

**THE DETERMINANTS OF  
JOB SATISFACTION OF  
PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS**

by

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# THE DETERMINANTS OF JOB SATISFACTION OF PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS

Julene M. Rodriguez and Gene C. Griffin

## ABSTRACT

The major carrier industry faces a costly problem with driver turnover and a general driver shortage. This paper looks at drivers' attitudes about specific areas of their work and how important these areas are to them in satisfaction. Management's perceptions of drivers are also addressed and compared to drivers' opinions. Job satisfaction is hypothesized to impact driver productivity, turnover among current drivers, new driver attraction, and the number of drivers leaving the industry. In addition, reducing turnover has been shown elsewhere to have positive impacts on safety.

Career advancement was shown to be important or very important to 75 percent of drivers. However, only 45 percent thought their company was very or somewhat concerned about their career advancement. Driver image and customer service were two additional areas of interest to drivers. Strategies are suggested to help managers incorporate these results into a plan of action.

## INTRODUCTION

Since 1980, a growing number of trucking companies have reported a shortage of qualified drivers (Johnston).<sup>1</sup> Reasons for this shortage include a slowdown in the growth of the labor force, changing worker expectations, a decline in the prestige of truck driving, tightened qualifications for drivers, and pay scales. One company has reportedly interviewed as many as thirty applicants without finding a qualified driver. Previously, the company found one qualified person for every five applicants (Johnston).

A growing demand for drivers only exacerbates this problem. Demand is expected to increase steadily over the next decade (Johnston). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (1987) predicts that demand for professional truck drivers will increase by 20.5 percent between 1986 and 2000. Johnston estimates the growth in demand for drivers at 16-23 percent between 1988 and 2000. He also estimates that attrition from the industry will be 15 percent per year during the same time period.

High turnover rates are also a problem for the motor carrier industry. This is caused by drivers either exiting the industry or changing companies. Annual driver turnover rates are reported to range from 85 percent to 100 percent among truckload firms (Drivers). LeMay reports similar median turnover rates, between 90-100 percent, for truckload carriers. The ICC regulated trucking industry has an unusually high annual turnover rate of drivers (38 percent) compared to labor in manufacturing (3.6 percent) (Corsi and Fanara).

Drivers are critical to the success of the motor carrier firm and industry. They are responsible for safely maneuvering the load from origin to destination. They are also responsible, as an integral part of a firm, for relating with customers, getting loads delivered on time, minimizing down time due to accidents and breakdowns, and influencing insurance rates. A shortage of qualified drivers can impact all of these factors. Unqualified personnel can lead to operational inefficiencies, increased down time, and higher insurance rates - all of which affect profits. Furthermore, if drivers simply are not available, potential business must be turned down resulting in lost revenues.

The shortage is also important to the firm and industry because of the cost of hiring drivers. The turnover cost of a new employee is estimated to be \$12,000 (LeMay). This includes time and business lost, advertising, and recruiting.

The driver shortage is important to society for safety reasons. Carriers with higher turnover have significantly higher accident rates than do carriers with lower turnover (Corsi and Fanara). The relationship between turnover and accident rates could be due simply to inexperienced drivers. Other factors may include job dissatisfaction which results in a lack of concentration and poor general job performance.

Society should also be concerned because of transportation's role in a well developed economy, such as the United States, which depends on specialization for its success. Such specialization would not be possible without an efficient, reliable, competitive, and service responsive transportation system. Efficiency and reliability are even more important today, and for the future, because of the developing global nature of the economy.

The purpose of the research reported in this paper is to develop a better understanding of what contributes and detracts from professional drivers' job satisfaction. The specific objectives of the research are: 1) to determine the factors which influence job satisfaction of professional truck drivers, 2) to establish what management's perception is of the determinants of driver job satisfaction, and 3) to develop strategies based on objectives 1 and 2 which management can implement to improve professional drivers' job satisfaction.

The research reported in this paper is distinct in three ways. First, it focuses on drivers' attitudes toward several job related factors. It then incorporates the theory of job satisfaction in the application of this focus. The study is also different in that management's perception of what factors influence drivers' job satisfaction is compared with drivers' attitudes. Finally, the research design is unique.

