

TOP TEN QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR PROSPECTIVE AOBRD/ELD VENDOR

When researching AOBRD/ELD vendors, it's beneficial to qualify them up-front so that you don't find out later down the road that you have wasted your time with a particular vendor that is not reputable. These ten questions will assist you in your approach to select the right vendor.

1 HOW MANY YEARS EXPERIENCE DOES THE VENDOR HAVE IN THE AOBRD/ELD FIELD?

An experienced AOBRD/ELD vendor should have five plus years of experience. Why? A vendor with five plus years' experience has been around long enough to have lived through regulation changes, hardware changes, software changes etc. and will have a reputation that can be reported on by both past and current clients. The vendor must be proven to be considered a good choice.

2 HOW MANY CUSTOMERS DOES THE VENDOR CURRENTLY SERVICE?

An experienced vendor with 20,000 plus users will have a reputation that can be reported on by both past and current customers. The vendor's solution must be widely utilized in the field to be proven and considered as a good choice.

3 DOES THE VENDOR'S SOFTWARE HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO BE USED ON MULTIPLE HARDWARE CONFIGURATIONS?

At some point in the future, you may choose a path towards a different hardware configuration. Most vendors require that if you purchase their solution, you must also utilize their hardware. But there are a few select vendors that can license their software on multiple hardware configurations; which offers extreme flexibility, in that drivers don't constantly have to be re-trained each time there is a change in hardware.

4 HAS THE VENDOR'S SOLUTION HELD UP TO AN FMCSA DOT AUDIT?

The ultimate solution you choose must be FMCSA AOBRD/ELD compliant, but most importantly, it must meet or exceed the Hours-of-Service (HOS) regulation requirements. Ask the vendor to give you references for companies that have been audited while utilizing their system.

5 WHAT IS MY VENDOR'S PATH TO FMCSA ELD COMPLIANCE?

Ask the vendor if their solution is AOBRD or ELD compliant. If they are AOBRD, then ask for them to provide you with their plan for getting to ELD, and to include their target date for certifying on the FMCSA website. This will help to make sure you are safe before the deadline of December 18th, 2017.

6 WHAT IS THE VENDOR'S TRACK RECORD? ARE THEY STABLE? WILL THEY BE AROUND IN THE FUTURE? DO THEY HAVE A POSITIVE REPUTATION?

HOS regulations are surprisingly complex to automate. Plus, there are occasional changes, such as the congressional back and forth on the 34-hour restart rule for property-carrying drivers. Ask yourself, "Does this vendor's hours-of-service system have a track record of proven compliance? How quickly is that vendor able to respond to regulatory changes?" Ask for business references to confirm they can perform as promised.

7 DOES THE VENDOR HAVE A SCALABLE SYSTEM? BOTH ON THE MOBILE AND THE HOST?

Does the solution the vendor proposes have the capability to grow with your fleet? Can applications be added to the mobile? Do they have the capability to scale their infrastructure to maintain system performance?

8 DOES THE VENDOR'S CUSTOMER SERVICE SUPPORT TRACK RECORD MATCH THEIR CLAIMS REGARDING HOW WELL THE SOLUTION WORKS?

What are the vendor's support hours? Do they offer tiered support that can provide timely resolutions?

9 DOES THE VENDOR HAVE WEB SERVICE API'S AS PART OF THEIR SOLUTION?

Your vendor of choice should have available to you, the user, an extensive library of web service API's that will allow for various HOS data to be shared with other third-party solutions (i.e. dispatch, payroll, fuel tax, etc.) Having these API's will provide a higher level of operational efficiencies that will increase your return on investment.

10 CAN I TRY IT OUT?

Choosing a telematics solution for your fleet is a major decision, one that you will live with for years. You can gain confidence and experience by installing devices on a few vehicles and trying it out. Look for feedback from drivers, maintenance, and operational staff. Does the system work as intended? Is it easy to learn and use? Is the vendor responsive to questions? Look for a vendor you can trust and a system that is accepted by your staff.



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