



**THE STATE OF SATISFACTION:**

# **2023 CDL Truck Driver Job Happiness Report**





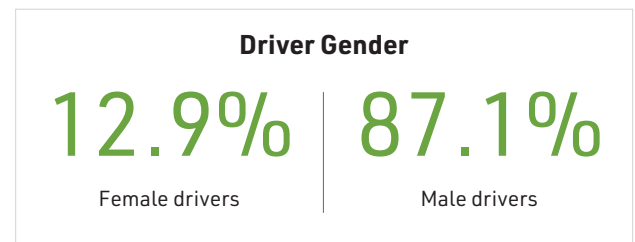
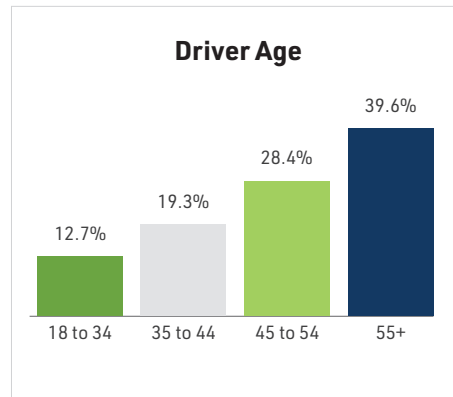
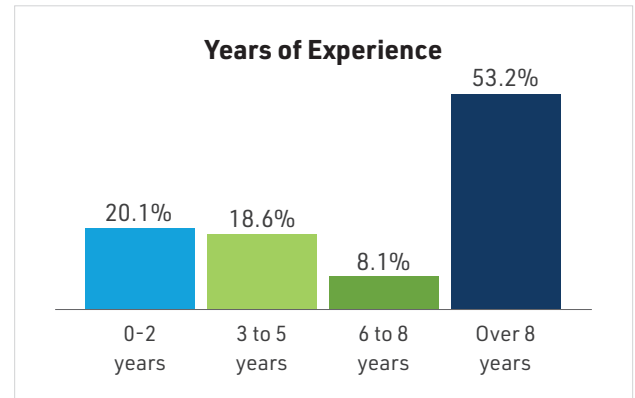
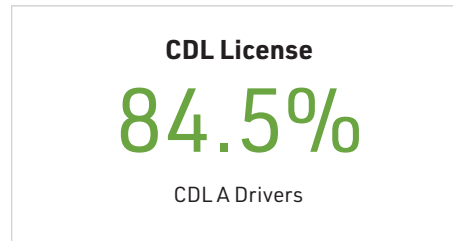
Drive My Way is a truck driver recruiting platform completely focused on drivers and their needs. We match company drivers and owner operators with CDL jobs based on more than 20 personal lifestyle preferences. We put drivers first to help them find a job they love.

## DRIVER HAPPINESS SURVEY

# Survey Methodology

In 2023, Drive My Way conducted a nationwide survey of over 500 CDL Drivers to do two things: first, understand what makes them happy in their career and life, and second, compare our findings with the results of our first study on driver happiness conducted in 2019.

### RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

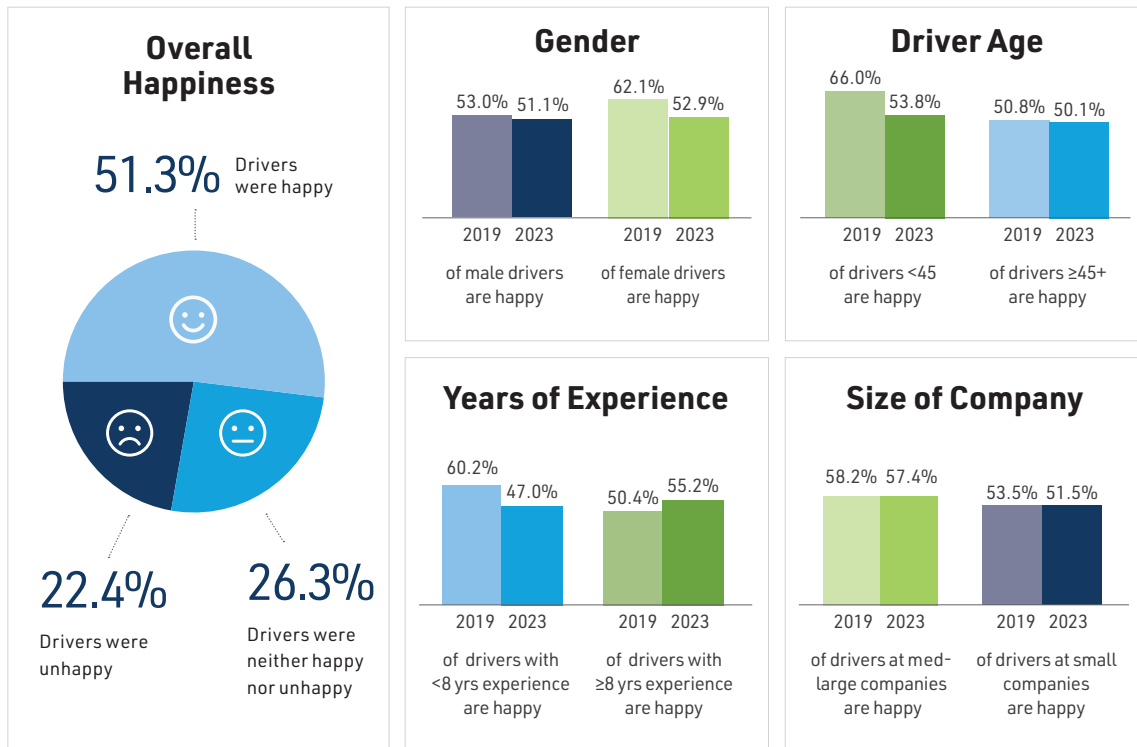


THE MILLION DOLLAR QUESTION

# Are You Happy With Your Job? Now, Only 51% Of Drivers Say Yes

Driver happiness levels have dropped by 3% since 2019, when 54% of surveyed drivers reported they were happy with their job. Younger and newer drivers expressed less happiness than older, more experienced drivers, another change from 2019. Also of note: female drivers continued to expressed slightly higher satisfaction levels than their male counterparts, as did those working for larger companies.

“It’s ironic that in today’s consumer-led job market, we don’t view drivers as consumers themselves. Truck drivers have infinite career options, and too many are not happy with their current job. A truck driver’s life and job are inextricably connected, therefore it’s critical their job fits their needs and preferences so they can live the life they want doing the job they love.” –Beth Potratz, CEO of Drive My Way



Overall driver happiness has dropped slightly since 2019, with less experienced drivers reporting the biggest decline.



