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An Introductory Driver Safety Guide for Businesses

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Work-related driving remains one of the most significant unmanaged risks faced by companies today. *More people are killed or injured in at-work road accidents than in all other workplace accidents put together*. It is in the best interest of every business, where a part of their workforce drives for work, to invest in driver safety. In this driver safety guide, we will cover the key elements to ensure you and your company have the practical information you need to improve driver safety across your organisation.

Dominic Saunders
CEO, Brightmile

Why Driver Safety is so important

Employees are a business's most valuable asset, and it's a company's duty of care to ensure they remain safe and healthy while carrying out their work. Globally, businesses benefit from improving their fleet safety programs to reduce risks and ultimately protect their employees. According to the World Health Organisation, work-related driving still accounts for a staggering 450,000 fatalities and 20,000,000 injuries on the world's roads each year.

«In the United States, Australia, and the EU, work-related motor vehicle accidents are estimated to contribute at least one quarter to over one-third of all work-related Deaths,» according to the World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention, World Health Organization.

Globally, the annual cost of traffic collisions to companies currently stands at over $370 billion. This total cost can include insurance, fuel, repairs & maintenance, absenteeism, injury costs and employee downtime. Companies are also legally liable for the actions of their employees who are driving for work. In the US, we have recently seen a record $20m fine for a company where their employee was involved in a fatality while texting.

Each business, especially those who own and operate a fleet, can play a vital role in *helping define and standardise what good driving is*, so this can be communicated to all employees. They can educate their employees on what good driving entails and the behaviours that need to be avoided or completely eradicated. They can provide driver safety policies, driver training, fleet safety tools and support that are required to substantially reduce this business risk and ensure their employees stand the best chance of remaining safe while they drive for work.

Caring for all company drivers and «changing the conversation»
It's also crucial for driver safety to extend well beyond just the 'traditional fleet'. Changing the conversation by talking about 'driver safety' as opposed to 'fleet safety' or 'fleet risk management' improves the collective mindset and culture. Driving becomes a discussion about driving wellness for all employees, including commuters and the *«grey fleet»*. Let's aim to make company programs about the people as opposed to the vehicle. Using the right language in all communications is the first step in achieving this.

Understanding your drivers and fleet

One of the first steps every business needs to take, to improve the business' driver safety programs, is to better understand their company drivers and the vehicles they drive.

Driver license checks

Driver license checks are an essential foundation for a company's driver safety program. In addition to ensuring employees hold valid licenses, license checks (sometimes referred to as MVRs, or Motor Vehicle Records), provide data that can be used to begin to assess fleet safety risk. Many countries now make this information available and accessible online. With your employees' consent, you can access and use this information to understand your drivers' collision history as well as traffic violations, which provides early insight into driver risk.

One approach to assess driver safety risk is an evaluation based on driver license checks. Companies can develop an internal risk scoring system based on a driver's history, including assessment criteria for:

- Number of unrelated collisions and/or moving violations over a period of time (example: 3 or more collisions in the last 3 years)
- Number of «at-fault» (as defined by the applicable local laws) collisions over a specified period time (last 3 - years, etc.)
- Has that driver had his or her driver's license suspended or revoked? If yes, how many times in the past 3 - 5 years?
- Number of impaired-driving moving violations over a specified period (driving while intoxicated or under the influence of substances)

However, this data alone only tells part of the story. Driver history is a lagging indicator and to establish a meaningful safety program, driver history data must be compared to other leading indicators.

Driver surveys

A more detailed risk assessment process can be used to supplement drivers' license data that deep dives issues such as driver attitudes, values and beliefs (e.g. culture assessment). Referred to as «driver surveys,» these assessments are often taken online and carried out by third party services (safety consultants and/or by your insurance provider).

In addition to culture surveys, they also examine issues such as driving history, knowledge and hazard per-

ception which, when used with driver license checks, paint a picture of the driver's potential exposure to risk. Although useful, you need to be mindful that employees may attempt to game a survey and look to provide the answers they think their employee wants to see.

