

Voices of the industry:

Enterprise Holdings' blueprint for navigating economic uncertainty



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Executive summary

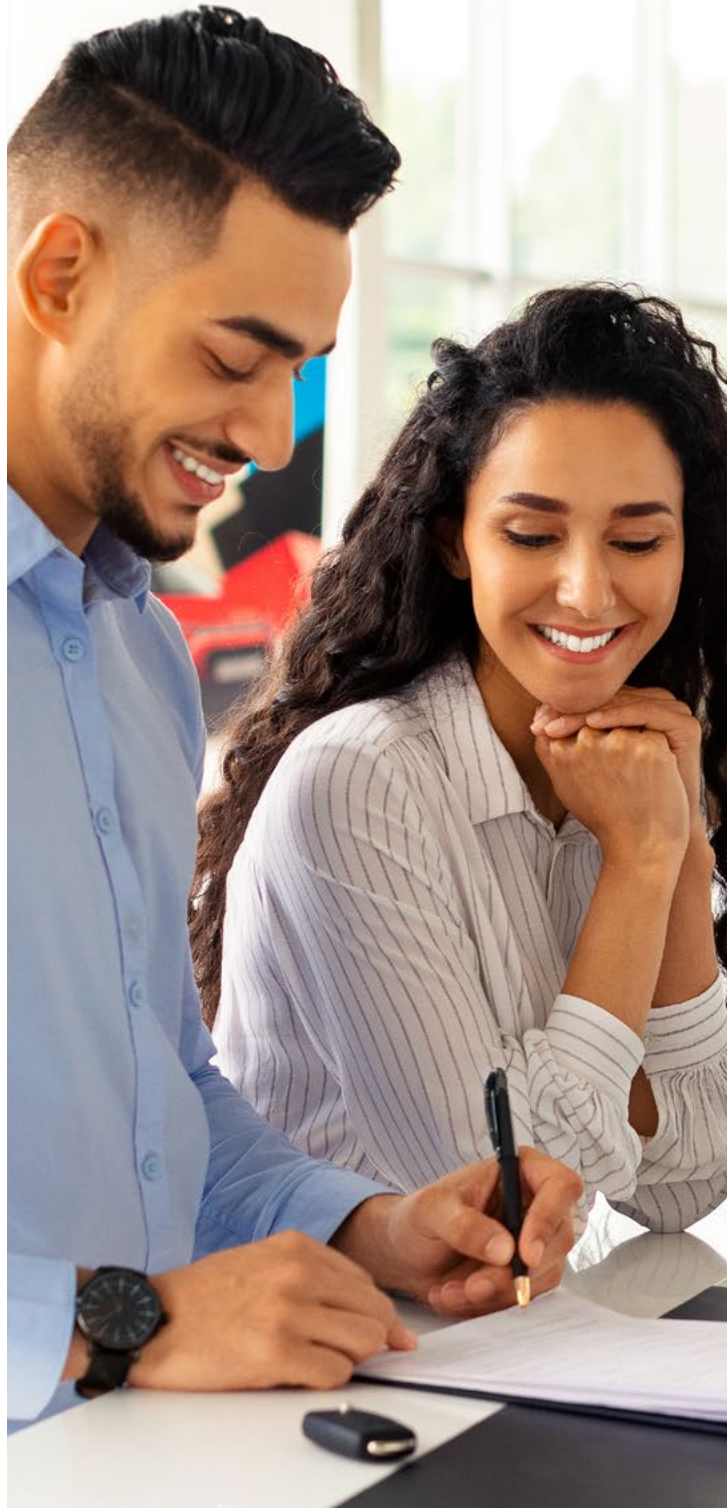
Enterprise Mobility is a leading global mobility company that owns and operates several car rental brands, including Enterprise Rent-A-Car, National Car Rental, and Alamo. When you read the name “Enterprise,” you probably picture their green and black logo. What you may not know is that Enterprise also offers a variety of mobility solutions including car sales, truck rental, fleet management, and car sharing.

In this report, we’ll explore how Enterprise Fleet Management, an affiliate of Enterprise Mobility maintains stability and growth despite economic volatility.

