

WHEN IT COMES TO DRIVER SATISFACTION AND TURNOVER INTENT

IS THERE A GENDER DIFFERENCE?

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When It Comes to Driver Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intent, Is There a Gender Difference?

What We Know

The American Transportation Research Institute recently reported that the driver shortage is the top concern of leaders in the trucking industry, as ranked by the 2018 Top Industry Issues report (ATRI, 2018). Carriers are struggling to fill their fleets to meet the freight demand. Naturally, this environment is causing them to seek out all available sources for potential drivers. Female drivers are arguably the largest virtually untapped demographic.

Despite women holding 57% of all jobs in the United States (US Department of Labor, 2017), the Women in Trucking Association and National Transportation Institute report that only 7.89% of truck drivers are women (Women in Trucking, 2018). This significant imbalance means that trucking is considered a nontraditional occupation for women, where less than 25% of workers are women (US Department of Labor, 2014). Bridging this gap will be crucial in the coming decades to maintain an adequate driver population, as the ATA anticipates a 175,000 driver shortage by 2026 (ATA, 2017).

Of course, getting the drivers hired is only part of the solution. As we know well at Stay Metrics, retention is the best long-term strategy not only to keep a carrier's trucks moving but also to stimulate continued fleet growth. According to the ATA, annualized large truckload carrier turnover reached 98% in the second quarter of 2018 (ATA, 2018). Clearly, carriers are looking for answers, and we wanted to determine if gender plays a role in the retention story.

Our Questions

Because they are underrepresented in the trucking workforce, many trucking company leaders, managers, and recruiters may be unfamiliar with women drivers and what they think. Seeking to understand the differences between male and female drivers, our Stay Metrics research team asked these questions:

- 1. Are there differences between male and female drivers in terms of satisfaction, motivation, and turnover/employment?
- 2. What are the implications of those differences?
- 3. How does this information affect fleets' recruiting and retention strategies?

In order to answer the questions proposed, we analyzed our extensive database of responses from the Stay Metrics Driver Satisfaction Survey. This standardized annual survey is used by our clients to assess drivers' opinions on a wide range of areas our research has determined relate to driver retention.



Methodology

Since 2012 Stay Metrics' research has focused on examining driver retention. One aspect of this research includes examining turnover-related variables identified through our suite of driver surveys. For the purpose of this paper, our research focuses on the Annual Driver Survey.

This 110 question survey is administered to drivers once each year. Figure 1 describes the domains of questions covered by the survey; which measure 3 constructs: Driver Satisfaction, Driver Motivations, and Driver Turnover/Terms of Employment.

The Driver Satisfaction construct incorporates seven domains (Pay/Benefits, Safety/Conditions, Recruiter/Career, Supervisor/Dispatcher, Fellow Drivers, Work Itself, and Company). Similarly, the Driver Motivation construct consists of seven domains (Motivation, Engagement, Commitment, Embeddedness, Stresses, Work-Family Conflict, and Trust).

FIGURE 1: Domains Measured by Annual Survey Divided into Categories



Most importantly for the purpose of this paper, the survey includes questions about Driver Turnover/Terms of Employment (Pre-Turnover Thoughts and Terms of Employment). We will focus heavily upon "Pre-Turnover Thoughts," as this domain relates most directly with retention.

For example, one question in this domain asks drivers if they expect to be driving for the same carrier next year. If a carrier's drivers have a high average score on this question, their drivers seem more likely to stay. Conversely, a carrier whose drivers answer this question with a low average score appear more inclined to leave.

How drivers' responses are scored

All items in the annual survey are presented in a Likert scale format, where

- 1 = Strongly disagree or very dissatisfied
- 2 = Disagree or dissatisfied
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree or satisfied
- 5 =Strongly agree or very satisfied.

