

Thesis

Investigating the Mindset of Truck Drivers and their Employers Toward Meditation Amidst a Trucking Industry Driver Shortage



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ABSTRACT

A truck driver shortage has plagued the United States for nearly a decade, with no end in sight. Drivers are leaving the industry to find different opportunities or retiring, with new drivers failing to fill the gap. Driving is a high-stress profession, contributing to decreased health and a shortened lifespan. Because professional truck drivers are vital to keeping the U.S. economy growing, not to mention food on the tables of American families, it is crucial to find ways to improve driver health and make driving a desirable career choice for young people. While taking up a practice of meditation could help drivers manage stress and improve health, studies have shown that blue-collar workers are among the least likely to participate. Furthermore, there is no literature on truck driver-specific attitudes toward meditation, nor is there information on the willingness of executives and leaders within the industry to support drivers if they choose to take up the practice. Thus, we aim to investigate the mindset of truck drivers and their employers toward meditation, while proposing potential solutions that might encourage truck drivers to incorporate meditation into their daily routine.



For this study, drivers ($n = 74$) completed a questionnaire to assess their interest in and attitudes toward meditation, including perceived barriers. Simultaneously, executives and leaders ($n = 32$) responded to questions about their views on drivers engaging in meditation and their willingness to support company-sponsored meditation programs. Following the analysis of questionnaires, the student researcher conducted interviews with industry leaders ($n = 8$).

While drivers were open to exploring meditation, leaders expressed enthusiasm about the potential benefits and offered support to advance the initiative. Workshops were conducted with transportation leaders ($n = 8$), utilizing design thinking strategies (e.g., statement starters, creative matrix, importance/difficulty matrix) to generate potential solutions.

One primary barrier: a perception of inadequate knowledge regarding meditation, so researchers tested an educational brochure with a small group of drivers. The brochure included a QR code that drivers could use to give feedback. Unfortunately, no drivers completed the survey, so more structured testing may be required.

Next steps might include the execution of a larger, more controlled pilot program, follow-up over time to evaluate the level of habituation for meditation and a discussion on how to further drive change in the driver population as well as change industry stereotypes.



Investigating the Mindset of Truck Drivers and their Employers
Toward Meditation Amidst
a Trucking Industry Driver Shortage

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Introduction

“ [Ron] Echols doesn't know any other drivers who meditate, and he suggests that the majority of truckers think meditation is 'wacky, kooky stuff'” (Kahaner, 2018, p. 3).

While in 2023, the professional truck driver shortage dropped from its high of 81,258 in 2021, it remains high at around 60,000 (Campbell, 2023). Considering that trucks move 72% of American freight, a lack of drivers is a substantial disruption (Goodman & Etheredge, 2022, p. 7). Trucking is a critical component of the United States economy, and the driver shortage is a significant issue that can affect American citizens and American businesses equally. According to the American Trucking Associations, “America's trucking industry is the lifeblood of the U.S. economy. Nearly every good consumed in the U.S. is put on a truck at some point. As a result, the trucking industry hauled 72.5% of all freight transported in the United States in 2019, equating to 11.84 billion tons” (News & Insights | American Trucking Associations, 2021, para. 1).

In 2020, truck driver turnover rates exceeded 90% for large, long-haul carriers and 72% for smaller carriers (Fleet Owner, 2021, p. 3). Moreover, the number of truck drivers leaving the industry is skyrocketing, and new drivers are not stepping in to backfill the void (Thomas, 2018, p. 3). This exodus is of particular concern since truckers are older on average than other workers. Their median age is 46, compared with 41 for all workers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). The industry also struggles to attract women. For instance, in 2018, just 6.6% of truck drivers were female, fluctuating between 4.5% to 6.6% over the last 18 years (Costello, 2019).

One reason that retaining older drivers and recruiting younger or more diverse drivers is increasingly difficult may be that trucking is a highly stressful career. Drivers experience a range of stressors on the job, from loneliness and loss of family life, anxiety due to health-related issues and uncertainty from health-related support, lack of respect from multiple parties, and the demanding impact of

government regulations (Williams et al., 2017). Additionally, truckers work longer hours than other professions (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Furthermore, as freight volumes increase and capacity shrinks, the existing driver pool is further strained. With 71.4% of all freight tonnage moved on highways, the driver shortage is a problem for the entire supply chain, adding to the pressure on existing drivers (Adler, 2019).

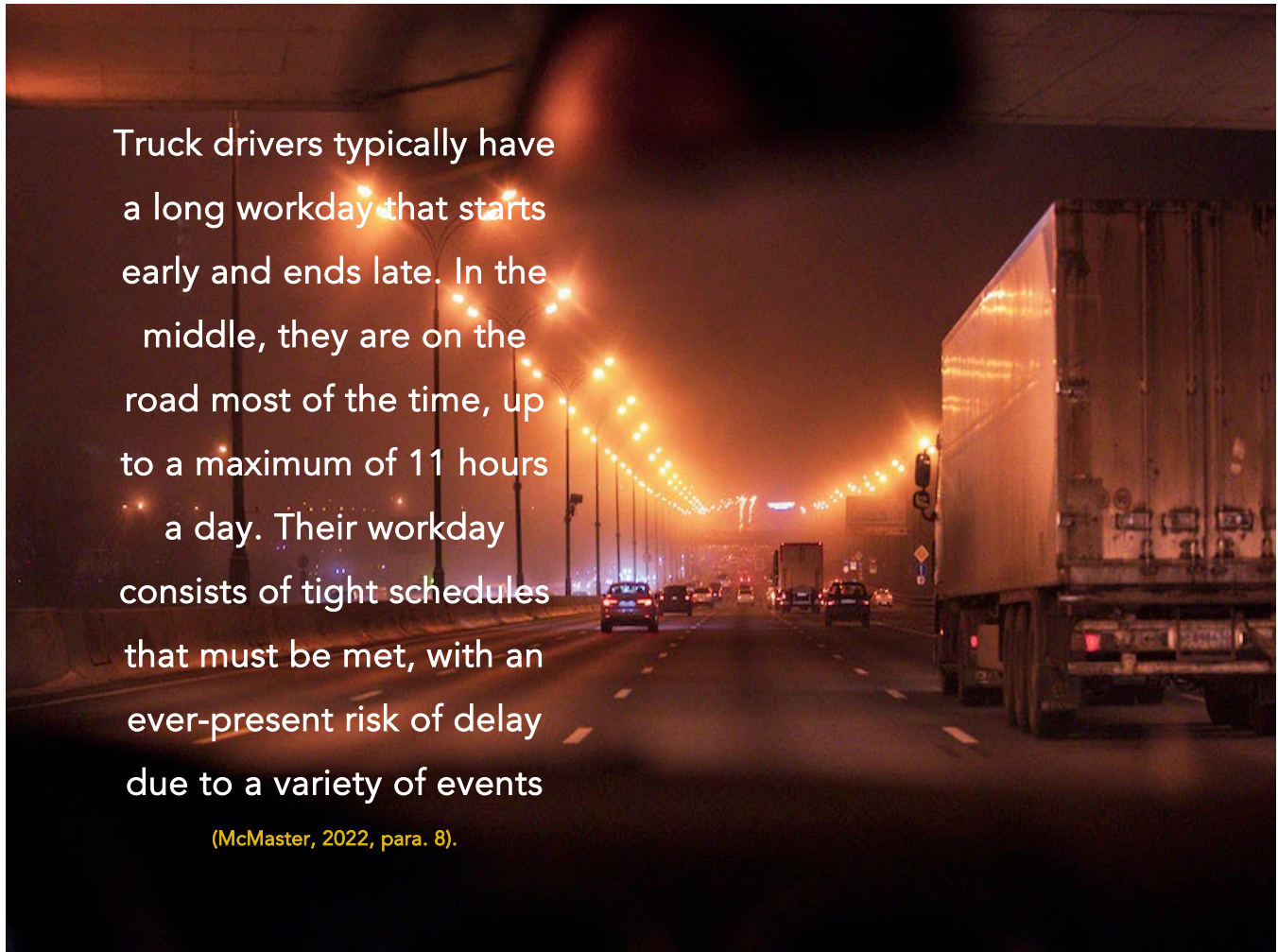


“The research situation in companies is increasing, but in the blue-collar area, there are very few reliable studies so far.”
-- Kristen Bub, mindfulness expert and former HR manager in automotive industries (How.Fm, 2020, para. 8)

Truck drivers and, by extension, their employers may benefit from participating in mindfulness activities such as meditation, which have been shown to decrease tension, which could enhance health (Chin et al., 2018) and increase focus, thus possibly improving safety. Despite holding extraordinarily stressful jobs -- according to a study of Centers for Disease Control (CDC) data, the average life expectancy for a commercial truck driver is 61 years (Laden et al., 2007b) -- blue-collar workers, like truck drivers, are very unlikely to practice mindfulness activities like meditation (Kachan et al., 2017).

Many articles, both scholarly and popular, can be found that show office workers are engaging at increasingly greater rates in mindfulness practices like meditation (e.g., Doornich & Lynch, 2024; Jones, 2021; Kachan et al., 2017; Peck, 2017). There are also countless businesses marketing their meditation services to executives (e.g., Healthy Minds Innovations, 2021; *What Meditation Can Do for Your Leadership*, 2019). However, blue-collar workers do not seem to participate or show interest in participating. Additionally, there appears to be little attention paid to studying this group. “We could find no intervention studies in the literature which focused on blue-collar or farm workers. Given the low prevalence of these practices noted in this study, there is a pressing need for the development of interventions targeting these occupational groups” (Kachan et al., 2017, p. 24). As stated by Kachan et al., there is limited literature available regarding the attitudes of blue-collar workers toward the

practice of meditation, and none were found that specifically discuss truck drivers. This gap in the literature is important as truck drivers are literally dying out of the profession (Laden et al., 2007). Many other drivers are leaving the profession for less difficult, dangerous, and stressful jobs that do not involve long hours and high-pressure conditions (Levy, 2022).



Numerous researchers, universities, and medical organizations – from the Mayo Clinic to The National Institutes of Health – have published literature discussing the benefits of meditation in reducing stress (e.g., Pascoe et al., 2017; Phoenix Truck Driving Institute, 2022; Williams, 2019). Although overall rates of mindfulness practices like meditation, which can benefit both workers and employers through reduced stress, improved sleep, increased attention, and more (UC Davis Health, 2022), are increasing in the workforce, research on truck drivers, as a subset of blue-collar workers, and their use of and attitudes toward meditation is missing.

For this study, we aim to investigate the mindset of this specific blue-collar segment, truck drivers and their employers, toward meditation while proposing potential solutions that might encourage truck drivers to incorporate meditation into their daily routine. Easing the stress experienced by truck drivers is important to the drivers themselves as well as everyone who benefits from the work that they do on a daily basis.

Definition of Terms

Company driver – a professional driver who is employed by a company and paid by the company for their driving work.

Daily, short-haul or dedicated driver – a driver who drives a run that usually goes to the same place on an identical schedule. Often these drivers are home daily.

Hours of service (HOS) – regulations issued by the FMCSR (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations) that dictate the number of hours commercial drivers can drive and work.

Long-haul or over-the-road (OTR) driver – a driver who transports goods over hundreds and even thousands of miles. Long-haul drivers often sleep in their trucks and can be on the road for days or weeks at a time. Most long-haul drivers are paid by the mile, not the hour.