The beneficiaries of this research include drivers, trucking firms, the trucking industry, shippers, and society in general. Drivers will benefit from increased job satisfaction in their employment (presuming the results are implemented by trucking firms). Firms will benefit from improved driver performance, decreased turnover, increased numbers of qualified drivers, lower accident rates, and improved relations between drivers and customers. Shippers benefit through improved driver/customer relations and through improved efficiency, and eventually lower costs. Finally, society in general benefits from improved highway safety and a more efficient, cost effective, and service responsive motor carrier industry.

The remainder of this paper is organized into four sections. In the next section, job satisfaction theory is reviewed. The work of Herzberg on the two-factor theory of job satisfaction is discussed. The third section, research design, documents the methods for obtaining the data including initial meetings held with trucking firms, post card surveys to develop the sample frame and the survey instrument. The results address both driver and manager surveys. The differences between the two groups of respondents are also highlighted. The results have been stratified by union and non-union respondents. In the last section, conclusions and recommendations based on the results are presented.

## **THEORY OF JOB SATISFACTION**

Theories of job satisfaction have been developed in this century as a response to new organizational structures brought about by the industrial revolution. Job satisfaction has been defined by Vroom as "*affective* orientations on the part of individuals toward the work roles which they are presently occupying" (emphasis added). Thus job satisfaction *affects* the way people behave towards their work. Job satisfaction has also been described as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state, resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke).

### **Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory**

This theory is based on the hypothesis that man has two separate and distinct needs: 1) those that arise from man being an animal opposed to pain, and 2) the needs of man for psychological growth. Herzberg's theory is closely related to Maslow's hierarchy of human needs.

The two-factor theory involves two separate, parallel lines: one for job satisfaction and one for job dissatisfaction (see Figure 1). Job satisfaction is separate and distinct from job dissatisfaction. The relative strength of feelings of job satisfaction are constantly weighed against the feelings of job dissatisfaction. In the worst case, it is possible for a worker to have no job satisfaction and a great deal of job dissatisfaction (C, A). Alternatively, the best case would be a worker with no job dissatisfaction and a lot of job satisfaction (B, D). However, most people will fall somewhere between the two endpoints on both lines (E, F). This causes them to constantly weigh dissatisfaction and satisfaction with their job. A note must be made about the difference between "being satisfied with" and "deriving satisfaction from" a job. The first concept is the highest possible achievement for the dissatisfiers. The second concept is the goal and motivation of the satisfiers.

**Hygiene Factors (Dissatisfiers).** Hygiene factors define the conditions necessary for man to avoid pain in the work environment. The name "hygiene" comes from the medical use of the word to mean "preventative and environmental" (Herzberg). Hygiene factors, as

they relate to job satisfaction,

include:

- 1) company policy & administration,
- 2) supervision,
- 3) salary,
- 4) interpersonal relations, and
- 5) working conditions.

These factors produce shorter term changes in job satisfaction.

They describe the circumstances under which people perform their work. Hygiene factors "led to job dissatisfaction because of a need to *avoid* unpleasantness" (Herzberg). While these factors may cause job dissatisfaction, they do not contribute to job satisfaction.

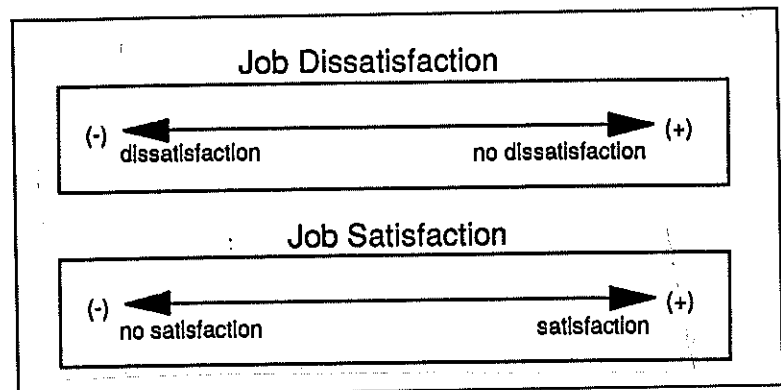
**Motivating Factors (Satisfiers).** Motivating factors fulfill man's need for psychological growth in their work. Included are needs for:

- 1) achievement,
- 2) recognition,
- 3) the work itself,
- 4) responsibility, and
- 5) advancement.

