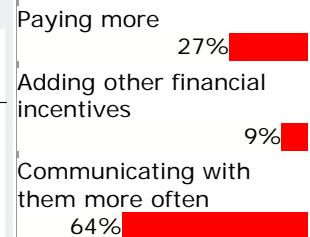
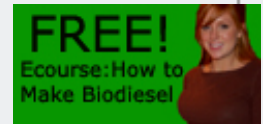


OPINION POLL

What are you doing to retain drivers?



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Learning steep curves

07/23/2007

SURREY, B.C. -- It's probably better to face your first Rocky Mountain brake failure in a lab than in a blizzard.

That's the thinking behind the new partnership between one of Canada's most innovative fleets -- Coastal Pacific Xpress -- and the well-known driving school Mountain Transport Institute.

As of this week, CPX's new Professional Driver Development Division will let new hires as well as experienced drivers train on a simulator that can mimic some of the most hazardous situations a professional driver might ever encounter.

The system -- the Mark III Full Motion-Based Driver Training Simulator -- recreates conditions ranging from black ice, heavy rain, hail and snow and sudden oncoming traffic to conditions in which a rig jackknifes. According to CPX co-president Jim Mickey, "this tool will help us predict, more than ever before, their future behaviors."

He said the simulator lets recruiters quickly assess an applicant's skills, while applicants can use the simulator to help them decide if a professional trucking career suits them.

"The process will result in lower drop-out statistics, a better end product for the trucking employers, and greater awareness of the professionalism of the career," said Mickey.

Paul Landry, President and CEO of the British Columbia Trucking Association (BCTA) commended CPX for this latest safety initiative.

"Preparing drivers for the most extreme road conditions in a safe setting can be invaluable in helping avoid expensive fleet damage, and more importantly, preventing harm to drivers and the public."

CPX co-owner Glen Parsons said B.C. has among the most severe winter driving conditions in North America. "It's better for our drivers to face these situations (first) in front of a computer than in real life," he said. "And this simulator offers the most realistic road conditions I have ever seen."



Sometimes it's better to first deal with a situation in front of a computer than real life