Fleet Risk Review

A Fleet Risk Review, otherwise known as a Fleet Safety Review, will examine all areas of Driver Safety, focusing on the main pillars of a programme but not be limited to:

1   Overall Fleet Management
2   Driver & vehicle selection
3   Journey planning (if applicable)
4   Accident management
5   Vehicle technology

A Fleet Risk Review should be a constructive process carried out by a competent person who will know the legislation that applies to Driver Safety, understand driver behaviour and the human factors that can influence this. This might sound like a daunting task, but leading fleet insurers increasingly offer support and assistance with their in house experts. Check with your insurance provider to understand what services they can offer. It might seem like opening up the car bonnet to show your insurer the engine faults but with your insurance provider already exposed to claims and a shared interest in reducing incidents working with your insurer can provide a number of benefits. This can include not just access to expertise but even assistance towards tools to deploy your risk management programme.

A review of a company's Driving at Work policies and procedures will provide you with two things:

1   Assess a company's policies and procedures for compliance against the appropriate legal requirements and best practice within a territory or country
2   Provide a company with robust advice to enhance a policy or procedure to comply with a requirement and provide advice to further enhance policies and procedures to have a positive effect on driver safety culture, and in turn improve claims costs, fuel costs and total cost of vehicle ownership that will fit with your business culture and methods of operation

Checking your vehicles

Assessing the safety of the vehicles driven by your employees is also vitally important - this is true even if your business does not own these vehicles. *Vehicle safety checks* are a key way of assessing your business' driving risk and in the long term, ensuring regular vehicle safety checks are carried out is a very effective way of reducing avoidable breakdowns.

«Most breakdowns are avoidable, and simple vehicle checks can help you have a safer journey.»

UK Department for Transport

Vehicle Safety Checks need not be painful and even simple policies and reminders for drivers to conduct fortnightly checks of key items like tyres, mirrors and windscreens can have a meaningful impact.
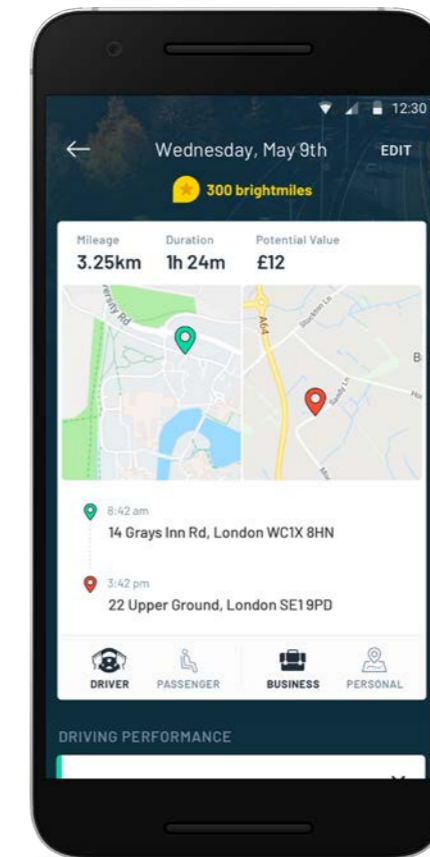
Brightmile App

Benchmark and measure real-life driver behaviour

You simply cannot improve what you don't measure. Collecting, analysing and disseminating metrics/key performance indicators (KPIs) are crucial management system components of a fleet-safety program.

Collision and Incident Data

Many businesses look at the most obvious data point available to them: the number of reported road incidents using insurance-based metrics such as Number of Claims and Cost Per Claim. However, a broadly recognised driver safety metric that also takes into account risk exposure is Incident Frequency Rate or fleet Collision Rate. This powerful metric looks at the number of vehicle incidents per million miles. This metric «normalises» accident data by illustrating incidents as a rate. This approach provides a true apples to apples comparison (for example, a driver with two collisions over 100,000 miles is statistically equivalent to another driver who has one collision over 50,000 miles).

