

# Active monitoring a major step forward

FLEET owners in the commercial vehicle and transport sector, which has been particularly hard hit during the recession, have been obliged to implement major changes and to focus on the efficient management of their vehicles to contain costs.

In addition, the current increase in cargo theft as opposed to vehicle theft — and the incidence of fuel theft — have posed additional challenges for fleet managers.

Brendan Horan, GM sales and marketing for MIX Telematics, says there is an understanding among criminals that it is far more lucrative to hijack trucks than cars, which has led to an increase in this type of crime.

He says that a highly competitive environment, coupled with the economic downturn, has contracted the available market, with many new entrants falling by the wayside.

"Today it's less about competing on price and more about competing on service, technology and experience — and this is where many smaller operators fall short."

Horan says that the active monitoring of vehicles has been a major step forward in tackling vehicle and cargo theft.

"Active monitoring allows for rapid



The control room can keep a close eye on vehicles' movements on the road.

response to incidents and reduces the risk of total loss. This eyes-on-screen monitoring can be enhanced by monitoring route adherence, speeding and abnormal behaviour to assist in anticipating criminal activity."

Mobile tracking devices are used to locate stolen trailers and cargo.

He says that immediate vehicle and asset recovery is vital for clients as business downtime has the biggest impact on fleet operators' bottom line.

"If vehicles cannot be replaced quickly delivery contracts may not be fulfilled, resulting in penalties or lost business. A quick recovery of the

vehicle and cargo is first prize.

"By implementing intelligent telematics, vehicle tracking and fleet management solutions, fleet managers achieve more efficient use of their fleet and excellent cost savings, while managing security threats."

The importance of on-time delivery, along with the high cost of fuel, make it important for fleet managers to know exactly where their vehicles are and to be able to monitor their drivers in the process — definite advantages in an industry where profit margins are habitually low, he says.

"Having information about every aspect of an individual vehicle trip can greatly assist in planning and managing fleet operations."

Fleet management solutions designed specifically for this sector can reduce accident rates substantially, drive improvements in fuel economy and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and lower maintenance costs, he says.

"We believe that the best strategy for making fleet management efficient and cost-effective and ensuring the security of vehicles and cargo is a partnership between the product supplier and fleet operator or customer. This requires buy-in from the customer and a long-term partnership," he says.

