automotive FLEET

OPERATIONS

The Top 50 Traits of a Great Fleet Manager

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There isn't a single trait that epitomizes a great fleet manager; rather, it is a multitud traits interacting with one another. To identify those traits, AF recently surveyed 200 f professionals, both fleet managers and fleet suppliers.Here's what they told

1 - Ability to Multi-Task The best fleet managers are "jugglers." They need to balanc everything to make the fleet program work efficiently. Drivers want one thing, supp suggest something else, management has a variety of focus areas (fuel economy, safe depreciation, image, etc.), and everyone is an expert about which manufacturer makes best product. The great fleet managers are those who are able to juggle these demands. one fleet manager said, if you are not capable of juggling 18 chainsaws at once, your ti as a fleet manager will be limited

2 - Good Time Management SkillsA great fleet manager must be a master of tim management. A fleet manager's customers range from upper management to drivers in field. You have to manage your time to satisfy corporate and driver needs, while comple your own work to keep the fleet running smoothly. A great fleet manager has the discip in day-to-day tasks to focus on the important without being consumed by the ur

3 - Goal-Oriented Fleet Managemen Great fleet managers are goal setters. They are

goal-oriented in all aspects of fleet management and employ metrics to continu benchmark productivity, vehicle downtime, fleet utilization, and effective manageme both fixed and operating costs. Great fleet managers are committed to achieving spe results and govern their operations with these results in mind. It is this results-orient that pushes a great fleet manager to be creative in addressing daunting challen

4- Adaptable to Change. The fleet manager role has changed over the past 20 years a fleet department staffs disappeared, outsourcing became more prevalent, and procure groups began playing a greater role in fleet sourcing. While good fleet managers adap change, great fleet managers thrive because of it and are willing to recommend change even if it impacts them negatively. Fleet is ever-changing and great fleet managers adap the change instead of fighting i

5 - Lifelong Learners. Great fleet managers never stop learning. They regularly atter fleet management seminars and read industry publications to keep pace with b practices. They are active members in industry associations. Plus, they are motivated attain professional certifications. They not only focus on professionally develop themselves, but also their direct reports, customers, senior management, and te members in fleet management and industry best practices. A continual learner ha constant thirst for knowledge and does not hesitate to share new-found information colleagues.

6 - Excellent Communication Skills This trait involves a high level of communicatio skills that allows the fleet manager to clearly communicate at all levels — both written oral. In terms of writing skills, this includes the ability to be brief and to the point, whi especially important for senior management presentatic

Great fleet managers have the ability to conceptualize an idea and communicate it. Th can persuasively articulate thoughts to others, at any level of management. They ha senior management's respect, because they can communicate a strong knowledge of fl management, which gives them credibility when proposing new prograı

7 - Leadership. A great fleet manager is able to lead and coach not only the fleet team, b

also drivers and multiple management levels. Being a fleet leader is more about serv than being served. A leader does not fear change. A great fleet manager is committec leadership by example. A great fleet manager is able to inspire a team toward a comn purpose or vision. In addition, they must possess a passion for success and understa they are a role model

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A great fleet manager values ideas, respects team member contributions, and create learning atmosphere within their organization that rewards individual accomplishı

8 - Business Acumen. Great fleet managers know how to read and interpret P&L shee and other financial documents. They have strong accounting skills and financial aptitu They not only have the ability to present the "numbers," but know where the "numb come from and their importance to fleet. They have the capability of performing hi levels of cost analysis, which is important because there is high turnover in corpor procurement. As a result, great fleet managers are capable of conversing and working v new procurement people and share ideas, because of their strong business sk

9 - High Ethical Standards. To be a great fleet manager, you must maintain very hig

ethical standards. You need to be honest to the core, even if it means acknowledgin mistake, which could cost your job. Fleet managers must be ethical, fair, and value ea team member's occasional challenges to their authority. These fleet managers are identi by everyone who deals with them as having unwavering integr

10 - Possesses a Thick Skin. No matter what you do, somebody won't like it, and they be sure to let you (and others) know. You must possess the ability to absorb construc criticism; because, when you're overseeing an asset that is used by other departmer there will be a lot of second guessing about your decisior

11 - Good Listening Skills. A great fleet manager is a good listener. Obviously, you mu listen to upper management, but you must also listen to your drivers, which isn't alw easy.

