

Mainline Haulage

Haulage Exchange Case Study

The haulage industry has a reputation for getting people 'hooked' and then immersing them in the business for life. This is very much the case for Mainline Haulage's main man Ron Aiken. A down to earth guy, Ron was brought up in the Motor Trade but it was the fuel crisis of 1974 that created a change of direction in Ron's career. He found his way into road haulage first running vans around Wolverhampton as an added value service of the Mainline Service Station business and then developed Mainline Haulage as a Midlands based, family owned, medium-sized business just off junction 10 of the M6.



Today, Mainline Haulage runs 40 vehicles from a 6 acre site at the Neachells Distribution Centre. Owned by Ron, there is a further 5 acres of land for future development. He has developed 75,000 sq ft of high quality modern warehousing with 24 hour high-tech security monitoring. It has state-of-the-art fire protection approved by the West Midlands Fire Authority and a loading canopy ensures that goods stay dry during loading and unloading. Currently the warehouse is contracted out to a major polymer producer on a long term deal.



This leaves Ron and his operations manager, Paul Watkins, to concentrate on running and maintaining the fleet. Ron believes in the quality of his fleet not only in terms of the livery and image but also in in-house maintenance. He is currently trialling gas/diesel engines and other environmentally friendly vehicles with a view to keeping running costs down as well as protecting the environment.

Mainline Haulage's fleet of 40 vehicles covers the complete weight range from 44 tonne tractor curtainsider combinations to 18 tonne rigids, 7.5 tonne urban delivery vehicles to small vans. Customers have ranged from steel stockholders and manufacturers, but as the industry around Birmingham has changed, Mainline Haulage's customer profile has also changed. It now concentrates on moving fine papers, paperboard and polymers. These products require safe and secure handling. Minimising damage is a key factor.

Mainline Haulage still sees itself as a general haulage business and, having had depots in Scotland and the South of England in the past, Ron believes that concentrating on his own fleet and the Birmingham 'hub', given its central location in the UK, is his ideal solution for his shared user national distribution operation. And this is where Haulage Exchange comes in.

Mainline Haulage uses Haulage Exchange for its vehicles that are available from its shared user fleet to get back to Birmingham. "Where Haulage Exchange works really well", says Ron, "is dealing with our same-day delivery of small loads". "We can find very competitive rates for small loads to London," adds



Ian Squire Commercial Manager at Mainline who has been brought in to strengthen the management team as the business grows. "We are a very hands-on business and pride ourselves on providing a high quality service at the right price for any individual customer. Sub-contracting loads is a major issue for us".

Having access to a large number of pre-vetted quality hauliers in parts of the UK where it is not cost effective for Mainline Haulage to run, is where Haulage Exchange is helping to make the most effective use of Mainline Haulage's fleet. This way Mainline Haulage is able to keep utilisation of its fleet at 95% on a regular basis and using Haulage Exchange where needed. "We have chosen to use Haulage Exchange instead of joining a pallet network as we believe it provides us with a major opportunity to keep a closer eye on costs" concludes Ian Squire. At a time of spiralling fuel prices this hands-on approach will see Mainline Haulage through the current crisis in the industry.

Haulage Exchange is a trading division of Transport Exchange Group Ltd, which specialises in the development & operation of real time collaborative trading platforms & associated services for the European transport industry. Transport Exchange Group delivers fully supported and managed online services for the transport sector, which enable businesses to realise the synergies that exist when organisations work together.

Transport Exchange Group provides the framework & venues for successful online marketplaces, as well as the mechanisms for ensuring that inter-company transactions are conducted seamlessly.

Haulage Exchange (<http://www.haulageexchange.co.uk>)

Real time online trading platform for the haulage industry.

Courier Exchange (<http://www.courierexchange.co.uk>)

Real time trading platform for the same day and express freight industry.

CX Mobile (<http://www.cxmobile.co.uk>)

A sophisticated, yet affordable & easy to use mobile data service for courier & transport companies.

Transport Exchange Group (<http://www.transportexchange.co.uk>)

Europe's largest network of professional freight exchanges and a member of the Fret Alliance.

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