



SUPPLY CHAIN INSIGHTS

HOW IS THE ROLE OF THE DRIVER CHANGING?

Logistics, once perhaps only of passing interest to those outside of the industry, has recently been thrust firmly into the public consciousness.

DHL Supply Chain – Excellence. Simply delivered.

The pandemic and its associated effects, such as empty supermarket shelves or a global semiconductor shortage impacting everything from PlayStations to Porsches, has made us all aware of how robust or fragile supply chains can be.

And while the pandemic greatly exacerbated the issue, drivers shortages have plagued the industry globally for many years before the emergence of COVID-19.

One of the main reasons for this is a lack of new recruits entering the profession. Potential new drivers may be put off by preconceptions around working conditions and the expectations of the job, while even experienced drivers may not fully appreciate the scope of opportunities available to them within the role.

DHL Supply Chain has thousands of drivers around the world, transporting a huge range of goods and carrying out roles as diverse as the regions in which we operate. Here, we look at why driving in 2022 and beyond is more than using a diesel truck to haul boxes from point A to point B.

Developing diversity

Think of a driver, and you probably picture an older male. There's good reason for that – the European average rate of drivers below 25 years old sits at 7 percent¹⁾, while the average age of a heavy vehicle driver in Australia is 54. Also, globally, only around 2 percent of drivers are women²⁾.

1) European Driver Shortages, Transport Intelligence report 2021
2) <https://www.iru.org/news-resources/newsroom/new-iru-survey-shows-driver-shortages-soar-2021>

It's a complex issue with no easy fix, but at DHL we are working hard to address the imbalance, remedy many of the perceived aspects of the role which can put young people and women off, and remove barriers to entering the industry.

In North America, our Dock-to-Driver program provides the commitment and funding for staff based across the supply chain to undertake training and secure a driving role. One recent California-based graduate of the program said they had "achieved a better lifestyle and better knowledge when it comes to my job" since taking part.

Another initiative, Driving Ambition, also provides drivers with 160 hours of additional training on the technology and equipment knowledge needed to undertake the role of a driver with DHL.

We are also a proud partner of International Women's Day, which sits alongside our commitment to building up the female talent pipeline at every level across our business, and work alongside government agencies and the private sector to consult on improving service station and rest stop facilities to make them safe and accessible for all.

"I love the flexibility I have to spend time with my young children. I get to have bath time with them in the evenings and enjoy my weekends," says Wendy, one of our UK-based female drivers. The diverse range of customers and contracts DHL works with means we can offer a range of working patterns and roles to fit with our drivers' lives outside of work.

Embracing technology and a varied fleet

A good working environment is important in any role and for drivers, the majority of their time will be

spent in the cab behind the wheel. DHL prides itself on our fleet of vehicles, which gives drivers access to the latest technology.

Features such as in-cab fridges to store food, adaptive cruise control (which uses GPS to monitor upcoming road conditions and select the most appropriate gear) and fatigue sensing technology all come together to create the most comfortable and safe vehicle possible.

Technology is also one of the key ways we are aiming to achieve our GoGreen target of net-zero emissions by 2050. We have recently partnered with Volvo to trial fully electric trucks with gross combination weights up to 60 tons in Sweden, and we are involved in trials of other alternative fuels, such as LNG and hydrogen.

Our GoGreen focus means we were the first organization in the Asia Pacific region to receive the Green Freight Asia (GFA) '4 Leaf Award' in 2018, and we are GFA certified in Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, India and Japan.

At DHL, our diverse customer base means our drivers transport more than you might think. Whether it's delivering beer to pubs, clothing to fashion houses or COVID-19 vaccines to hospitals, our drivers play a vital role in keeping many industries and sectors moving.

Plus, it's not just about driving 44 tonne HGVs – you could be transporting patients to hospital appointments in a private ambulance or new cars on a vehicle transporter. Our global fleet includes all the vehicle types we need to meet our customers' varied requirements.

Part of the team

While it may appear to be a solitary role, our drivers are part of a wider network dedicated to keeping customers' goods moving. DHL drivers work alongside a range of skilled people and teams including:

- Network designers, who plan optimum routes and ensure drivers can deliver goods as efficiently as possible.
- Safety engineers to ensure our fleet is safe, efficient and in the best possible condition for drivers.
- Connected control tower teams, who can dynamically re-route drivers to help avoid traffic or weather related delays.
- Training and development colleagues, who ensure our drivers have all the skills they need to carry out their job. This could range from driving sustainably to customer service.

The importance of drivers to keeping commerce, healthcare and society in general moving has been emphasized greatly during the pandemic. It's something that we at DHL have always recognized and why we endeavor to offer variety, job satisfaction and a good work-life balance to all our drivers, wherever they are located in the world.

