

# Top 10 Tips to Successful GPS Fleet Management Implementation

Implementing new technology in any business can be challenging. Learning new tools and processes can be daunting. But ultimately the benefits and improvements far outweigh the difficulties, especially if your organization is collectively committed and onboard with the change. But what if staff view the change with suspicion? What if it is seen as controlling or micro-managing, or even punitive? Then management must deal with a whole range of additional problems and potentially even active resistance or sabotage from staff.

Fleet Tracking or GPS tracking often has this kind of resistance to implementation. The typical reaction is a fear of “Big Brother” or constant surveillance; a tool that will be used to justify firing or punishing staff for bad driving.

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BLACKHAWK HAS DECADES OF COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE HELPING TO MANAGE THE CHANGES THAT IMPLEMENTING FLEET MANAGEMENT (TRACKING) REQUIRE. HERE ARE OUR *TOP 10 TIPS TO SUCCESSFUL GPS FLEET MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION*.

## 01. CONSULT YOUR DRIVERS

The number one step you can take is to work with your staff. Include them in the process from the beginning. Explain why the business wants to implement GPS tracking, what the reasons and objectives are. Acknowledge and address concerns. When people feel consulted and listened to you have already set a more positive tone and drivers will be more receptive to changes.

## 02. ESTABLISH GOALS

Most businesses are considering GPS tracking for a range of very positive and safety-conscious reasons. Make this clear with everybody. Talk about the reasons and how the technology will help to deliver positive results.

- “We want to improve our service to our customers”.
- “We want to improve safety standards for our team”.
- “We want to be known for our ethics and commitment to safety with other road users”.
- “We want to be more efficient and sustainable”.
- “We want to improve maintenance, reduce wear and tear on vehicles”.
- “We want to be better at measuring our performance and understand how we can make improvements”.
- “We want to be better at managing our costs and understand where we can be more efficient”.

## 03. ESTABLISH BOUNDARIES

Just as it is critical to establish goals, it is also useful to establish rules. In years of supporting a wide range of businesses types in implementing GPS tracking we have never seen a case of “Big Brother”. No one has the time to be looking over a driver’s shoulder and micro-managing them. And yet, this tends to be the biggest fear drivers have. Imagined or real, it is a serious concern about privacy, punishment, and control. Our advice is address the elephant in the room.

- “When you drive our vehicles, you represent this company. We have a duty of care to both you as our employees but also to our assets (the vehicle), our customers, the public and our reputation”.
- “Measuring how our assets are being used is in everyone’s interests”.
- “Data from the system will be used to identify patterns of use.”
- “No one has the time to check-up on every little thing you do every hour of the day”.
- “Where there is a clear pattern of activity that is inconsistent with the standards we want to achieve, we will use that data to help coach staff and improve behaviour”.
- “Where there is a specific incident or accident, we will use the data to determine the cause and again look to make improvements”.

**NOTE:** In our experience drivers knowing about the mere presence of GPS tracking has a noticeable positive impact on behaviour. Drivers tend to be more responsible. Speeding violations reduce. Accident occurrences reduce – everyone wins.

## 04. SAFETY IS EVERYONE’S RESPONSIBILITY

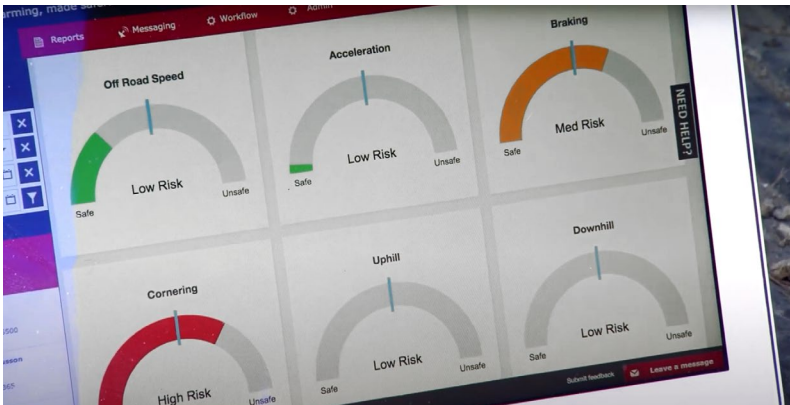
One of the biggest areas addressed by GPS tracking is speeding. However, GPS speed monitoring can be temporarily affected by external influences such as high-voltage powerlines or nearby high-rise buildings. This can result in anomalous GPS speed readings such as a jump from 50kph to 200kph and back again in a matter of seconds. Clearly this scenario indicates an anomalous speed reading as most commercial fleet vehicles are simply incapable of this sort of speed variation. Therefore, everyone (including drivers) should know that individual speeding events should not be used to make judgements about driver behaviour. Instead, the technology should be used to provide insights into patterns of behaviour over time.

