/sac also provides new business opportunities for leasing companies, and manufacturers are provided with an additional sales channel to help them achieve their Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Mandate targets.

These broad benefits are reflected in the latest figures from the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA), which shows the number of vehicles supplied by its members through this funding method has grown 61% year-on-year, with nearly 90% of these being battery electric vehicles (BEVs).

"Salary sacrifice car schemes are no longer just a tax-efficient perk, they are a critical tool for fleet professionals and their HR colleagues," says Simon Staton, client management director at Venson Automotive Solutions.

Traditionally, sal/sac has been seen as a staff benefit to help recruit and retain employees. This remains the case, even though the BVRLA says some employers are moving drivers out of perk company cars and into sal/sac vehicles. However, this does not seem to be a significant trend.

Some perk car drivers with lower mileage may benefit from taking a cash allowance and opting into a sal/sac scheme as they may be able to save money or use the allowance to get a vehicle not

available to them via the company scheme.

However, it may not be financially prudent for higher mileage drivers to do this because the sacrifice calculation is based on the lease cost of the car, which is influenced by the term and mileage. The longer the term and higher the mileage, the greater the cost.

In addition, the driver will be buying motor insurance with a premium based on an individual profile, whereas with a company car scheme the insurance is calculated on aggregate profile. Similarly, mileage, which is taken as an average of, say, 20,000 miles a year when the actual mileage may range from 5,000 to 35,000 miles.

"When an organisation is thinking of moving out of company cars, we understand their objectives, modelling the impact across the driver profile to ensure they are doing it for the right reasons and are not creating a new set of problems," says Caroline Sandall-Mansergh, consultancy and channel development manager at Alphabet. This may lead to one scheme or a blend of programmes.

NATIONAL INSURANCE EFFICIENCIES

A survey commissioned by Venson Automotive Solutions found that 61% of drivers who were already in or would like to join a sal/sac scheme said their primary motivation was reducing taxable income, leading to lower income tax and National Insurance Contributions (NICs).

Employers also benefit from NIC savings, and CBVC Vehicle Management says this could encourage more organisations to offer sal/sac schemes in light of the recent NIC increase faced by employers. ➔



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☞ In April the employer NIC rate rose by 1.2 percentage points to 15%, and the payment threshold dropped from £9,100 to £5,000.

"With employer NIC increasing, businesses are under growing pressure to manage rising costs," says Michelle George, commercial director at CBVC. "Introducing an EV sal/sac scheme is a smart, strategic way to significantly reduce your NIC bill while also boosting employee benefits and delivering on sustainability."

For example, the fleet management company has calculated that over a 40,000-mile/48-month period, an employer can, for example, save £7,104 in NIC on a BMW i5 eDrive M Sport 40, £6,048 for a Audi Q4 Sportback 45 Black Edition and £4,752 for a Volkswagen ID4 if a 40% taxpayer takes on those cars.

The BVRLA says one of the major drivers of the growth in sal/sac is the arrival of new, lower priced EVs as they have put lower emission vehicles within reach for more drivers, as well as contributing to organisations' ability to decarbonise operations.

An increasing number of leasing companies are also helping employees reduce their monthly bills by offering used EVs through sal/sac schemes.

Most used EVs being offered tend to be vehicles which have been returned either at the end of an existing contract or through early termination from corporate or sal/sac schemes.

This means the company offering the used vehicles should have a complete picture of their history, including maintenance and condition.

"By offering used EVs for second- and third-life

leases, leasecons are reducing their exposure to a volatile outright sell market," says Chris Salmon, commercial director of SG Fleet.

"The level of interest among drivers is huge; we have seen a significant shift in people wanting used EVs on sal/sac rather than new ones."

There are, however, some caveats. Manufacturers are discounting EVs where there are cheaper competitors or when they have not hit their ZEV Mandate target and need to shift vehicles to do so.

When one manufacturer makes the leap into a large discount, others will follow, and, as the range of manufacturers grows, there are many fighting for a share of the market.

As a result, better pricing on new vehicles closes the gap between new and second-hand, and that could lead an employee to opt for a new vehicle.

"Model choice is also likely to be much more restricted and the processes involved more complex," says Michelle Marlow, product manager for salary sacrifice at Arval UK.

"And, as company car tax rises year on year, some drivers may be concerned the benefit-in-kind (BIK) rate could be excessive for what is, after all, a used EV rather than a new car."

CHOOSE THE RIGHT SUPPLIER

For a sal/sac scheme to be successful, it is important an organisation partners with the right supplier.

A key first step is to know what you want and how you will run the scheme. Look at the cost of running it, both money and resource; assess how much time you need to administer and/or market it.

Are there any annual minimum requirements such as the number of new scheme members or quantity of vehicles?

Is there flexibility in early-term insurance and motor insurance, and does the supplier allow for self-insuring rather than having to use the providers who are included in the their own scheme?

Is the scheme as inclusive as possible such as offering longer agreement lengths to bring the overall cost down – between 24 and 60 months, and a range of models to help meet employees' incomes or other requirements?