Other valuable data points include:

- Incident rate based on fleet size [(Number of collisions X 12)] divided by [(Fleet size X Number of months in the period covered)]
- Collision rates (either miles-based for fleet size-based) per division or business unit
  Year over year number of vehicle accidents
- Number driver on-road injuries per unit of measurement (# of injuries per million miles, # of injuries per employee hours worked, etc.)

These metrics can be used to benchmark and measure improvement over many months. However, multiple factors can influence short term fluctuations, such as seasonal or business variations, changing staff, etc. Don't fall into the trap of seeing a rise in collisions in Month 3 of a driver risk management program and assuming failure!

Going beyond incident data for understanding and influencing driver behaviour

Incident-related metrics can still leave us with a 'black box' when it comes to understanding and influencing underlying driver behaviour, other than for the occasional driver with similar regular incidents. It is also hard to

apply them to employees who have recently joined the company because, even for bad drivers, incidents happen only infrequently. Hence, employees need to clock up significant mileage for the data point to be meaningful. They also fail to account for near misses, so strong performance can be down to nothing more than luck.

The most successful driver risk management programs are based on measuring and benchmarking real-life driver behaviour. Still, before you can start measuring and benchmarking, you must understand what the most valuable things for you to measure are and how can you ensure you are capturing data on these things. *There is potentially so much driving data available to businesses*, and it can be overwhelming trying to make sense of this. So it's important to identify and prioritise the ones that will give you the most useful measurement of how your business is performing when it comes to fleet and driver safety.

Data privacy and driver risk management

At this point, it is important to consider what can be one of the biggest hurdles in successful driver safety programs, employee privacy. You may wonder whether recent regulation like GDPR will limit your options for understanding real-life driving behaviour. However, enhancing your employee safety is a «legitimate interest» for GDPR. In essence, *the trick is to ensure that you are choosing the right tools to ensure that you are taking a proportionate approach to achieve that interest*.

With the right support from your supplier, with privacy policies and well-executed onboarding of drivers, access to the data you need to run successful driver safety programs need not be hindered by privacy hurdles.

Key quantitative driver safety data

The long-established focus, to understand real-world driver behaviour, has been on gathering driving data to monitor the following performance metrics:

- Speeding
- Harsh Braking
- Harsh Cornering

Businesses have traditionally focused their driver risk management programs on a subset of their workforce, usually those with branded company vehicles. To do this has relied on telematics providers with either additional in-vehicle devices or in some cases, specific car manufacturer (OEM) relationships to obtain these metrics. These programs executed well, with the right investment of time and resources, can achieve significant results. For many, however, the cost and complexity have made these results seem unattainable.

With advances in technology, what was once unattainable, full fleet risk management, including all company drivers is now attainable. The best way to do this is to *measure driving performance using a smartphone ap-*

plication. Every company employee will either have a company or a personal smartphone, which will make the deployment of an app-based solution a great deal faster, easier and affordable.

Smartphone applications for driver safety eliminate the traditional barriers of cost and complexity. Also, new driver performance metrics can be used to better understand and target behaviour improvements. For example:

- **Mobile phone distraction** - Number of interactions with the smartphone while driving
- **Contextual road risk** - Understanding driving behaviour at specific high-risk road infrastructure
- **Driver Fatigue** - Time spent driving without required breaks

Just a reminder though that you will need to capture a meaningful amount of data for your company drivers to effectively establish metrics for benchmarking and risk assessment. Hundreds of miles/kilometres of journeys across multiple weeks need to be recorded to start seeing and understanding the health of your driving community. The good news is that modern driver safety applications are hardware free, meaning no complex installations. Also, new mobile applications are equipped with backend self-service data platforms. So getting your program started and capturing critical data is no longer something that is part of «next year's plan.» Driver-centric mobile applications can be rolled out in a matter of weeks.

How to improve driver behaviour

So, you now understand how your drivers are performing and what their attitudes are toward safe driving. The next step is identifying what interventions and actions need to be taken to improve performance at both the driver and company level.

