

The goals of a fleet engineer may differ in detail from those of their counterparts in logistics, but, ultimately, everyone should be striving to meet the same ends.

So, what should be on a fleet engineer's wish list that would align with logistics? First, the vehicle specification has to meet all of the requirements of the logistics department and have the support of the manufacturer.

Secondly, maintenance of the vehicle needs to be simple, brief and cost effective. If I send my vehicles to a maintenance provider, I want a dedicated technician waiting for my vehicle, ready to work on it. This vehicle must never break down and, if it does, I want an instant replacement – free of charge – to ensure that my delivery is not affected, thus eliminating the need for any compensation battles.

Thirdly, at MOT time, the vehicle is inspected at 06:00, adjustments made between 08:00 and 09:00; the vehicle loaded at 09:30 (with our product), presented for test at 10:00 and on its way to the customer to make a delivery at 11:00.

Next, maintenance inspections should be just that; inspections, with a few minor adjustments. The vehicle should be available for work after three hours in the workshop. If anything beyond adjustment is required, and the vehicle is to be off road for more than four hours, then the replacement vehicle should again be despatched.

Fifthly, the vehicle combination needs to be constructed from the lightest, but strongest, materials, thereby ensuring maximum carrying capacity. Sixthly, it ought to be fuel-efficient and also able to run on whatever fuel is available in its operating region to the emissions standards prevailing. And, finally, it would be good if the truck could easily be programmed to run on new, cheaper fuels, as and when they are available.

If you could achieve all of these objectives, you would have done your job and the logistics department ought to be extremely happy.

The reality, however, is, at best, a serious challenge to the manufacturers.



**IRTE**

Transport Engineer's regular 'IRTE to IRTE' members' column: focusing on the issues, challenges and concerns that matter to transport engineers and fleet managers