Company overview

Enterprise Mobility has been a family-owned business since it was founded by Jack Taylor in 1957. It operates in over 90 countries and territories, with almost 9,500 locations worldwide. The company name comes from the WWII ship on which Jack Taylor served, the USS Enterprise.

Taylor started the business with a small fleet of seven cars in St. Louis, Missouri, where Enterprise is still headquartered today. The company has since grown into a global leader in the mobility industry.



The challenge

Economic downturns can be unsettling and leave business leaders wondering where to turn for advice and guidance. This case study is part of a series, “**Beyond the Curve,**” built for commercial fleet managers navigating today’s economic uncertainty. From long-term strategy to daily cost controls, we explore how local and regional fleets are managing risk, reducing expenses, and positioning themselves to emerge stronger from economic volatility.

Today we share what we learned from industry expert Dain Giesie, Vice President of Business Development at Enterprise Fleet Management, on how fleets can prepare for upheaval and manage their operations to best build efficiencies and help minimize loss.



The response strategy

The foundation of Enterprise's strong approach to challenging times

Giesie emphasized thoughtful and measured leadership during turbulent times. He described it as:

- Maintaining a keen focus on what your clients require
- Doing what you can to mitigate exposure to market volatility
- Maintaining operational stability within your business
- Ensuring a positive experience for your clients and employees no matter the economic climate

Giesie also highlights strong relationships with clients: with these close-knit working relationships, it's only natural for the Enterprise Fleet Management team to do everything they can to help guide clients through economic fluctuations.

He's focused on staying positive with teams and with their clients through turbulence: "The job market is growing slowly and is considered stable. Consumer spending is also stable. There has been a spike in consumer spending that is likely people trying to avoid any impact of future tariffs. Generally speaking, there's more consistency in the consumer market than there's been since COVID."

At the same time, Giesie acknowledges there is still some uncertainty in the market. "The volatility in economic policy today is something none of us have ever seen before, whether it's regulations—proposed, going to be implemented, or pulled back off the table...tariffs and the impacts do impact the market. A business can't move fast enough to keep up with today's rapid pace of daily announcements." Because of this volatility, Enterprise Fleet Management is hyper-focused on each clients' long-term business objectives, recognizing that helping clients' achieve their business goals and objectives is the guiding light for the organization.



An overarching philosophy to guide you through turbulence

Operate with flexibility and adaptability during difficult times

Above all else, Giesie emphasizes the importance of responsiveness to the economic environment, and always staying open to the possibility of changing tack. He recommends laddering this mentality down through your organization. “You want your team to understand that your business plan is going to require flexibility and adaptability as it changes. Emphasize that you are as focused today on your clients and your employees and that you’re going to continue to keep them updated as you move forward.” Confident and adaptable leadership—not to mention communication—goes a long way in keeping your employees on task and calm about the future.

How that adaptability supports your business facing supply chain challenges

Changing long-standing fleet habits can be difficult—especially when operators are used to relying on specific vehicles for specific jobs. But in today’s economic climate, with persistent supply chain disruptions and rising costs, success often depends on stepping back and asking, “Do I really need that exact vehicle to do the job?” That ability to separate preferences from true operational needs is where the real magic happens in fleet management.

For Giesie and his team at Enterprise Fleet Management, flexible thinking isn’t just a reaction to challenges—it’s a core strategy. When a preferred vehicle isn’t available, they see it as an opportunity to rethink what’s possible. “We may recommend replacing a vehicle that’s not able to be sourced with one you haven’t used before but may do the job that you need it to do,” says Giesie. “We prefer providing a suggested vehicle that may do your work more efficiently, with better fuel economy, and with lower maintenance costs. That’s when we may recommend to our client, ‘You don’t really need that heavier truck for the one or two times a month that you’re going to take something heavier.’”

Enterprise Mobility’s ability to implement creative solutions at scale is supported by their extensive sourcing capabilities and their strong manufacturer relationships allow them to factory-order directly from any original equipment manufacturer (OEM). “We have access to vehicles in dealer inventory in stock, and that was a big part of how we got our clients through COVID with minimal fleet disruptions,” Giesie shares. Enterprise Fleet Management source vehicles from dealer inventory nationwide, allowing them to meet clients’ growth needs, instantly replace vehicles involved in accidents or in need of repairs, and ensure fleet continuity—often in real time.