Long-haul carriers – trucking companies that employ long-haul drivers.

Meditation – a mind and body practice used to improve mental and emotional well-being by increasing relaxation, increasing focus, managing mood, or cultivating an attribute. Some forms of meditation require the practitioner to keep their attention fixed on a specific feeling, such as their breathing, a sound, a picture, or a mantra, which is a word or phrase that is repeatedly repeated. The practice of meditation, which entails keeping attention or awareness on the present moment without passing judgment, is one of the other types of meditation (NCCIH, 2022).

Mindfulness – the practice of cultivating moment-to-moment, non-judgmental awareness, which grows when one pays attention, on purpose, to direct present moment experience, with a willingness to let experience be as it is.

Owner-operator – a driver who owns the truck he or she drives as an independent business.

Yard jockey – a driver who shuttles trailers into and out of loading docks at a factory or distribution center. This type of driver is likely home every day and is not subject to many of the stressors of those who primarily drive on the road.

Terms – Design Thinking Methods

LUMA defines Human-Centered Design as the discipline of developing solutions in the service of people. In general, it is an activities-based approach to creative problem-solving that focuses on people — whether the challenge is making a better product, process, service, or anything else (Luma Institute, 2023).

LOOKING – Methods for observing human experience

- **Interviewing:** A technique for gathering information through direct dialogue.
- **Fly-on-the-Wall Observation:** An approach to conducting field research in an unobtrusive manner.

UNDERSTANDING – Methods for analyzing challenges and opportunities

- **Problem Tree Analysis:** A way of exploring the causes and effects of a particular issue.
- **Affinity Clustering:** A graphic technique for sorting items according to similarity.
- **Importance/Difficulty Matrix:** A quad chart for plotting items by relative importance and difficulty.
- **Statement Starters:** An approach to phrasing problem statements that invites broad exploration.
- **Visualize the Vote:** A quick poll of collaborators to reveal preferences and opinions.
- **Experience Diagramming:** A way of mapping a person's journey through a set of circumstances or tasks.

MAKING – Methods for envisioning future possibilities

- **Creative Matrix:** A format for sparking new ideas at the intersections of distinct categories.
- **Quick Reference Guide:** A short document summarizing the key principles and elements of a proposed solution.
- **Concept Poster:** A presentation format illustrating the main points of a new idea.

Terms - Popular Types of Meditation

There are many types of meditation practice. Here are nine popular practices described (Bertone, 2021):

Mindfulness meditation - Mindfulness meditation, the most popular and researched form of meditation in the Western world, originated from Buddhist teachings. In mindfulness meditation, one pays attention to thoughts passing through the mind without judgment or becoming involved with them. This practice combines concentration and awareness. Many people find it helpful to focus on an object or their breath.

Spiritual meditation - Nearly all religions use a type of spiritual meditation. Spiritual meditation focuses on developing a deeper understanding of spiritual/religious meaning and connection with a higher power. Christian prayer would be considered a type of spiritual meditation.

Focused meditation - Focused meditation involves concentration using any of the five senses. For example, subjects can focus internally on breath or externally on something like counting beads, listening to a gong, staring at a candle flame, and so forth. While this exercise appears straightforward, it can be challenging for novices to maintain concentration for more than a few minutes. Repeatedly refocusing the mind helps build extended focus.

Movement meditation - This type of active meditation includes more than yoga. Walking, gardening, tai chi, and other forms of gentle movement can be used to guide the practitioner into a deeper connection with your body and the present moment.

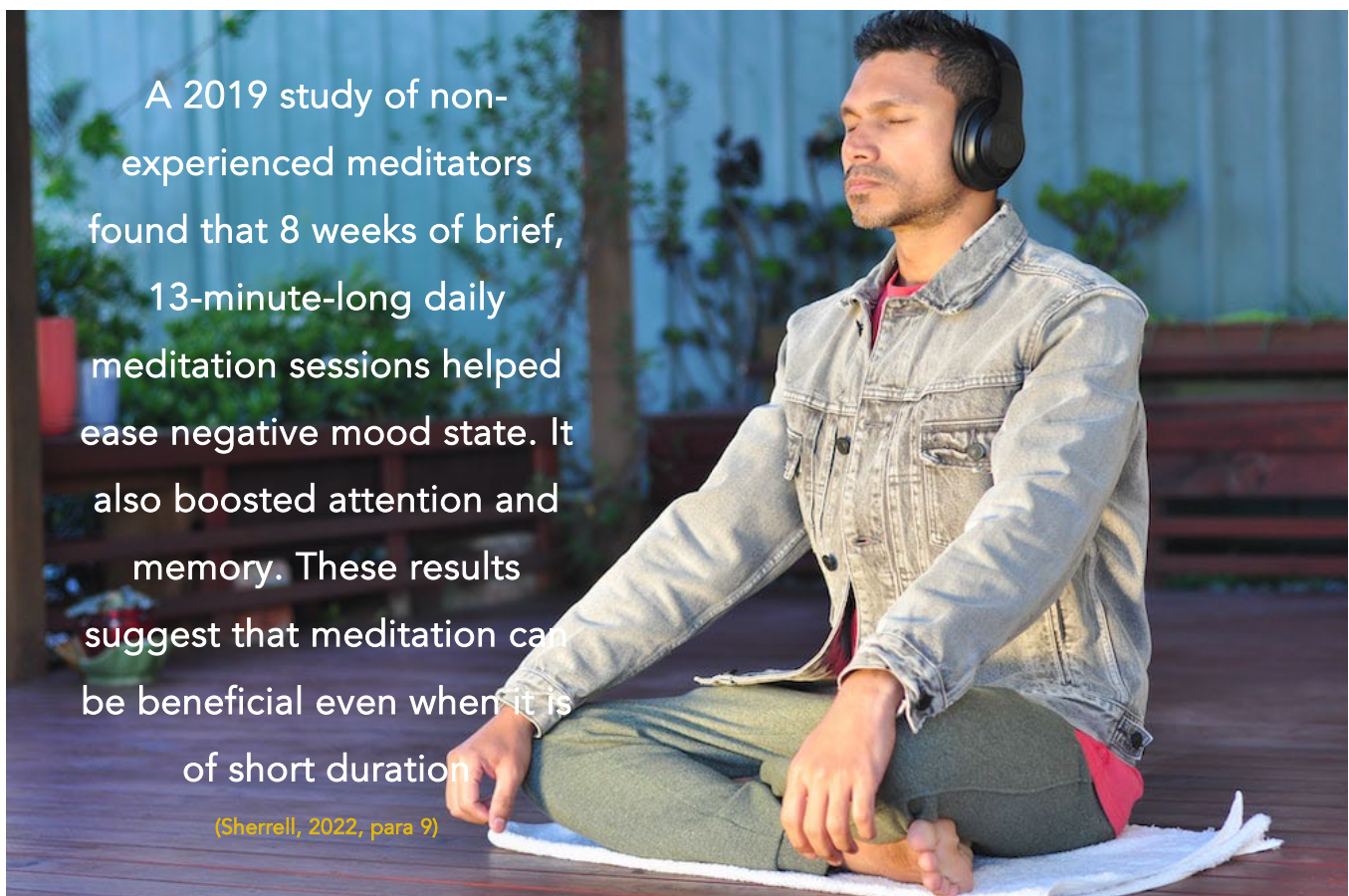
Mantra meditation - Numerous teachings, including those of the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, heavily emphasize mantra meditation. To help focus during this sort of meditation, practitioners play a rhythmic sound. It can be a word, phrase, or sound, with "om" being one of the most popular.

Progressive relaxation - Progressive relaxation, also referred to as body scan meditation, is a technique used to ease physical tension and encourage relaxation. Essentially, this type of meditation is gradually tensing and relaxing every muscle in the body, one group at a time.

Loving-kindness meditation - Loving-kindness meditation is used to evoke feelings of compassion, kindness, and acceptance toward oneself and others. It usually entails opening the mind to receive love and then sending well wishes to loved ones, friends, acquaintances, and all living beings by repeating phrases such as "May you be happy. May you be safe. May you be

content.” This sort of meditation may help people who feel angry or resentful since it aims to encourage compassion and kindness.

Visualization meditation - By imagining uplifting situations, images, or figures, visualization meditation aims to improve sensations of relaxation, tranquility, and calmness. This exercise requires vividly picturing a scene and including as many details as possible by using all five senses. It might also entail thinking of a beloved or respected person with the goal of emulating their traits.





Background

Importance of the Trucking Industry

According to the chief economist for the American Trucking Industry, “The U.S. economy has many industries that are much flashier than trucking, but in many ways, the motor carrier industry is the lifeblood of our economic machine. Quite simply, if you bought it and you can touch it, it probably came on a truck” (Costello, 2013, p. 1). Trucking serves as a barometer of the U.S. economy. It represents 72.5% of tonnage carried by all modes of domestic freight transportation. Industries served by trucking include manufacturing and retail -- goods consumed by most Americans. In 2020, trucks hauled 10.23 billion tons of freight. Motor carriers – or trucking companies -- collected 80.4% of total revenue earned by all transport modes (ATA Truck Tonnage Index Increased 0.6% in January 2022). As of Feb. 21, 2023, “Compared with January 2022, the SA index increased 1.5%, which was the seventeenth straight year-over-year gain. In December, the index was up 0.9% from a year earlier. In 2022, compared with the average in 2021, tonnage was up 3.5%” (American Trucking Associations, 2023, p. 5). And while tonnage briefly decreased at the beginning of 2024, it is back on the rise as of August 2024 (American Trucking Associations, 2024).

Truck Driver Shortage

There has been a lot of discussion in the media around disruptions in the supply chain, including a severe truck driver shortage (Kelly, 2022). The driver shortage is not a new issue. According to the American Trucking Association, the trucking industry has struggled with a shortage of truck drivers for at least the past 15 years. The issue was first documented in 2005 when a shortage of about 20,000 drivers was reported. The shortage abated during the Great Recession, which began in 2008, due to plummeting industry volumes. However, by 2011, as freight volumes increased again, the shortage returned. Since then, the market has had slight ups and downs, but overall, volumes continue to increase, aging drivers are leaving the workforce, and the driver shortage is increasing rapidly (Costello, 2019).

In 2020, truck driver turnover rates exceeded 90% for large, long-haul carriers and 72% for smaller carriers (FleetOwner, 2021, p. 3), with many drivers leaving the industry (Thomas, 2018, p. 3) to pursue less stressful careers (de Croon et al., 2004). The outlook for 2022 and beyond is not improving. Freight Transportation Research Associates, Inc (FTR) predicts that the driver shortage will continue to be an issue plaguing the supply chain beyond 2022. According to American Trucking Associations (ATA) estimates, the transportation industry is still down by about 80,000 drivers (2022, p. 11).

