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Training: a key to the future, by: Ian Bushby



There are shortages of people across the entire transport sector, but the reasons why are often not understood by many. It is not just confined to operator level, and is now hampering the future viability of the whole industry sector. Many suppliers at the recent truck show lamented the loss of key people, looming retirements and how to replace the skills and knowledge.

Proper education and training across all facets of the sector will help bring about change and ensure everyone's future viability. From mechanics to counter sales people, from manufacturing staff in truck and trailer builders to managers in the transport chain, the need for proper structured training can never be left out of the planning.

Yet it is still staggering that when it comes to training and skills, the trades are always high on the agenda and other parts of the industry seem to take second spot.

Despite the large number of conferences, seminars, discussions and articles about people shortages, the need for proper training exists at all levels of our industry.

The growing number of independent workshops who have taken on out-sourced work from others places further strain on the ability of suppliers to keep training and technical information up to date across a wide area. The number of updates on parts and modules with complex diagnostic equipment makes the task ever more difficult.

Constant and regular updates are also placing great strain on counter personnel and sales people who are continually asked to interpret a customers' needs, given the large number of parts and variety and number of suppliers. Not the least of which is the supply of correct and 'proper' use of spare parts.

Creating career paths, providing regular training, seminars, conferences, product updates, information sessions about existing, new and enhanced products can go a long way towards creating new skills and enhancing the industry's attractiveness.

Some suppliers already conduct a range of training and update services for the industry and should be congratulated, but the industry needs to do more if they are to address the looming shortage. Some industry members complain, 'I train people and they leave', but it could be worse, you don't train them and they stay!

The Australian Road Transport Suppliers Association (ARTSA) was formed in the early 1980's by a group of road transport supplier companies to provide a forum for technical input and sharing of knowledge. ARTSA produces technical papers on issues as diverse as "Why Trucks Catch Fire" through to "Air Suspension Code of Practice" and documents on "low pressure braking." ARTSA uses the technical expertise of its members to either share information or to further develop the technical agenda.

We have chosen to work closely with TBB to bring readers information on a number of topics, such as brake balance, replacement parts, ADR compliance and more. We hope you enjoy the monthly column and the excellent TBB magazine.

Ian Bushby
Chairman, ARTSA