"Businesses need to consider what they want to achieve with the car scheme they put in place. This should look at the cost of operating it – money and resource, plus the overall return on investment for each scheme – monetary, goodwill, competitive, etc.," says Staton.

"In some cases, a company may implement a sal/sac scheme which leads to improved candidate recruitment, even though the result may not be many employees signing up to it," he says.

It is important to look for a partner who will listen, tailor the scheme to your business needs and provide a structured implementation process.

"INTRODUCING AN EV SAL/SAC SCHEME IS A SMART, STRATEGIC WAY TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE YOUR NIC BILL WHILE ALSO BOOSTING EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND DELIVERING ON SUSTAINABILITY"

**MICHELLE GEORGE,
CBVC VEHICLE MANAGEMENT**

"It should feel like a formal project, led by a qualified team who will support you from design through to delivery and beyond," says Matthew Walters, head of consultancy services and customer value at Ayvens.

And, regarding design, the portal and user journey are critical, especially where an organisation is inviting people who have not had a company car before; they will expect their online trajectory to mirror their retail experience – seamless, simple and engaging.

"How the scheme works, how they understand it, how they bring vehicles up and what they look like, whether they can click to see a vehicle in different colours; the expectations of a salary sacrifice portal are high," says Sandall-Mansergh.

Risk and insurance are also a consideration. The main risks are an employee leaving midway through the contract, somebody going absent long-term and no longer being able to afford the payment, or their salary may fall to a level where they cannot afford the payments.

This is part of the conversation employers need to have with their provider.

Some companies outsource insurance, others self-insure, and others have a contingency element within sal/sac and everybody contributes to that so they have an internal pot, a safety blanket to cover the risk area.

This is, inevitably, more administration for the employer. All the above can be insured against, but organisations should take care not to overestimate their risks, which puts insurance premiums up to the point they undermine the value of the scheme.

And beware of going with the lowest price.

"We see a lot of fleets make decisions based on quotes provided at tender stage and we recommend against this. Quotes offer no guarantee as to pricing once the scheme is live, which can often be months down the line," says Salmon.

Instead, fleets should focus on qualitative aspects such as established reputation, a technology-based solution with self-service, ancillary products such as home chargers, charge cards and a marketing plan to hold participants' attention once the scheme is launched.



Maximising fleet efficiency with the right tools

A key responsibility of fleet leadership is selecting the right partners to drive operational efficiency and meet evolving business needs.

For organisations on the road to electrification Octopus Electroverse for Business is fast becoming the supplier of choice.

Earlier this year, the company launched a powerful new tool designed to support fleets at every stage of their EV transition to cover charging, fuel and everyday spend. Developed in partnership with VISA, the Octopus Electroverse for Business Payments Card goes far beyond simple EV charging – it connects seamlessly with a comprehensive fleet management platform, giving operators full administrative oversight in one intuitive dashboard.

With this platform, fleet managers can monitor charging and payment activity, manage driver profiles and payment cards, generate detailed reports and retrieve VAT-ready receipts, all from a single point of access. This integration is designed to boost efficiency, reduce admin burdens and increase transparency across operations.

With no fixed contracts or hidden fees, simple monthly billing through direct debit, and flexible payment dates, businesses using Electroverse have total flexibility to operate how best suits them.

As a disruptor in the EV charging space, Octopus Electroverse for Business continues to lead with innovative products and services that simplify charging and support both fleet operators and their drivers.

Head of Fleet Solutions Matt Pretorius said: “Octopus Electroverse for Business is changing how fleet managers operate; taking the mundane and flipping them into tools that actually benefit businesses (and speed up the electric transition!).”

One persistent pain point for fleets is the administrative hassle of reclaiming charging costs through traditional expense claims. The Electroverse fleet solution addresses this challenge head-on with seamless integration and automatic data capture, making electrification not just possible, but practical.

Since its launch in 2024, Octopus Electroverse for Business has enabled companies and their drivers to access



Matt Pretorius

more than 1,000,000 charging points across the UK and Europe via the Electroverse network, all consolidated under a single, centrally billed account with one simple monthly invoice.

The Electroverse app enhances the driver experience by providing live availability, charging speeds and nearby amenities, giving drivers the confidence to make smart, efficient charging decisions on the go.

Cost savings are achieved via Plunge

Pricing events, which provide discounts for drivers when energy supply is high and demand is low, delivering both financial and environmental benefits.

Pretorius adds: “We want businesses to better utilise their charging behaviour and easily identify cost-savings, just like we want drivers to have instant access to whichever charging station they need. EV charging for businesses doesn’t have to be tricky; it can be easy, slick and intuitive – and we’ve created Octopus Electroverse for Business to prove that.

“By consolidating all this information into a single platform, we make it easy for users to access everything they need without having to visit multiple charging provider sites or search through various sources, much like how fuel comparison tools work. That’s the purpose of Electroverse for Business, and that’s what it’s designed to do.”

This depth of insight not only improves operational efficiency but gives fleet decision-makers the tools to take control of costs and confidently lead their transition to electric.