Drivers and Stress

Commercial drivers work extremely long days in a high-stress environment. Their job requires them to meet tight schedules and stay alert for up to 14 hours a day. Uncomfortable living conditions and demanding work schedules can cause unhealthy, irregular sleeping patterns. These behaviors and their implications for chronic disease have become a growing concern for the government regarding safety (Levy, 2022). Additionally, drivers suffer from loneliness and isolation, inadequate health care options, lack of respect, and stress-related difficulties related to their pay, eligibility to drive, and being told how to do their job (Thomas, 2018b). Drivers also have a high incidence of heart disease,

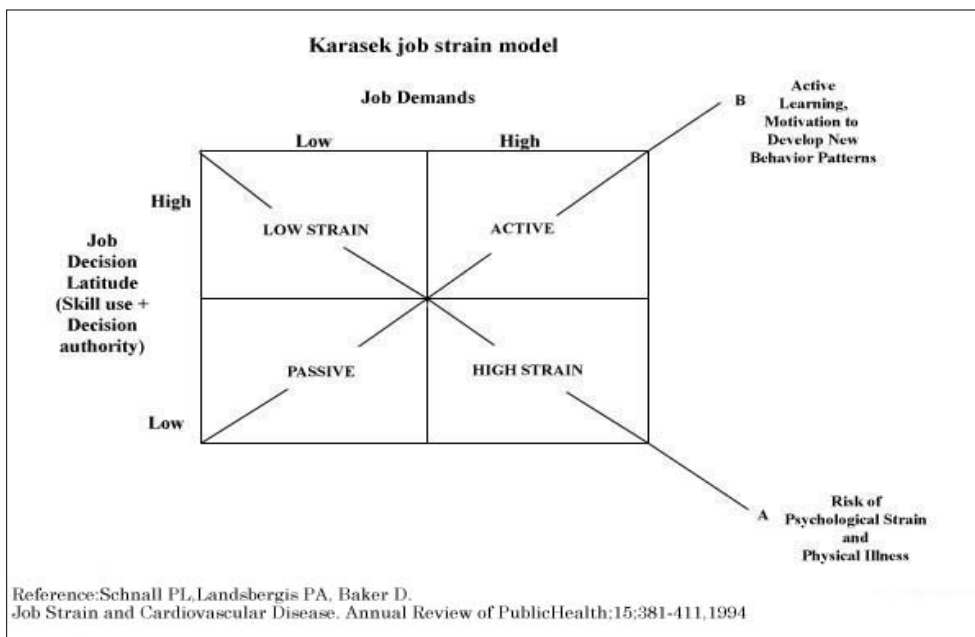


Figure 1: Karasek Job Strain Model (Wigger, 2011)

which might be due to stress factors at work. Recent changes in Hours of Service (HoS) regulations constrain the number of consecutive hours a driver may drive without sleeping. They may negatively affect drivers as they leave the driver with little job control over their time (Jensen & Dahl, 2009).

HoS regulations are narrowing the decision latitude and job control concerning working hours, especially for long-haul drivers. The control by the authorities and heavy fines for violation of the HoS regulations may cause drivers to feel restricted in their ability to make decisions and pressured to meet tight delivery windows while remaining compliant. This combination of push and pull means truck drivers have both low job control and high job demands (Jensen & Dahl, 2009). According to the Karasek job strain model (see Figure 1), the typical truck driver may fall in the “high strain” quadrant. “The greatest risk to physical and mental health from stress occurs to workers facing high psychological workload demands or pressures combined with low control or decision latitude in meeting those demands” (Wigger, 2011, p. 2). The mental strain caused by these competing factors equates to stress, which is a more significant concern for workers later in their careers (aged 45 to 64 years), the primary demographic of truck drivers. In fact, for older workers, time deadlines conflicting with having sufficient time to complete tasks, autonomy, and the interaction between problem-solving and schedule flexibility are strong predictors of self-reported stress (Shultz et al., 2009).

Stress on the job can lead to more significant health risks, increased costs, and productivity losses (Wolever et al., 2012). Moreover, “when stressors (negative events, chronic strains, and traumas) are measured comprehensively, their damaging impacts on physical and mental health are substantial” (Thoits, 2010, p. 1).

Benefits of Meditation for Stress Reduction

There is a robust amount of literature to support the notion that practicing meditation is an excellent way to combat stress (Birk, 2019; Pascoe et al., 2017; Seppala, 2015; Williams, 2019). In 1975, Herbert Benson published his groundbreaking book, *The Relaxation Response* (Benson & Klipper, 2000), which “may help people to counteract the toxic effects of chronic stress by slowing breathing rate, relaxing muscles, and reducing blood pressure” (MacDonald, 2010, p. 6). Meditation is one way to trigger the relaxation response (Scott, 2020).

Since then, countless business magazines, researchers, universities, and medical organizations – from the Mayo Clinic to The National Institutes of Health – have published literature discussing the benefits of meditation in reducing stress (Birk, 2019; Pascoe et al., 2017; Seppala, 2015; Williams, 2019). Discovering literature to dispute the notion that meditation can help reduce stress in individuals who practice it is difficult. However, while articles are beginning to show up in industry media (Phoenix

Truck Driving Institute, 2024; Pride Transportation, 2022), what is still missing is research on how meditation might be accepted by and affect the truck driver population.

While much of the early research on meditation as a stress reducer focused on people with long-well-established meditation practices (Benson & Klipper, 2000), new research shows that even short amounts of time practicing may have a positive effect. According to Basso et al. (2019), “even relatively short daily meditation practice can have similar behavioral effects as longer duration and higher-intensity meditation practices (p. 208).” To reach this conclusion, the study randomized subjects (ages 18–45) who were non-experienced meditators into either a 13-minute daily guided meditation session or a 13-minute daily podcast listening session (control group) and evaluated them after 8 weeks. Compared to the control group, the researchers found that 8 weeks of brief, daily meditation “decreased negative mood state and enhanced attention, working memory, and recognition memory as well as decreased state anxiety scores on the TSST (Trier Social Stress Test).” For this study (Basso et al.), a total of 76 subjects were recruited from the New York City area. Throughout the course of the investigation, 34 subjects dropped out (n = 14) or were excluded (n = 20), for a total subject number of 42 (15 males, 27 females – primarily college students). According to Suzuki, the results were consistent with other studies of the benefits of meditation (Huberman, 2022).

These results are good news for busy people trying to fit in a new meditation practice. “This study not only suggests a lower limit for the duration of brief daily meditation needed to see significant benefits in non-experienced meditators but suggests that even relatively short daily meditation practice can have similar behavioral effects as longer duration and higher-intensity meditation practices” (Basso et al., 2019, p. 208). Additionally, there is evidence that a single session of mindfulness meditation instruction can have a positive impact on anger reduction and reactivity, “Following meditation training, the [naïve] participants showed a robust change such that the anger induction was no longer substantially impactful. In fact, in light of a single meditation training session, following the anger induction, the participants’ physiological markers showed improvement compared to baseline” (Fennell et al., 2016, p. 59).

Demographics of Meditators vs. Truck Drivers

Meditation practice can benefit both employees and employers because it addresses multiple workplace wellness needs. Although more people in the workforce are participating in mindfulness practices like yoga and meditation, engagement rates across occupational groups vary. Kachan et al. (2017) examined the rates of 12-month engagement in four common mindfulness-based practices (meditation, yoga, tai chi, and qigong) in U.S. workers, comparing the rates among major occupational groups, and there was substantial variation. White-collar workers were more likely to participate in yoga or meditation than all other workers. After controlling for household income and education level, blue-collar workers remained less likely to engage in meditation or yoga. It was hypothesized that the lower meditation rates among blue-collar workers may be due to differences in beliefs about the value of meditation.

Perhaps the disparity in engagement with mindfulness activities such as meditation has to do with the divergent demographics of meditators and truck drivers, who would fall into the “blue-collar” category. According to the National Institutes for Health, meditators are more likely to be middle-aged, white, female, and college-educated (NCCIH, 2017). While the average United States truck driver is white and middle-aged, they are also primarily male (88.3%), and only 11% are college-educated (see Figure 2) (Zippia, 2021).



“Based on the research presented, even small increments of meditation a day for an acute period can improve [executive function]” (McCormick, 2021, p. 140).

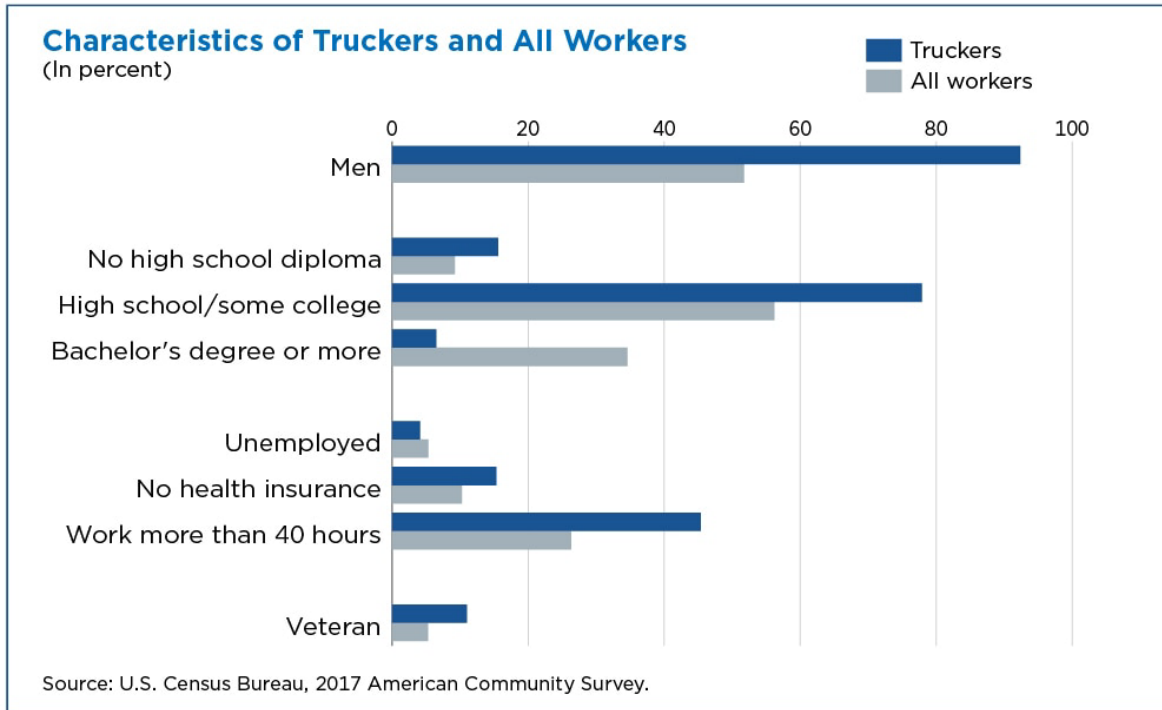


Figure 2: Demographic Characteristics of Trucker Drivers versus all Workers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022b)

Trucking Industry Attitudes Toward Meditation

Recall that scholarly research on truck drivers and meditation is missing from the literature. Additionally, a search of the Transport Topics website, an industry publication read by many executives within the transportation industry, resulted in no keyword matches for the phrase “meditation.”

Yet anecdotally, a few articles about meditation as a means for drivers to combat stress have been published in magazines targeted to drivers over the past handful of years. For example, a search for the keyword “meditation” on the website fleetowner.com retrieved eight articles with titles such as “Some truckers finding stress relief in meditation” (Kahaner, 2018) and “Keep your mind from 'zoning out' on the road” (Kahaner, 2017). On the other hand, according to one article on fleetowner.com, “Echols doesn't know any other drivers who meditate, and he suggests that the majority of truckers think meditation is “wacky, kooky stuff.” He adds that for many drivers, meditation comes across as weakness or worse, for some, as an anti-Christian or Eastern-based religion in opposition to their own religious beliefs” (Kahaner, 2018, p. 3).

