

# Recruitment and Retention Issues of Small Fleet Operators



## INTRODUCTION

Trucking has always been a tough job. Market conditions of the past year — a sluggish economy, supply chain shortages, high fuel costs and low spot market prices — have made it tougher, especially for small fleet owners already operating on thin margins. For these fleets, which account for over 90% of all the nation's trucking companies, hiring and retaining drivers is crucial to the health of their business and the wider supply chain.

SmartHop recently surveyed 1,000 small fleet owners to better understand how they are navigating the chronic trucking labor shortage, estimated by the ATA at over 80,000 drivers, and what they're doing to keep truckers trucking.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Truckers still like the job!

Despite its reputation as a tough profession, trucking remains highly attractive and the overwhelming majority of small fleet drivers have remained on the job over the past year.

#### What percentage of drivers have quit in the past year?

None .....	11%	About half .....	9%
Fewer than 10% .....	33%	About two thirds .....	5%
About one quarter .....	25%	About three quarters .....	2%
About one third .....	14%	Almost all .....	1%

Though truckers at small fleets aren't quitting en masse, those who have departed in the past year can provide keen insights for small fleet owners seeking to understand why they've quit, where they've gone and what can be done to stem driver churn.

#### Where did the drivers who quit go?

A large truck company/carrier .....	28%
Don't know .....	23%
A non-driving role at company .....	17%
Left the trucking industry .....	18%
A small trucking company .....	11%
To school .....	4%

#### What factor/s do you think have led to your drivers quitting?

High pressure and demand ....	45%	Low compensation .....	26%
Spot market rate instability ....	42%	Equipment cost/repairs .....	20%
Difficult work life balance .....	39%	Equipment availability .....	12%
Irregular work hours .....	31%	Lack of business resources .....	8%
Health issues .....	27%		



**Younger drivers give owners the most worry:** When it comes to turnover, it's younger drivers — specifically those 26-45 years old —that give small fleet owners the most concern.

**What's being done?** Small fleet owners are not sitting idly, as most are taking some steps to retain their drivers. The overwhelming majority of small fleet owners (86%) have addressed turnover challenges by training their staff/team on retention best practices in an effort to distribute organizational efforts to keep drivers on the job. This is only the tip of the iceberg.

METHODOLOGY

This report is based on the results of a survey conducted via the online platform Pollfish from September 9, 2022, to October 9, 2022, on behalf of SmartHop, the technology platform that helps fleets make the right decisions, increase productivity, and improve performance.. The survey was conducted for small fleet owners with 2-30 trucks with 53' dry vans and/or reefers.

