



What exactly is fleet management?



Contents

Introduction.

What does a fleet manager do?

Data is King.

The role of fleet management software.

The future of fleet management.

Summary.

Introduction

Whether it's a car used on occasional company business or dozens of vans covering thousands of miles a week, this is your business fleet. Put simply, fleet management is the process of running these vehicles, from acquisition through maintenance to final disposal. But fleet management is anything but simple!

ONE - What does a fleet manager do?

A fleet manager is someone who has to keep a large number of plates spinning. On a day-to-day basis, they will have responsibility for tasks as varied as:

- Driver management, including hiring, licence checking and training.
- Purchase or leasing of suitable vehicles.
- Planning and monitoring a fleet maintenance programme.
- Maintaining vehicle and driver records.
- Monitoring fleet costs.
- Arranging appropriate insurance.
- Vehicle dispatching, route planning and vehicle tracking.
- Dealing with third parties including suppliers and industry bodies.

The fleet manager's job is a challenging one, which has changed a great deal over the last decade and continues to do so. Modern fleet management is about more than just keeping your vehicles and drivers on the road. The fleet manager has an important role to play in the overall success of the business and must develop strategies to increase productivity, reduce costs and ensure complete legal compliance..

TWO – Data is King

As in all business sectors, information is a vital managerial tool. A fleet manager needs instant access to accurate real-time and historical data on every aspect of the fleet so performance can be measured against a wide range of metrics. It is only by gathering and analysing quality information that trends and problems can be identified and then sound business decisions taken.

Some of this data will come from onboard telematics systems, but the rest will come from disparate sources such as fuel cards, your drivers and technicians, leasing and insurance companies or the DVLA.

Manual or spreadsheet systems are no longer fit for purpose in today's data-driven fleet environment. Amalgamating and making sense of this potential avalanche of data can be impossible without the help of fleet management software, specifically designed to capture and analyse this data.

THREE - The role of fleet management software

Fleet management software is of huge benefit in achieving three key fleet management objectives:

It saves time

It's not just the fleet manager who is under constant time pressure. Office staff, technicians and drivers alike all need to keep the wheels of the business turning as quickly as possible. The right fleet management software can help every part of the team save valuable time.

For the fleet manager, being able to access a complete overview of the fleet operation at the click of a button can be a real game changer. No more waiting for reports to be compiled or data to be retrieved manually. Detailed analysis of key metrics is always instantly available, and regular reports are produced automatically.

Office staff can access all the fleet data in one place without having to chase paper records or access multiple spreadsheets. Data from third-party systems such as telematics, fuel cards or the DVLA can be fully integrated, removing tedious manual data transfer.

Phone-based apps for your drivers and technicians can transform tedious and time-consuming record-keeping tasks. Drivers can instantly report on vehicle safety checks, fuel purchases or any incidents they are involved in. Workshop technicians can plan and record their work simply and quickly, leaving them more time to get on with vital maintenance.

It saves money

With fuel costs spiralling and inflation in double figures, it's never been more important to control your fleet costs. An effective fleet management system will deliver up-to-the-minute insights into your costs, giving you the power to spot trends and then make and monitor changes.

Fuel and maintenance usually account for the majority of fleet spending and good data can help spot opportunities for savings. For example, identifying which vehicles and drivers have the poorest fuel economy can alert you to the need for fuel optimisation maintenance or driver training. Tracking maintenance records across individual vehicles can help prevent small problems escalating into bigger, more expensive ones. The hundreds of reporting options built into a fleet management system allow you to drill deeper in financial key performance indicators and stay in control of your costs.

It ensures compliance

For most fleet managers compliance is the biggest challenge of all. How can you ensure that your operation remains 100% compliant with regulations changing so frequently?

Fleet management software is automatically updated for you when there are new regulations. It keeps track of all the driver and vehicle checks you perform and sends automatic reminders when they are due. You will enjoy peace of mind that nothing is being missed and that you have fully auditable records to prove compliance.

To further improve and demonstrate their adherence to industry best practice, many businesses choose to become part of programmes such as the DVSA's Earned Recognition Scheme or the Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme. Fleet management software can automatically take care of the necessary data collection and reporting and so remove the extra administrative burdens of joining these schemes.

FOUR - The future of fleet management

One thing's for certain – the pace of change in fleet management is only going to increase. Fleet managers will need to analyse more and more data over an ever-wider range of fleet metrics.

For example, the need to monitor a business's environmental impact means that data on fuel efficiency and vehicle emissions will be indispensable in meeting new environmental regulations. The roll-out of the 5G mobile network will make more telematics data available allowing monitoring of critical aspects of vehicle health and the scheduling of proactive maintenance.

Summary

As the availability of data grows, it's never been more important for fleet managers to have the right software tools at their fingertips to leverage that data and achieve maximum fleet efficiency. The future of fleet management lies in data analysis and being able to act on the invaluable business insights this gives you.