Other industry publications, such as *Overdrive* by Randal Reilly, have a smattering of articles discussing the benefits of meditation for truck drivers. One article from 2014 discussed the topic with nurse and yoga instructor Elizabeth Harper. According to Harper, "Meditation promotes a deep sense of inner peace and relaxation. When you are relaxed, your breathing and heart rate slow, blood pressure normalizes, and all the symptoms of stress, such as rage and depression, dissipate. Research shows that meditation can reduce stress hormones in the blood" (Magner, 2014, p. 3).

Clearly, despite some apparent mild interest by a handful of truck drivers, there is a gap in the literature regarding driver and industry attitudes toward adopting meditation practices even though clear evidence suggests that doing so could benefit both drivers and their employers.

Men and Meditation

Since men are significantly more likely to work as professional truck drivers than women (Zippia, 2021), it is important to examine general male attitudes toward meditation outside of simply looking for data on the attitudes of professional drivers. As Mike Verano LPC, LMFT wrote in an article for *Psychology Today*, "Randolph Nesse, MD, professor of psychiatry and psychology at the University of Michigan and author of several books on evolutionary medicine, wrote, 'Being male is now the single largest demographic factor for early death.' As a mental health professional with over 30 years of experience in the field, I not only second that thought; I would add that being male is also the primary obstacle to getting help to change that fact" (Verano, 2023, p. 3). This attitude seems to be prevalent among men. Based on 2020 statistics, the CDC says only 8% of American men receive counseling or therapy. And age affected their willingness to find help (Terlizzi & Norris, 2021). This is important as drivers tend to be older.

The Need for Further Research

In summary, the literature clearly shows professional drivers experience stress on a daily basis. Additionally, meditation might help them manage their stress. Data suggests that due to their age and gender, drivers are unlikely to practice meditation. However, there is no research into whether or not drivers might be open to learning about meditation or trying it as a means of alleviating stress and boosting mental health.



Methods

“Mindfulness exercises have reached the center of society. In private life, more and more people are trying to act more consciously and thereby reduce stress and increase the quality of life. Companies also offer their employees courses or integrate different techniques into their meetings. How can this approach be transferred to the blue-collar industry and also be used in a meaningful way for workers?” (How.Fm, 2020, para. 2)

There were several phases of data collection during this study. The first phase concentrated on capturing a combination of demographic information as well as revealing practices and attitudes about meditation for both truck drivers and executives. Once that information was captured and sorted, the researchers moved into the design thinking stage of the investigation (see Figure 3: Flow chart of design-thinking methods.)

Why Design Thinking?

According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Management Sloan School, “Design thinking is an innovative problem-solving process rooted in a set of skills... At a high level, the steps involved in the design thinking process are simple: first, fully understand the problem; second, explore a wide range of possible solutions; third, iterate extensively through prototyping and testing; and finally, implement through the customary deployment mechanisms” (Linke, 2017, para 3.). While seeming easy, design thinking is complex and involves a combination of strategies that entail critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, and an understanding of human-centered design (Luma Institute, 2012). Further, a number of researchers have advocated that design thinking leads to innovation (Brown & Katz, 2011; Di Benedetto, 2012; Seidel & Fixson, 2013), which is often participant generated.

Design thinking has been used within the transportation industry to explore how to design a driver monitoring system (Dewi, 2022) and a driver warning system (Horberry et al., 2022). Additionally, IBM

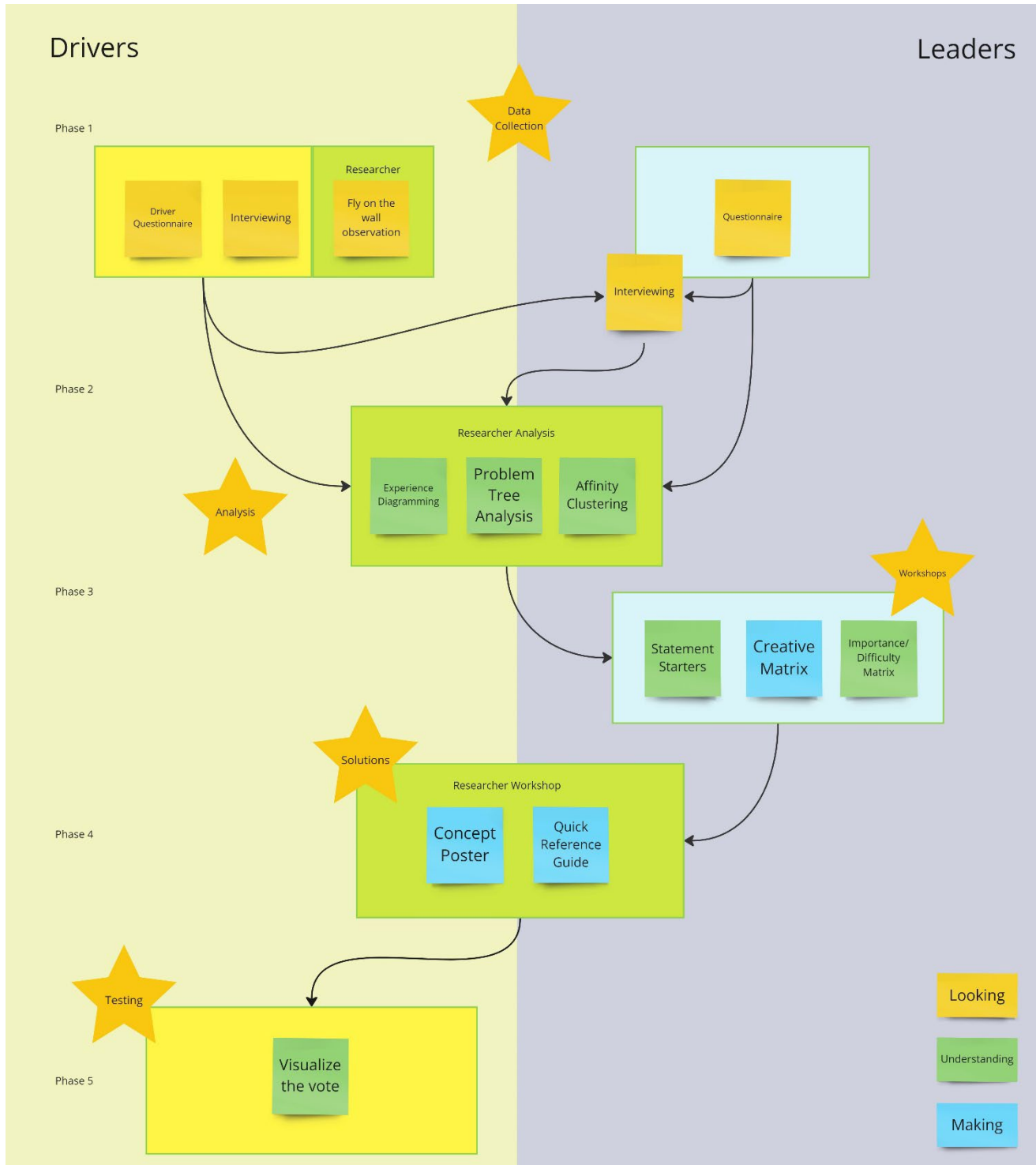


Figure 3: Flow Chart of Design-Thinking Methods

used design thinking to help the logistics industry: “They can utilize available equipment intelligently, and increase their bottom line, improving the lives of truck drivers and helping the environment all at the same time” (Kotwas, 2018, para. 5). Further, articles have been published on how schools can use design thinking to help students build resilience (Big Education, 2022) and improve well-being and stress reduction among healthcare workers (Kreitzer et al., 2019).

For this study, however, the researchers’ intent was to use design thinking methods to not only investigate the mindset of truck drivers and their employers toward meditation, but to find ways of incorporating meditation by truck drivers into their daily routine. For this, we used several design thinking methods including interviewing, stakeholder mapping, affinity clustering, bull’s eye diagramming, journaling, and more.



Design thinking is an innovative collaborative process for solving complex problems. Designers have been working within this framework for years – only recently have others found it to be successful across a multitude of non-design disciplines. The process requires empathetic problem identification through research and multi-disciplinary teamwork, brainstorming and ideation, prototyping and testing, revising, and finally implementation of the idea.

(Radford University, n.d.)

The research for this study was conducted in several phases: questionnaires, interviews, and observation; analysis and leader workshops; prototyping and testing. Any subject participating in any portion of the study was asked to complete informed consent (see Appendix B) before their phase began. Consent forms were embedded in the electronic questionnaire, emailed, or handed to participants. They were given time to read and sign them.



Phase 1: Driver and Leader Questionnaires, Driver Interviews, Observations

The purpose of the first research phase was to gain a high-level understanding of drivers' and leaders' demographic information and attitudes toward meditation. The researchers gathered data from truck drivers and leaders within the transportation industry using questionnaires, interviews, and observation (see Appendices C, E, J, and L). Using this quantitative and qualitative data, we aimed to discover the frequency of meditators within the sample as well as drivers' attitudes toward meditation and any barriers to forming a meditation practice they felt they faced. Additionally, investigators were interested in whether leaders within the industry would be supportive of drivers who wanted to initiate a meditation practice.

Sample

Before collecting data, human subjects' approval was obtained from the principal investigator's (PI) university (Appendix W). A purposive sample was used for this research study. Company drivers and leaders from the investigator's place of employment were asked to complete a questionnaire designed for their specific role, either driver or leader. While this is also "convenient," it is a sample of subjects from a group that is representative of company truck drivers and leaders across the United States, so findings may be partially generalized to the larger population of the industry, although it must be considered that this group all work for the same company.

The student investigator's employer is headquartered in the United States, operates one of the largest truck fleets in North America, and employs more than 10,000 drivers. Investigators were able to gain access to 74 professional drivers from the company to gather feedback via the questionnaire. The student investigator spent four days at two different company locations, observed the day-to-day activities of the drivers, spoke to many, and conducted structured interviews with four. Additionally, 74

completed questionnaires were collected during face-to-face interactions with drivers and recorded in Qualtrics by the student researcher. The driver pool consisted of primarily local/regional drivers who drive tractor-trailers for approximately 10 hours per day, making deliveries to a set number of locations within a standard route. They return home every day. For this study, owner-operators were not included as they do not have anyone overseeing how they use their time at work, and the investigator did not have the means to access their input.

There were fewer participants for the “leader” portion of the questionnaire. Within the company, the ratio of executives to drivers is around 1/1000. Therefore, the executive/leader pool was limited to 31. Again, the demographic mix was representative of the company (and the industry).

Design Thinking Strategy	Who?	Description	Purpose
Questionnaire (Looking)	Drivers and Leaders	A list of questions asked to individuals with the aim of collecting information.	This method was used to gain an understanding of the demographic information, thoughts, and opinions of a group.
Interviewing (Looking)	Drivers and Leaders	A technique for gathering information through direct dialogue.	Interviewing allowed researchers to ask specific questions that arose from the questionnaire results and dig deeper into qualitative data.
Fly-on-the-Wall Observation (Looking)	Researcher / Drivers	An approach to conducting field research in an unobtrusive manner.	While interacting with drivers as they pick up and drop off questionnaires, the researcher observed the comings, goings, preparations, and end-of-day experiences of drivers.