Satisfiers produce longer term changes in job satisfaction than the hygiene factors. Events involving these factors "led to job satisfaction because of a need for growth or self-actualization" (Herzberg). They characterize the relationship a person has to what they do.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

An initial series of meetings was held with a cross section of motor carrier firms operating in North Dakota prior to the development of the surveys. The purpose of the meetings was to: 1) develop a better understanding of the driver shortage problem; 2) enlist industry support for the study; and 3) identify the scope of the trucking industry in North Dakota. Management from seven trucking firms were interviewed as well as the executive director of the North Dakota Motor Carriers Association and the North Dakota Public Service



**Figure 1.** Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Job Satisfaction.



Commission (NDPSC) staff responsible for truck regulation. These meetings provided the foundation for identifying firms in North Dakota. Only firms with ICC authority domiciled in North Dakota were considered for the purposes of this study. A list of such firms was provided by the NDPSC.

To determine the number of drivers employed by each firm, a post card survey was mailed to all 462 firms on the NDPSC list. Information was requested on the number of drivers they employed, the number of drivers that quit or were fired in the last year, whether they are a union or non-union shop, and the type of service they provided. Two mailings were conducted resulting in 281 returns for a 60.8 percent response rate.

Firms identified through the post card survey as being large were defined as the population for the job satisfaction survey. The criteria for "large" were firms who employed more than thirty drivers.<sup>2</sup> This included company drivers as well as owner/operators. Owner/operators were included if they contracted with the firm on a continuing basis. A total of thirteen large firms, in five cities throughout the state, were identified. The number of drivers employed by these firms ranged from 31 to 180. Large firms were selected because they provided the quickest and most efficient method of contacting the largest number of drivers. Since the number of drivers employed by the large firms, as defined, were few in number, the entire population was surveyed.

Individual meetings were held with the management of each of the thirteen firms to explain the research and solicit their cooperation. Cooperation consisted of providing a list of the company's drivers and managers and their home addresses. The drivers themselves were not necessarily located in North Dakota. Management was asked not to inform their drivers that they were providing mailing lists as part of a survey. This was done to prevent a bias from being introduced in the response rate and in the answers to the questions. Some drivers may have been suspicious of management's motive if they knew they were cooperating in the study. All thirteen firms agreed to cooperate and provide the mailing lists requested. Included in the study were the following types of operations: household goods, less-than-truckload, long-distance flatbed, long-distance dry van, long-distance reefer,

and tanker carriers. Owner/operators were also included if they worked with one of these companies for an extended period of time.

Three survey instruments were developed for this research, one for drivers, one for management, and one for students. The student survey is not addressed in this paper. The design of the instrument for drivers was based primarily on Herzberg's two-factor theory. Nine major factor areas which contribute to job dissatisfaction or satisfaction were identified.<sup>3</sup> Several questions within each of these areas were developed for the driver survey. Five of the nine major areas were considered dissatisfiers and four areas were defined as satisfiers. The dissatisfier areas, or hygiene factors, are: 1) working conditions (such as equipment, facilities, and traffic); 2) interpersonal relations (such as relations with customers and other drivers); 3) salary and benefits; 4) supervision (such as relationship with supervisor and quality of supervisor); and 5) company policies (such as safety policies, driving policies, and on-board monitoring). The four major areas which were considered satisfiers, or motivating factors, are: 1) advancement (including opportunities or desire for advancement); 2) the work (such as actual driving, safety regulations, law enforcement, and loading/unloading); 3) recognition (such as awards policies); and 4) training (such as safety and state regulations). Some of the questions were related to job satisfaction theory, some of them were questions specific to trucking, and the rest were demographic questions.

The management survey was based on the drivers survey. For purposes of this research, management is defined as anyone in the firm who has authority over drivers. The goal was to determine if differences existed between what managers thought was important to drivers and what drivers themselves thought was important in determining their job satisfaction. Therefore, most of the management survey consists of the same questions found in the drivers survey. The questions were rephrased to indicate to the respondent that they were being asked for their perception of drivers attitudes.

An initial mailing was followed a week later by a postcard reminder. Two additional mailings were sent to drivers four and seven weeks after the initial mailing. A second mailing was sent to management four weeks after the initial mailing.

One-thousand twenty-one drivers from the thirteen largest North Dakota motor carrier firms were sent a questionnaire. Of those sent, 34 were not deliverable. The drivers themselves were not necessarily located in North Dakota. The driver questionnaire consisted of seventeen pages with sixty-seven questions. After three mailings, 471 (47.7 percent) had been returned. The non-union drivers returned 343 surveys (72.8% of the total) while union drivers returned 128 surveys (27.2% of the total). In addition, one-third were returned with additional comments written on the questionnaire.

