

Struggling with Shortage of Drivers



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We have been in the business of road transportation service since 1983 and as you are aware we have since diversified in a major way into cold chain and logistics services and catering to the requirements of major Pharma companies in the western region of our country. With today's fast paced activities in the areas of manufacturing,

logistics and supply chain, it is crucial to meet the stringent demands of these customers to ensure prompt, safe and just in time delivery of the products to its end destinations. The fact remains that just as logistics and supply chain plays a very crucial role in meeting these demands the role of the driver is also equally crucial and important because it is on him that the actual physical delivery of the product ultimately depends because even if all other arrangements and schedules are in place to ensure timely delivery, unless the driver succeeds in reaching the cargo to its destination, even the best of planning and scheduling can go haywire. The driver is therefore the key link between such planning and its ultimate and effective implementation.

Having said this one must realize that any company in the business of road transportation must among other things ensure to have the best of drivers if they are to succeed in delivering the goods to the expectation of the customers. Unfortunately the overall scenario today in the road transport sector

is that there is a acute shortage of drivers. Those who are available and willing to undertake the job are few in comparison to the increasing number of vehicles that ply on Indian roads day by day. One reason why there is such a shortfall is because the drivers are a neglected lot and do not get the respect and the status due to them as key players in the transportation functions involved. In our opinion the following factors are some of the reasons why this is so. Those who take to this profession are the ones who, having failed in making a satisfactory carrier elsewhere with their limited resources and qualifications take up driving as a last resort for their survival. In India as is a known fact it is very easy to obtain a driving license due to lack of proper laid down systems and procedures, minimum qualifications, background checks to verify the integrity, honesty and dedication on the part of the prospective applicant for issuing a very crucial and important permission such as the commercial driving license. Another factor as immensely contributed to lack of



drivers is the unwillingness on the part of the union government to confer the status of industry to the road transport sector. The general perception of the public towards the driver needs to be drastically changed in order to give them a stature and to be perceived as a person who performs a responsible and crucial role which facilitates the availability of products at every required location without any difficulty. To this end a driver must be looked up to rather than being looked down upon. If we can change the way we look at our drivers it could go a long way in improving their lot and encouraging others to take up this profession.

Today there is lack of basic amenities for the drivers enroute. They do not get proper resting places and basic amenities to take care of their day to day needs. He is expected to make his own arrangements for his needs which in our opinion causes a deep sense of frustration within him and which finally affects his overall attitude to his profession. The government on its part sadly lacks the vision and a willingness to come up with a comprehensive package for the driving fraternity to improve their lot. We being a part of the transport sector face this problem and off late we find this problem escalating to a point where it is difficult to manage the movement of our fleet on a day to day basis in the absence of good, reliable and qualified drivers. All these years we have somehow managed the show but now with diversification into specialized segment of transportation we have begun to feel the pinch even more severely. The present lot are found wanting

in terms of dedication, awareness, willingness and integrity to their job. Which effects our overall performance towards our valuable customers.

In view of the forgoing factors it is imperative to seriously look into this problem on a war footing and take urgent and effective remedial measures to encounter this alarming issue; failing which the road transport sector will have to face a day when there would be hardly any drivers to run its huge fleet of vehicles. Such a scenario could lead to many operators desiring to move out of this business and seek other options. This would be a very serious development since such an action could lead to a substantial fall in the demand for commercial vehicles which in turn would seriously affect the sale of commercial vehicles for the manufactures, besides creating a serious problem of distribution of products nationwide. As manufacturers of commercial vehicles and we as the end users of your products are sailing in the same boat and therefore just as the road transport sector must play a role in resolving this crisis, manufacturers also have an equal important role to play in preventing this crisis from aggravating and finding a lasting solution. Being an organized Industry you are looked upon as one who can initiate the process for resolving this problem with the help of the road transport sector, the government and other transport bodies and associations.

We believe you are better placed to voice your concern in this regard with the requisite authorities and lead the way to finding the means for finding a solution to this vexed problem. Your voice would be better heard. With this we hope and pray that you will take up this problem in an appropriate manner and at the appropriate platform. You are assured of the unstinted support and backing of the entire road transport fraternity and everyone who is in some way or the other involved in the transportation activity.

Together let's make a beginning.