Instruments

The first part of both questionnaires was devoted to gathering information about the drivers’ or leaders’ age, gender, job type, and more. In the case of the leaders, the questionnaire also looked at position and level within the company, as well as history of driving or not. This demographic data was essential to help investigators understand how the subjects do or do not align with subjects in past such surveys. The questionnaire also asked if the person was a current meditator so that the attitudes of those responses could be excluded if the investigators chose to isolate non-meditators to ensure the construct validity of the results.

The remainder of the questionnaire, which was meant to capture “attitude,” was developed by adapting an existing questionnaire used in the study, *Assessing Perceived Barriers to Meditation: The Determinants of Meditation Practice Inventory-Revised (DMPI-R)** (Hunt et al., 2020). This section of the questionnaire used a Likert scale where 1 is equal to “strongly disagree” and 5 equals “strongly agree” to allow participants to choose a level of agreement or disagreement rather than giving a binary agree or disagree answer. The investigator added additional questions to the leader’s questionnaire to assess attitudes about situations where introducing meditation may be acceptable or beneficial.

At the end of the questionnaire, there was a space for an open answer if the participant had anything to add that was not asked. This seemed important as the questions may have spurred ideas that were worth capturing for later analysis (see Appendix C).

After completing the survey, leaders were asked to review a short flyer that highlighted the benefits of meditation for health and on-the-job productivity and then asked a series of repeated questions to ascertain if their initial attitudes changed based on the information (see Appendix G and H).

* Cronbach’s coefficient α for the 17-item DMPI is 0.87, indicating the items hold together in a coherent way (Williams et al., 2011).

Procedures

Driver Questionnaire

Drivers were informed that the student investigator would be visiting their location by a poster exhibited in their break area (Appendix A). Drivers were provided a paper copy of their questionnaire (Appendix C) and asked to complete it by hand. Each driver signed an informed consent form (Appendix B) before completing the paper questionnaire.

Leader Questionnaire

Leaders were sent a cover letter (Appendix G) via company e-mail that invited them to participate in the study and directed them to click a link that took them to a webpage where their rights were explained to them and where they were given the opportunity to electronically consent to participate

in the study. Upon their agreement to participate, they were directed to an online questionnaire to complete this phase of the research.

The leader questionnaires were uploaded to an online survey software program called Qualtrics. The only identifier for each completed questionnaire was an IP address that was not traceable to the respondents unless they willingly disclosed their contact information to participate in further discussion or other activities later in the study. Upon receipt, the survey software numbers completed questionnaires sequentially. These assigned numbers serve to identify the completed questionnaires.

Driver Interviews

Some drivers ($n = 4$) were available for brief interviews to further gain clarification on how they feel about their level of stress and experiences (or not) with meditation. Before the interview, the student investigator briefly explained the purpose of the study, asked the driver to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix D), and commenced with interview questions (see Appendix E). The interviews lasted approximately 5-10 minutes and were conducted face-to-face at the driver facility.

Observation

While the student researcher was onsite with the drivers recruiting for the questionnaire portion of the study, she was able to observe the day-to-day operations of the drivers coming onto or ending their shifts, as well as the various interactions of the dispatch team with the drivers who encountered obstacles while driving their route. The student researcher also noted the landscape of the driver spaces and procedures for beginning and ending their day. The observation period lasted four individual days between April and May 2024 and consisted of five to six hours of observation per day.

Leader Interviews

The student researcher recruited participants for leader interviews via the questionnaire used in phase one. As part of the questionnaire, leader participants were offered the opportunity to be interviewed individually either by phone or via online software such as Microsoft (MS) Teams. Individual interviews lasted 10-20 minutes.

Would you be interested in participating in the next phase of this study? Yes No

In which of the following ways would you be willing to participate? (Choose all that apply)

- A brief phone interview (will take approximately 20 minutes)
- An online workshop (will take approximately 1 hour)

The student researcher scheduled the call at a time that worked with the participant and sent a link to access the meeting via email. At the beginning of the interview, the student researcher briefly explained the purpose of the study. In preparation for the interview, the student researcher prepared a short PowerPoint presentation (see Appendix L) that outlined some of the key findings from the questionnaires to lead into more detailed questions. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for future use.



Phase 2: Researcher Analysis

The purpose of this phase was to use Design Thinking methods to analyze the data collected in phase 1 and find any themes, patterns or new ideas that might emerge.

Design Thinking Strategy	Who?	Description	Purpose
Questionnaire Data Analysis	Researcher	Chart or graph data using the Qualtrics platform.	This process helped reveal consistencies and disparities among answers and allowed analysis using descriptive statistics.
Experience Diagramming (Understanding)	Researcher	A way of mapping a person's journey through a set of circumstances or tasks.	The student investigator used this method to illustrate the many ways in which a driver's day may unfold.
Problem Tree Analysis (Understanding)	Researcher	A way of exploring the causes and effects of a particular issue.	The student investigator used this method to help understand the causes and potential outcomes of the problem.
Affinity Clustering (Understanding)	Researcher	A graphic technique for sorting items according to similarity.	This method organized and analyzed the data derived from the questionnaires and interviews and helped develop a roadmap for the workshops.

Instruments

Phase two was conducted by the student researcher. It involved analyzing the data that had been collected during phase one of the study using the Design Thinking methods of Experience Diagramming, Problem Tree Analysis, and Affinity Clustering.

Procedures

Questionnaire Data Analysis

Using the “Reports” functionality within the Qualtrics system, the student researcher created charts, graphs, and reports that revealed consistencies and divergence of the answers within the completed driver and leader questionnaires. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate frequencies, means, and standard deviations for the Likert scale and demographic questions.

Experience Diagramming

Using data gathered from interviews and fly-on-the-wall observations, the student investigator created an Experience Diagram to illustrate a driver’s good day versus potential disruptions that could lead to a bad day. This diagram aimed to help researchers identify drivers' stressors and foster empathy for better understanding.

Problem Tree Analysis

Investigators collected data from questionnaires, interviews, and prior research (Cohen-Katz et al., 2004; Lomas et al., 2014) and analyzed it using the Problem Analysis Tree, a design thinking method. This approach helped the researchers delve into the root causes of the problem and understand its potential impact on the target demographic.

Affinity Clustering

The student investigator highlighted key words and phrases gathered from the interviews with drivers and leaders. The highlighted words and phrases were then placed on digital “Post-it” notes and organized into groups of like ideas. From there, the researcher identified key themes that emerged and labeled them. Subsequently, relationships and interactions were mapped and labeled to highlight how different themes might work together or feed into one another.



Phase 3: Leader Workshops

The purpose of this phase was to gather additional information from transportation leaders, expose them to the data that was obtained and analyzed during phase 1, and work with them using design thinking methods to begin to develop solutions that might help drivers overcome the perceived barriers to taking up and maintaining a practice of meditation.

Design Thinking Strategy	Who?	Description	Purpose
Statement Starters (Understanding)	Leaders	An approach to phrasing problem statements that invites broad exploration.	Reframe the problem to ask better questions and expose more potential solutions.
Creative Matrix (Making)	Leaders	A format for sparking new ideas at the intersections of distinct categories.	Generate many far-ranging ideas in a short amount of time using a structured approach to guide the process.
Importance/Difficulty Matrix (Understanding)	Leaders	A quad chart for plotting items by relative importance and difficulty.	The purpose of this exercise was to focus on what is most important to drivers and what might have the greatest impact, as well as what is within reason for the company to provide to meet those needs.

Sample

Within the leader questionnaire (see Appendix J), leaders were given the opportunity to opt-in to participate further in the study:

Would you be interested in participating in the next phase of this study? Yes No

In which of the following ways would you be willing to participate? (Choose all that apply)

A brief phone interview (will take approximately 20 minutes)

An online workshop (will take approximately 1 hour)

From the leaders who opted in during the questionnaire portion of the research, a smaller sample size of eight (n = 8) transportation leaders were invited to participate in design thinking workshops. Several of those leaders who were not chosen to participate in interviews were asked to participate in workshops following the interviews.

Instruments

Using results from interviews, questionnaires, and the data analysis, the student created an introductory PowerPoint deck to inform leaders on the results and introduce the workshop (see Appendix O).

The student researcher conducted workshops with eight leaders ($n = 8$) divided into two groups using Statement Starters, Creative Matrix, and Importance/Difficulty Matrix using MS Teams. These sessions were meant to help researchers generate ideas on how the company and industry leaders might help drivers overcome barriers to meditation as a means of managing stress and look at ways of how to conduct meditation activities and why it may be important.

Procedure

Leader Workshops

At the start of the online video call, the student investigator introduced herself, explained the purpose of the study, and described the activities in which the participants would be engaging. The leader workshop(s) consisted of the following design-thinking methods; “Statement Starters” then “Creative Matrix” followed by “Importance/Difficulty Matrix.”

Working with participants’ schedules, a Teams link for the workshop was sent through email to all participants along with an informed consent form that was signed and returned via email (see Appendix N). Once the leaders entered the meeting platform, the student researcher briefly explained the purpose of the workshop (see Appendix O for PowerPoint overview). Leaders were prompted with the themes that were generated from the interview and questionnaire data and participated in creating Statement Starters (see Figure 4). The student

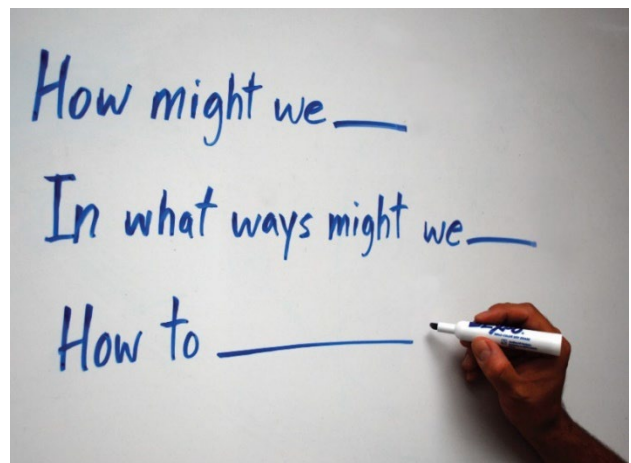


Figure 4: Statement Starters (Luma, 2012)

researcher walked the team through the initial statement starter exercise using guidance provided in the Luma template (Appendix P) and then asked them to finish the remaining three with her

facilitating. The most popular “how might we” questions were then turned into themes and moved to the Creative Matrix.



Figure 5: Creative Matrix (Luma, 2012)

The leaders also had the opportunity to add their own information and then began to complete the matrix, with the researcher adding sticky notes to the digital board.

Next, the student researcher shared her computer screen and showed the participants the digital Creative Matrix template (see Appendix Q) with blank sticky notes via Mural. The columns of the Creative Matrix were designated for categories related to the “How might we...” statements and the rows were designated for categories enabling solutions, such as technology or workshops. These areas were populated by the student researcher based on information from the previous



Figure 6: Importance/Difficulty Matrix

These methods helped participants problem-solve in a creative way. Participants were able to use the Importance/Difficulty Matrix to determine which ideas should be moved forward for possible testing.

Finally, the student researcher guided the leaders through an Importance/Difficulty Matrix exercise (see Appendix R), where they placed the sticky notes from the Creative Matrix on an X/Y axis where X equals “relative importance or impact,” and Y equals “relative difficulty/cost.” As in the last exercise, the student researcher managed the digital manipulation of the Mural board.