For management, 112 surveys were sent out. The management questionnaire consisted of 14 pages and 49 questions. After two mailings, 58 surveys were returned (51.8 percent).

## **RESULTS**

### ***Demographic Information***

A ten year difference between the average age of union and non-union drivers is statistically significant. Union drivers are 9.23 years older than non-union drivers. They average 47.69 years, while the non-union drivers average 38.46 years. Seventy percent of non-union drivers are married or living together, while 86.7 percent of union drivers fall into this category. Single or widowed drivers account for 19.0 percent of the non-union work force. For the union work force, only 3.1 percent are single or widowed. Only 8.7 percent of all drivers are separated or divorced. This average compares closely to national averages for all these categories. Over half, 57.2 percent, of the drivers have one or more children under eighteen at home.

Ninety-seven percent of all drivers are male, with 100 percent of the union drivers being male. Only 4.1 percent of the non-union force is female. The non-union male/female split is similar to the national average for drivers (BLS, 1978-1987). Ninety-eight percent

are White. The remaining 1.7 percent are equally distributed between Blacks and Native Americans.<sup>4</sup>

A typical trip varies quite a bit by union membership status. Non-union drivers average 2,896.93 miles per round trip, while union drivers average 812.85 miles, less than a third of the non-union average. The difference in time away from home for non-union and union drivers is statistically significant as shown in Table 1. For non-union drivers, the statistical mode is over three weeks on the road. Most union drivers stay out days only.

**TABLE 1. NUMBER OF DAYS SPENT ON THE ROAD**

	Non-Union Drivers	Union Drivers	All Drivers
	-----	percent	-----
Days only	12.4	61.4	25.3
1-3 nights	12.7	27.0	16.6
4-7 nights	14.7	2.5	11.4
8-14 nights	13.3	2.5	10.5
15-21 nights	12.4	3.3	9.8
22 nights or more	34.5	3.3	26.4
	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>

The differences between non-union and union for managers are not as pronounced as they are for drivers. For that reason, and because of the small sample size, managers will be treated as a homogeneous group. Manager's age averaged 41.24 years. Managers are 91.4 percent male and 100.0 percent White. Many, 51.7 percent, have attended college or received degrees. Nearly as many, 32.8 percent, have a high school diploma, while 6.9 percent attended technical school. Only 8.6 percent have less than a high school education.

## General Job Satisfaction

Overall job satisfaction ranked moderately high with drivers. On a scale from one to five, where:

- 1 = my job is very rewarding
- 2 = my job is somewhat rewarding
- 3 = my job is not rewarding
- 4 = my job is a source of dissatisfaction
- 5 = I don't care if my job is rewarding or not.

Job satisfaction for all drivers ranked a 1.99.

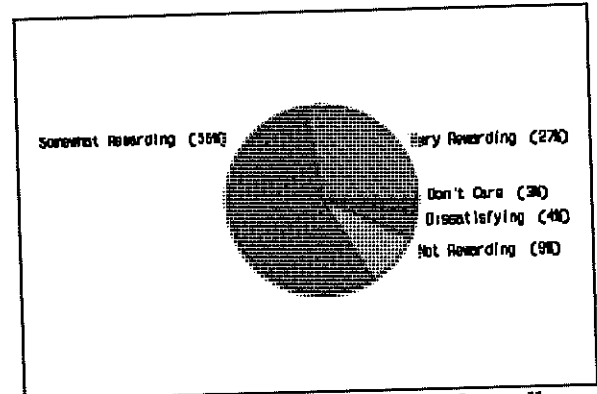
Of all drivers, 83.5 percent chose either number 1 or 2, indicating that their jobs were very or somewhat rewarding (see Figure 2). In

addition, 65.6 percent of drivers said they thought they would still be in trucking in five years. The differences between non-union and union drivers are minimal in this respect.

Drivers and managers were asked to rank nine major areas in their order of importance to drivers' job satisfaction. Five of the major areas are considered dissatisfiers and four are satisfiers. The nine areas and their mean rankings are listed in Table 2. The factors were ranked from 1 to 9 with 1 being most important. Those which are considered satisfiers are followed by (S), while (D) follows the dissatisfiers.