**Learn more about
Octopus Electroverse
for Business here**



Grosvenor's Legacy Fleet Management: A seamless transition for your fleet

Changing contract hire providers has never been an easy switch. With replacement cycles on company cars and vans varying between two-to-five years, and leasing companies also using their own preferred network of partners for ancillary services, moving can result in fleet managers adding to their workload with multiple funders and suppliers for many years.

Grosvenor's legacy fleet management solves that problem and has always been a huge success with new customers.

Smooth and stress-free supplier transition

Recognising the challenges that come with switching contract hire providers, the legacy fleet management service makes the transition as smooth and stress-free as possible. From the moment Grosvenor onboards a new client, a dedicated team takes charge of managing all of the customer's vehicles, suppliers and drivers – irrespective of who owns or leases the vehicle.

"Our legacy fleet management service is a game-changer for companies looking to move suppliers efficiently and with minimal hassle," says Lee Brown, managing director at Grosvenor (pictured below).

"Our team manages the remainder of each vehicle's life until a new vehicle is ordered under a contract hire agreement with us. We also retain certain ancillary suppliers, such as licence check providers, or repairing garages that sit outside of our



approved network, if the relationship is working well for the customer. This provides an even greater continuity of service and minimises disruption."

Managing the entire fleet supply chain

During the onboarding process, Grosvenor engages in extensive discussions about the client's existing suppliers across various areas. We make contact with all incumbent providers, creating valuable communication channels to allow us to manage the entire fleet supply chain. It means customers avoid the disruption of handling different providers for different vehicles and drivers enjoy the same consistent and familiar support, regardless of who provides their vehicle.

"The legacy management is provided at a very detailed level," continues Lee, "and we personally handle all aspects of in-life management, such as direct involvement in maintenance, downtime management, contracts and actual vs budgeted mileages, as well as end-of-life management. We can also add all vehicles into our Advanced Remote Connectivity

(ARC) solution, which has immediate benefits in proactive maintenance and downtime management.

Advanced Remote Connectivity (ARC)

"ARC is a bespoke telematics solution and, for most vehicles, it can be activated remotely, eliminating the need for device installation.

"Connecting our fleet management system to each vehicle's on board diagnostics (OBD) system gives us a real-time feed of true odometer readings, service and maintenance countdowns, fuel or EV battery levels and vehicle dashboard warning lights. As a result, we can be truly proactive, not only with our own funded vehicles but when working with the outgoing providers too.

"In fact, one of the key benefits of our legacy fleet management service is the integration of all fleet data into our award-winning OSCAR 365 fleet management system. This provides a single point of reference for all fleet information, across all funders and suppliers, making it easy to manage and make informed decisions."

For more information click [here](#)
Telephone: 01536 536 536
Email: info@grosvenor-leasing.co.uk



"SUCCESSFUL SCHEMES
THAT HAVE A BROAD MIX OF
EMPLOYEES CAN EXPECT TO HIT
10% IN THE FIRST COUPLE OF
YEARS, IF THEY ARE MARKETED
WELL AND CONTINUALLY, AND
ARE GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY"

CAROLINE SANDALL-MANSERGH,
ALPHABET

◉ NOTHING SUCCEEDS LIKE SUCCESS

Communication is the bedrock of running a flourishing sal/sac scheme. It is essential that drivers are aware it exists and are continually kept aware.

Use every tool available: intranet, newsletters, webinars, on-site events, roadshows – plaster it everywhere up to the launch.

Ensure that material is easily and widely available to help employees understand what the scheme is about, how it benefits them and how to access it.

And after the launch, keep reminding them of the benefits, including special offers, alerts to the impending arrival of new stock – an annual engagement plan is crucial.

"Often the best form of promotion is testimonials from early adopters of the scheme," says Richard Jessop, director of sales – salary sacrifice and corporate partners at Ogilvie Fleet.

"With new manufacturers coming to market and smaller, cheaper EV models becoming available, the proposition is getting stronger and stronger, and that allows organisations to open it up to a wider population," says Sandall-Mansergh.

"Employers can launch a scheme and then build excitement for arrivals over the next year or two."

It is all about communication and keeping the message in the limelight. It has to be compelling – exciting, interesting and good value, to ensure employees remain interested.

Regarding a realistic uptake, up to 5% is reasonable for a driver population that was not previously eligible for a car, but those who already have a cash allowance could use that to pay for the vehicle, and they might amount to between 20% and 30% of the qualifying workforce.

And where there is a lot of higher rate taxpayers, their savings through sal/sac are also higher, so there will probably be better take-up.

"Successful schemes that have a broad mix of

employees can expect to hit 10% in the first couple of years, if they are marketed well and continually, and are good value for money," says Sandall-Mansergh.

PITFALLS TO AVOID

To avoid regular hazards, profile your drivers thoroughly, particularly if sal/sac is a new offering or if there is a major change in existing eligibility.

Ensure you understand driver requirements, otherwise you risk missing an opportunity to make a scheme attractive to the broadest population.