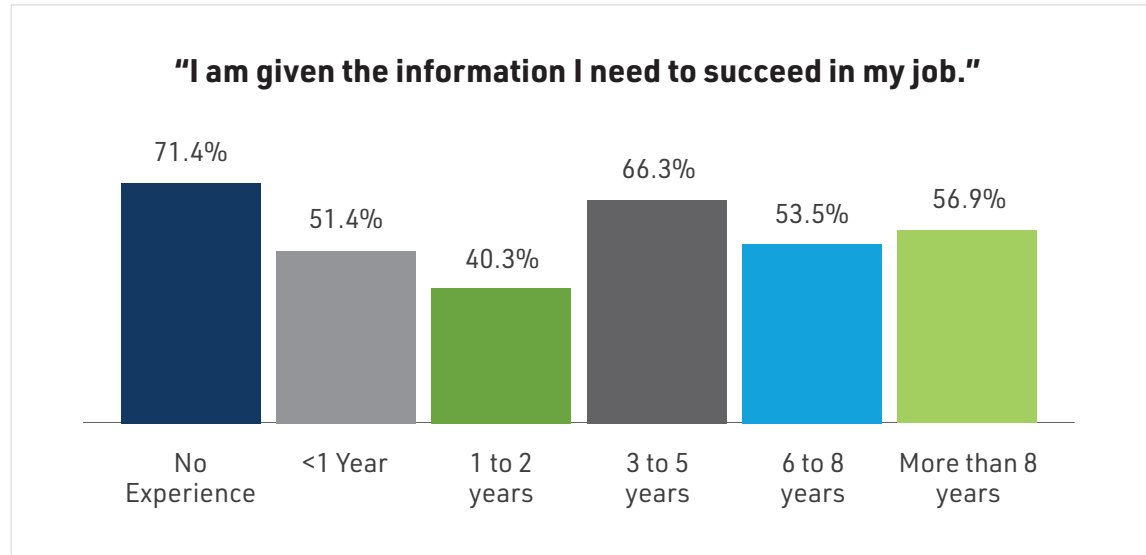


New drivers need support long after orientation ends. Make sure they feel like they have the information needed to do their jobs well.

**HAPPINESS AFTER THE HONEYMOON PHASE**

# The Industry Needs New Drivers. Are They Being Set Up for Success?

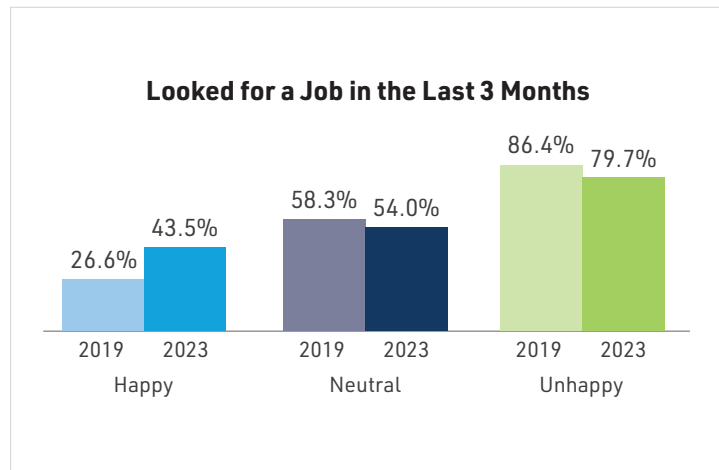
Drivers with 1 to 2 years of experience reported significantly lower happiness than any other segment with only 44% saying they were happy in their current role, and three out of four say they're looking for other jobs. The biggest culprit? Feeling set up to fail: a mere 40% of drivers at this stage reported that they get the information they need to be successful.



ARE DRIVERS HAPPY, LOOKING TO MAKE A MOVE, OR BOTH?

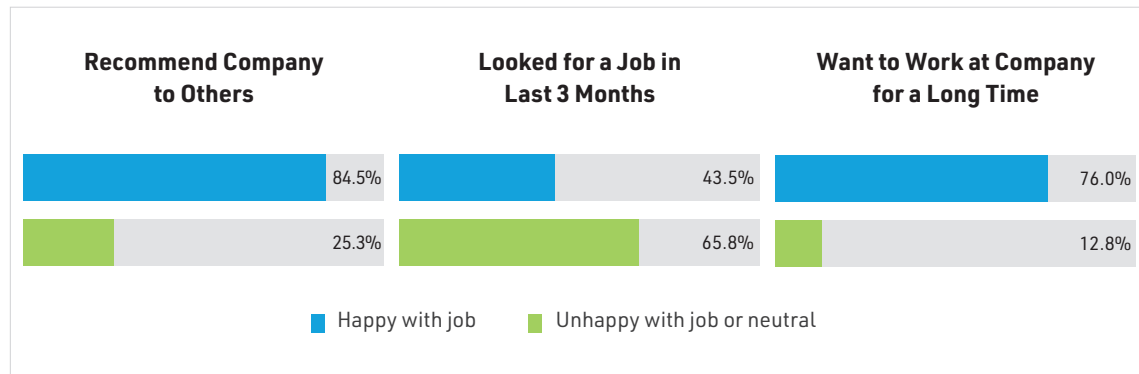
# Connections Between Happiness, Retention, Referrals and Turnover

Happiness is contagious, but is it enough? While happy drivers are more likely to stay – and three times more likely to refer others to their employer – **they are nearly twice as likely to look for a new job than they were in 2019**. And as unhappiness remains a strong predictor of turnover, failing to invest in the satisfaction of your drivers comes at a higher cost than ever in both retention and recruiting.