Being armed with driver safety data enables precious resources to be targeted, where it makes the most difference. For example, does the data show company-wide driving trends and findings (like a culture of speeding or lack of understanding of company driving policy)? These will be where you will need to address these issues with all of your drivers as a group. Or are their targeted support needed focusing on specific drivers?

There are several tools available to support education and improvement. We will explore some of these now.

Company Policies

It will be key to revisit and update company policies, handbooks and to resupply these to all staff. You can *download a sample driving for work policy to get started*.

No organisation can take it for granted that an employee will read and retain your company driving policies - even if you make this a contractual obligation and with heavy penalties in place for compliance. It is the responsibility of your company leadership to ensure every employee is personally introduced to these policies, has an opportunity to ask questions. And most importantly, they understand 'why' these policies exist in the first place: For the safety and wellbeing of your staff and the general public. Employees should also feel like they can contribute ideas or raise concerns in the name of continuously improving company policies.

With a driver safety program that covers all employees, this also shouldn't be seen as something specific. This should be as normal to your employees as standard coffee area or first aid policies!

Prioritising those who are the most at risk

Beyond the policies and training offered to all your employees who drive, it is crucial to identify and prioritise tailored training and intervention for employees who are most at risk. Use the information you have gathered on driving offences, skills and attitude to make your shortlist. But also consider other key factors as well. Such as the number of miles they drive for work and the types of driving they do when making your selection.

There will also be other circumstances where employees will need to be singled out for bespoke training. These

could be after an incident or a complaint or if they are returning to work after a long absence. Look out for driver risk management solutions that help make this task easier.

Empowering employees to understand and change their own driving behaviour

With modern driver risk management tools, it is also now possible for drivers to understand and change their own performance directly. There is a range of smartphone applications that directly engage your drivers to see how they are performing for their business or personal trips. They can assess their performance over a period of time or for specific journeys. They should be able to see how they compare against their organisational average. The app should help them identify the areas where they need to focus on improving their performance and give them the opportunity to do so, in many cases avoiding the need for additional specific training.

With any such solution, it is also absolutely essential to ensure employee privacy is a key consideration. For full organisational adoption of any such solution, drivers must consider the app to be a company benefit as opposed to a tool with which their employer can monitor and track them. Furthermore, for even greater engagement, *the principles of gamification and rewards can be hugely effective*.

Acknowledging and rewarding good driving

Over the years, a great deal of focus in fleet safety has been around identifying 'risk' and mitigating against it. Yet language like 'risk' can sometimes make this whole process rather clinical and make us lose perspective of some of the key things that lead to human behavioural change: acknowledgement, praise and reward for good or improving performance.

So measuring and benchmarking key aspects of driver safety help us identify the positive as well as the negative trends and outliers. They also help identify and reward the people who are committed to improving their driving. Acknowledgement and praise are fundamental ingredients in ensuring continued positive engagement and commitment to a successful driver safety program.

A Gallup research project surveyed more than four million employees about the importance of praise and recognition. *The study found that* «employees who receive regular praise are more productive, engaged and more likely to stay with their organisation than those who do not. The survey results also indicated that employees who are praised receive higher loyalty and satisfaction scores from customers and even enjoy better health than employees who are not.»

So, based on this study, the benefits of adopting a proactive policy of acknowledgement, praise and reward can

actually go far beyond just running a successful driver safety program!

How to run an effective driver recognition and reward program

Clear communication and consistency are absolutely crucial to running a successful recognition and reward program for safe driving. Employees need to understand how their performance will be measured. They need to understand how good driving and improved driving performance will be tracked and rewarded. They also want to be reassured that any reward program is accurate, fair and can not be gamed by their colleagues.

«For a recognition program to be effective, it should meet several criteria. The program should be well-funded, aligned with organisational goals, appropriate for employees' achievements and timely. The methods of presenting awards must be managed well, with managers themselves playing key roles.» *SHRM*

There is the possibility that a chosen driver safety solution will provide you with an out of the box driver safety reward program, which companies can further supplement. For instance, Brighmile leverages the principles of gamification and rewards as a key component of its driver safety platform. Drivers are rewarded Brightmiles for every good mile/kilometre of driving. They can also earn further Brightmiles by unlocking trophies for their achievements. These Brightmiles can be used to enter raffles for prizes or can even be donated to a charity. The manager portal also provides insights into the most improved drivers, who can also be acknowledged and rewarded.

