Switching to an open, long-term telematics solution

2022

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Switch to a truly open, customizable telematics solution for flexibility and control

Switching out your telematics solution is a big decision. In some cases, you might spend months with a provider only to find out they're not the right fit.

But there are lots of reasons why you'd want to make the switch — especially from a closed solution to a truly open and customizable one.
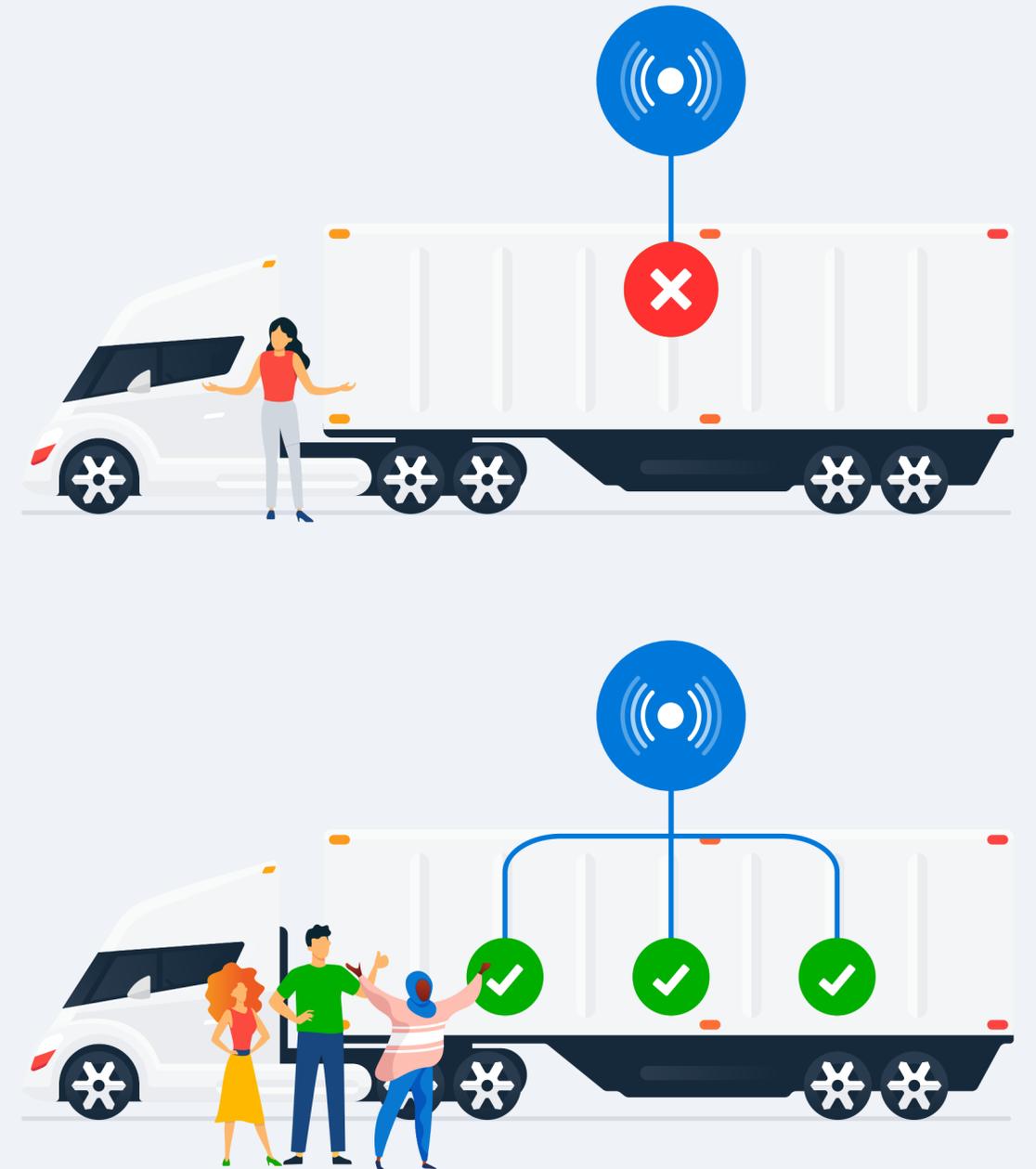
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CHAPTER 1

Open vs. closed telematics

A closed telematics solution is often marketed as "one-size-fits-all." In some situations, these solutions might be enough to address your needs. However, they often can't integrate with other components and lack the control and flexibility fleets need for long-term growth.