Of the six areas ranked highest in importance by drivers, four are dissatisfiers. These include salary & benefits, working conditions, interpersonal relations, and supervision. The intrinsic value of the work itself and advancement were the only satisfiers listed in the top six factors in drivers' job satisfaction.

This is in contrast with drivers' overall positive perception of their job satisfaction. Apparently, the intrinsic value of the work itself outweighs the negative effects of the dissatisfiers. Interpreting this finding, using Herzberg's theory, indicates that drivers rank positively on the job satisfaction line; at the same time, they rank negatively on the job dissatisfaction line (points D and A on Figure 1).



**Figure 2.** Drivers Response to Overall Job Satisfaction

**TABLE 2. RANKING OF MAJOR JOB SATISFACTION COMPONENTS.**

	Non-Union Drivers		Union Drivers	All Drivers		Manage- ment
	----- mean ranking -----					
Salary & Benefits (D)	2.31	*	1.88	2.19	**	1.60
Working Conditions (D)	2.63		2.82	2.69		2.52
The Work (S)	3.88		3.76	3.83		3.80
Interpersonal Relations (D)	4.55	*	3.71	4.30		5.50
Supervision (D)	5.87		5.69	5.81		5.42
Advancement (S)	5.51		6.50	5.81		6.58
Company Policies (D)	6.47		6.70	6.53		6.46
Recognition (S)	6.74		6.84	6.78	**	5.64
Training (S)	7.05	*	7.11	7.06		7.54

(D) = dissatisfier and (S) = satisfier

\* Non-union and union are significantly different at the 0.10 level.

\*\* Drivers and management are significantly different at the 0.10 level.

### **Drivers And Public Policy**

Public policy areas are a good example of dissatisfiers. By removing all the heartburn caused by these areas, drivers are not motivated to do a better job. But eliminating the heartburn allows them to concentrate on their work and thereby perform better.

Road pavement conditions were rated by drivers as the biggest problem out of 12 areas.<sup>5</sup> Rough roads are causing drivers to be dissatisfied with their job. Of 459 respondents, 420 rated it as a small or big problem and fifty-one percent of the drivers rated pavement conditions as a *big* problem. Only 39 drivers thought it was no problem at all. Rough roads conflict directly with the area most liked by drivers - driving the truck. Even if they really like to get behind the wheel and drive, when pavement conditions get bad enough it will force drivers out of the truck.

Variation between states' laws also proved to be a big problem for many drivers. Almost half the drivers, 218 out of 459, felt this was a big problem. An additional 121 drivers felt it was at least a small problem. There was a significant difference between non-union and union on this question. Union drivers did not perceive this to be as great a problem as non-union drivers. This could be explained by differences in the scope of operations (how many times a driver crosses a state line) as well as the regularity/irregularity of the routes of the two types of carriers.

### ***Driver Image***

The image of the professional driver has changed over time. Drivers and managers were asked if they thought that the professional driver's job has an image problem. Non-union drivers answered "yes" 74.4 percent of the time, while union drivers answered "yes" only 51.3 percent of the time. Conversely, non-union drivers answered "no" 15.7 percent of the time, while union drivers answered "no" 31.9 percent of the time. The remainder did not know. Management however, thought this to be a bigger problem. They answered 77.6 percent "yes" and 20.7 percent "no".

Image is an area that motivates drivers. Having a positive image to live up to is one way to provide motivation. It develops the self-esteem of the drivers. Self-esteem is the first step in winning esteem from others and improving the overall image of the industry.

### ***Customer Service***

Drivers stated that relations with shippers/customers were an item they liked about their job. They also thought that recognitions for customer service were very important. When asked to judge a list of nine possible recognitions from not important to very important, customer service was considered **the most important**. **But** when ranked in order of importance, recognitions for safety came **first** (accident free miles and years) with customer service a close second. Of the firms in this study, this is an area where few recognitions are currently being given.

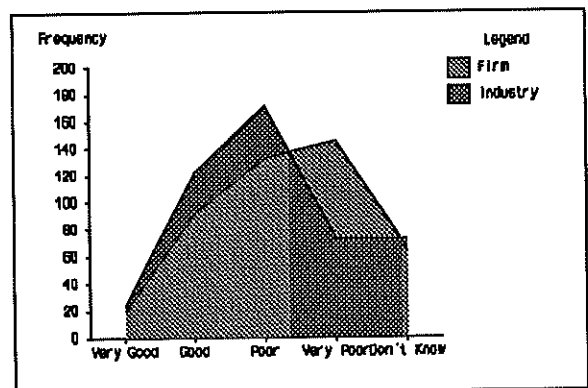
**Career Advancement**

The most dramatic results fall under the area of career advancement. Several questions were asked of both drivers and managers about the subject. These ranged from drivers' perception of advancement opportunities to their perception of management's attitude about drivers' career advancement.