Enterprise Mobility’s culture of creativity and adaptability, and its unmatched access to vehicles gives them—and their clients—a competitive edge in times of economic uncertainty.

Fleet management vision and tools

The first thing every fleet should do to prepare for a coming recession or economic downturn: Create a sound fleet management plan

Giesie sees Enterprise Fleet Management's holistic vision of each client's fleet as one of the most valuable tools they offer clients no matter what the economy is doing, but particularly during downturns. Through their analytical tools Enterprise Fleet Management can assess a client's entire fleet and provide guidance from a high level. This guidance encompasses every aspect of fleet management: how to best use the vehicles they have, how to trade in inefficient vehicles, how to train technicians on most effective vehicle use, and how to use each vehicle in the most cost-sound way possible.

Fleet management for fledgling companies built from the ground up

A lot of times when a business engages with Enterprise Fleet Management, they've been built from the ground up. The business owner started as a technician for someone else and then struck out on his own. Over the years this technician built his business organically, adding vehicles as needed. Understandably with that kind of growth, he finds himself with a large business that's become a little unwieldy. This is when the technician-turned-business-owner might decide he or she needs a bigger picture view of how to organize operationally. In this case the conversation starts with simply showing that customer that their fleet is a big cost item on their P&L.

That conversation can often start with simply asking that business owner what they know about their fleet. Next, Giesie shows that client an example of how they could transform their business by changing the way they organize their fleet. "We see it all the time—somebody's got 10 different $\frac{3}{4}$ ton pick-up trucks with different specs, from different OEMs, and with different after-markets on them. When we organize their fleet and they can see it cleanly, our clients often experience a paradigm shift in how they operate. Just showing them where to even start with an organized fleet is usually an 'Aha' moment for our clients." This is where the dashboard is a great tool for strengthening client knowledge and insight about fleet management.



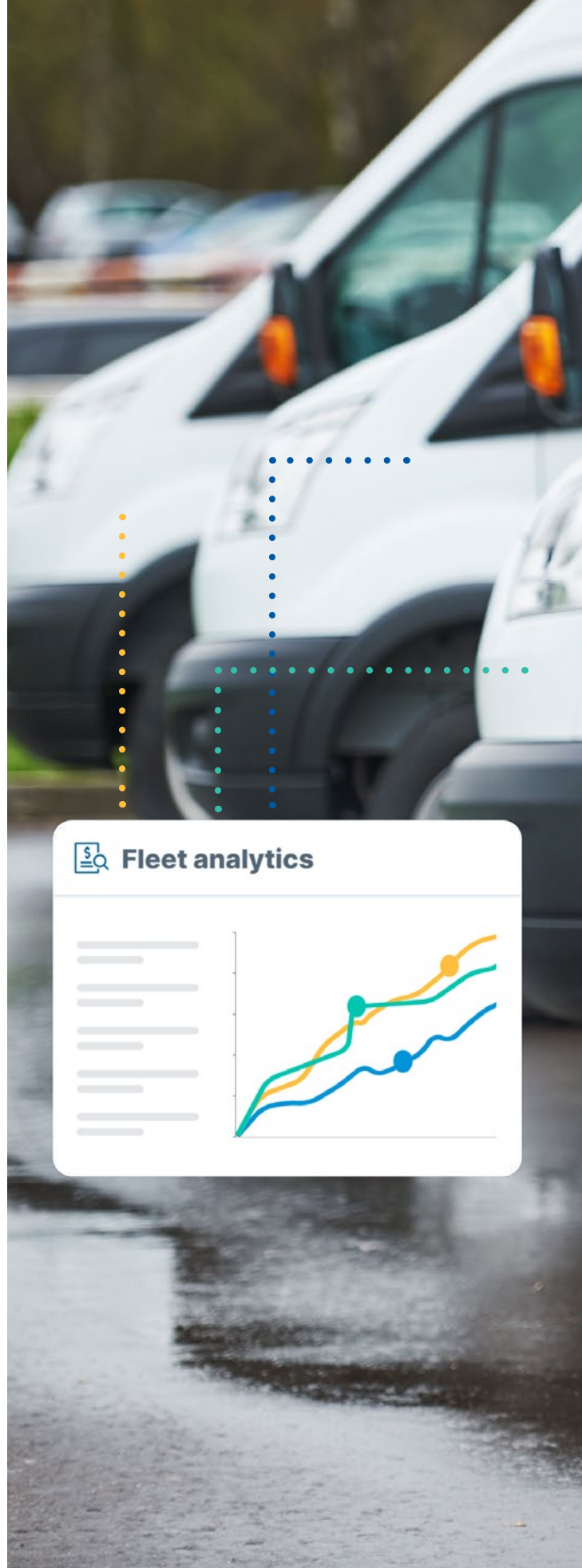
How Enterprise helps a customer reconfigure their fleet

