Don't set and forget: Tuning tech for your needs

THE BUSINESS OF SAFETY

Deploying new technology is a challenge.

Effective change management can be critical for getting a new system running.

It'll also help you get a better return on your investment in two ways:

You'll get your technology up and running – and delivering value – **faster**.

It'll be easier to **fine-tune** your technology as you go to make sure it keeps pace with any changes in your business.

Here are some tips to help you get the best from your new system.

Do you even need new tech?

Be clear on what problem you're trying to solve.

A technology solution might not even be the right way to go.

For example, you might be able to resolve an increase in fatigue incidents by changing your routes and schedules.

Or, if your operational records are a mess, you could check your business rules and processes for deficiencies or bottlenecks.

Choose your solution and provider carefully

Technology solutions can be expensive and deploying them takes up precious resources.

So, it pays to make sure the one you're looking at will do the job.

As a matter of course, you'll consider a solution's **cost** and **capability**. But you should also pay close heed to a third 'C': **customisation**.

Every business is different. You want to be confident that your vendor can customise its solution to meet your specific requirements and offer ongoing training and support.

Optimise, then deploy

Optimise what you can before deployment; it's cheaper and less disruptive.

You want a provider that will make adjustments, add new capabilities and offer ongoing support as needed.

That'll ensure your technology can keep pace if your business changes and evolves.

Deployment

Poor deployment causes many technology failures.

Communication is key

Whether you're deploying a back-end software system or an in-cabin driver monitoring system, the key to a successful rollout is to communicate early and often.

Explain the technology's benefits and how you'll introduce it.

Train your team

If it's not practical to train everyone, train some 'leads' to help others.

Your provider might be able to run familiarisation or training sessions.

Consider trialling with a couple of trucks first before you do a full-fleet rollout; this will allow you to iron out any bugs and gain some operational experience.

Use team meetings or toolboxes to keep everyone up to date on the rollout's progress. Your lead drivers can talk about how they've found the system and answer any questions from the other drivers.

Share the data

If you have any preliminary data, share it with your team to show how the new technology can improve the business.

Using your data

It's easy to be overwhelmed with the amount of data generated by new technologies.

Step one: collect

If a new system reveals a glaring fault or potentially disastrous safety problem, then of course you should act immediately.

Otherwise, take your time to assess the data before you make any decisions or operational changes.

Critically, this is the time to decide if the technology's default settings are right for your business. Work with your provider to ensure you're getting data relevant to your business's unique requirements.

For example, if some of your routes have a high roll-over risk, you might want to work with your vendor's technicians to fine-tune your new stability control systems.

Step two: analyse

When you have a reasonable sample, analyse what's happening.

If there are clear patterns in the data, learn what's causing them.

Talk with your drivers to understand why you see alerts and work with them to find a solution.

Taking time to analyse and understand the data will make its alerts relevant, actionable and unambiguous.

Adjust and evolve

Your business will evolve, and so too will its technology needs.

Make sure your systems are keeping pace and be ready to adapt and upgrade them as required.

And if you see sudden spikes in certain types of alerts, check in with your drivers.

Check your tech

Assess and optimise the technology's performance regularly.

Your technology vendors are critical business partners and can help with service and upgrades.

Finally, every technology requires maintenance and upkeep.

Refresh and retrain

Keep your skills (and your team's) up to date with refresher courses, and commit to regular reviews and communications about the data.

Keep in mind that if you adjust your technology, you might get different data – and you might need to train your staff on those changes.

That'll help you spot emerging problems before they become full-blown, recognise opportunities for safety and business improvements, and keep your team members on-side.

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