Consider the range of salaries of those who are offered the option, how easy is it for them to charge EVs, and look at locations – those in accessible inner-city areas versus those spread across rural settings.

Employers should also think about their savings target, while not forgetting that sharing some of the NIC savings with drivers is an important part of making the arrangement affordable for them.

And do not take too conservative an approach to risk – ensure there is something appealing to all contenders.

In Arval's experience there are two main drawbacks. First is a lack of employer engagement in the sal/sac scheme, which is difficult for the partner organisation to overcome.

All stakeholders involved, especially the human resources department, need to recognise the benefits of the initiative and show enthusiasm over an extended period.

"The second is that the composition of the employee base might not be suitable for salary sacrifice such as a significant proportion of staff being paid close to minimum wage, excessive attrition levels, a large part-time population, or a high percentage of very young staff," says Marlow.

Payroll should also be briefed and any integration with existing benefits platforms should be planned early.

And make sure a salary sacrifice plan is marketed as an employee car scheme, not a company car replacement; these employees are used to a retail experience and will not see it as an extension of a company car arrangement.

In brief, salary sacrifice remains a viable and popular staff benefit. EVs are featuring an ever-larger range of models and the ability to offer used EVs in a sal/sac scheme brings the cost down, which not only allows some drivers to take an EV affordably, but also allows a company to reduce its carbon footprint.

However, it is not straightforward to set up a salary sacrifice plan; the clue is in the word plan – attention to detail is all.



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A SPECIAL REPORT BROUGHT TO YOU BY **FleetNews**



THE AA – A 120-YEAR HERITAGE OF INNOVATION

How The AA is innovating to assist fleet customers in decarbonising and achieving zero emissions, ensuring a high standard of driver behaviour and maximising their overall value and performance

In association with



Key milestones of The AA



1905

Founding of The AA

Formed on 29 June 1905 by a group of motorists to help drivers avoid police speed traps. Originally called the Motorists' Mutual Association, it quickly became The Automobile Association

1906

The AA salute and speed trap warnings

AA patrols used a salute system to discreetly warn members of police speed traps. This practice became iconic and symbolised The AA's early advocacy for motorists

1912

Introduction of The AA hotel star ratings

The AA began inspecting and classifying hotels, introducing the now-famous star rating system, which remains a trusted standard in UK hospitality

1920s

Deployment of The AA sentry boxes

More than 600 sentry boxes were installed across the UK, offering members shelter, supplies and a direct line to The AA's headquarters. These became a symbol of roadside assistance

1920

First roadside petrol pumps

The AA pioneered the installation of roadside petrol pumps, making refuelling more accessible for early motorists

1951

Royal endorsement and presidency

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh became president of the AA, marking the beginning of a long-standing relationship with the Royal family. The AA-owned BSM driving school even taught Queen Elizabeth II to drive





1961

Introduction of four-wheeled patrol vans

The iconic yellow AA minivans replaced motorcycles, enhancing the efficiency and comfort of roadside patrols

1973

Launch of The AA Relay service

A major innovation in breakdown recovery, the Relay service allowed vehicles to be transported anywhere in the UK, not just repaired on the spot

1986

Command and control centre goes paperless

Breakdown calls taken at The AA operation centre begin digital transition as computers help improve the speed of patrol attendance. System is a precursor to the 'AAHELP' systems used today

1999

Online route planner launch

The AA brought its route planning services online, revolutionising how drivers navigated the UK. It served more than a million routes within six months

2020

Support during the Covid-19 pandemic

The AA's patrols supported ambulance services across the UK, ensuring emergency vehicles stayed operational during a national crisis

2024

Launch of electric vehicle fleet

The AA's breakdown services and driving schools begin using electric vehicles across the fleet to help rescue drivers at the roadside, while preparing new drivers for the changing automotive landscape



Innovating to be Always Ahead with support for modern fleets

Modern fleets are experiencing a period of unprecedented change. In an already unpredictable business environment, fleet managers are facing a sector-wide shift away from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles amid calls for greater sustainability, along with a need for proactive and more insightful vehicle and driver management.

In the face of such challenges, The AA combines 120 years of experience in fleet management and technological development with its 'Always Ahead' approach to deliver a range of innovative solutions.

Fleet News spoke to Paul Kirby, managing director of EV Essentials, commercial vehicle expert and founder of the EV Café, about how The AA has established itself as a trusted presence in fleet for more than a century, and how this heritage informs its current strategy of leading through innovation.

A WEALTH OF EXPERTISE

As of 2025, The AA has been campaigning for drivers for 120 years. The organisation runs more than 2,600 patrols on UK roads and offers end-to-end services for businesses on a 24/7 basis, all year-round. This level of experience and engagement puts The AA in a prime position to understand the current priorities of fleets across the UK.

Kirby says: "The AA is able to serve fleets really well because it is a fleet in its own right. There is such variety and diversity across The AA's fleet that it is able to fully understand what's going on in the fleet world."

The AA's approach is summed up in two words: 'Always Ahead'.