Improving safety and driving best practices requires a level of unbiased, data-driven analysis to determine the true picture. We have all seen the safety commercials on TV where someone thinks they are a great driver, but

in reality they are seen by others as having a risk factor to their driving habits. In those commercials the other people are too afraid to tell the bad driver the truth. GPS technology allows drivers and organisations to set a level playing field from which to benchmark and evaluate everyone's driving behaviour fairly and without bias. It is an endeavour that everyone should and needs to be onboard with. The stakes are too important.

Time and again the successful implementation of GPS tracking systems has proven to have an overwhelmingly positive series of outcomes for organisations, including:

- Reducing the frequency and volume of speeding violations – demonstrating a cultural shift away from speeding and bad driving habits (some businesses have seen as much as a 90% reduction in violations!).
- Reducing the number of accidents and insurance claims (this also results in financial savings).
- Reducing the number of speeding fines.
- Reducing the number of injuries inflicted on drivers and the public.
- Reducing fuel consumption and emissions.
- Improving accountability.



**Figure 1: An example Driver Behaviour Report highlights patterns of behaviour over time.**

When everyone within the business recognises that safety is a collective responsibility and that everyone is being measured fairly and equally the positive benefits are undeniable. Focusing on the desire to do better is key to getting the most out of the technology.

## 05. IMPROVEMENT REQUIRES MEASUREMENT

One of the most important steps we recommend with any implementation is establishing a baseline set of data from which to measure improvement. 30 days is a good starting point. From here you can establish monthly reviews and see not only who is improving but in which areas. Are drivers not only speeding less but also braking less often and therefore improving the maintenance life of their vehicles? This kind of insight has proven to be at the heart of any truly successful implementation of GPS fleet management technology. But it requires regular review, and it requires visibility of the data. So, drivers and management should have access to the same data, at the very least, sharing the data at regular intervals. If drivers can see the kind of data they generate and understand how it can be used to help them to improve or address bad habits it removes much of the misaligned fear of “Big Brother”.

Blackhawk is happy to provide anonymous sample reports at the Step 1 consulting point to help drivers understand from the beginning how the data looks and how the reports show improvement over time.

## 06. POSITIVE CULTURE CHANGE

Attitudes are rapidly changing, but there was a time when health and safety culture was seen as a bit of a joke or “woke” political correctness amongst some drivers and managers. Therefore, anonymously surveying everyone about health & safety concerns as part of the initial consultation process can be a useful step. It not only helps to identify key areas of concern it can also highlight general attitudes towards improving safety culture. If a percentage of people think safety isn't as important as getting jobs done on time for example this can be a useful topic to highlight and discuss. Establishing a picture of your organisation's safety culture can be an important tool in the change management process. Being able to talk about problems and attitudes openly can be a critical success factor towards positive cultural change.

When organisations follow a process similar to what we have outlined so far the nett result can be profound. The change in general culture and attitudes towards safer driving is often very positive and typically across the board. But again, this works best in organisations that are committed to making this change and desire these outcomes. It is not merely a case of putting GPS tracking devices in vehicles and waiting for change to happen on its own.

One of the most satisfying and positive results we have seen at Blackhawk is the change that some drivers experience during the course of a GPS tracking implementation. We have seen drivers who are resistant and dismissive that there is even a problem at the beginning and argue against the need for tracking. And then later in the process the same drivers become staunch advocates for the system, having not only seen the areas for improvement in their driving habits but the positive shift in culture across the wider organisation.

## 07. REWARDS AND GAMIFICATION

One of our favourite best practices is to use a bit of healthy competition to focus drivers and encourage ongoing safety improvements. Keeping this positive and rewards-based works best. Top driver for the month or most improved awards are a great way to get drivers to stay vigilant and keep improving.

Making improvements in key safety categories like fewest speeding events and harsh braking events is great. But it can also become a very productive game to see who can achieve the lowest fuel consumption by kilometre or the lowest braking distance while maintaining schedules or other KPI's. Then the game becomes as much about who is the best driver in certain categories rather than who performs worst.

Some organisations reward their best drivers with gift cards or cash but often the biggest motivator is simply recognition of being the most improved or the top performer.

