

How fleet managers can lessen the blow of record-high fuel prices

Despite the recent announcement of downward adjustments to the fuel price by the Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy, Gwede Mantashe, South African consumers and businesses remain financially burdened and under pressure.

"There's never been a greater need for businesses that operate a fleet of vehicles - using two or more vehicles within their operations - to find effective ways to manage their finances and save on costs, no matter how small the saving might be," says Justin Manson, sales director at Webfleet. "It is crucial that any business' fleet management adopts solutions that help reduce its vehicles' fuel usage and improve driver behaviour."



Source: Supplied

Although fleet managers can't control South Africa's fluctuating fuel prices, there are a few ways to help them monitor their fleets' fuel usage more effectively.

Encourage fuel-efficient driving behaviour

There are countless benefits to managing driving behaviour, including reducing vehicle wear and tear, the risk of an accident, and fuel consumption. Fleet managers can help drivers operate their vehicles more economically on the road by enrolling them in a driver training programme. These programmes help educate them on fuel-efficient driving, including unnecessary idling, harsh braking, and acceleration.

Fleet managers can complement this training with a driving performance monitoring solution, providing drivers with direct feedback and predictive driving advice while on the road. This level of responsible driving will help businesses reduce the total cost of vehicle ownership.

Keep vehicles maintained

Ensuring fleets are well-maintained helps fleet managers avoid vehicle downtime, which is a massive inconvenience for any business. In addition to late or missed deliveries, which negatively impact business profits and a company's image,

unmaintained vehicles can also increase fuel expenditure.

To avoid this and increase fuel efficiency, fleet managers can integrate digital vehicle maintenance solutions, which help them closely monitor the service requirements of each vehicle.

These tools also allow fleet managers to minimise the chance of breakdowns or vehicle maintenance downtime by providing detailed insights into the vehicle's condition. These solutions can also use vehicles' odometer information to schedule fleet maintenance tasks effectively, provide information on trouble codes, and keep vehicle costs down.

Avoid drivers getting stuck in a jam

Drivers stuck in traffic congestion can severely affect productivity and fuel efficiency. By introducing driver terminals with navigation, fleet managers can access a complex network of live traffic data and advanced algorithms to help drivers avoid traffic jams, closed roads, and other obstacles that could disrupt their schedules.

Route optimisation takes the guesswork out of the order in which specific jobs should be done. Coupled with live traffic information, this is one of the best ways any fleet business can save on fuel costs.

Go green by operating sustainably

New research published by Moneybarn reveals that South Africa is ranked the highest in producing the most transport carbon dioxide emissions worldwide. Businesses looking to reduce their carbon footprint can encourage drivers to adopt better driving habits such as avoiding harsh accelerations, ensuring smooth and slow cornering and braking, and avoiding excessive speeding.

Telematics solutions monitoring fuel usage can also report carbon emissions, allowing even more businesses to shift to eco-friendly operations without compromising fuel reduction efforts.

"Fleet managers have access to a range of solutions to help them monitor and optimise their vehicles' fuel consumption, including driver behaviour like speeding and idling, route planning, and even vehicle maintenance. These measures allow fleet managers to safely and effectively navigate the fluctuating fuel price and ensure their businesses operate in the most economical way possible," concludes Manson.