These methods helped participants problem-



Phase 4: Researcher Prototyping Workshop

The purpose of phase four was to develop prototypes to present back to the drivers (and possibly leaders) for evaluation and testing.

Design Thinking Strategy	Who?	Description	Purpose
Quick Reference Guide (QRG) (Making)	Researcher	A short document summarizing the key principles and elements of a proposed solution.	This method enabled the researcher to present a plan to the drivers for their review.
Concept Poster (Making)	Researcher	A presentation format illustrating the main points of a new idea.	This method was used to advertise the testing phase.

Instruments

The purpose of phase four was to develop prototypes to present back to the drivers (and possibly leaders) for evaluation and testing.

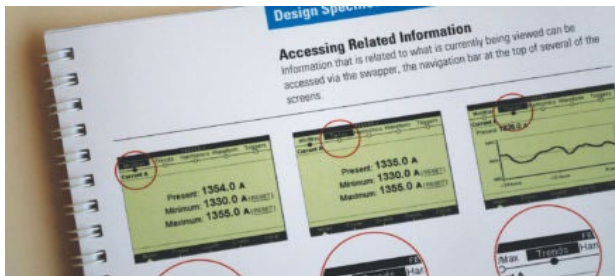


Figure 7: Quick Reference Guide (Luma)

According to the online Luma-Workplace, “A Quick Reference Guide (QRG) ensures that your original design intent is maintained as the idea moves from conception through production and beyond.” For the purposes of this study, the quick reference guide helped communicate a few solution concepts to the driver stakeholders. The drivers used the QRG for

phase 5 as part of their evaluation. For this study, the Concept Poster was used to attract and engage drivers to participate in the testing phase.

Procedures

The Concept Poster (Appendix S) was posted at the two driver locations where the questionnaire phase was conducted. It notified drivers that the student researcher would be on-site to distribute the QRG. The QRG (Appendix T) was distributed to interested drivers for their use. Drivers were asked to use the QR code on the QRG to then complete the testing phase of the study.



Phase 5: Testing

The purpose of phase five was to give drivers and leaders time to evaluate and use the possible solutions developed by the researcher and for the researcher to analyze this feedback and draw further conclusions to inspire additional research in the future.

Sample

Drivers who took an instructional flyer and chose to fill out a short survey which could be accessed by clicking on a QR code included on the flyer.

Design Thinking Strategy	Who?	Description	Purpose
Visualize the Vote	Researcher	Once again, we want to uncover themes.	This will help us understand where we have hit the mark and where we need to improve.

Instruments – Visualize the Vote (questionnaire)

Participants were presented with the prototypes from the previous phase in the form of a Meditation Quick Reference Guide (instructional flyer) and asked to try one or more forms of meditation for one to two weeks. Within the guide, they were given a QR code that gave them access from their smart phone and lead them to a simple questionnaire. For ease of participation, the survey asked primarily yes/no questions or multiple-choice questions (see Appendix V).

Procedure

Drivers were asked to try one or more of the three meditation methods presented in the QRG flyer. Per instructions on the flyer, they were also asked to keep notes of how long they meditated, how they felt, etc. Drivers then used their notes or, if they had not taken notes, their memory to answer a few short questions within the Qualtrics survey tool.

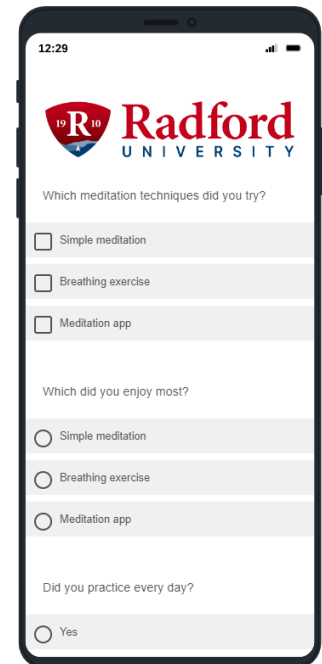


Figure 8: Driver Testing Survey

Within the questionnaire, drivers were asked if they tried any of (1) simple meditation, (2) breathing exercise, or (3) meditation app. They were asked to choose which of the three options they preferred. This modified version of Visualize the Vote will aid in future testing development.



“It’s up to us to harness that inspiration into tangible change that can address mental health across the workforce”

(Segel, 2022, p. 18).





Results

Phase 1: Data Collection

During phase one, data was collected in several ways: questionnaires were distributed to drivers and leaders within a large trucking company, the student researcher used the fly-on-the-wall observation method at two separate company locations, and the student researcher conducted interviews with drivers and leaders at the trucking company.

Driver Questionnaires

Seventy-four drivers completed a questionnaire over a two-month period. The demographics of the drivers were consistent with the demographics of US truck drivers. "There are over 1,495,809 truck drivers currently employed in the United States. 8.4% of all truck drivers are women, while 91.6% are men. The average truck driver age is 47 years old" (Zippia, 2021). Of the sample of 74 drivers who completed the questionnaire for this study, 97% were male, and 60% were age 40+.

This demographic, as previously noted, is divergent from a typical meditator who is more likely to be female (NCCIH, 2017).

Drivers and Stress

As noted previously, "the greatest risk to physical and mental health from stress occurs to workers facing high psychological workload demands or pressures combined with low control or decision latitude in meeting those demands" (Wigger, 2011, p. 2). While on-site observing drivers, the investigator noted that many of the day's stressors were beyond the control of the driver. These

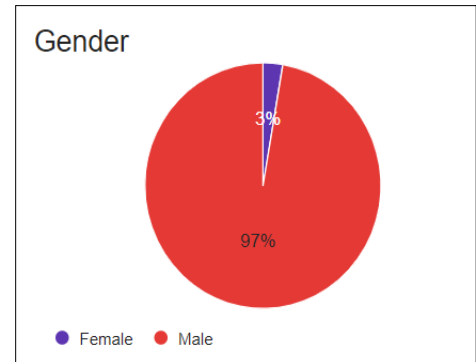


Figure 9: Driver Demographic - Gender.

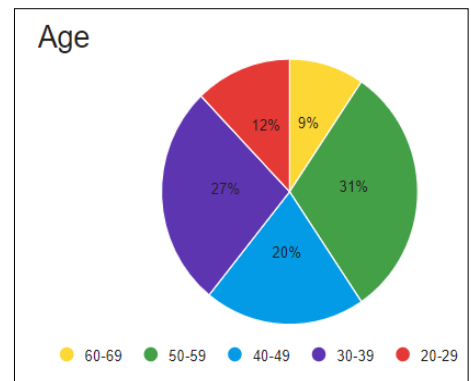


Figure 10: Driver Demographic - Age.

included traffic, weather, schedule changes, mishandled preparation, and more (see Figure 22, page 54).

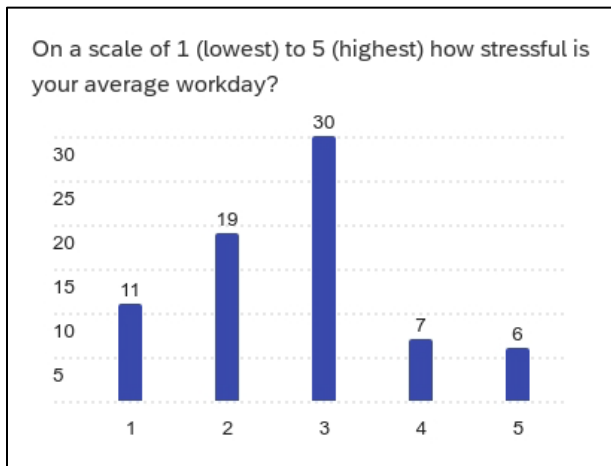


Figure 11: Driver Reported Stress Level

Within the questionnaire, drivers were asked, on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), how stressful is your day? The most frequent stress level reported by 30 drivers who completed the questionnaire was three, followed by 19 drivers reporting two. The least frequently reported level, with six responses, was five (highest). Without being given a range to choose from, drivers were also asked how many days they experienced stress. The average numbers of days per week respondents felt stress was 5.81.

Driver Attitudes Toward Meditation

The majority of drivers (81%) completing the questionnaire reported they were not active meditators, which is consistent with the small amount of information found in the literature. More than half (63%), however, reported that they had tried meditation in the past. When asked if they would be interested in learning more about meditation, most (44%) responded that they were unsure. However, more responded “yes” (34%) than “no” (22%) (see Figure 12). This was a pleasant surprise and not what had been expected based on anecdotal data found in the literature.

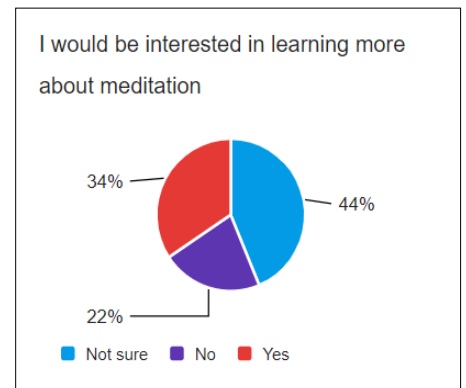


Figure 12: Driver Interest in Trying Meditation.

Driver-Perceived Barriers to Meditation

The questions for the assessment of the perceived barriers to meditation were modified from a previous questionnaire, *Assessing Perceived Barriers to Meditation: The Determinants of Meditation Practice Inventory-Revised (DMPI-R)* (Hunt et al., 2020). For this section of the study, drivers were given a list of statements with which they may agree or disagree. They were asked to circle a response between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree) that best represented their thoughts or opinions. As with the previous assessment, the greatest perceived barrier to meditation among drivers, with a

mean score of 3.66, was “I prefer to be accomplishing something” (see Figure 13) (Hunt = 3.26). The perceived barrier with the second highest score was “I don't know much about meditation,” with a mean score of 2.93 (see Figure 14) (Hunt=3.20), followed by “It is a waste of time to sit and do nothing,” at 2.82 (Hunt=2.34) and “I would not know if I were doing it right,” at 2.78 (Hunt=2.94).

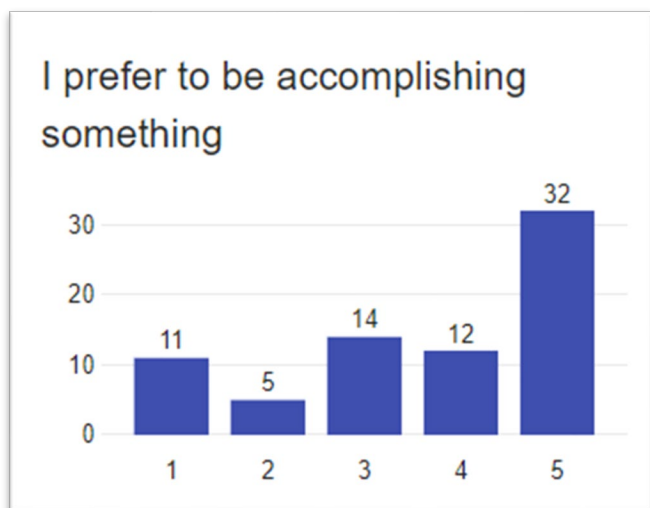


Figure 13: Assessing Barriers to Meditation: I Prefer to Be Accomplishing Something – Results.



