

The New Year is always a great time to reflect, so let's look back at 2007 and remind ourselves about some of the noteworthy events of the past year and what we need to do to be profitable and successful in 2008.

A year ago right now we spoke about the effort we put into our careers and our personal lives and the return that we can then expect to receive on this investment. You can't manage what isn't measured so set measurable goals for yourself in both your personal and work life and see how you perform! You'll find that even simple awareness about a particular goal will result in an average 10 per cent improvement, even without a formal plan for change. Don't rest on this fact though; nothing will happen unless you take accountability for yourself and your actions. Times are tough, but if you're willing to be the one who embraces change and profits from it instead of playing victim and whining about how better things were in the old days, there's still good money to be made out on the road. While you're running up the miles driver, remember why you're in this business in the first place and make sure that it's the work you want to be in. This is a great job for the person who wants to see North America without someone constantly looking over your shoulder; trucking is a way of life and you're bound to rub shoulders with some of the greatest guys and gals in the world if you stay involved long enough. There's no shortage of new things to learn, but you've got to want to do it or else you'll never be happy.

The good fight still goes on regarding entry level driver training in the U.S and the Apprenticeship program in Ontario. By April of last year I was having a tough time beating the drum on these issues but found strength in some solid relationships I have formed over the years which are constantly renewed, refreshed and reinforced at industry conventions and events. These are places where the issues are debated and they're debated for the most part by passionate, informed people. These good people and they and the companies they represent are there to learn and share and are in the game. Is your company?

Towards the end of April we got some good news as we received word from the provincial government when their budget announcement contained provisions making the Apprenticeship Program a reality in Ontario. This is a big step forward for our industry and will go a long way towards raising the standards for training in Canada. We also saw some significant achievements made by our fellow Canadians, one of the best examples being Bison Transport of Winnipeg, Manitoba, who won the Truckload Carriers Association's National Safety Award for the second straight year. This is a great accomplishment in an industry facing more new rules and



Happy New Year, driver. Are you ready to hit the road running in 2008?

regulations than ever imagined and it's great to see a Canadian company doing well on the international stage. Kudos to them for a job well done.

I started the second half of 2007 by challenging those of you who are considering changing jobs to put pen to paper and do the math. The grass is always greener when looking through the recruiters eyes, but take a few minutes before you jump ship and make sure you're making the right decision. The message in a nutshell is that all of the information you need to make an informed choice is available if you take the time and make the effort to collect and pay attention to it...so do so!

All work and no play makes Joe an unhappy trucker. In August I realized that the majority of my articles have been about planning. Plan to be a successful owner operator or company driver... plan your career path or enjoyable retirement by budgeting, etc, etc. Here's a new planning and budgeting idea for you...set some money aside from each pay statement for a family vacation away from it all. Plan it well and include as many of your close relationships as you can. Just Do It! You need the brain drain as we all do! Get out of the truck; park it somewhere safe and forget about it for a couple of weeks. Regroup, refresh, relax and re-acquaint yourself with the important people in your life away from the industry. It might just save your life! Keep in mind that there are no tombstones

that I am aware of in the great drivers' bone yard that read "Here lies John Brown, his only regret is that he didn't get more miles in."

I closed last year all over the map. I recounted my conversations with a gentleman who was considering working for a company that still interstates and for those who missed it, the risk/reward factor means that this practice no longer makes any sense at all! A few extra dollars isn't worth your truck and being kicked out of the US for good. Speaking of the border, we also touched on the border situation and what freedom really means in a post-911 trucking world. No matter what your heritage or background, I think most of you got it, except for one guy who really went on a rant... takes all kinds I guess. I closed the year off with a plan for those of you who are in deep credit problems to resolve some of your issues; I hope some of you decided to take up the idea and are doing your homework.

I hope you enjoyed this year's offerings from Speaking from Experience and that you saw some value in a few of the words I scribbled out to you. I wish you all a successful and enjoyable 2008! Now let's get back to work...

Drive safely (and successfully)!

Yours truly,

Ray J. Haight
CEO, ATBS Canada
Email: ray@otr.on.ca 