Drivers considered advancement opportunities *within their company* to be poor. Almost two-thirds, 61.1 percent, said that these opportunities are poor or very poor. Only 24.6 percent of all drivers said they thought opportunities were good or very good.

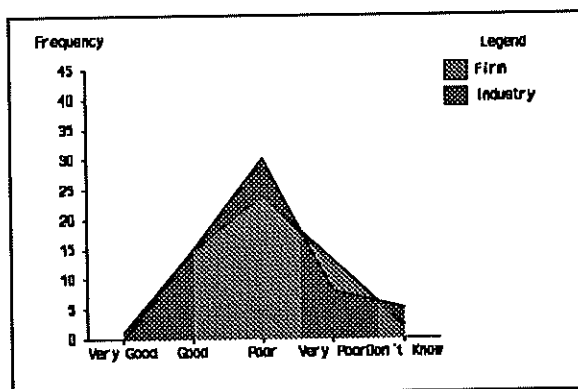
Drivers were then asked to judge the opportunities *within the motor carrier industry*. The outlook improved somewhat with just 51.2 percent of non-union and 58.7 percent of union drivers ranking it very poor or poor, and 33.7 percent of non-union and 24.6 percent of union drivers ranking it either very good or good.

The advancement opportunities were judged by drivers to be better in the industry than in the firm. Figure 3 shows the results by the drivers individual responses.



**Figure 3.** Opportunities For Driver Advancement, As Judged By Drivers.

In contrast to the drivers, management thought opportunities were better within the firm than within the industry. Not one manager thought opportunities were very good



**Figure 4.** Opportunities For Driver Advancement, Management Opinions.

either place, but 27.8 percent thought opportunities were good in the firm and 25.9 percent thought there were good opportunities within the industry. At the same time, managers also thought opportunities were worse within the firm than within the industry. Opportunities within the firm were rated by 68.5 percent of managers as poor or very poor,



while 65.5 percent thought the same of opportunities within the motor carrier industry. The remainder is made up of managers who did not know.

The drivers were then rated the importance of career advancement. Here, 82.9 percent of non-union and 55.9 percent of union drivers said opportunities for career advancement are either very important or somewhat important to them. An additional 13.0 and 27.6 percent of non-union and union drivers, respectively, said they were neutral about career advancement. Only 3.5 percent of non-union drivers and 13.4 percent of union drivers said it was not important or not at all important to them. The remaining drivers did not know.

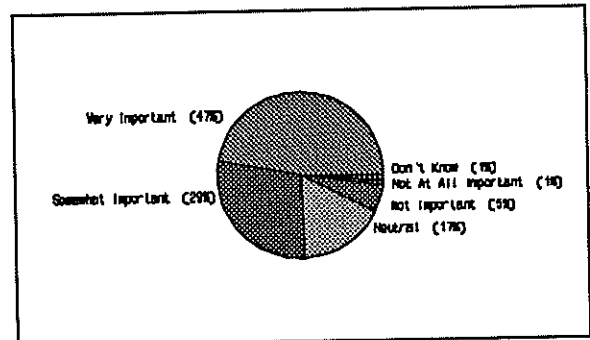


Figure 5. Importance Of Career Advancement To Drivers.

Managements' perception of the importance of advancement was slightly different. Only 57.9 percent believed it as very or somewhat important to drivers, and 24.6 percent thought drivers are neutral. More importantly, 17.5 percent thought advancement was not important or not at all important to drivers. This contrasts with the drivers response of only 6.3 percent. Career advancement is more important to drivers than managers believed.