Enterprise Fleet Management helps clients organize and keep fleet operations efficient and cost-effective. One way they do that is through an annual analysis of year-over-year client fleet performance. Enterprise Fleet Management client strategy managers sit down with clients and look at costs accrued and with each one of those cost categories, where they're trending, and why. From that analysis they can isolate where there's opportunity for building efficiencies and that analysis often brings unrecognized opportunities for streamlining a fleet. "It's so important to separate fact from fiction. So often what people feel is going on in their fleet is not necessarily the case. Understanding areas of opportunity in your fleet based on our tools allows us to create the best strategy to help move those needles in a client's preferred direction."

In some instances, during this analysis a client might see that their repair costs have gone significantly up or their up-time has gone significantly down, and they can't find evidence as to why this is the case. Up-time impacts can occur when vehicles sit in the shop longer than expected. These kinds of delays are far more frequent during economic volatility due to labor shortages and supply chain issues. There can also be delays when a vehicle needs a technology upgrade. Regardless, operations are impacted when a vehicle is out of commission. Enterprise helps pinpoint those shifts in spending and come up with solutions to mitigate those increases in cost.

When clients see that their operational costs have gone up, they often point the finger at increases in fuel expenses as an easy target. August 2025 was the seventh month in a row of price-per-gallon sitting below what it was in the prior year, so to blame cost increases on fuel expenses would be a misallocation of blame.^[1] "Sometimes you experience what you perceive as an increase in fuel expenses and operational cost increases are due to reasons other than what you might think." Common culprits include an increase in fleet size and busier technicians. Regardless, Giesie and his team embrace helping clients find the true causes of changes to expenses and helping them find solutions in often creative and unexpected ways.

^[1] According U.E. EIA.gov



How technology can help you best manage your fleet

With every aspect of analysis Giesie and the Enterprise Fleet Management team perform, they are leaning on a few different technological tools. Enterprise Fleet Management has a fleet maintenance product that helps keep client's vehicles on track and in a preventative maintenance program. Enterprise Fleet Management also uses telematics information paired with data pulled from WEX cards to help provide operational strategies for fleets. "We pull a lot of important data from our dashboards we get access to through the WEX card. We can pull things like mileage validation, gallons used, fuel spend, and with that data we can compare with other vehicles in a client's fleet. Through the WEX card we're also getting the type of fuel that's being purchased and where that fuel is being purchased." Where fuel is being purchased by drivers is important for Enterprise Fleet Management's clients because with that information, they can help steer their drivers to fueling stations where there is opportunity to save on a per-gallon basis.

Type of fuel purchased is another data point Giesie cites as adding value to their overall operational analysis. "If a driver is fueling super unleaded for a half-ton cargo van, we might flag that and suggest that driver could save on fuel costs without sacrificing efficiency by fueling regular unleaded instead."