In contrast, an open solution is one that's fully customizable. It allows you to integrate individual components and gives you access to far more innovative solutions to grow and optimize through your fleet's life cycle.

Each fleet is different and has unique needs, meaning one size does not fit all

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The challenges of a closed solution

Since closed solutions don't offer the same flexibility and control as an open solution, they may not address your fleet's evolving needs. Often, these solutions won't support your growth.

Providers of closed solutions try to do everything. As a result, they:

May not be able to offer best in class components for a complete telematics platform

May not offer deep technical support as they may have limited access to experts for each technical focus area

May not have the capacity to focus on innovating for the future and may not be able to keep up with specialist providers

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The power of an open telematics solution

A truly open, secure and customizable telematics platform is designed around connection and customization. It can adapt to your fleet as you evolve through every stage of growth, from small to enterprise.

An open telematics solution offers:

- Access to pre-vetted integrated options

- More choice to optimize safety, fuel management, compliance and fleet operations

- More control to ensure the best possible solution for your specific needs

- The ability to sustainably scale your business

This guide will help you understand why switching from a closed solution to an open telematics platform gives you greater flexibility and control.

In fact, such a switch can be more efficient and profitable for your fleet. It can save you a lot of money in the long run, help you scale your business and keep you competitive.

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CHAPTER 2

Advantages of open telematics

A good analogy to compare an open platform with a closed platform is right inside your pocket: your phone.
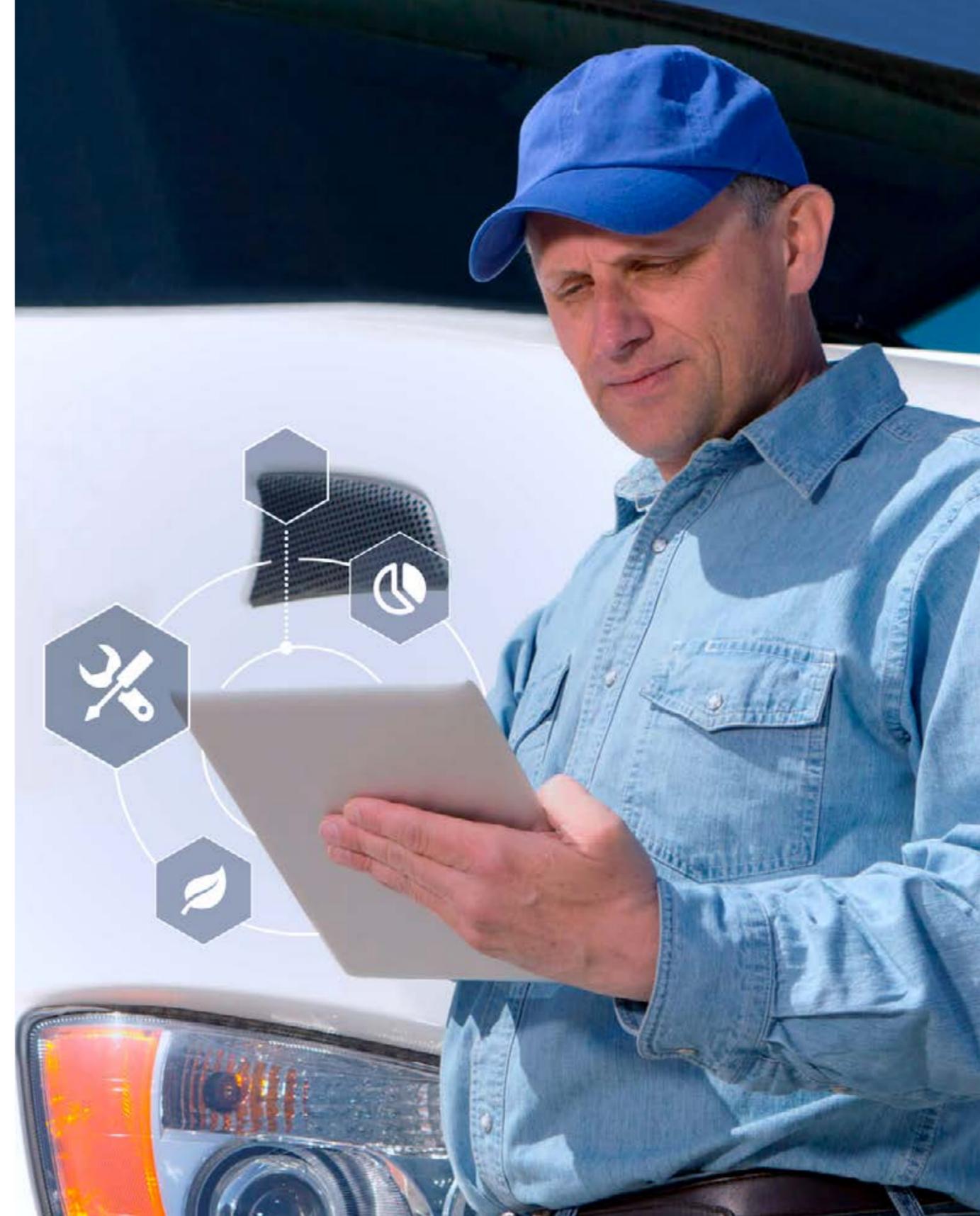
Smartphones have become ubiquitous. While many devices look the same, the apps you choose to install — and the operating system upon which they're built — make each phone unique.