Questions from each domain are averaged to find a driver's score on a 5 point scale for that particular domain. For example, in the domain of "Pay and Benefits" drivers answer questions such as "How



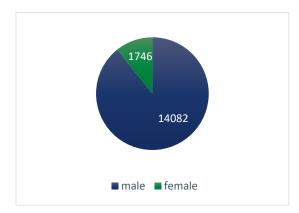
satisfied are you with your compensation?" and "I am fairly paid compared to other drivers with my experience." The average of their responses to all questions in this category is the final domain score.

How We Selected Our Study Sample

The present sample (N = 21,719) consists of Stay Metrics' clients' drivers who responded to the Annual Driver Survey anytime between January 1, 2017, to July 31, 2018. Drivers from 84 carriers are included; these carriers represent a wide range of trucking sectors, including dry van, flatbed, reefer, and tanker with OTR and regional runs.

Of the original set of drivers, approximately 24% were no longer active with the carrier for which they took the survey. Unless otherwise noted, the statistics reported are for active drivers, meaning drivers who were still driving for the carrier for which they took the survey as of July 31, 2018. Below and in Appendix A are descriptive statistics about the sample.

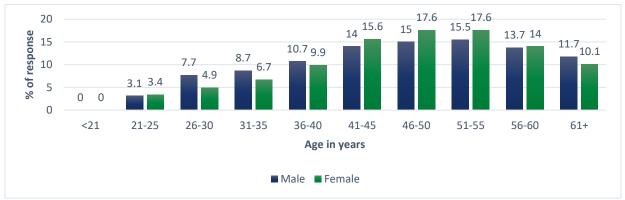
FIGURE 2: **Proportion of Male/Female Drivers in Sample**



The sample we examined consisted of 15,828 drivers, of which 14,082 were male and 1,746 were female.

Therefore, Stay Metrics' clients tend to have a higher percentage of female drivers (11%) than the general trucking industry (7.89%).

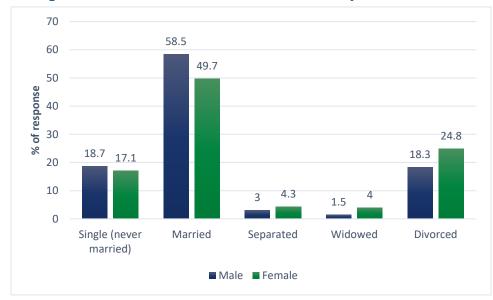
FIGURE 3: Comparison of Driver Age by Gender





In our sample, female drivers tended to be older than male drivers. Even though both male and female drivers were most often between 46 and 55, female drivers were significantly less represented in the 26-40 age range than male drivers. This observation suggests that more women may be entering trucking as a second career or after raising children.

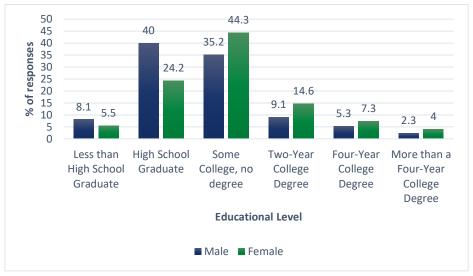
FIGURE 4: Comparison of Marital Status of Drivers by Gender



Female drivers in this study were less often married and more likely to be separated, widowed, or divorced than male drivers. Male drivers were significantly more likely to be married and had a slight edge among single, never married drivers. These patterns further suggest that women may be more likely to enter trucking due to a change in life circumstance.

FIGURE 5: Comparison of Education Levels of Drivers by Gender

Education levels were significantly different between our male and female respondents. Women were more likely to have at least some college experience, especially "Some College, No Degree." This difference supports our conjecture that more women than men come to trucking as a second career.



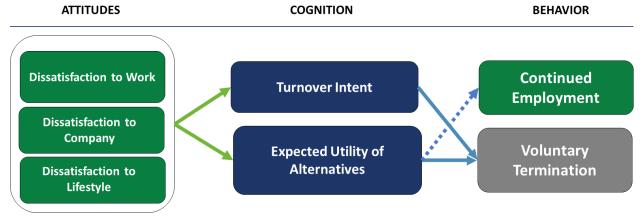


Pre-Turnover Thoughts Lead to Turnover

For this investigation, our research team was most interested in the domain of "Pre-Turnover Thoughts." This domain tends to have a strong correlation with turnover.