The most impactful factors when managing a fleet through economic downturns



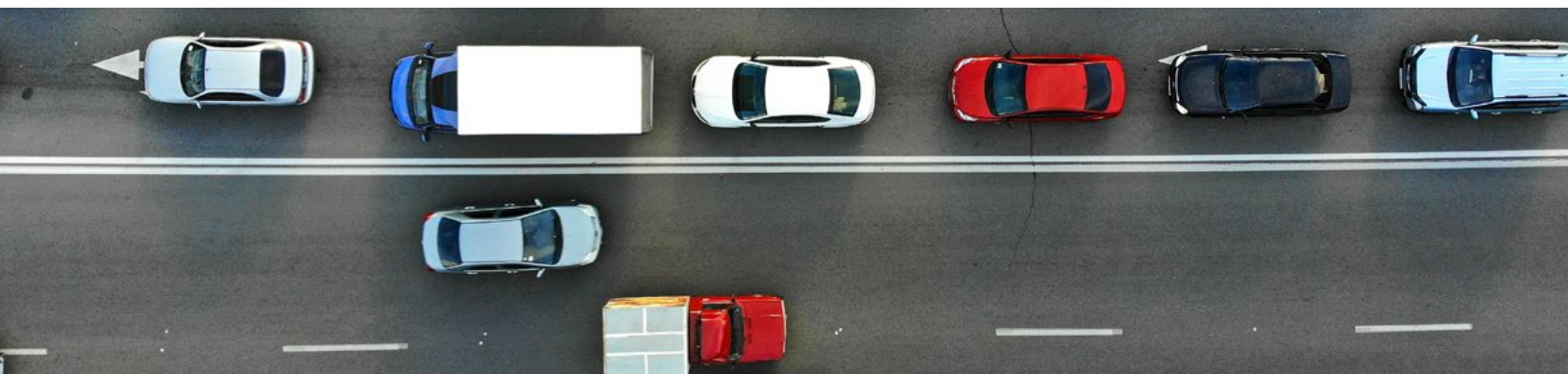
Total cost of ownership

During COVID, the supply chain crisis created serious challenges for fleet managers: vehicle prices soared. Fleets were deferring vehicle purchases because of increased acquisition costs. What they failed to consider was that when acquisition costs for a new vehicle rise, so do resale prices. “at Enterprise Fleet Management, we have a bird’s eye view of the fleet industry and can advise clients on when it makes sense to purchase a new or used vehicle even when acquisition prices are high.” Enterprise Fleet Management also helps its clients manage the total depreciation number for a fleet. Their focus is minimizing risk while reducing the number of underutilized vehicles, all with total cost of ownership in mind. Total cost of ownership (TCO) includes all the direct and indirect expenses tied to operating a vehicle over its lifecycle—such as purchase price, maintenance, fuel, insurance, depreciation, and eventual resale value—making it a valuable factor when evaluating the true cost efficiency of a fleet. No one wants to see an expensive asset sitting in the shop gathering dust. The goal during economic downturns is to be operationally tight while at the same time efficient with expenditures.



Preventative maintenance

Giesie also notes the importance of a client keeping an eye on preventative maintenance schedules no matter what the economy is doing but even more so during market turbulence. “We have a maintenance product, and we have an entire team of ASC-certified mechanics watching over our clients’ fleets and making sure that those maintenance visits are happening.” During supply chain interruptions it is often parts and materials needed for vehicle repairs that get delayed. “If you’re running a tight fleet and you don’t have spare vehicles set aside for emergencies and a vehicle goes in and it’s there for four months, what are you going to do with that technician who needs that vehicle to do his job?” The more you can keep vehicles healthy with preventative maintenance and out of the shop for unplanned repairs, the more in control of operational costs you will be during times of supply chain turbulence. In an uncertain economy, when every dollar and resource counts, preventing avoidable downtime is one of the smartest ways to protect your bottom line.



The top culprit for fuel spend? Idling.

Enterprise Fleet Management can analyze idle time with the data they get from the WEX card. As Giesie shares, “The majority of opportunities to reduce fuel consumption comes from—not driving, believe it or not—but idling.” He and the Enterprise Fleet Management team emphasize idling with their clients because it’s an easy place to find unrealized savings. He also looks at idling differently depending on geography. If you have drivers who need to sit in the heat of Southern Kentucky, mid-summer, their vehicle’s AC is essential for safety reasons, so it’s a deeper analysis than purely demanding all technicians abide by a “no idling” policy. Giesie knows this from experience, “I started my career in the Gulf Coast of Texas and if you’re out in Midland Odessa and you’re in the middle of an oil patch and you’ve got a diesel, you’re running your engine because that’s your shelter. Understanding the business of your clients you would know that a reduction in idling is not going to be an opportunity for cost savings in every case.” But in times of economic uncertainty—when fuel prices are volatile, and margins are tight—cutting back on unnecessary idling can be a quick, impactful way to reduce operating expenses without sacrificing service.