From a software perspective, you can choose banking apps that let you pay bills and make investments, educational apps to learn new skills, and social apps to keep you connected with friends and family.

An open operating system on your phone gives you greater control over how you customize your experience. With third-party applications, it's like building the custom device you want today and being able to easily reconfigure the components you want tomorrow.

Similarly, a telematics platform that's also open and customizable gives you a fully-integrated experience with pre-vetted third-party products to switch in and out based on your needs. You can also build a custom app that is unique to your fleet, if you choose to do so.

Now, imagine your phone without the ability to add new apps. You'd be stuck with the same apps while knowing better apps exist that allow you to create, interact and connect.

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Considering choice,
data permissions and focus

Choice and integrations

Often, closed solutions not only lack the power of choice, but they also lack the integration capabilities for you to keep the parts of your current solution that are working. True open and customizable solutions let you compare and contrast best-in-class solutions, like cameras, connected sensors, fuel management solutions, compliance and electric vehicle (EV) solutions and more.
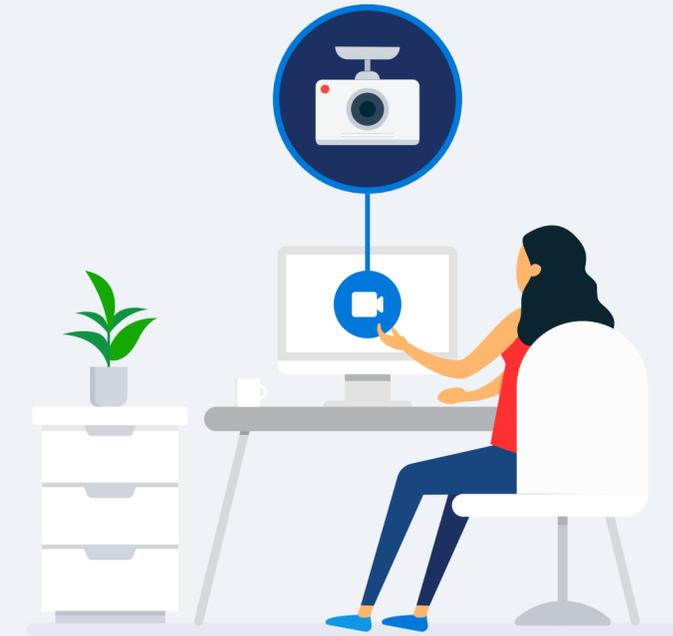
Data permissions and ownership

A closed solution means you're also limited with what you can do with your data. You might not be able to export data to your own systems, or even extract data without the permission of the telematics provider. That means you lose control and flexibility over the most important aspect of your solution — the data. When evaluating telematics solutions, always ask who owns the data and where that data is stored.