Using a driver safety solution with recognition and rewards built-in can dramatically reduce the administrative burden for companies for successfully running an engaging recognition program.

Employee driver training

«Good driver training does not just focus on driving skills, but also on driver's attitudes, knowledge and understanding of how they can manage driving risks.» ROSPA

Companies can provide driver education and practical training for their drivers, based on the overall needs identified. They can also tailor the training and prioritise those that are considered the most at risk.

There are the following types of training at your companies disposal:

- Driver education seminars or workshops - These can focus on topics like defensive driving, but they can also educate the drivers on personal characteristics and circumstances that can impact one's safety.
- E-learning courses - These can cover the same content included in the seminars and workshops and will usually be a less-expensive option. But, obviously, they do not offer the same level of interaction between the employees and their trainers.
- On-Road training - 2 to 3 drivers at a time have the opportunity to actually have a practical driving session with an instructor,
- Advanced and specific vehicle driver training courses could also be an essential requirement, based on the types of driving activities and vehicles that are driven by your employees

Companies can either employ their own in-house driver trainers or commission an external company to provide these training services.

Coordination and monitoring of the training can often be one of the biggest challenges. A number of modern driver risk management solutions offer automated services with training partners to deliver targeted training to the drivers automatically.
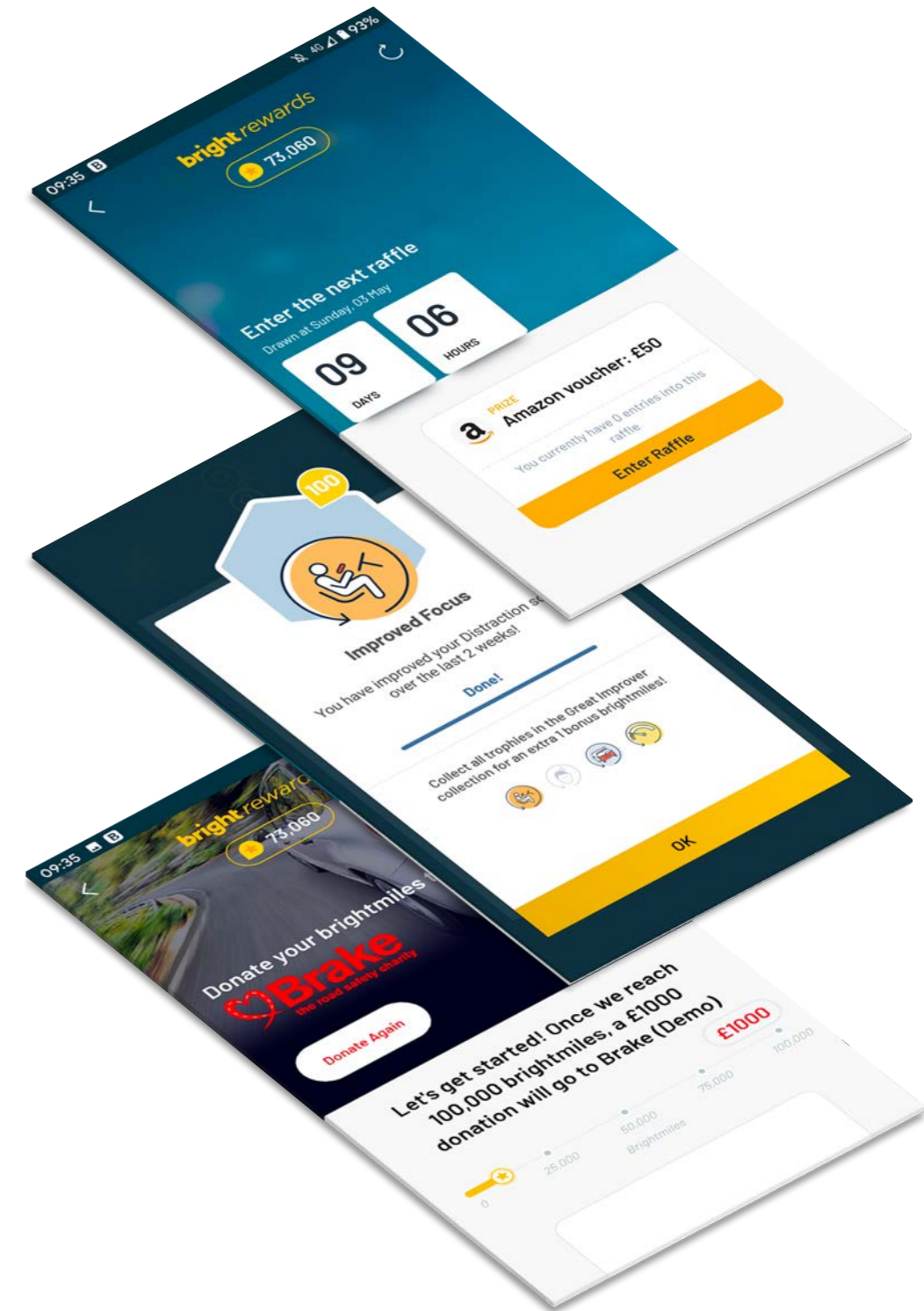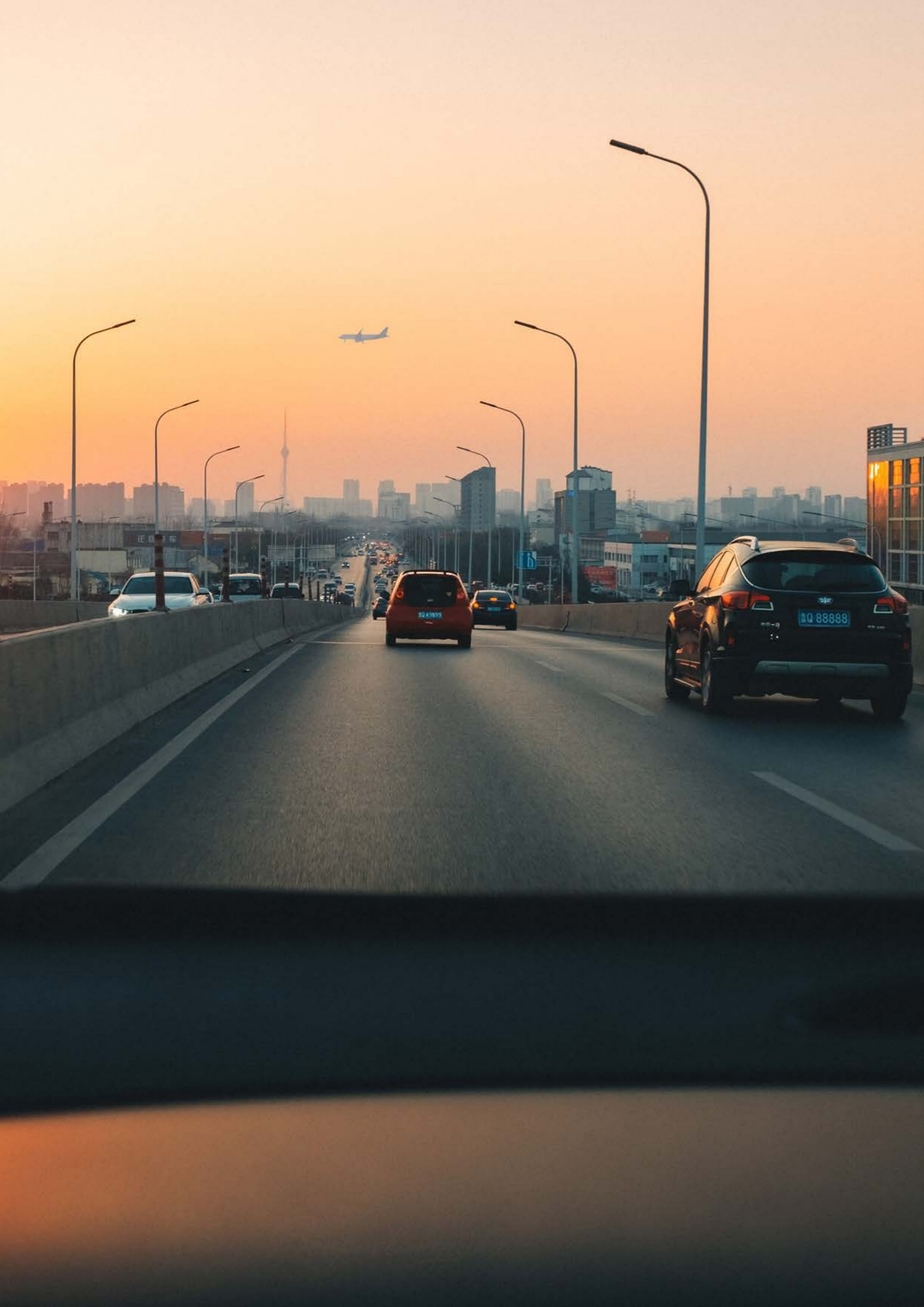
How to ensure you stand the best chance of maintaining a long term commitment to improving Fleet Safety