Rather than simply providing services for existing issues, the organisation leverages insights from fleets across the UK to identify where the sector is headed and then develop innovations that prioritise customers and their upcoming needs.

TRANSITION TO ZERO-EMISSIONS

Fleets are experiencing a paradigm shift towards decarbonisation as customers and regulations – such as the government's Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Mandate – are increasingly calling for an industry-wide transition to zero-emission vehicles.

Kirby comments: "Over the next 10 years, we are going to change everything we've been doing for well in excess of 100 years. We have been used to relying on ICE for many a year. But now we are changing, and the scale of change is something we've never seen before in the transport sector."

The AA supports fleets as they decarbonise and transition away from ICE vehicles, offering insights and practical solutions to reduce emissions.

"Transport doesn't necessarily need to be electric," Kirby notes.

"It most likely will be electric, but we are going to be moving to a different way of doing things."

The AA has adopted an innovative approach of 'test, learn and scale' with electric vehicles (EVs) and alternative fuel sources, such as hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO).

Kirby says: "It has HVO and EV in its fleet, has tested hydrogen; and it's starting to utilise AI to support fleets and their breakdowns. The reality is that The AA is leading and others can look at where it gets the wins."

The testing processes also benefits The AA's fleet customers in a more academic sense.

Any insights are captured and compiled, before being made available as specialised yellow papers.

This strategy enables greater confidence from The AA's fleet customers as they can act on real-world data that demonstrates the impact of any recommended solutions.



FLEET MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

Vehicle management and maintenance are familiar concerns for any modern fleet and are passed on to fleet service providers. The ideal for any fleet manager would be a service that can identify problems before they could happen.

Kirby comments: "Many people talked about being able to do this. But nobody actually delivered on it."

The AA has developed a new solution that incorporates cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to deliver predictive and proactive vehicle insights.

The solution provides fleet managers with a unified platform for managing fuel and vehicle health, with alerts for potential issues that enable significant reduction in vehicle downtime, and behavioural insights that allow for greater management of driver performance.

Kirby says: "It's able to understand what's going on in a vehicle based on different sensors, incorporate different elements that have gone wrong in the past, and bring all of that together to the point where you can predict where something's going to happen with that vehicle. You can begin to identify trends and things that happen, and then you can intervene with confidence."

By developing innovations that incorporate AI and automation, The AA empowers its fleet customers to make strategic decisions – based on accurate and real-time data – that maximise driver performance and vehicle management.

"It's very forward-thinking," Kirby says.

"To be able to deliver a solution that keeps vehicles on the road even more than they do today. Not being reactive but instead, proactive."

UNLOCKING DEVELOPMENT FOR FLEET DRIVERS WITH DRIVETECH AND HALO

Drivers, already crucial to any fleet's operations as vehicle operators, are also relied upon to be public-facing representatives for their fleets. This requires a high standard of work and behaviour, which must be maintained – both on the road and in an ever-shifting business environment with frequently evolving regulations and equipment.

Drivotech, a driver training solution from The AA, provides drivers and fleet managers with a suite of products and services designed to reduce risk and ensure safer driving.

Kirby comments: "I think Drivotech is able to support drivers in improving, adopting new technology and new practices to really think about how they're driving."

The AA is further innovating its Drivotech service with new resources for eco-driver training and sustainability practices, and the HALO platform – a centralised source of data, products and services.

Kirby explains: "HALO is really about getting under the skin of the driver behaviour, providing insights to fleet managers and drivers, so they can confidently introduce changes that make everybody safer."

DELIVERING CONFIDENCE THROUGH FORWARD-FACING INNOVATION

With its focus on innovation, guided by a 120-year heritage of supporting drivers and their vehicles, The AA is always working to develop the latest solutions and strategies for the fleet sector.

"The AA has proven that it is looking at every option," Kirby notes.

"It has HVO in its fleet, hydrogen, and EV; it's starting to utilise AI to support fleets and their breakdowns. The reality is that The AA is leading and others can look at where it gets the wins."

With its willingness to innovate and trial new practices or technologies, The AA does a great deal to raise the confidence of developing fleets – particularly in areas of modernisation or decarbonisation – while also establishing a robust fleet strategy that can serve as a template for the wider market.



"We have been used to relying on the internal combustion engine for many a year. But now we are changing, and the scale of change is something we've never seen before in the transport sector"

Paul Kirby, MD of EV Essentials

www.theaa.com/business
www.drivotech.co.uk

Get the most out of vehicle rental

The products offered by rental companies have evolved dramatically in recent years. **Ben Rooth** looks at how fleets can maximise their use

The need for fleet decision-makers to ensure operational efficiency and cost control is ever-present.

Regardless of the number of vehicles in use, fleets' budgets are being stretched and scrutinised to maximise efficiency and profitability.

Consequently, decision-makers must opt for the right type of rental for their organisations' specific needs every time.

But with these products evolving rapidly in recent years, how can fleets get the most out of rental?