## 08. VINDICATE THE INNOCENT

When it comes to objections and resistance to GPS tracking implementation one of the biggest is fear that the data will be used to prove who is at fault in the event of an accident. Some drivers worry it may be used to prosecute or incriminate them.. There is no denying that GPS data and engine telemetry have a significant part to play in crash investigation and determining fault. However, the data cannot be used by police without your organisation's explicit permission or a court order. The data the Blackhawk system collects is your data and can only be used as your organisation sees fit.

The key benefit a lot of drivers forget is that while the data may potentially work against you if you are guilty it will almost certainly work for you if you are innocent. In the event of an accident where fault is disputed (and this happens more often than people think) the data is there to back up the driver and prove their version of events. For people who drive for a living or where their livelihood could be at risk the availability of supporting evidence in the form of GPS and engine telemetry data can be the difference between keeping your job and losing it.

Often when drivers realise how GPS tracking can be used for their benefit, to protect their job and their reputation they will switch from advocating against to endorsing the use of the technology.

#### 09. BE CONSISTENT

When it comes to the application of technology for measuring behaviour or enforcing standards it must be clear how it will be used and consistently applied. It is important to document the process for how coaching driver behaviour will be applied. When inconsistent standards are applied it undermines all the hard work and preparation that has gone before to establish goals for safety culture and achieving buy-in with staff. If one person gets away with a violation when another person is punished for it, this inconsistency will reinforce those negative fears and reservations and will surely contribute to a failure of the implementation or will impact the wider benefits that we have talked about.

#### 10. DRIVE TO BE BETTER

Overall, the key to successful implementation of GPS fleet management technology is a universal desire to do better, to be better at what you do and to be better for all those around you. When it is done right, everyone wins; management, drivers and the public.

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***See also 'More Reading' over the page.***

## About Blackhawk

Blackhawk enables real, measurable digital transformation. We connect machines, vehicles and assets to service teams, operational teams, and your customers through a combination of IoT devices, managed SaaS and smartphone applications, creating transformative customer engagement, service excellence and increased revenue. Since 2005, Blackhawk has enabled businesses and financiers to track and manage their vehicles and assets. We work with New Zealand's largest enterprises, including Spark IoT, to deliver branded and managed SaaS systems that are both trusted and proven. Talk to us about your goals and allow Blackhawk to show your business how you can achieve real transformation.

## More Reading

It is important to recognise that, in most countries, employers have a duty of care to their employees, especially when working alone. In New Zealand, the **Health and Safety at Work Act 2015** explicitly identifies vehicles as workplaces where employers have an obligation to monitor employee health and safety:

### 20 MEANING OF WORKPLACE

- (1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, a workplace—
  - a) means a place where work is being carried out, or is customarily carried out, for a business or undertaking; and
  - b) includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work.
- (2) In this section, place includes—
  - a) a vehicle, vessel, aircraft, ship, or other mobile structure; and
  - b) any waters and any installation on land, on the bed of any waters, or floating on any waters.

Compare: Model Work Health and Safety Act (Aust) s 8

The implication, where employers have a legal obligation to ensure the health and safety of workers, is that measures such as GPS fleet tracking are a proven and reasonable measure for them to implement to meet their WH&S requirements. Staff need to consider that GPS tracking is a “..reasonably practicable” measure to give workers and other persons “the highest level of protection against harm to their health, safety and welfare...” If the employer (officers) fails to meet their duty of care and implement reasonably practicable safety precautions, processes, monitoring and record-keeping they may be subject to conviction under the act with penalties including substantial fines and other criminal charges.

### 3 PURPOSE

- (1) The main purpose of this Act is to provide for a balanced framework to secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces by—
  - a) protecting workers and other persons against harm to their health, safety, and welfare by eliminating or minimising risks arising from work or from prescribed high-risk plant; and
  - b) providing for fair and effective workplace representation, consultation, co-operation, and resolution of issues in relation to work health and safety; and
  - c) encouraging unions and employer organisations to take a constructive role in promoting improvements in work health and safety practices, and assisting PCBUs and workers to achieve a healthier and safer working environment; and
  - d) promoting the provision of advice, information, education, and training in relation to work health and safety; and
  - e) securing compliance with this Act through effective and appropriate compliance and enforcement measures; and
  - f) ensuring appropriate scrutiny and review of actions taken by persons performing functions or exercising powers under this Act; and
  - g) providing a framework for continuous improvement and progressively higher standards of work health and safety.
- (2) In furthering subsection (1) (a), regard must be had to the principle that workers and other persons should be given the highest level of protection against harm to their health, safety, and welfare from hazards and risks arising from work or from specified types of plant as is reasonably practicable.

Compare: Model Work Health and Safety Act (Aust) s 3