

Fleet-Mentor: Is your v-p a man or a mouse?

For the past six months, I have been impersonating a truck fleet. Really, I was learning about a new online fleet-management system called Fleet Mentor, from J.J.Keller, the compliance experts out of Green Bay, Wisc., and I'd joined more than 5,000 industry members as Beta testers in advance of the system's rollout this summer.

As a member of the Beta-test club, I could be my fictional fleet's back office.



(We guinea pigs got the service for free. Check with Keller to find out how much the real deal will cost.)

Using very user-friendly software and from the comfort of my own desk, I was able to track my imaginary employees, equipment, money, and many of the regulations and changing compliance rules that a fleet owner would want to track.

Log on to www.fleetmentor.com and you'll see what I'm talking about. It's sort of like replacing a middle manager with a computer mouse.

Customers get almost 60 management tools. Jacqui Jurmu, FleetMentor design manager, says the service is targeted at truckers with up to 200 trucks.

For example, the operations section of the site includes tools to identify fixed and variable costs, rates, accident claims and insurance issues. It includes a rate calculator that looks at a fleet's costs, lanes, fuel and other costs.

Fleet Mentor also features a customer master list that contains information such as delivery windows, lead times, claims and other information on each customer.

Vehicle and inventory tracking applications allow users to track their iron by terminal location, region or fleet.

The insurance policy manager helps fleets keep track of their various insurance policies, generating alerts and reports based on policy expiration dates, policy coverage and insurance company.

In the personnel area, you get help managing drivers, creating competitive

pay packages, managing any DOT required drug and alcohol testing for southbound drivers and other tasks.

There are daily alerts to remind you who needs a licence renewal or an annual performance appraisal, and you can also check your boss's birthday.

You get the picture. Keller promises to keep the service fully Canadianized, to boot.

Says Stephanie Dean, Keller's marketing and communications specialist: "A lot of smaller fleets say they want to function more like the big boys, but they don't have the resources for the kinds of systems the large fleets use."

And take it from me, a guy who still doesn't know all the features on his iPod. Fleet Mentor's really easy to use.

— Peter Carter

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