



# Protect your assets

Brendan Horan, general manager sales and marketing for MiX Telematics Africa

The commercial vehicle and transport sector that was hit particularly hard during the recession has had to implement major changes and fleet owners have been forced to focus on efficient management of their vehicles. Not only that but the current increase in cargo versus vehicle theft has posed additional challenges for fleet managers and is expected to continue. Fuel theft is but one such challenge. Brendan Horan, general manager sales and marketing for MiX Telematics Africa, says there is an understanding that it is far more lucrative to hijack trucks than cars which has led to an increase in this type of crime.

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MiX Telematics, a global provider in fleet management and telematics solutions, has been tracking these trends and offering fleet management and security solutions to fleet managers. “Through the implementation of intelligent telematics, vehicle tracking and fleet management solutions, fleet managers are achieving more efficient usage of their existing fleet and achieving excellent cost savings while managing security threats,” says Horan. “Managers are looking for solutions which allow for active fleet management in real time, delivering accurate meaningful data and facilitating sound decision making.

“Telematics has the potential to fundamentally change the way in which fleets are managed but locally, the integration of telematics into fleet management has been far slower than in the rest of the world,” says Horan.

Horan says commercial telematics solutions have proven themselves as tools for fundamentally changing the way fleets are managed. “They are not potential changers, they are proven changers.”

Given the importance of on-time delivery and the high cost of fuel, knowing exactly where vehicles are and monitoring

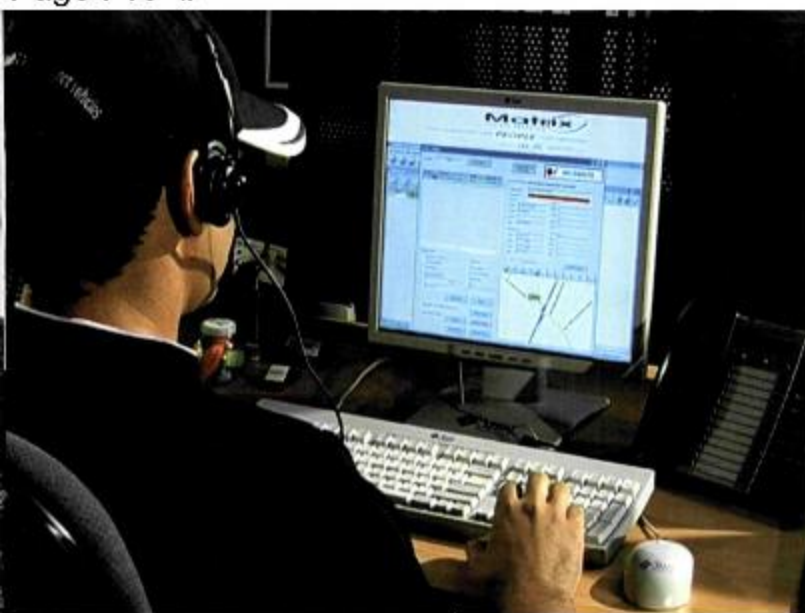


their drivers seem like definite advantages in an industry where profit margins are habitually low. As a fleet manager, having information about every aspect of an individual vehicle trip can greatly assist in the planning and managing of fleet operations.

Perhaps one of the greatest advantages of telematics to fleet operators is the improved security it provides. Horan says that fleet management solutions, designed specifically for this sector, can substantially reduce accident rates; drive improvements in fuel economy and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and lower maintenance costs.

Horan says the current highly competitive environment, coupled with the economic downturn, has definitely seen a contraction in 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 have fallen short. MiX Telematics has also kept its ear to the ground, resulting in its global success, proactively designing products and functions to meet the needs of fleet managers, especially with regards to crime.”

The active monitoring of vehicles has been a major step forward in tackling vehicle and cargo theft. “Active monitoring allows for rapid response to incidences which reduces the risk of total loss. This ‘eyes on screen’ monitoring can be enhanced with the monitoring of route adherence, speeding and abnormally detected behaviour to assist in proactively anticipating criminal activity,” said Horan. Mobile tracking devices are used to locate stolen trailers and cargo which can be disconnected or taken from the vehicle during criminal activity.



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Immediate vehicle and asset recovery is vital for clients as business down time has the biggest impact on fleet operators' bottom line. "If vehicles cannot be replaced quickly, delivery contracts may not be able to be fulfilled resulting in penalties or lost business. There is also an administration disruption as the client has to go through the process of the insurance claim and replacement. A quick recovery of the vehicle and cargo is first prize," he added.

The innovative product range, 24/7 technology hub and National Operations Centre, professional recovery teams and a dedication to customer service has positioned MiX Telematics ahead of the pack.

## Telematics

"Our well-established Matrix Recovery Services is one of the leading personal safety and security tracking unit brands in South Africa. We have a simple philosophy in our business of 'Our customers are people, not vehicles'".

In terms of product innovations, the company recently developed a sophisticated business intelligence tool, MiX Insight Reports. MiX Insight Reports forms part of FM-Web, the internet-based fleet management service offered by MiX Telematics.

As its name implies, the primary objective of the Reports is to provide insight into a customer's data, stored in a powerful data warehouse and presented in an intuitive reporting structure. The new features enable FM-Web customers to leverage both real-time and historical fleet information, thereby assisting fleet managers in managing vehicles and drivers more effectively.

"Products such as MiX Insight Reports have been developed to meet and overcome many of the challenges facing fleet owners. We strongly believe that the best strategy for making fleet management efficient and cost-effective and ensuring the security of vehicles and cargo, is a strong partnership between the product supplier and fleet operator or customer. This requires buy-in from the customer and a relationship that is a long-term partnership," concludes Horan. ♦