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Ditch old-school methods and retain healthy drivers

ACCORDING TO BOB PERRY, the trucking industry has lost more than 150,000 drivers to elevated blood pressure and blood sugar levels since 2014.

Perry, the president and founder of Rolling Strong, discussed the importance of truck driver health and wellness during a recent Truckload Carriers Assn. webinar titled Health and Wellness: Rebuilding Blocks for Driver Retention.

Based on the number of otherwise qualified drivers who fell out of the industry for health problems, Perry said the industry's methods must change when it comes to retaining drivers.

"We're showing that there are better drivers out there; we just have to do a better job at keeping those drivers," he said. "Now that we understand what the driver shortage looks like, we really have to rework our model and come at it from a different angle. The old methods don't apply."

It starts, Perry said, during the recruiting process. He noted that all too often he sees too much junk food when he speaks to recruits at wellness and driver orientation events. He stressed that driver wellness education should be an enhancement to the recruiting package.

Perry also suggested that carriers should implement second-chance programs for drivers who fail at orientation because of medical issues.

"If they're within reason, have a coach work with them on nutrition and exercise," Perry suggested. "If you do those steps in the beginning, you'll see that you'll save these men and women. Over time, you'll see that disqualifications decrease because you're working on it from the beginning."

During driver orientation, Perry



According to Bob Perry, driver retention starts in the recruitment phase.

recommends taking health readings and consulting with the candidate on the findings. Also, feed recruits better. Explain that the company will be demonstrating agility testing procedures, go through that process and demonstrate proper form. Give tips on what to expect and how to maximize results.

When it comes to following up with drivers after orientation to make health and wellness a long-term lifestyle change, Perry said he's found that coaching and education work best.

"They really appreciate that someone is taking the time to address [it with] them," he said. "We've found that when drivers can come in and talk to someone, they really appreciate it. You can't just load up on the front end; there has to be some follow-through."

"Drivers go from [being] three-month employees to one year, then one year to two years," he said, adding investing in driver health has a great return on investment. "Now you've got a long-term employee."

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PEOPLE

TRIANGLE TIRE GROUP has named Manny Cicero CEO of its newly formed U.S. subsidiary Triangle Tire Group USA.



MANNY CICERO

HORTON HOLDING promoted Cordell Dietz to president and CEO, the company announced.



CORDELL DIETZ

DAIMLER TRUCKS NORTH AMERICA

announced Kary Schaefer has been appointed general manager of marketing and strategy.



KARY SCHAEFER

LAWSON PRODUCTS appointed Matthew Brown vice president of field sales.

ALJEX SOFTWARE announced that Tim Bickmore has joined the company as vice president of corporate strategy.

PHILLIPS INDUSTRIES said that Rob Myers has joined the company as director of sales.

OMNITRACS has appointed Brad Taylor vice president of data and Internet of Things Solutions.



BRAD TAYLOR

SOUTHEASTERN FREIGHT LINES has promoted Charles Parkman to service center manager in Tampa, FL.