

Attracting Women to the Trucking Industry

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We lady drivers and members of trucking groups get asked quite often what would attract more women to the industry. It is a multidimensional answer and cannot be summed up easily, or can it?

Some special interest groups say that women want special areas at truck stops with special security provided, just for women. Some say that women are harassed on the job and should be granted special privileges, and others think that women should be paid higher wages than men, to train specifically. This is not necessarily the case.

A study done in 1998, <http://www.cdc.gov/elcosh/docs/d0300/d000391/d000391.html> surveying women drivers at a mid sized trucking company shows that women drivers are fairly satisfied with trucking as a whole as a career, but would not encourage most other women to join the industry due to lack safety at truck stops and rest areas. The women surveyed, felt that they were treated equally at work and were paid equally to men, which the women felt that they could ask their male counterparts for assistance if it was needed and that harassment came mainly from outside sources rather than coworkers.

The role of younger women in society is that of raising the children and staying at home. Therefore, attracting younger women to trucking is difficult unless they are single and do not have young children. Older women do consider the trucking industry these days as a viable way to make a living, especially if they are single or if their husbands drive also. So, what really would attract women to trucking?

In the study cited above, the main issues the survey found that would attract women to trucking would be to improve the image of trucking in general and improving safety at truck stops and rest areas. How could that be done?

Improving the image of truckers is an ongoing challenge by groups like layover.com and OOIDA. It has been up hills battle with the diversity of us drivers ourselves and the anonymity of the road. Improving our image cannot be done easily and takes all of us acting like the professionals we are to accomplish. Aggressive driving by us, lack of hygiene, rough talk, cb rambo'ing, those evil roadside bottles and suggestive signs on our trucks are all areas that WE control and can change to help improve our image.

Truckstop and rest area safety is a somewhat easier fix. Added lighting and 24 hour attendants or regular patrols in rest areas are the most cited way to improve these areas, but are the states willing to do that? In this day of budget crunching, probably not.

Good training, with a course on personal safety included; education on how to deal with the cultural/ societal harassment from the people a woman has to deal from clerks, attendants and waitresses; clean facilities, both at the terminals and at the truck stops; adequate social support from management and coworkers; and time for some exercise to relieve stress round off the list on what would attract a woman to trucking.

I would add: with women being more often involved with family care giving and business, providing adequate home time with some flexibility would allow women drivers to take care of

their business at home.

But wait!!! Wouldn't all the above things be beneficial to male drivers too?

In my opinion, attracting women drivers is simple. Treat us like our male counterparts...no better, no worse.