**3x**

Happy drivers are **3x more likely** to refer drivers to their employer than unhappy drivers.



Happy drivers are nearly **twice as likely to look for a new job** as they were in 2019, making retention an even tougher fight.



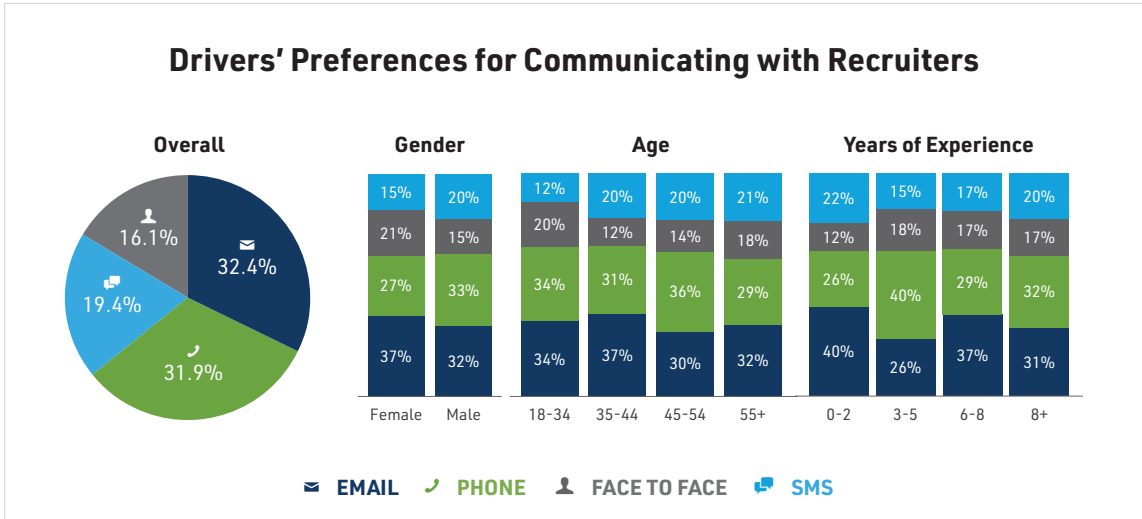
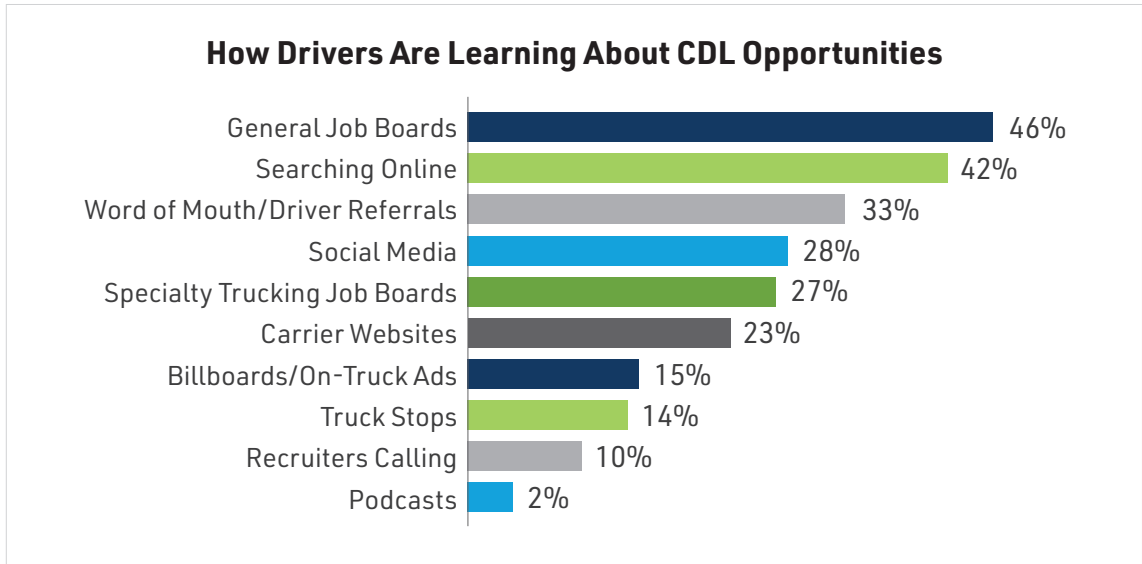


