

- 1. Hi Sunday, do you see that your approach leads to a better retention of your drivers? Can you tell us a bit about that? I think we are all sometimes struggling with drivers who move to other organizations just for the salary.**

Driver recruitment is an expensive exercise, so when drivers are recruited and confirmed to be an asset to the organization, it is very important to keep them. Knowing how to redistribute their duties to locations where they are required is one way to go about this. The question is, "How do you treat your driver? Do you show inclusion in how they are utilized in office operations? What actions do you take to ensure their growth and development? How often do you recognize their contribution, and what do you give them in return for having the organization? Everybody would like to work for an organization where he or she is respected and included in the scheme of things that affect them directly or indirectly.

- 2. Dear Sunny, congratulations once again to you and your team on the Green Challenge Champion in the 2022 DRP, with your experience in Fleet Management, which would you advise; a driver assigned to a one vehicle in the fleet against drivers assigned to more than one vehicle in the fleet of the organization, with the merits and demerits of both systems.**

Fleet-right sizing is the ideal way to go. You cannot keep 60 vehicles and 35 drivers and expect that a driver will be assigned to each vehicle. In WFP Nigeria, we assign a vehicle to a driver, which makes it easy to manage, monitor, and control. We also have other special-purpose vehicles that we use. When there is a need for such vehicles to be used, we can assign them to a driver who can operate them. That we, the drivers, are responsible for vehicles that are allocated to them and can also advise each other when they find any of them not performing well as expected. If a vehicle is seen to be performing badly, it is easily identified if it is under a driver in terms of who is responsible, and a swap can occur between two drivers so that we can tell if it is the vehicle or the driver's behavior that needs attention. This will be impossible if multiple drivers are assigned to use a vehicle. Control and a performance improvement plan might be difficult to establish.

- 3. How do you manage fraud of fuel especially truck drivers and many drivers complains about field missions DSA?**

When it is established that the fuel consumption of a particular vehicle is high, please let the first thought or solution to this problem not be fraud. There are a lot of things that can increase fuel consumption in a vehicle. The vehicle might be too old, the fuel injectors or nozzles may be faulty, the fuel purchased may be poor or adulterated, the maintenance may be poor, or even the driver's behavior (oil pressure, heavy footing, use of the wrong gear, engine idling, over speeding, and overloading, amongst others). There is a need to consult a maintenance workshop to establish what might be the cause of the challenge and how to deal with it. Training for drivers, regular meetings to discuss driving behaviors, and introducing monetary incentives will also help improve the situation. DSA for drivers in different locations is a policy thing and should be discussed with senior management for advice and directives. This policy should be shared with all drivers and explained to them in a way that they can understand.

- 4. You made quite some investments in your drivers (with the study etc). How did you make the business case that convinced your management?**

People get bored with doing the same training repeatedly. Everybody can drive. Sending them on a training course that is always related to driving (be it armored, evasive, or defensive) makes them tired and sleepy. There was not much we did. What we only proved to management is that a lot of drivers may not know that the attitude that they display is bad. Introducing soft skills training will lead to better interpersonal relationships with people and better networking skills that will help them progress in their chosen career. We gave some typical examples of people we know who took this sort of training, how their performance improved, and how it added value to the organization. Indeed, you will need a management system that supports.

5. Do you have a dedicated person for drivers' management, or are these functions under the fleet manager? One of the problems we face is that driver management is not understood as part of the fleet management functions, so I'm curious about this.

Drivers' management is an administrative function. In WFP Nigeria, the fleet manager reports to the Head of Management Services (Administration), but it is the fleet manager who manages the team through the head of drivers who supervises the drivers directly. All driver's performance evaluations are done by the fleet manager, and he is responsible for implementing a performance improvement plan when there is a poor performance evaluation recorded by a driver. Every organization has its own policies on how things are done. Yours might be different.

6. How do you manage the fuel consumption variance due to the load, good and bad roads.

My approach may be different. For me, every vehicle has a range by which its performance can be measured. Any figure within the performance range is a good performing vehicle. These items you mentioned above can affect the performance of a vehicle as follows:

- **Overload:** every vehicle has a maximum weight it can take. If this weight is exceeded, the engine will need more power to perform the activity required of it. This means more fuel per displacement and less performance. To improve performance (Km/L), avoid overloading.
- **Bad roads** mean that the vehicle is not covering the same distance in the same amount of time. It also means several accelerations and decelerations happens quickly in short intervals, making the driver use a lower gear more often during the journey. This action of accelerating and decelerating in quick succession requires the engine to produce more power to perform a required task. This causes the vehicle to consume more fuel leading to a low performance (Km/L)
- **A good road** means better performance in a vehicle if the driver has the right driving behavior, the fuel is good, and the vehicle is fit for purpose. For instance, I recommend that we make use of a petrol engine sedan in urban centers instead of a 4 x 4 diesel engine The sedan is lighter and covers more milage a heavier SUV both on good or bad road (better Km/L for a sedan). Remember to always maintain a policy for monitoring the vehicle's life cycle. Vehicles that have reached the end of their useful life should be replaced with new ones to reduce the cost of operation which includes the fuel consumption.



The keys to a successful program delivery –
with Sunday Akuru WFP Nigeria