Focus and resourcing

Another issue with a closed solution is the allocation of resources needed to build a high-quality telematics platform. With a fully customizable solution, you have experts building each component, while simultaneously innovating in that space. For instance, would you rather buy a camera from a telematics company or from a camera company?

Dedicated focus on building — and maintaining — a high-quality product is the best way to serve fleets and ensure they can achieve their goals. Open telematics enables the connectivity and integrations required to bring market-leading solutions together for the best possible solution for your fleet.

Limited options to support your fleet

Flexibility to choose a solution

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Comparing solutions

Access to experts

Open solution	• Select industry experts for each portion of your solution that have dedicated R&D to innovate • True expert support with each component
Closed solution	• Can't excel in each aspect because they lack the resources and focus (e.g., camera, sensors, TMS, etc.)

More control

Open solution	• Purchase only the solution and components you need for your fleet • No need to force any aspects of a solution that don't match your workflows or objectives • Pivot and adjust components as your fleet evolves — if you don't like one component, you can switch it out and keep what works
Closed solution	• You're only able to use the components that come with the solution

Scalability

Open solution	• As your business grows and your operational goals change, you can update your solution as needed
Closed solution	• May lack the flexibility and required features to grow with your fleet

Comparing solutions (continued)

Data ownership

Open solution	• Secure, unfiltered access to all of the data collected from your vehicles • Share and use the data as you see fit
Closed solution	• No control over your data • No ability to determine who has access to your data

Powerful integration

Open solution	• Bring best-in-class solutions together on a single dashboard • Integrate with existing components that are already working for you
Closed solution	• Doesn't allow you to integrate with any existing components

Homegrown solution

Open solution	• If there aren't any third-party solutions that address your team's unique challenges, open platforms allow you to create your own solutions
Closed solution	• Doesn't offer the flexibility for this type of customization

A few things to keep in mind

As you can see, an open solution provides the flexibility, control and power you need to reach your fleet's goals — ideal for your fleet today and easily customizable for tomorrow.

Here are some additional things to consider when evaluating an open solution:

Research different components

Conduct a comprehensive needs analysis of your fleet to identify how an open solution can support your growth. Work with a solutions expert for advice on which components best meet your needs. Open platforms offer several component options — e.g., cameras and asset trackers. You can also make recommendations and be more involved in the process, versus a closed solution where you only have one option.

Consider telematics an investment in your growth

A telematics solution is an investment in your fleet. Open solutions help you save money in the long run, operate more efficiently and stay competitive. Closed solutions become outdated, requiring further investment and downtime. Your telematics provider should have a vision of how they can support your future growth and a reputable track record of helping large fleets succeed.

Rely on experts, not generalists

Your telematics provider should be the expert in telematics. Similarly, companies that create individual components — cameras, asset trackers, routing and dispatch solutions — are the experts in their industry. Open solutions give you access to the experts, where closed solution providers are generalists trying to be the experts in everything.

What are the components of a comprehensive telematics solution?

Once you've decided to go with an open, customizable telematics solution, it's important to understand the components that make up an effective solution:

Telematics — A foundational platform upon which to collect rich data from multiple sources to make better business decisions to improve safety, productivity and efficiency.

Transportation management systems (TMS) — A logistics platform that uses technology to help businesses plan, execute, and optimize the physical movement of goods. An effective telematics system needs to have the capability to fully integrate into your TMS so you can use the data you're collecting.

