

Europe's road freight market – relayed

by Christophe Saby, *Head of Trucksters in Poland*

Trucksters, a freight transport start-up from Spain, is changing the way freight transport operates by halving transit times and improving the lives of lorry drivers by utilising artificial intelligence (AI) and a big data-integrated relay system.

Trucking is a vital aspect of the EU's freight transport, accounting for three-quarters of its inland transportation. However, according to the International Road Transport Union, there is currently a shortage of 400k truck drivers in Europe, and the ever-rising demand for hauliers is catalysing a problematic situation. Many European countries have been impacted by this issue, including Poland, the UK, and Germany. The issue aggravates as the number of lorry drivers is contracting, but demand for transport is increasing.

The current operating system of the transport industry is fundamentally unsustainable. The working conditions have proven unattractive to many new professionals who value a healthy work-life balance, including the younger generations and women (still rarely seen in the sector). Most drivers are forced to spend weeks away from home, sleeping in their

cabs, eating on the side of the road, and working under very challenging conditions. These circumstances cause individuals to refuse to join the sector.

How does the relay system work?

During the Persian Empire period, messengers would often change their horses on their journey to inform the ruler of news from the remote parts of the realm and around the world – and this is the base model of the modern relay system. What is new is that the Trucksters' relays system is integrated with innovative technologies, such as AI and big data. These applications allow the relay system to be efficient and effective even when operating over distances of more than 1,500 km and on routes that cross several countries.

By utilising its relay system and the unique driver organisation structure, with the company's own semi-trailers and

a dedicated fleet of partner companies, Trucksters can optimise the time and cost of the operating route – and the living conditions of the drivers. The system allows the trucker to carry cargo from point A to B, which is then picked up by another driver who can take it to point C. The original driver can then turn around and take a new shipment back to the starting destination, providing them with the possibility to return home and rest.

It has been difficult to set up efficient relay systems in the long-distance freight transport sector due to the complexity of the planning processes. However, with the aid of high-tech algorithms, Trucksters is able to plan, re-plan, and control all resources at every stage of the process. The technology-integrated operation system allows the company to manage any unforeseen situations that road transport entails: from slow traffic to breakdowns, from inclement weather to human error



Photo: Trucksters

while driving. The application of technology in a sector as rigid as transport is what makes Trucksters' operation scalable and different from the rest.

The advantages of using relays

The most notable benefit of the integrated relay system is that it allows drivers to spend more nights resting at home and with their families relative to the status quo. Technology usage also creates a new interest for the younger generations who have grown up using smartphones and other advanced technologies.

Moreover, the relay system drastically shortens the delivery time, reducing transit times by 50% – offering the customers the air freight delivery time but at a road transport price. And by utilising the technology-integrated system, Trucksters can provide real-time feedback on the cargo and its transportation status to the customers at any point during the shipment.

Companies can reduce the number of kilometres driven empty, with 5% kilometres driven by their vehicles without any load, which sits below the industry average of 7%. The empty kilometres result from the hyper fragmentation that the sector has been experiencing for many years. With Trucksters' corridor model,

the company can further limit empty kilometres, as there are guaranteed customers at the departure and arrival points.

High adaptability is another notable aspect of the system. Trucksters' operations are easily scalable, as the company can work with third parties and sole traders, who can easily integrate their vehicles into the operational structure.

From anecdote to a paradigm shift

As the transportation sector is experiencing a paradigm shift, a pivotal transition – from a traditional transport model to the future semi-autonomous driving – our organisation believes that the relay system will soon become the industry standard for road freight transport. This change will resolve many of the problematic situations the sector is currently facing: from the lack of drivers to wasteful usage of trucks that are spending many hours idle.

Trucksters' relay system has received significant support from industry experts

and investors. It has also been recognised by different professional organisations like Germany's Verkehrsrundschau award in digitalisation/service providers, the CEL award of the Spanish Logistics Centre, whilst also shortlisted for the prestigious CILT Awards for Excellence in the UK. The operation model has also attracted the attention of the innovation technology sector, where it was nominated at the recent Energy Tech Summit held in Poland last May.

With the announcement of Trucksters' new corridor, where the link between Spain and the UK is formed, the brand is one step closer to its aim to consolidate and expand the company's relay network in Europe. Eight more corridors are set for opening by 2023-end, in addition to the company's other three corridors connecting Central-Northern Spain to Benelux/West Germany, the Spanish Levante to Benelux and West Germany, and to Poland.



Trucksters is a transport operator focused on providing a long-distance full truck load transport service through an innovative relay system based on big data and artificial intelligence. Founded in 2018 by Luis Bardají, Gabor Balogh and Ramón Castro, Trucksters' goal is to make the global road freight industry more efficient and dignified for professionals in the sector. Visit en.trucksters.io to discover more.