



Driving Towards Safety: A Fleet Industry Leader on Embracing Technology in Fleet Management

“I remember my first deposition. There had been a crash at the company where I worked, and a person had lost their life. I never want to go through that again. Any crash is significant. And, in my experience, most crashes are caused by the driver being distracted. When it sadly gets to the point where attorneys are involved, one of the first things a prosecutor will say is: ‘There is technology to avoid this behavior. Why don’t you have it?’ So, how can companies defend themselves? The technology is there – it just has to be implemented.” – SUE MILLER, INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT.

Achieving longevity and success can be a rarity in the fleet industry. However, with over four decades as an industry leader, seasoned professional Miller has not only showcased dedication but also a journey marked by innovation and thought-leadership.

Sue started her fleet career at ServiceMaster Industries, then with A.B. Dick Company and Keebler Company before joining McDonald’s Corporation where she enjoyed over 29 years, culminating as their Director of Fleet Services. At its largest point, Miller oversaw a fleet of 3,000 vehicles. She attributes her success and longevity to being direct, forthright, and innovative. “I never compromised my integrity, and I took our brand protection very seriously,” she said. “I wanted our fleet to be successful and safe.”

Miller has won numerous awards, including *Automotive Fleet’s* Professional Fleet Manager of the Year award, Automotive Fleet & Leasing Association’s (AFLA) President’s Award, and McDonald’s President’s Award, reserved for the company’s top 1% global performers. She also served as AFLA’s President and was a founding member of the Women in Fleet Management Association (WIFM). Miller was inducted into the Fleet Hall of Fame in 2012.

Recalling the challenges of the 1980s when safety concerns and sometimes inefficient practices plagued the fleet industry, Miller acknowledged that a flat budget and budget cut challenges made progress difficult. Yet, innovation was essential, and her vision was resolute: to redefine internal safety standards and establish safety and crash mitigation as a priority. “I know it’s about running a business, and I know what needs to be done for shareholders,” she said. “But there comes a point where we have to find a way to transform the message that makes it meaningful to the c-suite: to save dollars, we must spend some to save much. This is where technology is paramount.”

Reflecting on her extensive journey, Miller emphasized her steadfast belief in the transformative potential of technology in ensuring safer drivers and roadways. “Technology has always been the cornerstone of safer roads,” she affirmed, underscoring a principle that has guided her actions throughout her career. “Investments in technological advancements ultimately contribute to safer roads and enhanced operational efficiency. That’s where I see NOCELL® making an incredible impact on safety in our industry.”

“Part of the success of implementing any policy and procedure change was through creating a diverse driver council and utilizing surveys created by that council to gather feedback,” she said. “Drivers realized – wow, not only are they listening to me, but they sincerely want my feedback. This is critical to their buy-in and adoption.”

Nevertheless, the journey towards safer roadways continues to encounter hurdles with fleet managers and their leadership. “There must be a cultural shift,” she said. “We know that fleet managers are cautious of implementing new technology because they fear losing drivers and having what they feel is more on their already full plate. But the questions need to be: do you want drivers on your team who are not willing to abide by your safety standards? And how will you answer that prosecutor when they ask why you did not have a strong safety standard that includes available technology that can prevent a crash?”

Looking ahead, Sue remains optimistic about the future of fleet management, safety and specifically curbing distracted driving, especially with the ongoing advancements. “The tools are available,” she said. “Fleet managers and their leadership simply need to embrace them. One of the many things to be subpoenaed in a lawsuit involving a crash will be cell phone records. If you could prove your drivers are not distracted when behind the wheel, why wouldn’t you? NOCELL® is making our roads safer, and I hope that fleet managers and their leadership will see and accept its immense value to their company.”