Asset tracking — Connect trailers, containers, generators and other powered and non-powered assets.
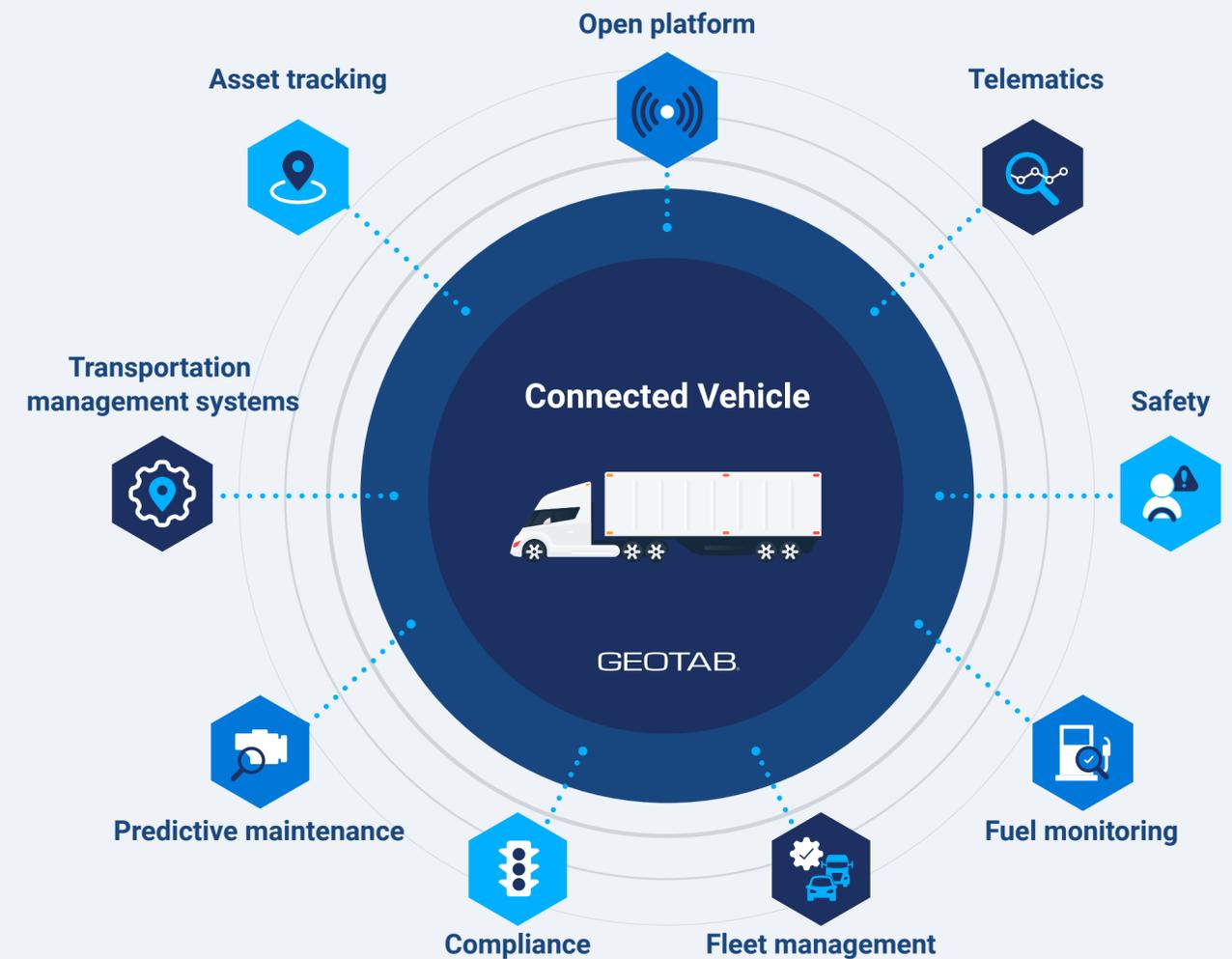
Safety (Camera, driver scorecard, ADAS) — Capture events on the road through single or multi-cam hardware options or detect distracted driving to adjust behavior.

Compliance (HOS, DVIR, IFTA toll/weigh station bypass) — Meet your regulatory obligations and maintain, or improve, your compliance safety accountability.

Fuel monitoring — Fuel is an expense that requires the right payment and optimization solution. Choose one that gives you control and visibility of your fuel expenses and provides you with automated reporting and actionable analytics.

Fleet management — Automate daily tasks and run more efficient fleets with the help of comprehensive dashboards and reporting tools. Using the data, benchmark current performance and measure improvements.

Predictive maintenance — Data-driven solutions maximize uptime and provide more accurate maintenance predictions. Track driver and operator inspections to generate work orders. Analyze and act on fault codes from your vehicle OEM. Streamline maintenance workflows and improve fleet productivity.