Figure 14: Assessing Barriers to Meditation: I Don't Know Much About Meditation - Results.

Hunt et al. (2020) classified “I prefer to be accomplishing something” and “It is a waste of time to sit and do nothing” as “Low perceived benefit.” They classified “It is a waste of time to sit and do nothing” and “I would not know if I were doing it right” as “Perceived inadequate knowledge.”

Additional classifications identified by Hunt et al. include “Perceived pragmatic barriers” and “Perceived sociocultural conflict.” Statements within the sociocultural conflict classification represented the lowest barriers to meditation for both drivers and Hunt et al. (2020) (see Figure 15).

Assessing Perceived Barriers to Meditation: the Determinants of Meditation Practice Inventory

Item	Mean	SD	Classification
I prefer to be accomplishing something.	3.66	1.45	Low perceived benefit
Meditation might be boring.	2.31	1.00	Low perceived benefit
It is a waste of time to sit and do nothing.	2.82	1.46	Low perceived benefit
I don't know much about meditation.	2.93	1.40	Perceived inadequate knowledge
There is no quiet place where I can meditate.	2.12	1.34	Perceived pragmatic barriers
I don't have time.	2.66	1.44	Perceived pragmatic barriers
There is never a time when I can be alone.	2.20	1.29	Perceived pragmatic barriers
I would not know if I were doing it right.	2.78	1.36	Perceived inadequate knowledge
I'm concerned meditation will conflict with my beliefs.	1.88	1.28	Perceived socio-cultural conflict
My family would think it was unusual.	1.96	1.32	Perceived socio-cultural conflict
Other drivers would think it was unusual*	2.13	1.28	Perceived socio-cultural conflict
My manager would think it was unusual*	2.07	1.38	Perceived socio-cultural conflict
I don't believe meditation can help me.	2.35	1.23	Low perceived benefit
I wonder if meditation might harm me.	1.65	1.11	Perceived socio-cultural conflict
I am uncomfortable with silence	2.16	1.47	
I can't stop my thoughts	2.47	1.54	Perceived inadequate knowledge (?)

Figure 15: Assessing Perceived Barriers to Meditation: Results. 1 = Strongly Disagree And 5 = Strongly Agree

Fly-on-the-Wall Observation

The student researchers spent a total of four days at two different driver dispatch locations observing the daily activities of company drivers and their dispatchers, supervisors, and other associated personnel. The space set aside for the drivers to check in and out, gather their belongings, and prepare for the day (see Figures 16 and 17) was relatively small for the number of drivers and bustling with activity throughout the day.



Figure 16: Customer 1 break room.



Figure 17: Customer 2 break room.

drivers arrived to begin their workday between 2:00 and 6:00 PM. That means they do not end their day until well into the night.

During the observation period, the student researcher witnessed several incidences that could be considered high-stress events: a severe weather situation and a police-involved traffic delay that lasted more than four hours.

Average Day

The student researcher observed that, for the most part, drivers arrive 10-25 minutes before they are expected to begin their route. They check in with the dispatch team, receive their paperwork for the day, and head to their trucks. They perform any required pre-trip inspections, ensure everything is as expected, and begin their day.

Drivers returning at the end of their shift follow a similar routine. They return their truck to the yard, hand in their paperwork, and check out for the day.

Stressors

One important note: In the cases of this observation, drivers began and ended their days at nonstandard hours. At the first location, drivers arrived back at the dispatch center in midafternoon after driving most of the night. At the second location observed, most

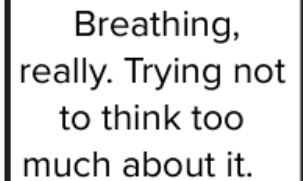
Driver Interviews

During the Fly-on-the-Wall Observation exercise, the student researcher also conducted interviews with four professional drivers. While this was not a complete sample, the researcher was able to chat informally with many drivers as they came and went and found their attitudes were consistent with those who participated in the formal interviews.

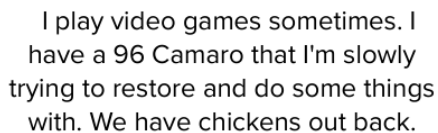
Current Stress Management Strategies

While the drivers primarily did not practice meditation, they all reported different stress management strategies. These included:

- **Patience and Acceptance:** Several drivers use patience and acceptance as their main strategies to manage stress. They recognize that some things, such as traffic or delays, are beyond their control and focus on keeping calm.
- **Breathing Techniques:** One driver explicitly mentioned using breathing techniques to handle stress, indicating an awareness of the need to manage physiological responses to stress. When asked how he handled job-related stress, he said, "Breathing, really. Trying not to think too much about it."
- **Hobbies and Personal Time:** Engaging in hobbies like driving (as a relaxing activity outside of work), running, working on cars, playing video games, and spending time with family were noted as ways to unwind. However, the amount of personal time varies, with one driver mentioning having just two hours of personal time a day.



Breathing, really. Trying not to think too much about it.

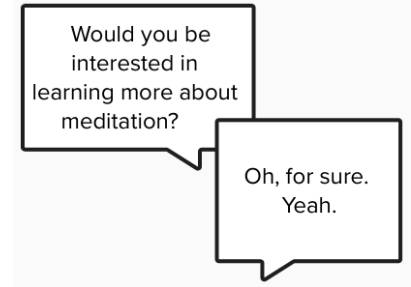


I play video games sometimes. I have a 96 Camaro that I'm slowly trying to restore and do some things with. We have chickens out back.

Driver Attitudes Toward Meditation

Lack of Experience: Most drivers had not tried meditation, primarily due to lack of exposure or not having considered it as an option. One stated, "I just never seen anybody do it. Never had any type of experience with it. Or know anyone has had experience with it." However, he associated running with a form of meditation, "It helps you relax. It gives you a peace of mind." This could indicate that he might already engage in meditative practices without "knowing" it.

Openness to Trying Meditation: While there is generally a lack of current meditation practice, all interviewed drivers expressed openness to trying meditation, particularly if it were supported by their company or introduced in an easily digestible way. The drivers perceived meditation as potentially beneficial for stress management, especially in high-pressure situations like dealing with road rage or constant situational evaluation while on the road. One stated, "I think it would be really good for guys that have road rage."



Driver Interest in Company-Supported Meditation Initiatives



There was a general openness among drivers towards company-supported initiatives focused on mental health, such as meditation sessions or stress management programs. Drivers recognize the potential benefits such initiatives could offer, especially in improving their ability to manage the unique stressors of their job. Some drivers expressed curiosity about how meditation or similar practices might be perceived by their peers, indicating a concern about appearing "weird" or different. However, they also noted that their current work environment is generally supportive, which might mitigate these concerns.

Leader Questionnaires

Thirty-two (n = 32) leaders completed a questionnaire over a two-month period. Of those, 29% were members of the C-suite or Vice President level, 32% were director level, and 39% represented supervisors or managers. Twenty-three percent (23%) had previously held a position as a truck driver. Sixty-one percent (61%) had previously tried meditation, and 19% still practiced meditation.

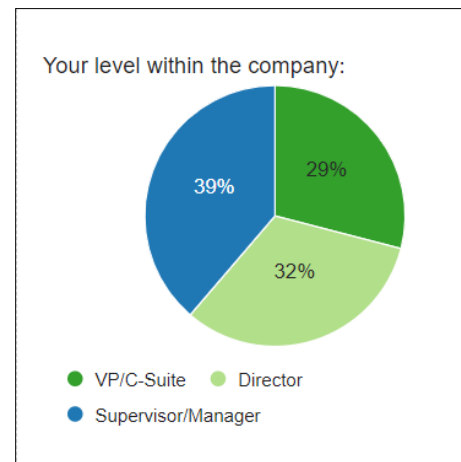


Figure 18: Leader Level Within the Company

Leader-Perceived Barriers to Driver Meditation

In addition to demographic information, leaders were asked to anticipate what drivers might identify as barriers to meditation. They were asked the same questions the drivers were asked, but in relationship to how they thought drivers might answer.

Leader Attitudes Toward Meditation for Drivers

As part of the leader questionnaire (see Appendix J), leaders were asked to rate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) the following five statements regarding professional drivers within the company practicing meditation:

- I believe meditation may benefit drivers’ health, safety, and productivity.
- I believe supporting drivers in developing a meditation practice could benefit the company.
- I would support giving drivers time to meditate during their workday.
- I would support providing apps to help drivers meditate.
- I would support company sponsored meditation training for drivers.

Support for driver meditation initially leaned to the higher side (M = 3.85). Interestingly, after being exposed to literature that discussed the benefits of meditation, leaders support for it increased (M = 3.99) (see Figure 19).

Leader Support of Driver Meditation Before and After Exposure to Literature Describing the Benefits						
Item	Before		After		Change	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
I believe meditation may benefit drivers’ health, safety, and productivity	3.97	0.65	4.10	0.64	0.13	
I believe supporting drivers in developing a meditation practice could benefit the company	3.71	0.92	3.87	0.83	0.16	
I would support giving drivers time to meditate during their workday	3.68	0.89	3.77	1.01	0.09	
I would support providing apps to help drivers meditate	4.06	0.72	4.16	0.77	0.10	
I would support company sponsored meditation training for drivers	3.84	0.95	4.03	0.86	0.19	
	3.852 AVG		3.99 AVG		0.13	

Figure 19: Leader Support for Meditation. 1 = Strongly Disagree And 5 = Strongly Agree



"The topic is very interesting, and I believe has value."

- Vice President-Fleet Operations

Leader Interviews

Eight leaders (n = 8) from various areas of the transportation company that employs the drivers were interviewed. These leaders had previously completed the Leader Questionnaire and opted into being contacted for an interview. They were, therefore, acquainted with the direction of the research before the interview. The leaders' group was comprised of a combination of president, vice presidents, and directors. All were male.

To prepare for the interview session, the student researcher created a slide deck that presented important results from both the driver surveys and the leader surveys to focus the discussion (see Appendix L).



Figure 20: Sample Slide from the Leader Interviews.

This qualitative semi-structured interview approach enabled the student researcher to ask consistent questions but also allowed the conversation to take whatever direction might yield the greatest number of new ideas and interesting discussions.

The interviews revealed strong support from company leadership for initiatives that could improve driver wellness, including meditation. Several key themes and insights emerged about introducing meditation to drivers, along with potential barriers and strategies to overcome them.

Interest and Openness to Meditation

General Interest: There's a notable level of interest among leaders in supporting anything that might help improve drivers' physical or mental health. They said things like, "Any anything you can do," and "Anything that'll improve drivers' health is, in my opinion, kind of critical." Every leader expressed a high level of interest in exploring the possibility of bringing meditation resources to drivers. One stated, "If we can improve the fitness even if it's baby steps that to me, that's a win. That's a huge win for us." They were excited to learn that over a third of drivers expressed interest in learning more about meditation with many more being unsure but open to learning more. One leader even mentioned, "the leaders of these drivers would benefit as well." This indicates a potential opportunity to introduce meditation programs to drivers as well as those around them.

Perception of Uncertainty: A significant portion of drivers (44%) responded with "not sure" when asked if they would be interested in meditation. Leaders agreed there is a potential positive, suggesting that these individuals could be swayed with more information and proper framing, implying that the "not sure" group is likely open to persuasion. One leader mentioned that "I think some people are just scared of the unknown" in reference to drivers being uncertain about meditation.