So, let's assume you've invested all this time and effort into measuring driver safety, building effective policies and driver training programs. You've empowered employees to measure their own performance. You are also acknowledging and rewarding their performance. So, how can you ensure this is a long term commitment for your organisation and best-in-class driver safety practices become ingrained in the values and DNA of your company? It all needs to start with clear ownership.
Ownership

There needs to be a board-level sponsor in every company for an ongoing driver safety program, driver safety needs to be visible at all levels of the organisation. The overall driver safety program also needs someone who is ultimately responsible for its leadership. These individuals don't need to necessarily manage the company fleet. However, they should feel ultimately in-control of running the program and be recognised across the company.

Manager Involvement

For all but the smallest of organisations, the responsibility for the safety of drivers should be cascaded out to managers at a department or regional level. This builds awareness, involvement and importantly means that no single individual is the bottleneck to the program. Involving managers through their own participation (many managers drive on business) is essential to a successful program, it immediately removes the perception of them and us and by using as well as simply telling it improves engagement and understanding. Managers should also have the tools to be able to directly understand the behaviours of their team, recognise success and provide guidance where needed.

A well-defined safety program

A well-defined safety program will need to have a clear cadence of meetings and check-ins with all key stakeholders. The cadence of these meetings will depend on the organisation and the phases of the program. Monthly is typical with more frequent meetings in the first two months of program preparation and launch.

As well as the initial rollout to all drivers there needs to be a well-defined driver safety induction for every new employee to ensure new drivers are onboarded. This can be as simple as ensuring that invitation to driver safety

tools is part of the HR induction checklist.

Focus on the key metrics

As previously mentioned, there can be an overwhelming amount of data and metrics businesses can measure when it comes to driver safety. Look to create a 'players' scorecard for your organisation rather than a detailed managers report when it comes to reporting on safety. So, keep it simple, focused and accessible for the whole organisation. Aim to have a handful of data points you track and report on to prevent information overload and subsequent disengagement. Remember, behavioural change and trends should be viewed over months, not weeks so don't get too focused on the smallest week on week change or a single bad month.

Communicate progress

So many driver safety programs see the data discussed behind closed doors and drivers only really understand progress from coffee discussions about the last driver to have been brought in for a debrief. The best programs that stand the test of time regularly publicise progress, celebrate success and evolve the focus and targets over time to reflect the changing organisation and progress of the fleet. This need not be an onerous task with many organisations communicating progress as part of wider quarterly staff publications or ad hoc bulletins on milestones or updates.