Open platform

Asset tracking

Telematics

Transportation management systems

Connected Vehicle

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Safety

Predictive maintenance

Compliance

Fleet management

Fuel monitoring

Why some fleets may
be hesitant to switch

Transitioning any technology solution involves time and effort. While the advantages of an open platform outweigh those of a closed platform, you have a lot to consider before switching systems.

Look for a vendor that offers the data you need in the format you want to help you make the best decisions for your fleet.

- **Knowledge of existing solutions** — You know how to use your legacy systems and don't want to go through the process of installing and learning how to use a new solution.

- **Complexity** — Integration with multiple applications can be overwhelming. You want to ensure efficiency when getting telematics data back into your TMS systems.

- **Associated cost** — A switch of any kind to a different solution will have an associated cost, either with breaking a contract or through installation.

- **Installation and training** — Professional installation of new devices along with getting drivers trained on the new system may cause vehicle downtime.

- **Unaware of options** — You might not be aware of the powerful opportunities you have with an open solution that would encourage you to switch.

These are all things to consider for your fleet if you're thinking of making the switch. This uncertainty coupled with a mindset of "if it ain't broke don't fix it" might cause you to miss a solution that can accelerate growth and provide the insights you need to stay competitive — something that's becoming increasingly more important in today's climate.

Next, we'll dig a little deeper into what to consider before making the switch and how to integrate with your current systems.

CHAPTER 3

Considerations before switching

There are practical steps you can take to help make the switch to a more customizable solution as seamless as possible:

1. Identify your current systems

First, make a list of all the systems and technology your fleet currently uses. If you're using a telematics provider, which one are you using? Which electronic logging device (ELD) are you using? Include everything in your solution network to capture an accurate picture of your current setup.

2. Understand the flow of information

Map the flow of data through your integrations. How do your systems talk to each other and what does the exchange of data look like? Now, smaller fleets might be able to start evaluating individual components. But larger fleets with more customization — like their own tables and incentive reports — have to look at their processes.

One way to do that is to mimic the funnels that traditional systems use and then expand on them. Select API data that matches your legacy provider, bring it into the same place and then use additional data to create more advanced reporting.

1. Identify your current systems

2. Understand the flow of information

3. Evaluate potential solutions

3. Evaluate potential solutions

Now, you're ready to look at some potential solutions to integrate with a fully customizable telematics platform. Take the information you've collected from step two (Understand the flow of information) and identify solutions that will fulfill your needs. This is where you can work with a solutions expert to ensure all your needs are met and you're positioned for success and growth in the future.

Look for partners with extensive experience in the heavy truck industry who can support your business with insights into specific use cases for data and data feeds. Find a solution with integration capabilities for all facets of your business.

Compare solutions with a side-by-side field test with your existing system. See how the data compares and what additional insights you can pull from a fully customizable solution. You can also identify any customized reports you'll need outside of the stock integration.