To maximise value and minimise cost when renting vehicles, experts advise that fleets should start at the end, not the beginning, by implementing a clear plan to ensure end-of-rental costs, such as damage, are kept to a minimum.

"A consultative approach, based on a knowledge of the business and how the vehicles are used, will help suppliers build solutions with customers as to how end-of-rental charges are agreed," says Andy Bland, head of business rental development, UK and Ireland, at Enterprise Mobility.

"It's something we build over time and that our strategic account managers work with their customers to develop.

"The solution could involve a fixed fee that covers damage within a certain threshold and saves significantly on administration costs on all sides involved in handling the damage."

Enterprise Mobility has created a handheld damage evaluator to assist with this process.

"To give the renter peace of mind, we only charge for damage that exceeds a certain size and this simple tool empowers the branches to make decisions meaning only major repairs are escalated, while the little stuff is just part of wear and tear," adds Bland.

"By setting the parameters upfront, there are no surprises and account management time is spent on driving broader improvements rather than chasing up or discussing charges."

Paul McNeice, commercial director at Europcar Mobility Group UK & Ireland, says driver education must be at the heart of the end-of-rental process.

"Drivers need to take responsibility for the condition of the vehicle they are using – just as they would if it was their own car or van," he adds.

"Drivers ought to bear in mind clean air and ultra-low emission zones, toll roads and speed limits, all of which can add to end-of-rental charges.

"However, we all know that accidents can happen which is why we have invested in the technology to provide clarity around any additional costs that might be incurred.

"Handheld tech used by our delivery and collection agents captures all the necessary vehicle information in one place as well as enabling customers to provide their electronic signature to accept the information collected.

"At the end of the rental, the images are recalled and matched to the vehicle condition.

"We know this provides fleet managers with the insight they need to manage end-of-rental charges."

All Europcar vehicles are now connected and SMS messages for CAZ, ULEZ, Dartford Crossing and Tyne and Mersey tunnels are sent automatically to drivers to remind them to pay tolls and charges, says McNeice.

Neil McCrossan, managing director at Northgate, stressed the importance of companies making clear to drivers precisely what is expected of them.

"Our vehicle inspection app can be used not only for daily checks, but as a tool to monitor vehicles throughout the hire period," he explains.

"We also offer a 'Safe Driver' programme, which provides expert online courses to both drivers and fleet managers on how they can reduce risks while out on the road.

"Because Northgate maintains customer vehicles through its in-house workshop network, their condition is monitored throughout the rental period.

"This will also help us work with customers to ensure their vehicles are in good condition, mileage is monitored versus the contract to ensure that they don't incur a large end-of-contract bill."

CHOOSE THE RIGHT TYPE OF RENTAL

Rental can play an important role in an organisation's mobility strategy, when correctly implemented.

All types of rental – from hourly and daily to long-term – can be pivotal. But there are also potential repercussions to making incorrect choices.

Phill Bye, sales director for Switch, says it is important to understand what's available to make an informed decision about the best fit for your fleet.

"The different rental durations are hourly, daily and long-term," he says. "However, there can be some nuances. For example, daily rates are typically set out as one-to-two, three-to-six, ☞

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On the road, on record: supporting safer, smarter fleets

For field service teams, the road can be unpredictable. From first job to last call, every trip brings exposure to risks: collisions, disputed timings or unsafe behaviour. Managing these risks is more than just good practice – it's an employer's duty of care.

Even minor incidents can escalate into major costs, legal battles, higher premiums and undue stress. But with telematics and dashcams in place, your teams can work with confidence, supported by clear proof when it's needed.

Accountability on every journey

One-in-three collisions involves someone driving for work. Nextbase has reported a surge in dangerous, impatient driving captured on dashcams – a trend with serious consequences for fleets.

If road rage, risky overtakes and sudden braking are becoming more common, protecting your teams with solid evidence is essential. Integrated telematics and dashcam solutions deliver second-by-second crash data, location and speed tracking, plus high-quality video footage to resolve disputes quickly and fairly.