A good listener is balanced, open to opposing perspectives, has an attitude that they c learn from others, and is open to new ideas. Listening is often an underutilized pa communication. Listening intently and devoting your time to people's concerns or opin goes a long way in building a great team and outside support for the fleet departn

12 - Ability to Make Decisions Great fleet managers possess the ability to make decisiv decisions, large and small. When on the spot, they have the confidence and knowledge make those decisions. Daily phone calls and e-mails bring numerous small problems t need to be resolved, requiring a fleet manager to have the ability to think on their feet, n decisions, and act quickly. They make quick, calculated, cost-effective, and fact-base decisions and do not look back

In the corporate world, not everything is black and white. These fleet managers can m decisions when faced with ambiguit

13 - People Person. Great fleet managers have the ability to interact with people at levels of a company. They have a great rapport with every level of management. To b great fleet manager you must have excellent people management skills. Fleet is a peo business and there are many different personalities and levels of management a f

manager will deal with each day. Fleet is obviously asset management, but it is alsc customer-service job

14 - Sense of Humor.A great fleet manager must have (or will quickly develop) a sense humor. You'll hear excuses from drivers that the writers for Jay Leno couldn't come up w This also means being "fun." All of us have seen that fun fleet managers seem to get b practices from others, because people like dealing with that fleet mana

15 - Professionalism. Great fleet managers always conduct themselves in a profession manner, both inside and outside of their fleet operation. It is rare to hear nega comments from these fleet managers. They invariably have a "can-do" attitude a disposition

16 - Diplomatic Skills.A great fleet manager is a "diplomat." Being a diplomat als involves having tact, which you'll need when the VP of finance gets a second speedi ticket in six months.

17 - Ability to Effectively Present to Senior Managemer Great fleet managers have strong presentation skills, both in putting together effective reports and delivering the keep upper management informed. If you wish to be respected within your corporation skill is a requirement in corporate business. If you can't present or effectively repo senior management, your value will never be recognized by the

18 - Metrics-Oriented Measure everything. Great fleet managers understand that wh gets measured gets managed and hold themselves and team members to goals. They a results-oriented and understand metrics. These fleet managers drive for continu improvement to achieve specific business results. For them, there is no such thing as "status quo."

19 - Good Stewards of Corporate Monies Most fleet managers struggle to do an eve increasing job with static budgets. Great fleet managers are creative in cutting costs a somehow, someway succeed in maintaining the same level of servi

20 - Understands Company Goals, Products, and Services A great fleet manager fully understands corporate products and programs. They know their company's business. T have a willingness to manage at a level that is "company impactful" rather than simply "f impactful." Learning more about each department that utilizes fleet vehicles ensures t meets the real business needs and demands of the company. A great fleet manager h the ability to link strategic business objectives to the management of the fl

They understand what "support" means to their company. They embrace company g and philosophy. They are customer driven. They have the ability to effectively connect dots between company, organization, department, and individual objecti

21 - Innovative Great fleet managers are innovative and use out-of-the-box thinking develop new ideas. Fleet managers need to think beyond today into the future. They m be able to anticipate both challenges and opportunities, and be prepared to react to t accordingly. This requires a unique combination of analytical and conceptual abilities. Gr fleet managers implement innovative initiatives to drive cost out of fleet operations establish metrics to monitor performance. These exemplary fleet managers rise above level of simply managing day-to-day work. They are proactive and anticipate chan

22 - Ability to Influence and to 'Sell' Idea A great fleet manager is persuasive and ar educator of management to ensure their support. They have the ability to gain their res and support. These fleet managers are able to influence others who can drive change their organization. They have the ability to "sell" ideas and are viewed as influential wit the company. They are able to mobilize others to help facilitate organizatic transformation where needed. They are effective in working with peers, partners, others who are not in the line of command to positively impact process improvements overall business performance. This skill allows them to prove their value to managem

23 - Focused on the Internal Custome A great fleet manager recognizes their primar goal is serving end-user departments and drivers. They establish a cooperative, work relationship with all internal departments associated with fleet operations and are proa with their needs

Great fleet managers understand that the managers and drivers they support are ke their success. They are service savvy. They keep their sights set on the end-user and th board of directors, as well as everyone in betwee

24 - Capacity to Handle a Heavy Workloa In an era of doing more with less, great flee managers are able to shoulder the burden of more work without skipping a beat. They k how to turn strategies into tactic

25 - Accountability Great fleet managers must be accountable for the programs, vehicle and policies put in place. It's imperative you understand the importance of your role fleet manager in the success of your corporation. Great fleet managers take th responsibilities very seriously. Fleet managers are the stewards of expensive assets a people's lives. They create a culture that stresses accountability and lead by examp

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26 - Organizational Skills Great fleet managers are adept at project management. The have strong organizational skills. They deliver on goals, yet never rest on what's be accomplished. These fleet managers pay attention to detail and are task maste

27 - Detailed understanding of the remarketing proce All great fleet managers have an in-depth understanding of the wholesale remarketing process. They understand tha is not properly managed, there can be a tremendous amount of "lost" money resulting the resale of out-of-service vehicles

28 - Enjoy What They Do. Great fleet managers find personal gratification in their jo They enjoy what they do. They are passionate about their job and responsibilities. Th may wince and groan at "doing more with less" and constant new challenges, but, at end of the day, a great fleet manager has a deep flame of job satisfaction that is har extinguish.