Revise goals

The organisation should aim to set ambitious yet achievable driver safety targets for the company, and these should be communicated throughout the organisation, these need not be fixed to being yearly, effective programs often review and communicate quarterly progress and where appropriate celebrate success and publicise new targets. It is important not to relentlessly chase perfection with targets and to remember as the program matures that the target could be as much about maintaining previous success as it is about striving for further improvement. Ensuring that drivers can see targets being achieved and progress is celebrated is essential, avoid the temptation to celebrate early success by setting targets that are out of reach and become stale.

Analyse and learn from each incident

Unfortunately, even with the most successful driver safety program incidents will still happen.

«Organisations need well thought out, and re-hearsed processes for responding to accidents, incidents and near misses effectively, especially in the early stages.»

ROSPA

We'd highly recommend reading and implementing some of the best practice advice from ROSPA when it comes to *incident reporting and investigation*.

Learning from each of these incidents will help continuously evolve your driver safety program for the better.

Finally, don't fall into the trap of seeing the individual accident as a failure in the driver safety program. Look at the overall incidents and the trend for these.
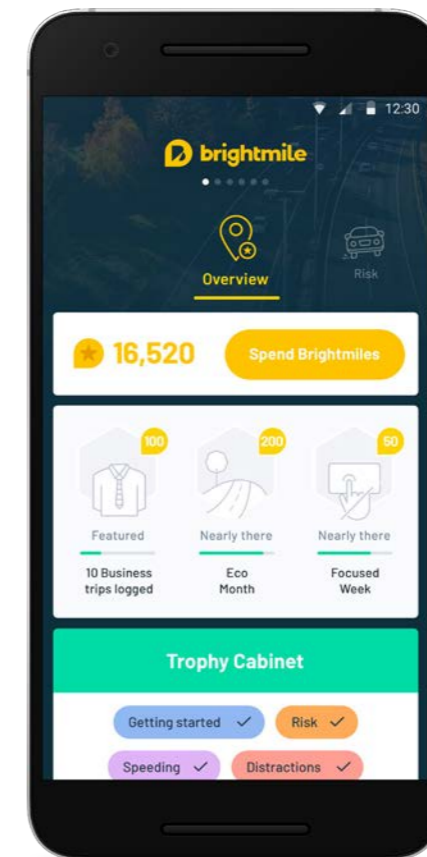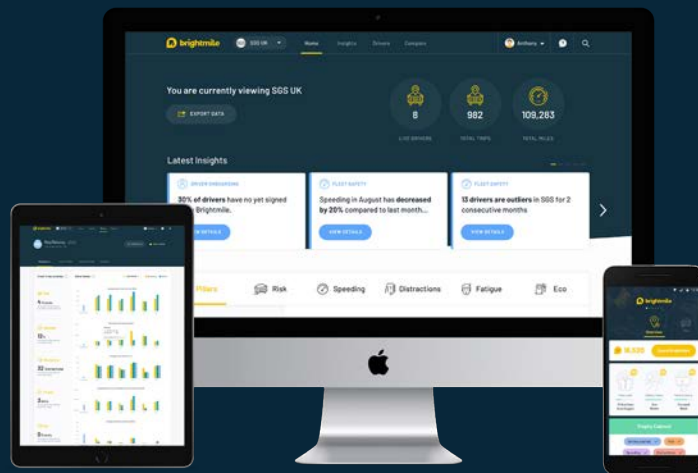
Final Thoughts

«Employers have a duty of care to their employees, which means that they should take all steps which are reasonably possible to ensure their health, safety and wellbeing.» *ACAS*

Driver safety programs can seem daunting and unattainable, but hopefully, some of this guide helps you realise that significant reduction in the frequency and severity of road incidents for your staff is more achievable than you might have thought.

It is the responsibility of every employer to ensure their employees clearly understand what it means to be a safe driver and the importance of this to the business. They should feel engaged and supported in understanding their driving risk and be engaged and incentivised to improve. Here at Brightmile, we continue on our mission to help employees, like yours, return home safely at the end of the day.

Brightmile App

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