Many factors influence job satisfaction, including attitudes about the work itself, the company, and the lifestyle. Hom and Griffeth (1991) found that once turnover intent (another way to think of pre-turnover thoughts) is formed, it prompts job searching and comparing each alternative, which leads to turnover. Figure 6 presents these relationships in graphic form.

FIGURE 6: Dissatisfaction-Turnover Intent- Turnover Behavior Procedural Model



(Source: Adapted from Hom & Kinicki, 2001)

According to Stay Metrics' research, work conditions (e.g., pay, quality of equipment and facilities), company and management (e.g., communication and respect shown to drivers), and lifestyle (e.g., nights at home) are three major sources of driver dissatisfaction in the trucking industry. Once dissatisfaction occurs, drivers consider quitting. If the thoughts of quitting are strong enough or the alternatives are good enough, they quit.

Because of this correlation, we focused on how differently male and female drivers answered questions related to pre-turnover thoughts.



Results

Overall results from the Annual Driver Survey show that female drivers were more satisfied than their male counterparts in 14 of the 16 domains measured. The full list of each domain's scores for female and male drivers appear in Figure 7. The table sorts these domains so that the highest positive difference in scores for women is at top. The two areas were male drivers outscored women, Embeddedness and Fellow Drivers, appear at the bottom.

FIGURE 7: Comparison of Female-Male Responses by Domain, Sorted by Difference

	Female	Male	Female-Male (+/-)
Pre-Turnover Thoughts**	3.81	3.62	0.19
Work-Family Conflict**	3.35	3.18	0.17
Stresses**	3.35	3.22	0.13
Pay and Benefits**	3.52	3.42	0.10
Work Itself**	3.77	3.69	0.08
Engagement**	3.91	3.83	0.08
Commitment**	3.62	3.54	0.08
Safety & Conditions**	4.00	3.95	0.05
Motivation**	3.85	3.80	0.05
Trust*	3.93	3.88	0.05
Terms of Employment*	3.87	3.83	0.04
Supervisor/ Dispatcher	4.07	4.04	0.03
Recruiter/ Carrier	4.02	3.99	0.03
Company	3.99	3.97	0.02
Fellow Drivers**	3.67	3.74	-0.07
Embeddedness**	3.00	3.14	-0.14

Note. N = 15,828 (Male = 14,082; Female = 1,746), *p < .05; **p < .01.

To more fully understand what specific responses are to these average domain scores, we compiled Figure 8, which lists the top 10 questions on the Annual Driver Survey for which female drivers averaged higher scores than male drivers.



FIGURE 8: Top 10 Questions Where Female Drivers Scored Higher Male Drivers

	Domain	Female	Male	Difference
My job does not strain my personal/family life.	Work-Family Conflict	3.60	3.09	0.51
I'm seldom bored by what I do.	Work Itself	3.82	3.55	0.27
I am fairly paid compared to other drivers with my experience.	Pay and Benefits	3.44	3.21	0.23
I have enough time at home.	Work-Family Conflict	2.81	2.59	0.22
I have never considered leaving this carrier.	Pre-Turnover Thoughts	3.28	3.07	0.21
This job gives me a feeling of accomplishment.	Work Itself	4.01	3.85	0.16
This carrier is a great carrier to drive for.	Work Itself	4.20	4.08	0.12
This time next year I will be driving for the same carrier that I drive for today.	Pre-Turnover Thoughts	4.10	3.98	0.12
Overall, how satisfied are you with the compensation you receive from your carrier?	Pay and Benefits	3.72	3.62	0.10
How satisfied are you with the type of runs you make?	Terms of Employment	4.04	3.96	0.08

Female drivers reported that trucking interferes with their personal/family life to a lesser degree than male drivers. This response appears related to the driver demographic data shown in Figures 3-5. Women are more likely to be older and less likely to be married, suggesting that fewer of them have a spouse or children at home than male drivers.