Fleet managers who have passion about their work inspire others to take on r

challenges. They have the ability to “light the fire in the bellies” of their st

29 - Self-Promotion Skills. Great fleet managers know how to promote themselves with being perceived as a self-promoter. They use their self-promotion skills so others in company know what they do and how well it is done. They promote the fleet departme accomplishments

30 - Analytical Skills. Great fleet managers are “pre-wired” to strip away the sales hyp and identify fact from embellishment. This skill transcends all strata of what they do e day, from vehicle options and content to vendor relations to fuel and tires,

31 - Persistent.A great fleet manager must be persistent. It’s tough to stick to the messa when other vehicle “experts” in the company have other ideas. Persistence gives you t skills of knowing how to survive and possibly excel in challenging times as it relates shrinking budgets and reductions in work force. Every fleet manager must have this ski keep up with the ever-increasing workload dealing with all the changes in the fleet indu

A great fleet manager has tenacity and the ability to creatively find solutions in a chang environment. In many ways, they are fearless, willing to make a difference in th organization.

32 - Empathetic.A great fleet manager is capable of empathy. Imagine yourself drivi 2,000 miles a month in that company vehicle — drive a mile in the salesperson’s shoes. empathetic fleet manager is tough, but fa

33 - Problem Solver. Great fleet managers are resourceful. They take the initiative. The have superlative problem-solving skills, including the ability to find the root cause solution.

34- Open-Minded.A great fleet manager has strong industry knowledge, an open mir and insightful analytical skills. They are open to new ideas. You may be the fleet expert, someone else may have a better idea. Be open to ideas from anywhere, which includ peers, suppliers, drivers, employees, etc

It is critical to be open-minded because fleet is an ever-changing industry. You need to willing to explore all service channels available in the industry. You must be open to r possibilities. This leads to innovative approaches in fleet manageme

However, open-minded doesn't mean being open-headed. You must listen and enter new ideas, but also temper such a practice and attitude with pragmatism, wisdom, sensibility.

35 - Involved with the Industr A great fleet manager is connected to the industry a large. They become involved with industry associations, such as NAFA and Automoti Fleet & Leasing Association (AFLA). They read fleet industry publications. The more wide read and knowledgeable you are, the less the likelihood you might be seen as a "one-tr pony." Be knowledgeable about the major trends in the overall auto industry so you conversant with both your bosses and the OEMs

36 - Computer Skills. Nowadays, exceptional computer skills and data analysis skills ar crucial. This includes having strong Microsoft Excel and database management skills. good fleet managers are technically proficient. Great fleet managers are fact driven — a understand every aspect of the facts as it relates to fle

37 - Team Player A great fleet manager builds strong relationships from the top down a the bottom up. Each day, they put on the managers' or drivers' "shoes" and ask t questions they would pose

Great fleet managers are not viewed as self-centered or a self-promoter. Rather, they viewed as the consummate team playe

38 - Management Skills Many great fleet managers are simply great managers wh happen to manage fleets. People skills, creativity, and an incredible amount of drive ten be common denominators. Great fleet managers are also good delegatc

39 - Effective Networking Skills Great fleet managers recognize the importance c

relationship building. They maintain excellent relationships with internal and exte business partners along with senior leadership. They continually network with indu peers and suppliers, attend national fleet meetings to enhance knowledge, and partici in organizations supporting the fleet industry. They take advantage of networl opportunities to learn as much as they can and maintain an open-door to industry supp who are often excellent sources of informatic

40 - Patience and Flexibility. Patience is a virtue in all aspects of life, but especially so i you are a fleet manager. Those fleet managers recognize that it may take time for other senior management to recognize their contributions, especially if they may be new to position.