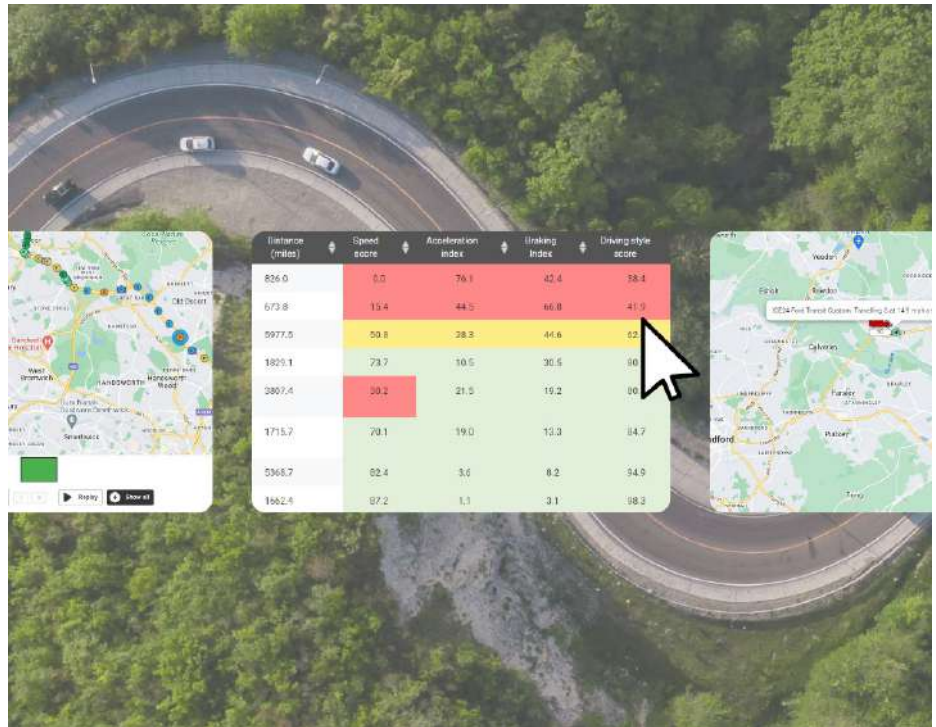
Telematics also gives a clear view of your fleet's risk profile and the chance to take preventative action. Driver behaviour reports highlight unsafe habits, such as harsh braking or high speed. This enables targeted coaching to reduce accident risk, fuel consumption, insurance costs and vehicle wear.

Monitoring driving risk and protecting employees is key to meeting duty of care obligations. But how can you ensure your business is doing enough?

Fulfilling your duty of care

Here are practical steps any organisation can take to manage risk, improve efficiency and support drivers:

- ✓ Share a clear 'Driving for Work' policy so expectations are understood.
- ✓ Install telematics and dashcams for visibility of the road ahead, behind and in-cab.
- ✓ Monitor driver behaviour and provide



"Using the driver behaviour reports, we reduced HGV accidents by 65% and improved mpg by 12%. Results like these are precisely why we use telematics"

Scott Logan, Transport Manager, WJ

coaching to improve safety, fuel-efficiency, and reduce wear.

- ✓ Use high driving hours reports to spot and manage fatigue risk.
- ✓ Limit in-cab distractions by restricting calls and audible alerts.
- ✓ Enforce regular vehicle safety checks to catch defects before they become dangerous or costly.

- ✓ Include fitness-to-drive checks to reduce risk from health issues or medications.
- ✓ Provide incident reporting tools to capture details quickly after any crash.

Benchmark, improve, protect

With the right systems in place, fleet operators can shift from reactive to proactive management.

Telematics data benchmarks safety improvements, measures driver progress, and proves the value of risk management initiatives.

"Using the driver behaviour reports, we reduced HGV accidents by 65% and improved mpg by 12%. Results like these are precisely why we use telematics," said Scott Logan, Transport Manager, WJ.

It's about creating a culture where drivers feel protected and valued – and businesses can take pride in their risk management.

Quartix supports businesses with easy-to-use fleet tracking tools, dashcam solutions, and a vehicle safety checks app – making duty of care simple, effective and cost-efficient.

Discover the difference that Quartix tools and data can make for your fleet. Visit quartix.com/en-gb/ or speak to one of our experts on 01686 806 663.

Quartix

seven-to-27, and 28 days-plus where the price reduces dependent on the duration of the hire.

"Long-term – or flexi – has a minimum commitment of 28 days and the booking requirements can be more specific such as providing make, model, P11D and CO₂ emissions.

"Hourly rental is best suited to those who will only require the vehicle for the period they have booked and flexibility is not required as cost can be excessive to extend beyond the initial period.

"Daily rental provides greater flexibility and is perfectly suited for 'stress purchases' such as in the event of an accident or a servicing requirement when a replacement is needed."

Bye adds that long-term – or flexi – is perfect for new employees throughout their probationary period so fleets are not contracted to vehicles on a three-year lease.

This approach is clearly beneficial should the new starter not pass their probation.

"This type of rental is also great for surge requirements such as new contracts that are going live quickly, short-term contracts and as a top-up to existing fleet giving the ability to increase and decrease fleet with ease," he says.

Bland agrees there will be a different answer for each business.

"It comes down to having detailed knowledge of who needs which vehicles, where, when and for what," he says.

"A mobility consultant will always be asking questions or wanting more detailed information.

"This curiosity about your business objectives means mobility solutions can be designed with broader company goals in mind, ensuring it

**"MANY BUSINESSES ONLY
LOOK AT USER DATA BY
DEPARTMENT, DIVISION OR SITE,
BUT IT'S ONLY WHEN
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START TO COME TO LIGHT"**

**ANDY BLAND,
ENTERPRISE MOBILITY**

evolves with the business needs over time.

"Mobility consultants should also bring data to the customer to show if moving from hourly to daily to long-term – or vice versa – might bring a better result for the business and for the employee."

CONSEQUENCES OF GETTING RENTAL WRONG

There can be cost, employee convenience and carbon emission implications of making ill-informed choices.

