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## Session 8-D: Professional Driver Issues

*Session chair: L. Lee Lane, Association of American Railroads*

### **The Determinants of Job Satisfaction of Professional Drivers, by Julene M. Rodriguez and Gene C. Griffin.**

**Julene M. Rodriguez is a Transportation Economist, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota.**

**Gene C. Griffin is Director, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota.**

The motor carrier industry faces costly problems with driver turnover and a general driver shortage. This paper looks at drivers' opinions about specific areas of their work and how important these areas are to their job satisfaction. Management's perceptions are compared to drivers opinions. Job satisfaction is theoretically linked to driver productivity, turnover, new entrants, and fewer drivers exiting the industry. In addition, reducing turnover has been shown elsewhere to have positive impacts on safety.

Herzberg's two-factor theory of job satisfaction was used in designing and interpreting the questionnaire. Factors motivating drivers are separated from factors aggravating drivers. The two areas are distinct from each other. Problems in the different areas require distinct solutions.

Over a thousand surveys were sent to union and non-union drivers of thirteen

North Dakota firms. Four hundred seventy-one were returned for a forty-eight percent response rate. The questionnaire consisted of sixty-seven multiple-part questions. In addition, one-third of those returned included additional comments on the questionnaire.

Two public policy areas were very important to drivers. The variation between states' laws and road pavement conditions were considered big problems by drivers. Management should get involved in the development and implementation of these policies. These areas have a direct impact on their drivers.

Career advancement, a motivator, is important or very important to three-fourths of drivers. However, drivers felt opportunities for advancement either within their firm or within the industry were poor. In addition, two-thirds thought their company was not concerned about their career advancement. Management's perception in this area missed the mark.

Drivers also felt that their job suffers from an image problem. This problem is severe enough to have affected their job.

Customer service is very important to the driver. It is an aspect of their job that they enjoy but are not recognized for.

Pay is *not* perceived as the solution to the problem of turnover and a general shortage. However, pay must be at a sufficient level to prevent it from aggravating people into leaving. Other, more innovative steps will need to be implemented to successfully meet the increasing demand for truck transportation.

Suggestions are made to help managers incorporate these results into a plan of action. Management, both union and non-union, should consider changes in how they manage their drivers.

**Driver Work Histories,  
Qualifications and Intentions, by  
Richard Beilock and Russell B.  
Capelle, Jr.**

**Richard Beilock is Associate  
Professor, University of Florida,  
Gainesville, Florida.**

**Russell B. Capelle, Jr. is  
Director of Research and  
Statistics at the Regular  
Common Carrier Conference of  
the American Trucking  
Associations.**

The truck driver shortage is a problem that has received recent attention in trade journals and in the research literature.

Gaining a better understanding of the severity and progression of the problem depends upon analysis of the industry exit behavior of the existing driver work force. Such an analysis requires data from the subjects of the investigation, the truck drivers themselves.

The authors use data collected from several recent surveys of truck drivers from all over North America. Particular variables of interest include those measuring education, average earnings in prior occupation, years as a professional driver, driver age, change in income, and owner-operator status. A multivariate analysis of the data yields insights into the magnitude of the problem and potential solutions. It was found that pre-employment training can be a loyalty-development tool reducing driver exit intentions, that drivers least likely to contemplate occupational moves are in their 30s, and owner-operator loyalty to truck driving appears stronger than that for company drivers.