Using fuel card data where it matters most

Enterprise Fleet Management uses fuel data information from WEX in conjunction with their internal data resources. With those combined tools, they see data showing when a vehicle is being fueled in a way that’s inconsistent with expectations, or when a vehicle is being used for a purpose better suited to a different vehicle, or when a driver is not pumping the most cost-effective fuel type. “When we’re looking at a fleet, if we find a vehicle that’s inefficient compared to another vehicle being used the same way in the same geography, we dig deeper.” They look at the engine to be sure it’s running at top efficiency, the tires to be sure they aren’t posing an issue, and then with telematics they can look at driving behavior to determine any issues caused by inefficient driver practices. Because Enterprise Fleet Management’s reach is broad, they have the added advantage of being able to compare a client’s fleet with that of another client to gain any further insights with that additional data.

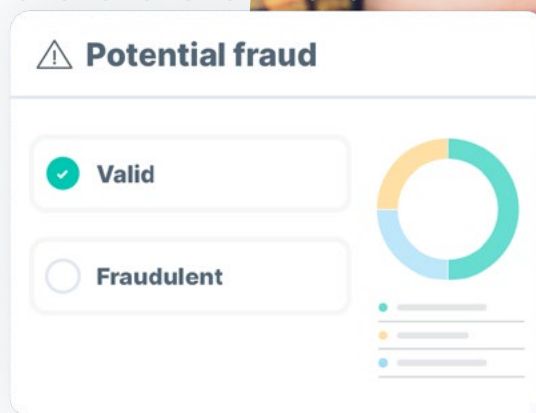
Enterprise Fleet Management has access to necessary data, and a skilled team to parse through the data, to provide valuable cost-savings insights for fleet managers. But what they value most and what is the driving force for them as a business is the relationships they have with their clients. Giesie says, “There are a lot of levers we can pull for our clients to help them find savings, but it all goes back to that trusted relationship between our team and their clients.” You can have all the data in the world but it’s building those trusting relationships that give that data power to enable strategic growth. “Our job is to identify strategies to help clients achieve their goals and business objectives, present those, and execute on what they decide is best for their business or organization.”



Increased fraud prevention focus during times of economic strife

Historically, fraud increases during economic downturns. A survey conducted by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners about 2009's recession revealed that over 55% of respondents experienced increased fraud during a 12-month period of 2009 than normal. During all economic conditions, fraud prevention is an important focus for fleet managers. Both WEX and Enterprise Fleet Management take fraud prevention very seriously. Giesie's approach is multi-pronged, but one often overlooked strategy he employs is internal communications. He and the Enterprise Fleet Management team help guide clients to consistently educate employees on the negative impacts fuel card fraud can have on both the technicians and the business for whom they work. Simply communicating to employees that you have access to all the transaction data, and therefore can see fraudulent activity, goes a long way toward preventing internal fraud from happening. "Our clients prefer that we have an ability to see fraud and that we communicate to their team that we can see it. This communication serves to prevent fraud before an employee takes that fraudulent action. We don't want an employee of one of our clients thinking about doing something fraudulent and getting themselves into a situation where they get in trouble. So, we have a strong emphasis on communicating about fraud measures so employees know that any attempts to steal fuel will be detected." This ties back again to maintaining a strong leadership position as a fleet manager while also having a focus on employee communication. "I think generally people are good and they can sometimes make bad decisions in a pinch, so we help them not do that."

Part of what provides Enterprise Fleet Management that window into fraud that can help their clients reduce internal fraud comes from Enterprise Fleet Management's use of WEX's products and services. "We can overlay that WEX data we get with our WEX card over the telematics data to make sure that any vehicle being filled up with fuel is actually in the location in which it is being filled up."