"Hourly rental can be considered attractive due to a preconception that it will be more affordable than short-term rental that bills in 24-hour

increments," says Bye. "However, care should be taken as often extending an hourly rental by even a modest period will increase charges beyond the traditional 24-hour rental cost.

"The trend for hourly rental has dipped due to this and because business user demands are typically for longer durations.

"Renters should consider their needs and book accordingly as not doing so may lead to additional charges, including 'out-of-hours' charges."

Bye says a good quality supplier that accepts bookings starting at 8am – the earliest time booked where an out of hours charge doesn't apply – will pre-deliver the vehicle so it is in situ for the employee, giving them peace of mind that their travel plans will not be affected.

Where the period of hire needed is 28 days or longer, many rental companies will offer products that reward longer durations with more attractive pricing where drivers can commit to this period from the outset.

Bland adds: "Many businesses only look at user data by department, division or site, but it's only when aggregating data across the business that opportunities start to come to light.

"Improvement can take many forms. For example, organisations starting to migrate users to EVs can introduce a small number of rentals as part of that process, for the right journeys and the right employees."

GREY FLEET MANAGEMENT

Rental is widely feted as an ideal way to remove the need for employees to use their own vehicles on work journeys. But this requires an approach that





is as convenient for drivers as is using their own vehicle or a clear travel plan that prioritises rental.

McNeice says Europcar has discovered that four-in-five businesses (81%) still rely on 'grey fleet'. "This presents a range of challenges for businesses, including employee duty of care," he adds.

"The other risk of relying on grey fleet is in the area of sustainability. By relying on typically older grey fleet vehicles, companies are undermining sustainability goals.

"Unfortunately, employers are already facing rising mobility costs so many cannot afford to upgrade or expand their entire fleet to remove the need for grey fleet vehicles.

"In recent years we have seen many of our business customers take a very successful transitional approach, steadily reducing emissions through limiting journeys, alongside testing hybrid and electric alternatives through rental."

Bland says proximity to a branch or car club vehicle is essential to encourage employees to use rental instead of their own car.

"This means the mobility partner must be able to quickly mobilise the right vehicles to get them where they're needed," he adds.

"We always want to understand why a business has grey fleet on its travel policy and why employees choose grey fleet over other options.

"Often, it's a default solution or a habit and something that happens because no one has ever questioned it.

"Convenience is a key factor, but this is offset by growing maintenance costs, fluctuating residual values and a mileage recharge rate that has not changed in line with inflation."

RENTAL – AND DECARBONISATION

Rental firms are proactively seeking to support fleets on their wider sustainability journeys.

Quite apart from tailpipe emissions, they are also actively helping businesses move from ownership to usership to reduce environmental impact.

According to the BVRLA's Vehicle Rental Credentials report, Europcar Mobility Group UK's electrified fleet share is now 14%, which exceeds the rental industry average.

McNeice adds: "We ensure there's the greatest flexibility for businesses that want to get on the EV path. Earlier this year, we launched Flex Model Choice which gives businesses the flexibility of rental with the vehicle model certainty of leasing.

"Specific makes and models from Europcar's comprehensive BEV and PHEV fleet can be booked for rental for a minimum of three months and up to 12 months at a fixed monthly rate, eliminating the long-term commitments and early penalties of leasing. It also means employers can accurately allocate vehicles and forecast benefit-in-kind expenses."

The commitment Europcar has made to EVs in the past year has resulted in a significant increase in low and zero emissions rentals, from 228,000

rental days in 2023 to more than 1,241,000 in 2024.

Northgate's McCrossan adds that its recently-launched 'Drive to Zero Consultancy' helps fleets identify where EVs can be deployed effectively and affordably.

"We assess things like routes taken, charging feasibility and costs to recommend the right approach, whether that's for a few vehicles or a full fleet transition," he adds.

"We also offer a Drive to Zero suitability analysis – a diagnostic tool that supports moving vehicles across to EV alternatives."

Northgate now offers nearly 20 different types of electric cars, vans and micro mobility vehicles across its network.

FLEXIBLE RENTAL

Some fleets have switched from contract hire for their commercial vehicle fleets to flexible rental for the ability to take and return vehicles without having to pay early-termination charges.

So, what are the benefits of this approach? "Flexible rental is ideal for businesses that need to adapt quickly to changing workloads, contracts, or customer requirements," says McCrossan.

"Unlike contract hire, where you're tied into a fixed term, flexible hire allows customers to rent vehicles for as little as one month and return them when no longer needed, without penalties. This reduces the risk of overcommitting to long-term contracts and helps businesses to remain agile.

"Fleets can add or remove vehicles as demand changes, get vehicles on the road quickly, and have all the costs included under one monthly fee."

Bland concludes: "Flexible rental offers financial and balance sheet benefits, liberating capital for other priorities where funds may be required. Speed is another advantage as our flexible solutions are rooted in our daily rental model. It brings all the benefits of short-term hire with the financial value of long-term hire."

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**NEIL MCCROSSAN,
NORTHGATE**