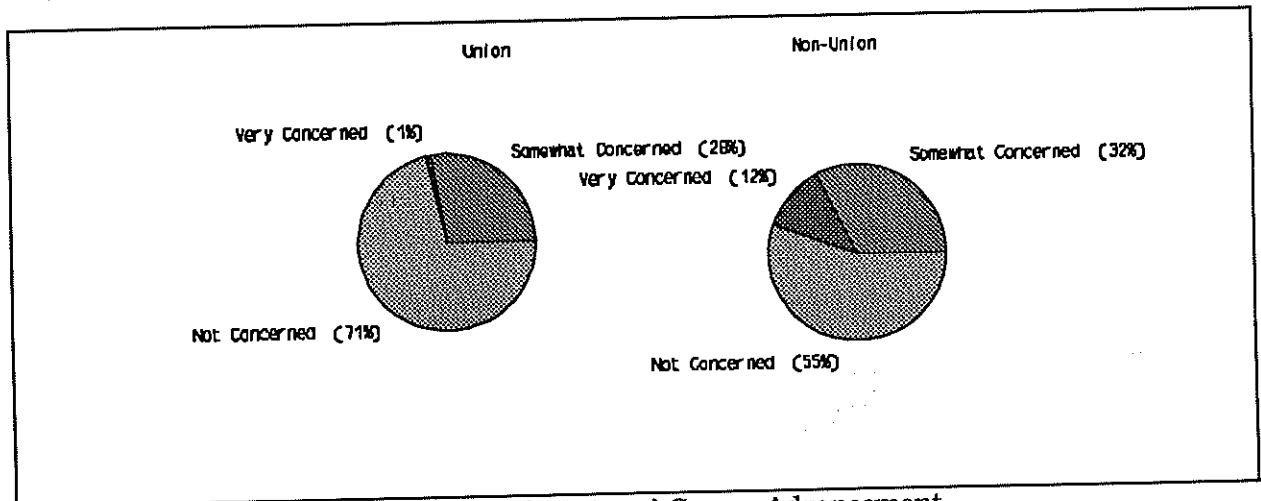


Figure 6. Company's Attitude Towards Drivers' Career Advancement.

The drivers were also asked to evaluate their company's attitude towards their career advancement. Non-union and union drivers had a notable difference of opinion here. Over half, 55.4 percent, of non-union drivers and 71.4 percent of union drivers said the company was not concerned with drivers' career advancement. More than a fourth of union drivers, 27.8 percent, said the company was somewhat concerned. In addition, 12.3 percent of non-union drivers said the company was very concerned with the drivers advancement. (see Figure 6) However, not a single union driver had this opinion of their firm.

Management confirmed this situation with 39.7 percent saying the company was not concerned, 51.7 percent saying they were somewhat concerned, and 8.6 percent of managers saying that the company was very concerned with drivers' career advancement. Approximately 24 percent more managers than drivers believe the company is concerned with driver career advancement.

### ***Why Drivers Are Leaving The Industry***

One-third of the drivers thought they would be leaving the trucking industry in the next five years.<sup>6</sup> Of these drivers, one-third stated that one reason they will leave is because they are going to retire. However, nearly 45 percent of these drivers said that some of the reasons that they will leave is because it doesn't pay enough, they are away from home too much, and *no advancement is possible*. Management perceived the pay and travel issues accurately, but did not do as well with career advancement. Only 29.3 percent of the managers thought that this was one of the reasons drivers are leaving the industry.

### ***SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

It appears that drivers have both a high degree of job satisfaction and a high degree of job dissatisfaction. This is a hopeful sign. The work of the professional driver is rewarding enough to keep drivers working when other elements are dissatisfactory. Because dissatisfiers ranked highest in the overall job satisfaction scheme, they deserve industry attention. These areas include salary & benefits, working conditions, interpersonal

relations, and supervision. However, caution is advised in assessing the significance of salary & benefits to drivers' job satisfaction. Often pay is blamed for other unacceptable conditions. For example, "This job doesn't pay me enough to be gone for three weeks." It is not necessarily that the pay is inadequate, it may be that the working conditions are unacceptable. The work itself was the highest ranked satisfier in third place. Advancement was the next highest ranked satisfier in sixth place.

Road pavement conditions were rated as the biggest problem out of 12 problem-related areas surveyed. This finding would appear to be very crucial because of the importance of operating a rig in determining drivers' satisfaction. This is a good example of how the relative strength of satisfiers and dissatisfiers are constantly being weighed by drivers. If the satisfaction from driving a rig outweighs the dissatisfaction from pavement conditions, a driver keeps driving. If not, he quits. Because of this, management should take a stronger and more aggressive role in influencing public policy concerning pavement conditions. Variations in state laws also proved to be a major problem for drivers. Management again needs to get involved more aggressively in the development of public policy to improve the situation.