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CHAPTER 4

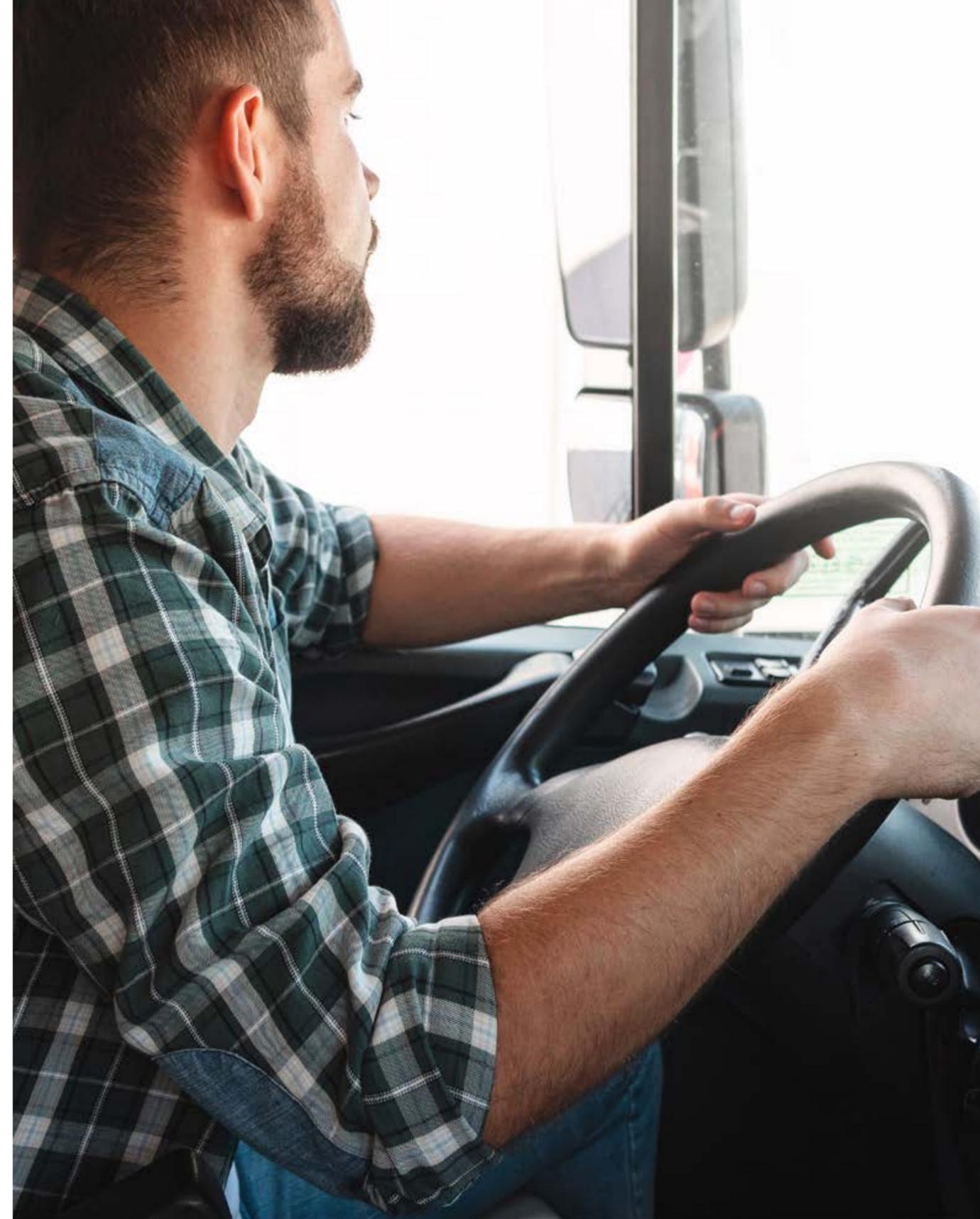# How to choose the right solution

One constant in your fleet's life cycle will be change. While the industry is faced with issues that are common for every fleet, like rising fuel costs, driver shortages and traffic congestion, each fleet has their own path to success and growth, which will pivot depending on needs.

You'll need to evaluate different solutions that will help you collect the data you need to make better decisions.

Let's use selecting a camera as an example. A camera is one component of your telematics solution. And when it comes to choosing the right camera, there's lots to consider:

- Do you need forward facing, driver facing or rear facing?
- What will your cameras be connected to?
- How much time can you spend managing a successful video program?
- Can you integrate your camera into your telematics solution?
- Does the camera provide real-time or delayed footage?

- What events do you want to record?
- Does the camera use AI (Artificial Intelligence) technology?
- Do you want to improve insurance rates and/or claims?
- Do you want to send driver alerts?
- How do you expect to manage updates?
- What do you expect with accidents when going less than 5 m.p.h.?

This is where an open platform provides large fleets with unmatched control and flexibility. A solution expert can triage your options down to your most relevant choices based on your needs.

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Scenario 1: Do I really need a camera?

You might learn, after a comprehensive needs and business analysis, that you'll get more value from your solution if you focus on monitoring fuel levels or on routing and dispatching tools. With an open solution, you can focus your time and resources elsewhere and you don't pay for the camera you don't need. With a closed solution, you pay for the camera regardless of whether or not you need it.