In addition, Women reported lower levels of boredom than men. They were more likely to feel fairly compensated and more satisfied with home time. These factors suggest that women tend to be more satisfied drivers.

For this study, the most interesting pattern found is that women are less likely to have considered leaving their present carrier and more likely to see themselves as driving for the same carrier next year. These scores suggest that women are less likely to be actively considering quiting than male drivers. As we demonstrated in Figure 6, this consideration is often a precursor to turnover.



Conclusions

Female drivers are, on the whole, more satisfied than male drivers

As seen in Figure 7 above, women score higher in all areas of satisfaction, motivation, and turnover/employment than men except "Fellow Drivers" and "Embeddedness." This result suggests that women are happier with their carriers and report higher motivation on the job than male drivers. Since all of the domains have influence over turnover, our results suggest women may be easier for carriers to retain than men.

In the key area of "Pre-Turnover Thoughts," women score higher than men by a wide margin

Because we know pre-turnover thoughts are often a precursor to turnover, the fact that female drivers report having fewer suggests of them suggests women have a lower intent to turnover. Women seem less inclined to be thinking about what other carriers are offering than men and are more likely to picture themselves as working for the same carrier next year.

Final Thoughts

Given the conclusions above, we find that female drivers are more satisfied than male drivers in most areas of professional driving. Even more strikingly, they express fewer pre-turnover thoughts. Both of these findings suggest that women may be easier to retain by trucking companies than male competitors.

Carriers should carefully consider the role of female drivers in their fleets. Bringing on female drivers may pay off doubly. They are a new source of drivers to meet a carrier's demand; and due to their tendency to be more satisfied, they may speak more highly of their carrier than male drivers. We speculate that the praise of female drivers could prompt more women to join a carrier's fleet. Adding more women to the driver workforce may help alleviate the dissatisfactions women report in the "Fellow Drivers" domain.

For those carriers that already have female drivers on their teams, we recommend implementing a driver feedback system to ensure that any concerns they have are addressed. Because women tend to score lower in the Fellow Drivers and Embeddedness domains, areas a carrier may not be able to monitor directly, having your drivers surveyed is the best way to identify if women in your company are experiencing problems that might neutralize their higher levels of satisfaction.

Stay Metrics offers solutions like this one as well as a whole suite of tools to increase your retention. If you would like information on how to partner with us to design your retention solution, feel free to contact us any time.



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$\begin{array}{c} \textbf{Appendix} \ \textbf{A} - \textbf{Additional Comparisons between Male and} \\ \textbf{Female Drivers} \end{array}$

FIGURE 9: Comparison of Driver Type by Gender



FIGURE 10: Comparison of Run Type by Gender

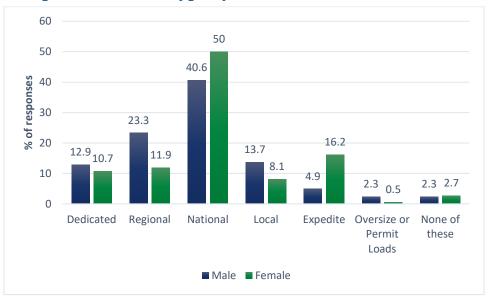
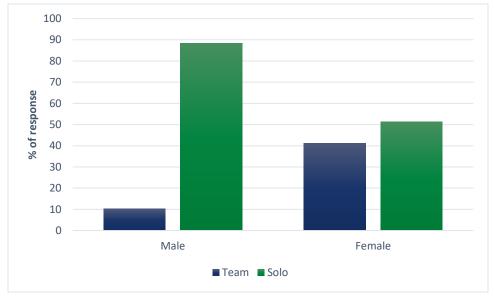




FIGURE 11: **Proportion of Team vs. Solo Drivers by Gender**





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As the driver shortage worsens, it is more important than ever to keep the drivers you have on your team. What if you could find out why your drivers are leaving and then take steps to address their concerns?

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