1 in 5 drivers hear about new jobs from other drivers, making that 3x referral rate from happy drivers invaluable to your talent search.

**HOW DO DRIVERS PREFER TO COMMUNICATE?**

# Finding Jobs & Talking to Recruiters

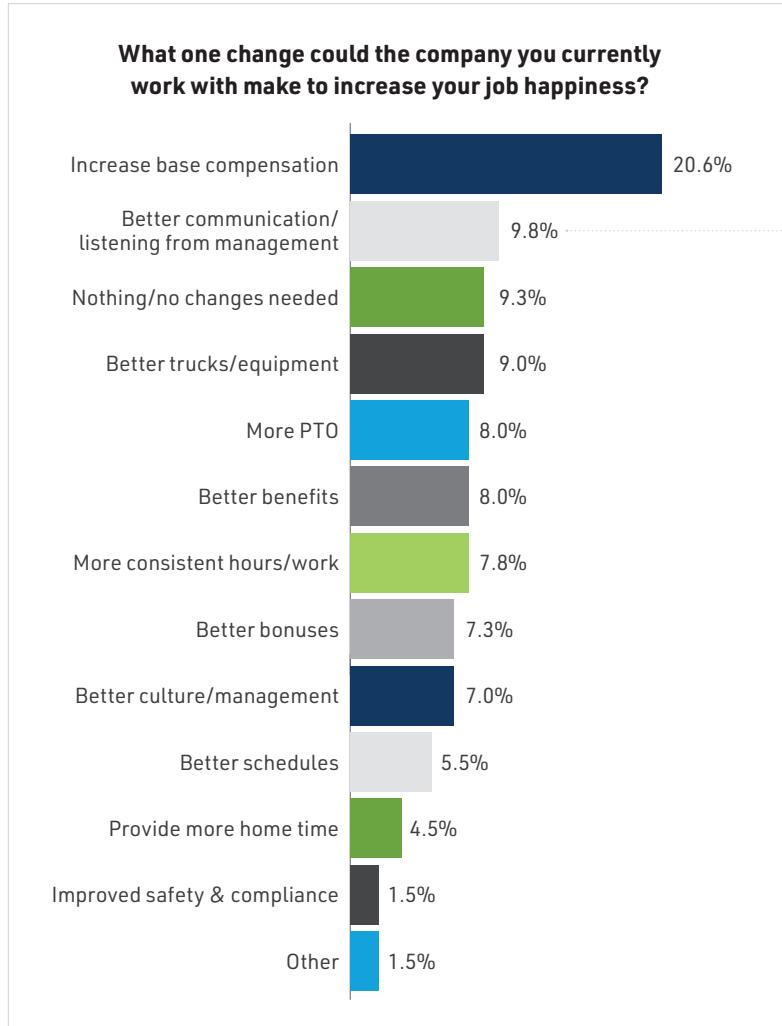
This data reveals where drivers are most often finding new CDL opportunities – and how they prefer talking to recruiters when looking for a new job.



## WHAT WOULD MAKE DRIVERS HAPPIER?

# The One Thing Employers Can Do Better, According to Drivers

While driver pay has climbed dramatically since 2019, an increase in base compensation continues to be the number one most important thing link to job happiness for drivers. But that may not be enough.



Communication is key for female drivers and new employees:



Twice as many women as men reported that “better communication and listening from management” was the one thing their employer could do to improve their job happiness.