Scenario 2: Can I try different cameras?

A good strategy is to run a side-by-side comparison of different options. Depending on your needs, you'll want a camera that is the best option for you today. But as your fleet grows and your needs change, you might need a different option in the future. For example, you may want to test an AI-powered camera that gives you access to real-time insights. A closed solution doesn't let you switch that camera out, even if it doesn't meet your needs as you grow.

Scenario 3: Can I switch out my camera?

Hopefully, you don't end up in a situation where you're not happy with your camera. But with an open solution, if that happens, you can remove your camera — and stop paying for it — or you can try another solution better-suited to your fleet. As illustrated above, closed solutions don't offer that type of flexibility.

In the situation of selecting a camera, you can see how the flexibility and control of an open solution is valuable. If you need multiple components in addition to a camera, you can apply that same flexibility across your entire solution.

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CHAPTER 5

The path to a successful switch

Making the switch to an open, customizable platform doesn't need to be an overwhelming task. If you've gone through the needs discovery process, you're ready to take the next step.

Your solution expert will be your main point of contact and will have the knowledge and technical expertise to align each component of your solution with your individual needs and goals.

Proof of concept pilot

- Work with your solution expert to find opportunities to run proof of concepts with potential solutions.

- Identify no more than three components you want to test. Proof of concept won't include all integrations, but only for specific components.

- Create specific goals or outcomes you want as a result of your test (e.g., I want to see these three drivers go 30 days without unassigned logs).

- Start with stock integrations as this might be enough for some fleets. Your solution expert will help you develop your custom processes.

- Test the solution along with your current provider and compare the results.

Controlled pilot projects are an effective way to run tests in real-world environments to ensure potential solutions meet existing needs.

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Geotab — the open platform experts

Geotab lets you apply flexibility and control across your entire fleet with an open and customizable telematics platform that allows you to become truly agile.

Easily pivot and evolve as your needs change to constantly position your fleet for growth and success.

Learn more about **Geotab** and the only truly open and customizable telematics solution in the market.

Learn more

"We are able to utilize Geotab's SDK to automate driver profile creation and group status updates from our TMS. We also pull GPS and HOS into our TMS for load tracking and ETA calculations."

- Brian Hedge, VP of Information Technology, Riverside Transportation Inc.

"Willy's Trucking Service is using Geotab's SDK to, among other things, build in-depth custom reports. The SDK documentation is fantastic, and very easy to understand and use."

- Rafael Wiebe, IT Manager, Willy's Trucking Service

Geotab — the benefits of an open platform

Scale your solution easily

Update each component of your solution as you grow and your needs change.

Access over 200 solutions

Geotab's Marketplace provides you with choice and flexibility to tailor your solution to your needs.

Control your data

Get unfiltered access and control with your data as needed.

Powerful integrations

Use parts of your current solution that work and access everything you need on a single dashboard.

Develop custom apps and Geotab Add-Ins

Extend your solution with the MyGeotab SDK to create custom apps suited to your business needs. Joining Geotab data with your own APIs means having all required data in one place.

Enhance the in-cab experience

IOX expansion technology lets you connect additional hardware to the Geotab GO device for added functionality.

About Geotab

Geotab is advancing security, connecting commercial vehicles to the internet and providing web-based analytics to help customers better manage their fleets. Geotab's open platform and Marketplace, offering hundreds of third-party solution options, allows both small and large businesses to automate operations by integrating vehicle data with their other data.

The in-vehicle device provides additional functionality through IOX Add-Ons as an IoT hub. Processing billions of data points a day, Geotab leverages data analytics and machine learning to help customers improve productivity, focus on sustainability, optimize fleets by reducing fuel consumption, enhance driver safety, and achieve strong compliance to regulatory changes. Geotab's products are represented and sold worldwide through Authorized Geotab Resellers.

To learn more, please visit **www.geotab.com** and follow us **@GEOTAB** and on **LinkedIn**.

This ebook is intended to provide information and encourage discussion on topics of interest to the telematics community. Geotab is not providing technical, professional or legal advice through this white paper. While every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this white paper is timely and accurate, errors and omissions may occur, and the information presented here may become out-of-date with the passage of time.

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