Great fleet managers are also very flexible. They have the flexibility to adapt to chang industry trends with a focus on strategic planning. They are able to switch directions at drop of a hat. They maintain a positive attitude when decisions have been made with litt no input from them. As many fleet managers will tell you, flexibility is the key to ca survival. You must be able to change as required to get the job done. Nothing stays same, and you must constantly be ready and able to move in a different direction, and always the way you expected

41 - Collaborative. Great fleet managers have the ability to collaborate with stakehold and develop an internal value proposition that promotes continuous improven particularly through new technology. This includes the ability to elicit commitment diverse business stakeholders, companies, and personalitie

42 - Receptive to Technology. Great fleet managers embrace new technology, thoug remain realistic about it. They know how to use technology to communicate to driv enhance fleet safety, and improve driver productivity. These fleet managers use dat drive decisions. They use technology to establish scorecards to measure performance suppliers and the fleet.

43 - Confident. A great fleet manager has confidence about their abilities. You are t expert in fleet management; everyone else is a car bu

44 - Agent of Change. This is the ability to challenge tradition when there is clear eviden that changing the way something has always been done will result in a positive custor and/or employee experience and/or savings. A great fleet manager must become an ag of change, always supporting their position with empirical data. They take the emotion of the discussion and decision making and know their data backwards and forwards. prepared to speak and rationalize the change that you encourage. Be prepared to def your position, and, most importantly, be prepared to show objectors the direct benef them and/or their departments in making this change. Great fleet managers are advoc of change and embrace new technologies. Fleet managers who are agents of chan continually strive to do better. There is always something new coming along that need be examined and, perhaps, implemented

45 - Negotiation Skills. Great fleet managers have excellent negotiation skills with bo internal customers and external supplie

46 - Mentorship A great fleet manager often serves as a mentor. They serve as a teache or educator to others in their company and the industry. Great managers mentor wher the opportunity arises

47 - Consistent Performer A great fleet manager produces consistent performance a results. They foster a climate within a fleet operation that is known for taking prompt a and doing what it says it will do. A great fleet manager promotes continuous improvem

48 - Detail-Oriented & Self-Motivate Great fleet managers are very detail-oriented an self-motivated. You must possess both of these traits because you are often the only f employee in your organization and usually the only one who knows all of the moving p that make up a well-run fleet

49 - Giving Back. Great fleet managers give back to the industry by getting involved w industry associations such as AFLA and NAFA. They become an interview source fc industry publications to share their knowledge and expertise with others in the ind

They volunteer to be industry speakers at conferences and actively network with those r to the industry. Great fleet managers are viewed as leaders inside and outside of tl organization

50 - Knowledgeable About Automotive Trends and Equipment in the Fle These fleet managers know when totally redesigned versions of the cars and trucks on their selecl will debut so they can cycle out as many of the "old" models to optimize resale. This fl manager is up-to-date on the status of their fleet. They instantly know how many of v type of vehicles are located where and why

They are also in tune with how the driver base, HR, risk management, finance departme and driver management view the fleet operation, and are proactive to rectifying concerr misperceptions

More Great Traits and Skill sets

- Strategic vision. A great fleet manager is a strategic thinker and visionary and has t ability to develop and communicate a strategic vision based on data analysis and tc cost of ownership. When doing something nobody has ever done, they must be a to clearly "see" future results and verbalize what the end state will look like. A gr fleet manager is long-term drive
- Creative. A great fleet manager is creative. Even if you don't have the resources, yc think of a way to do it. Fleet managers must be in possession of well-developed sk in the areas of critical and cognitive thinking, and hone their abilities so they are a to resolve issues that require negotiation and conflict resolut
- Commitment. A fleet manager's focus each day should be: What can I do today to a value?Anticipating changing product lines, job functions, business models, and serv requirements to stay ahead of the "bow wave" is always a go
- Protector. A great fleet manager is a protector of all employees who come under t umbrella of management. This enables people to make mistakes, to ask for help become better at their chosen vocation, to always be willing to learn new tasks, a take on new projects
- Sincerity. A sincere fleet manager is trustworthy. They engender trust. People will follow someone they cannot trust and who is not since

- Enthusiastic. Great fleet managers are always enthusiastic. They enjoy their work a desire to make positive change, which, as a side effect, has a positive effect c departmental and company moral
- Humble. It is important to be humble. Don't worry about who gets the credit; ge job done.
- Willingness to Help. Your personal ethics guide you to always value the people arou you. You can't do many things in life by yourse
- Proactive. A great fleet manager is proactive in identifying needs for their specific fl operation
- Determined. A great fleet manager is a determined person who is relentles constantly identifying opportunities without compromising anything
- Calm. Great fleet managers have a consistent and composed demeanor wh addressing challenging and/or stressful situatio