# 60.6%

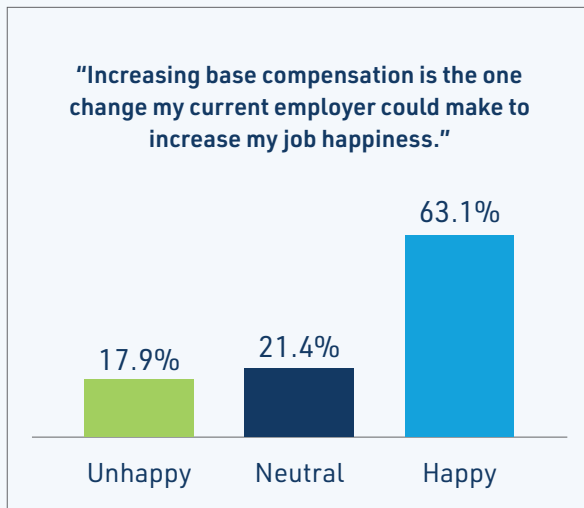
Three out of five drivers who most desired better communication and listening from management have been in their current roles for less than two years.



While pay continues to be most important, good listening and communication are critical to improving driver happiness.

# ↑ 17.9%

That's how much drivers' base mileage and hourly pay has grown on average since September 2019, according to The National Transportation Institute's National Driver Wage Index, which tracks driver pay percentage movements across equipment types, fleet segments, driver experience levels, and more.



The results of the 2023 Driver Happiness Survey show that pay raises won't convert unhappy drivers or neutral drivers into happy drivers, but that pay raises would make happy drivers even happier.

## A Closer Look at Driver Pay's Impact on Driver Satisfaction

Driver wages, despite making immense gains related to both evolution of pay models and amplification, remain quite complicated. The National Transportation Institute tracks nearly 180 attributes of driver compensation daily, highlighting how complicated pay can be for both drivers and their fleet employers. The common aggravator for drivers today may not be their base pay, which has seen strong gains (17.91% on average, according to NTI's National Driver Wage Index) since the 2019 edition of the Driver Happiness Survey was published. **Rather, productivity is the major concern for drivers right now, as lack of productivity – aka fewer miles, hours, and loads – is pinching drivers' take-home pay.**

As long as driver earnings continue to be directly tied to miles and hours, drivers will see fluctuations in weekly earnings, especially given the volatility of today's market, which is substantially impacting many fleets, and of all sizes and operation type. Additional aggravators drivers report regularly are unpaid, unproductive time that is out of their control – think detention, traffic congestion, weather, maintenance, layovers, etc. – and unpaid work expenses that impact convenience and costs for drivers away from home. As we've all experienced because of economic inflation over the past few years, these expenses have mounted for drivers.

Many fleets are working hard to demystify drivers' pay package to add stability and clarity. Fleets are also increasingly communicating with customers to improve conditions and accommodations that impact drivers. Also, the prevalence of guaranteed pay continues to grow, with just shy of 40% of fleets in late 2023 reporting they offer guaranteed pay. That's up from 26% in late 2019. Guaranteed pay safeguards minimum earnings when drivers experience productivity fluctuations outside of their control.

However, while fleets' emphasis on these issues is certainly the right move and appreciated by drivers, these programs are still far from the industry standard, and the aforementioned aggravators will persist in the current freight cycle and even into, if not beyond, the next freight market recovery.



IN CLOSING

Get focused on your drivers' happiness and protect your greatest investment with a one-on-one consult.

The evidence is clear: it is vital to maintain driver happiness levels, whether the recruiting market is strong or not. Drivers can become disengaged quickly, poorly represent your brand, and will likely leave at the first opportunity.

**That's why we're offering one-on-one consults with Drive My Way CEO Beth Potratz**, where you'll get expert insight on your own recruiting and retention efforts – and ways you can improve them.

To set up a call with Beth, visit [drivemyway.com/consult](https://drivemyway.com/consult).



Beth Potratz, Co-Founder and CEO of Drive My Way, has over 20 years of experience as an innovative, forward-thinking HR professional and is disrupting truck driver recruiting by treating the driver as a consumer in the employment relationship and making recruiting personal again.

