

Occupational road safety 2020: Using PESTELED analysis to understand the work- related road safety context

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Introduction

Since the formation of the coalition government in the UK there has been increasing focus on, and debate about, cuts in the road safety budget. Such cuts will have many knock-on effects for road safety, including the work-related or fleet sector. This means that it is increasingly important for all sectors of the fleet industry, and its suppliers, to fully understand the external context in which they find themselves, particularly when trying to make long term plans. Work-related road safety is influenced by external economic, legal and political factors which operate at local, national and international levels. These factors influence organisational changes such as management structures, which in turn influence work context and job characteristics at organisational and individual levels. When developing a work-related road safety program - for all vehicle types from heavy trucks and buses, right down to couriers on two wheeled machines - it is vital to understand and allow for such external factors.

During the 1980s, a PEST (political, economic, social and technological) analysis was developed as the way to do this. Then in the 1990s, this concept expanded into a PESTEL (political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal) analysis. Now the tool has further evolved into a PESTELED (political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal, ethical and demographic) analysis.

PESTELED explained

So what is a PESTELED analysis, and why is it important for organisations to undertake one in relation to work-related road safety in these interesting and potentially challenging times?

PESTELED analysis is defined as a management technique to enable an analysis of external factors that may impact the performance of an organisation. Originally designed as a business environmental scan, PESTELED examines the external macro environment ('big picture') including political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, environmental, legal, ethical and demographic forces within which businesses operate and which act on them.

PESTELED is a useful tool for understanding the 'big picture' of the environment in which businesses are operating, and the opportunities and threats that lie within it. By understanding the external environment, organisations can take advantage of the opportunities and minimize the threats. With significant future growth expected in road freight transport in Australia

and other countries, this tool should prove useful in highlighting a range of safety issues, and making a contribution to improving safety in the commercial heavy vehicle and transport industry.

The following provides some initial thoughts on the current issues affecting the fleet and fleet supply industry.

Political factors affecting work-related road safety

- change of government in UK, with some moves toward Euro Scepticism amongst British politicians – particularly around the debt crisis in the Eurozone, and significant cuts occurring in road safety budgets and other government spending
- increasing EU interest in work-related road safety including clarification that Framework Directive EC 89/391 does categorise vehicles on the road as a workplace
- lobbying power of motor industry and suppliers forcing safety investment into technology rather than driver development or improved mobility management
- occupational road safety discipline growing
- movements around environment and corporate social responsibility
- impact of Decade of Action for Road Safety, Moscow ministerial declaration and the recent United Nations resolution on road safety
- managing the government's own substantial fleet and leading by example.

Economic factors affecting work-related road safety

- government cost-cutting and the impact on road safety and training
- recession and the need for cost saving, high value solutions, needs-based approaches, detailed business cases and outcomes evaluation
- increasing need for budget protection supported by well thought out purchasing, cost, finance sourcing and risk financing models
- promoting the importance of fleet safety as a brand enhancement, reputational and money- saving opportunity
- focus on use and safe management of contractors, sub-contractors and freelancers to cut costs
- impact of rationalisation, downsizing and other negative changes on safety
- sustaining safety and engaging drivers and managers in hard times.

Social factors affecting work-related road safety

- role of government and the government fleet, and its importance to business
- using the road for work and commuting – remains the biggest injury and fatality risk faced by most people
- road safety campaigns
- road Safety week and community-corporate social responsibility
- fleet safety as conduit for general road safety
- embracing the systems-based approach to safety.

Technological factors affecting work-related road safety

- maximising the benefits of telemetry and other technology such as vehicle-based cameras
- electronic licence and criminal records bureau (CRB) checks. Note: in the UK organisations can obtain such data electronically directly from the government agencies involved as long as they have the informed consent of the driver, and can prove the security of their systems for data transfer, storage and retrieval
- data linkages/warehouses – national and organisational – linking collisions, risk assessment, fuel, telemetry and licence check data – leading to needs-based targeted training programs
- need for data-led systems based approach.

Environmental factors affecting work-related road safety

- safety and environment links
- focus on green, carbon, fuel
- systems-based approach.

Legal factors affecting work-related road safety

- globally – impact of ISO39001 standard on Road Traffic Safety, framed by the systems-based approach
- relevant European and other regional regulations such as the Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) for large vehicle drivers, EC89/391 covering health and safety, and the Working Time Directive
- UK health and safety regulations including vehicle as part of workplace under Health and Safety law, corporate manslaughter and vicarious liability
- Eastern Europe – importance of the Labour Code in engaging organisations
- Australia – Chain of Responsibility rules for heavy vehicles; all vehicles irrespective of type, size and ownership being seen as part of workplace under Health and Safety law, and, Fatigue Management regulations
- US – Negligent Entrustment, ANZI 15 standard and Hours of Service
- Germany – workers compensation, social insurance and the role of the Berufsgenossenschaftens (regional social insurance organisations)
- Sweden – Vision Zero, engaging suppliers through building safety into purchasing, interpretation of EC89/391 and government leadership on vehicle safety features

- New Zealand – Chain of Responsibility rules, the Accident Compensation Commission fleet guide and vehicle as part of workplace under Health and Safety law
- South Africa – road safety regulations called Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences (AARTO), including substantial fines for organisations operating vehicles illegally
- In the emerging or BRICK economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China and Korea) the number of road fatalities have typically been increasing in line with development. Currently there appears to be limited legal process in place for work-related road safety in the BRICK economies, even though vehicles being driven for work are involved in about 70% of road fatalities in such regions according to the Global Road Safety for Workers project (see www.virtualriskmanager.net/niosh).

Ethical factors affecting work-related road safety

- growing importance of data protection and privacy as fleet safety and driver training become increasingly data-led, based on risk factors such as collisions, licence checks and telemetry
- the road safety versus mobility trade-off
- the question of investment in vehicle safety features or journey management.

Demographic factors affecting work-related road safety

- ageing population, requiring different interventions
- young drivers joining workforce bringing higher risks
- health and wellbeing
- driver life cycle – driving for life from cradle to grave
- land use planning issues linked to population decentralisation.

Summary and lessons for work-related road safety research, policy and practice

Overall, in these interesting, changing and challenging times, it is vital for the fleet industry and its suppliers to understand the context in which they operate when making plans for the short, medium and long term future.

PESTELED is a good framework for achieving it - to allow a better understanding of the potential market opportunities and threats to the industry. Interested readers are encouraged to spend 10 minutes undertaking a PESTELED review of the road risks in their organisations, and to send your feedback via email to will.murray@virtualriskmanager.net. A 'Gap Analysis' is also recommended as a good starting point for a work-related road safety program, using the freely available 10 and 30 question tools at www.fleetsafetybenchmarking.net.