Driver image was perceived a problem by both drivers and management. Management and drivers alike should take steps to improve this situation. Public relations efforts, training in how to deal with the public, dress codes or uniforms, and instituting a driver code of ethics could all be utilized by the industry and the individual firms to improve the situation.

Relations with shippers/customers was rated positively among the fourteen factors by both union and non-union drivers. Very few drivers indicated that they disliked or really disliked this aspect of their job. Management should use this positive attitude to create better shipper/customer relations. Since drivers like this aspect of their job, management could develop programs which encourage drivers to act more as a business agent of the trucking firm. This could lead to increased profits through greater contact with customers and improved company performance. It might also lead to greater job satisfaction for

drivers. Acting as a business agent could be considered a motivating factor. The message here is if the industry, as it presently exists, lacks motivating factors for drivers, it must create them in a meaningful way.

Probably the most important finding of this study is the importance of career advancement to drivers, a satisfier. Drivers, like everyone else, need goals to work for and recognition for accomplishment and mastery. Drivers have a strong desire for advancement opportunity, but felt little existed and that management was unconcerned. It is a major reason why drivers are leaving the industry. This is also one of the areas that management did not perceive well; managers did not consider this to be as important to drivers as the drivers did.

A suggestion to the motor carrier industry is to devise a system of classification for drivers. Drivers should be able to advance as drivers. They should not have to move into management if they don't want to. Perhaps this could be a classification system such as: 1) apprentice driver, 2) certified driver, 3) advanced driver, 4) senior driver, and 5) master driver. The names of the ratings are not important, the different levels are. Criteria for moving between the levels could include miles driven, accident-free miles, length of time employed, customer service proficiency, scheduling quotas, hazardous materials experience, and training (first receiving, then giving). Rewards for achievement could include additional pay, additional benefits, more managerial roles and responsibility, team driving, shorter lengths of time out, or choosing equipment and/or options. Demotions as well as promotions should be possible. The exact shape of this type of program is best left up to the individual firm to suit its needs.

The benefits of a classification system include:

1. **It creates advancement opportunities for drivers within driving.** Drivers like to drive. This would allow for some type of advancement without having to move everyone into management, which often is not possible or desired.
2. **It distinguishes new drivers from experienced drivers.** A proven driver is worth more to a firm than a raw recruit. Experience pays off in increased safety, customer service, efficiency, and response to problems.

3. **It defines goals for drivers.** It gives them something to work for other than simply getting a load to its destination. It allows them to put forth their effort in the manner which is most desired by the company.
4. **It determines what is important to the company.** The goals that are set for the drivers determines whether a company is customer oriented, efficiency oriented, or profit oriented.
5. **It improves driver image.** Image is boosted both in terms of self-esteem and recognition from others.
6. **It provides a means of improving pay.** A classification system would probably at some point include a bump in pay. However, this allows a selective way of increasing pay without an across the board raise.
7. **It provides an incentive to stay with a firm.** Depending on how the system is set up, achieving higher levels in the system would offer enough of an incentive to drivers to slow or stop their turnover. Turnover is often the only means of advancement available to a driver.
8. **It allows management to reward performance.** Often managers know who is a good driver and who is an excellent driver. Efforts to reward people are viewed as favoritism when not done within structured guidelines.

A classification system is a good first step to retain current drivers and also a means of attracting new drivers. Career advancement was most important to drivers in their twenties and thirties, the age groups where most new drivers come from. Something innovative will be required to allow the trucking industry to compete with other, more profitable industries.

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## ENDNOTES

1. Reports of the driver shortage can be found in *Transport Topics*, December 19, 1988; *Fleet Owner*, January 1989; *Traffic World*, March 27, 1989; and the *Council of Logistics Management Annual Meeting Proceedings*, 1987, Volume I.
2. It should be pointed out that these firms would probably be classified as small or medium sized firms on a national scale.
3. These nine areas were adapted from Herzberg's two-factor theory. They were modified and combined to fit the professional driver's job more closely.
4. This compares with 95.8 percent White, 0.4 percent Black, 0.3 percent Asian, and 3.5 percent other races for North Dakota. (*U.S. Statistical Abstract*, 1988.)
5. The list included other items such as highway danger, absence from home, staying on schedule, irregular hours, etc.
6. This is similar to the response from the Regular Common Carrier Conference Safety Survey. See Bellock *Driver Occupational Intentions* in this journal.