The future of fleet management: what does it look like and how are industry leaders preparing?

How the remainder of 2025 looks from here

As with anything economy-related, it can be hard to forecast what's to come, but Giesie has seen some early signs of what he sees on the horizon for fleets for the remainder of 2025. He has noticed dealer inventory tightening up.

He's observed some industry concern about the future, but he remains optimistic for the most part. He does expect the cost of doing business to increase this year. "I do believe that the cost of vehicles is going to be impacted by the current volatility we're experiencing, and we don't know to what degree, or which manufacturers will be most impacted. We know that manufacturers are working very hard to stay ahead of any friction."

How original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are preparing for what's to come

Giesie has insight from OEM partners that they are very focused on moving production to the U.S. where they can. "They're also very focused on smoothing out the order banks and the process for clients with high demand. This is to ensure we don't have these dead periods where vehicles can't be ordered." These OEMs learned from COVID and are working to avoid a situation where customers can't get the vehicles they need in a timely manner.

Giesie recognizes preparation has its limits—he and his team won't know for certain how to respond to changes until they see what those changes bring. "It's really not an option for companies that have to get technicians and materials to a job site to sit on the sidelines and wait for the prices of vehicles to come down. Maybe they come down, maybe they don't. It's about how to mitigate all those expenses, be efficient, and grow your business." Business growth, building efficiencies, and controlling expenses are what Enterprise Fleet Management helps customers achieve.



Where the fleet industry is innovating today

While fleets are concerned about global economic volatility, there is also a lot to be hopeful about in the industry. For one thing, technological innovation is on the rise, bringing growth opportunities. “We are seeing technology and data experts entering the fleet. Maybe they developed mobile devices in the past, or smartphones, or sensor technology, and have sold those businesses and are looking for their next opportunity. They see vehicles as the next data source.” As a result, the efficiencies that we experience through smartphone use are now being developed for vehicles. “Whether it’s fleet orchestration, or using machine learning for exception reporting, tools for vehicle health and performance, or using different technologies like AI to improve on and make it easier to do small, everyday tasks with a machine. There is a lot of innovation happening in the fleet industry.”

Strategic partnerships create confidence in the future

For many businesses, the complexities of managing a fleet have become more challenging in recent years. Giesie says, “Buying vehicles and operating a fleet is not as simple as it once was. Vehicles are better today because of enhanced technology. But with that stronger technology comes some complexity. Because of the people Enterprise Fleet Management has at our local offices, in market for our clients, because of our infrastructure, and our reach, we at Enterprise Fleet Management can help client’s in communities in which we live and work. At the end of the day what it comes down to is that’s fun for us and brings us a lot of satisfaction, helping our clients achieve their goals and celebrating success, together.”

While fleet management has grown in complexity, opportunities to strengthen business abound. “The headwinds are just that. There is an opportunity to look at your fleet with fresh eyes and come up with new strategies to be efficient.” Giesie sees economic volatility as an opportunity to reassess your fleet and make changes to improve how you operate. The partnerships we all build whether it be with an industry expert like Dain Giesie, or with the insights and customer support Giesie has found partnering with WEX, those valuable relationships will help us all build fleets of the future.



About Enterprise

What started with a fleet of just seven cars more than six decades ago has since expanded into a global network of mobility solutions including car rental, fleet management, flexible vehicle hire, carsharing, vanpooling, car sales, truck rental, vehicle subscription, luxury rental, technology solutions and more. Enterprise's vision is to be the world's best and most trusted mobility company.



About WEX

WEX is the global commerce platform that simplifies the business of running a business. WEX has created a powerful ecosystem that offers seamlessly embedded, personalized solutions for its customers around the world. Through its rich data and specialized expertise in simplifying benefits, reimagining mobility, and paying and getting paid, WEX aims to make it easy for companies to overcome complexity and reach their full potential. For more information, please visit wexinc.com.

Resources:

Association of Certified Fraud Examiners

The WEX logo, featuring the word "wex" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. The "x" is stylized with a double-stroke effect. The logo is white and is set against a red, rounded rectangular background.