

Mycompanyfleet identifies five-point plan for fleets for 2011

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With the UK still recovering slowly from recession, fleet cost control will continue to be the key priority for most companies in 2011. Fleet software provider Mycompanyfleet has devised a five-point plan for fleet managers to help them keep costs under control by tackling five key issues: the grey fleet, fuel management, vehicle utilisation, fleet servicing and data entry.

Most companies look set to keep a tight control on all aspects of corporate expenditure this year, as the UK economy struggles to recover from the depths of one of the deepest recessions in living memory. The Association of Car Fleet Operators underlined the point recently in confirming that they expect there to be three key priorities for fleets this year – cost, cost and cost.

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1 Grey fleet management

An often-invisible cost that is too high on most fleets, as company employees use their own 'grey fleet' cars on company business and recharge their employer for their use. Many grey fleet cars are older, less environmentally friendly and not as well maintained as their company car equivalents.

Mycompanyfleet offers a solution through its intuitive Driver Self-Serve web portal, which stipulates that drivers sign a declaration confirming that their cars have been regularly checked and serviced in accordance with manufacturer instructions before they can claim their business mileage expenses.

This not only also meets duty of care requirements by confirming vehicle condition, but reduces administration time and costs as drivers are required to verify and input mileages themselves. The system also proactively informs the driver of the number of miles before the next service is due and when the vehicle will need to be booked in for a service to be carried out.

2 Fuel management

The average price of diesel has passed the £6 a gallon mark, and despite measures announced at the 2011 Budget, could be set to go still higher this year. For many companies, this puts the emphasis on controlling fuel costs and cutting business miles. This can be achieved by the use of fuel cards integrated within the fleet management system, linked to the use of exception reporting to highlight those drivers who are exceeding pre-agreed spending parameters.

The use of fuel management modules, such as Mycompanyfleet's 'fuel optimiser', which identifies the most fuel-efficient cars and vans from all major motor manufacturers, can also

help fleet managers select the right mix for the fleet. They can also be used to produce fuel cost reports of existing fleet models to flag up the best and worst performers, showing which vehicles and drivers are the most expensive for the company to operate.

3 Vehicle utilisation

Fleet managers can cut vehicle hire costs through better utilisation of vehicles already on the fleet. Vehicles that are freed up when employees leave through redundancy or natural wastage can often lay unused for days sometimes weeks before they are re-allocated or returned to the vehicle supplier.

By using a fleet management system, such as Mycompanyfleet's FleetAcumen platform, to log and pinpoint the location of all vehicles it is possible to keep a much closer control of the whereabouts of vehicles across different sites at various locations.

The system can be pre-set to flag up when vehicles become free across multiple locations within the business, allowing the fleet manager to take the appropriate action to re-allocate vehicles as quickly and effectively as possible, so avoiding expensive extra hire charges.

4 Fleet servicing

By utilising up to date vehicle information including mileage details, the latest generation of fleet management software systems, like Mycompanyfleet's FleetAcumen, flag up, through exception reporting, those vehicles due for servicing, well in advance of their allotted service interval. This ensures that service intervals are not missed, which would invalidate vehicle warranties, and that the fleet does not face the potential for expensive corrective maintenance bills.

5 Data entry

Fleet managers can reduce administration costs and time by the use of modern fleet management systems which allow data input from third parties, including drivers and suppliers. Systems, like FleetAcumen, integrate with the back office of leasing companies, for example, which avoids the need for time-consuming double-keying of data. Key information such as monthly vehicle contract hire rates can be integrated seamlessly within the company system without the need for manual intervention, saving both time and money.

Paul Jackson, Product Development Manager at Mycompanyfleet, said: "Without doubt the major focus for fleet operators this year will again be cost control.

"We have devised a five-point plan for fleet managers which we believe will have a significant impact on fleet costs and will be able to help save between 10 and 15% of total fleet operating costs."