

# What to Avoid When Choosing a Fleet Management Service

Choosing a fleet management service is a major decision. Whoever your company decides to work with will play an enormous part in all aspects of your business' fleet (and, indirectly, every aspect of your business that relies on that fleet).

The right system can drive efficiency, help your fleet save money, and work with you to help your business meet its goals. The wrong fleet management system, however, can cause significant problems for your business that actually impede your growth and success.



## **EVERGREEN CONTRACTS (AUTOMATIC RENEWALS)**

Automated renewals of contract periods aren't always a bad thing, they can help simplify paperwork and keep your fleet management services running smoothly. However, it's important to avoid automatic renewals that make it difficult for you to opt out of the renewal—especially if the contracts are long-term rather than month-to-month. Being locked in with a subpar fleet management service because of automatic renewals can be incredibly taxing. Be sure to check for clauses requiring a 60 day advance notice or similar time periods to cancel renewals before signing.



## **LONG TERM CONTRACTS**

Contracts with exceptionally long terms of service should probably be avoided whenever you're first signing up with any fleet management vendor. You may want to try a service for a few months before committing 3 whole years to it—just to see if there are any issues that both you and the vendor might not have been aware of. Also, shorter trial periods let you get a grasp of what you can expect in terms of customer service in the future. If they're not helpful during the honeymoon period, then don't expect a very happy partnership 3+ years down the road.



## LOCKED EQUIPMENT/DEVICES

Proprietary systems that only work for one fleet manager's software should be avoided whenever possible. Locked equipment & devices that only work with a single management system are a huge liability—what happens if you decide to change vendors or that vendor goes out of business? You'll have to purchase all-new equipment all over again at a significant expense. Open devices that are compatible with different fleet management software programs can be carried over from one system to the next, which reduces the cost of changing vendors.



## NO APPLICATION PROGRAMMING INTERFACE (API)

Let's say you need a custom software solution to track a specific piece of information, but your fleet manager's software doesn't provide the building blocks or framework to create any such solution and embed it in the software. APIs are the tools that allow software developers to build software applications. Without them, building custom integrations for your software is nearly impossible.



## NO SOFTWARE SUPPORT TEAM

A lack of an outward-facing API for embedding new features in the software might not be the end of the world. However, if the fleet management company doesn't have a software team to actually implement new features that you need, then there's not much opportunity to get the features you need implemented if they don't already exist in the software application.



## LACK OF FEATURES

Most fleet management companies have a fairly robust feature set based on the needs their clients have. A fleet management solution without many features reflects a management provider that doesn't have much experience. For example, does your service provide corridor geofences or geofences within geofences? Are you able to construct any shape of geofence?



## **GRUFF OR UNINTERESTED CUSTOMER SUPPORT TEAMS**

It may be hard to identify if a fleet management company's customer support is good or not prior to signing a contract, but it's well worth investigating just to know what kind of service you'll be dealing with. One way to check is to ask around with other customers who have used that provider and see what their experiences have been, or call into their service line to ask a few questions ahead of time (try calling on different days to see if attitudes are consistent between different support agents). Be sure to check online reviews of the software before making any final decisions.



## **ADDITIONAL FEES FOR EVERY SERVICE**

Make sure to dig deep into a fleet management service's fee structure before signing. You'd be surprised how many fees and other costs that might arise from adding features or upgrades. A fleet management service with tons of extra fees is one that's looking to nickel and dime you to death. These management providers should be avoided.



These are just some of the warning signs that could tell you to avoid a particular fleet management service. The important thing is to carefully research your options in detail before committing your company to any one solution.

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