Recognized Barriers to Meditation

Time Constraints: While not the highest concern, leaders recognize time as a barrier for drivers to adopt a practice of meditation. Even those interested may struggle to find time for it. One leader recognized the nature of the driving job as "One of the tyrannies of driving is that, unlike other jobs, like in your job or mine, if we need to take like 10 minutes to go do something, we can just go do it. If

you're driving, you really, of course you could stop and take a break, but then you're not covering those miles. So, finding the time to do something like that would be a twist for many, I'm sure."

Perceived Low Benefit: Leaders agreed that since some drivers viewed meditation as a waste of time, preferring to be "accomplishing something" rather than "sitting and doing nothing," this might point to a need for education on the recognized benefits of meditation. One leader noted, "I think it's hard to understand or quantify the benefit of something if you haven't experienced it."

Inadequate Knowledge: Because many drivers expressed a lack of knowledge about meditation and uncertainty about how to practice it correctly, leaders agreed that addressing this knowledge gap could help reframe meditation from being seen as non-beneficial to something that could enhance their well-being and job performance. One leader noted, "to me it goes back to they probably don't know much about it." Leaders discussed means of communication and education suggesting solutions such as videos, mailers, and apps. One stating, "It's more around education and communication, in my opinion."

Strategies for Introducing Meditation

Education and Reframing: Leaders emphasized the importance of educating drivers on the benefits of meditation. This might involve repeated exposure to information, possibly through different media (e.g., videos, workshops), to help the benefits "sink in." Additionally, leaders agreed on the importance of reframing it as a productive activity. This approach could involve providing flyers and brochures, soliciting testimonials from other drivers, and helping to define what success in meditation might mean. One leader suggested, "If you rolled something out, we'd have to definitely define what the benefits are. Maybe some examples of other drivers or other folks they can relate to."

Tailored Communication: Leaders highlighted the importance of delivering information in a way that is accessible and engaging for all different individuals. Some suggestions include using methods like QR codes to direct drivers to videos or other easily consumable content, as it was noted that "Everyone embraces information differently" and have a variety of preferences for how to consume content.

Use Existing Channels for Communication: Leaders point to using practical methods for reaching drivers include messaging through their work phones, sending materials to their homes (where family members might also see them), and integrating meditation into pre-shift routines or huddles, similar to stretching exercises done on warehouse floors. One leader stated, “Giving them literature would be would definitely be good, whether whatever medium we decide works best along with whatever, you decide an app or what have you. This is not a big lift too, which to me is another enticing thing about it is that this sounds pretty easy, like a little education and maybe an app and you're done.”

Use of Technology: Leaders suggested leveraging technology as a practical approach to reaching drivers. The use of QR codes, communication channels like Celcom phones, and digital content might make meditation resources more accessible. These methods might also allow for tailored communication that can address individual drivers' learning preferences and needs. Additionally, there are various mobile phone apps available that might be appealing to drivers that can guide their meditation journey. One leader specifically used an app.

Incentives and Gamification: Two leaders suggested using incentives, possibly through a points system or a competitive framework, to encourage participation. This could appeal to drivers' competitive nature or desire for personal achievement, much like fitness tracking apps. One leader suggested something similar to the experience a person might have with a Peloton bike, where you can compete with yourself or with friends.

Pilot Programs: Several leaders suggested a targeted approach that focuses on specific groups of drivers. Pilot programs could be launched with a small group of drivers to test the effectiveness of different approaches and gather feedback before a broader implementation. Early adopters could then serve as ambassadors, sharing their experiences with their peers and encouraging wider participation. Testimonials could be distributed as broader efforts are implemented. One leader noted, “Let's say you went down the path of doing a pilot and you got a couple drivers and they're like, oh, this is great. And then you use them to be your voice.”

Health and Wellness Connection: There is significant support from leadership for wellness initiatives, which could facilitate the introduction of meditation programs if they are shown to be effective. Leaders see meditation as part of a broader effort to improve driver health, which is a critical concern

for the company, one stating, "From a financial standpoint -- [we're] self-insured healthcare -- the healthier [drivers] are, that drives business results as well." They believe improving driver wellness could also have positive business outcomes, such as better retention and recruitment.

Fit with Safety Efforts: Leaders see meditation as potentially beneficial, aligning with existing safety efforts, such as combating fatigue. This could be an important angle for introducing meditation, emphasizing its role in enhancing safety and well-being. Meditation could fit into broader efforts to manage driver fatigue and support mental health, especially with initiatives like exploring sleep apnea's impact on drivers. One leader stated, "It's good if that's the way [drivers] feel that we're doing something right with our training and the support and the safety that we're delivering to them."

Broader Application: Beyond drivers, leaders note that other groups within the organization, such as warehouse workers and supervisors, might also benefit from meditation practices. This suggests that while the focus is on drivers, the initiative could have wider applicability across the company. One leader noted, "Beyond the driver workforce, I mean it might benefit probably warehouse workers, supervisors; there's a host of people that I think [would benefit]."

Company Support and Cultural Impact

Employer Engagement: Several leaders believe introducing meditation, or at least offering it as an option, could reinforce the perception that the company cares about its employees. This could contribute to a stronger connection between drivers and the company, enhancing job satisfaction and retention; one leader noting, "And it goes hand in hand with, again, trying to continuously find new ways to emerge as an employer of choice for our people."

Workplace Culture: Leaders also note that offering meditation as a resource could positively impact workplace culture, fostering a sense of community and well-being among drivers and possibly others within the company. One noted, "I think there's an added, separate perception and that even the idea of somebody sharing something as an option for you is still an employer who cares, who's trying to give you options to make you more connected with your work, a better associate, all the things that go into that connectivity and that sort of emotional paycheck, that's why people actually come to work and stay at work."

Implementation Challenges

Time and Resource Allocation: There is an acknowledged challenge in finding the time and resources to implement meditation programs effectively. This includes whether it is possible to create opportunities for drivers to practice meditation during their workday or downtime. One leader acknowledged, "Yeah, the quiet place to meditate and I don't have time, like those are the big things for me, right? Like I just think about the busyness of drivers, right? They're always on the go. They've got aggressive schedules. You know, they have no control of the traffic around them, but yet they're supposed to be somewhere."

Overcoming Skepticism: Leaders feel there may be resistance from drivers who are skeptical about the benefits of meditation or who have deeply ingrained habits that might make adopting a new practice challenging. One leader wondered, "Well, when you've got a driver who's been driving 15 years, it's kind of hard sometimes to break bad habits. How do you encourage better habits?"

Phase 2: Investigator Analysis (Design Thinking Methods)

The student researcher transcribed the driver and leader interviews (see appendices F and M) and highlighted key words and phrases. Those notes were then transferred to digital cards within the software program, Mural, for use in the Experience Mapping, Problem Tree Analysis, and Affinity Clustering exercises (see Figure 21).



Figure 21: Key Phrases from The Transcribed Interviews Were Recorded On Cards Within Mural For Later Clustering.

Experience Mapping

Based on driver interviews and observation, the student investigator used the Experience Mapping method to explore different aspects of the driver's day. This helped participants of the leader workshops view the driver experience with empathy. The map (Figure 22) illustrated when stress became a factor and revealed times when meditation might be possible. Plotting out the day-to-day activities also revealed how easily a driver's day could get derailed or become suddenly more stressful.

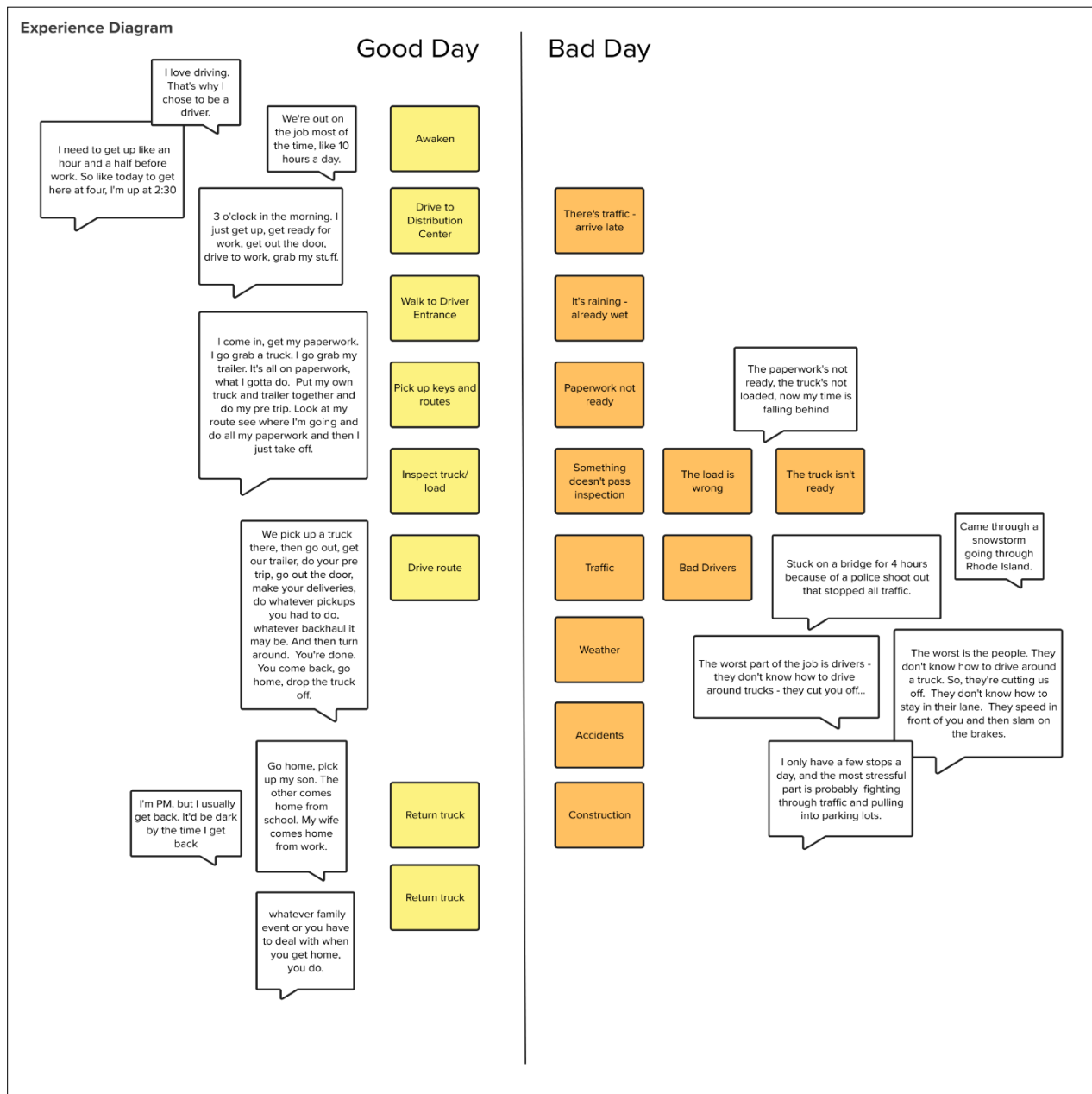


Figure 22: Experience Map of The Driver's Day.

Affinity Clustering

The student researcher used Affinity Clustering (Figure 23) to look for common themes and related ideas among key words and phrases that were pulled from the driver and leader interviews.

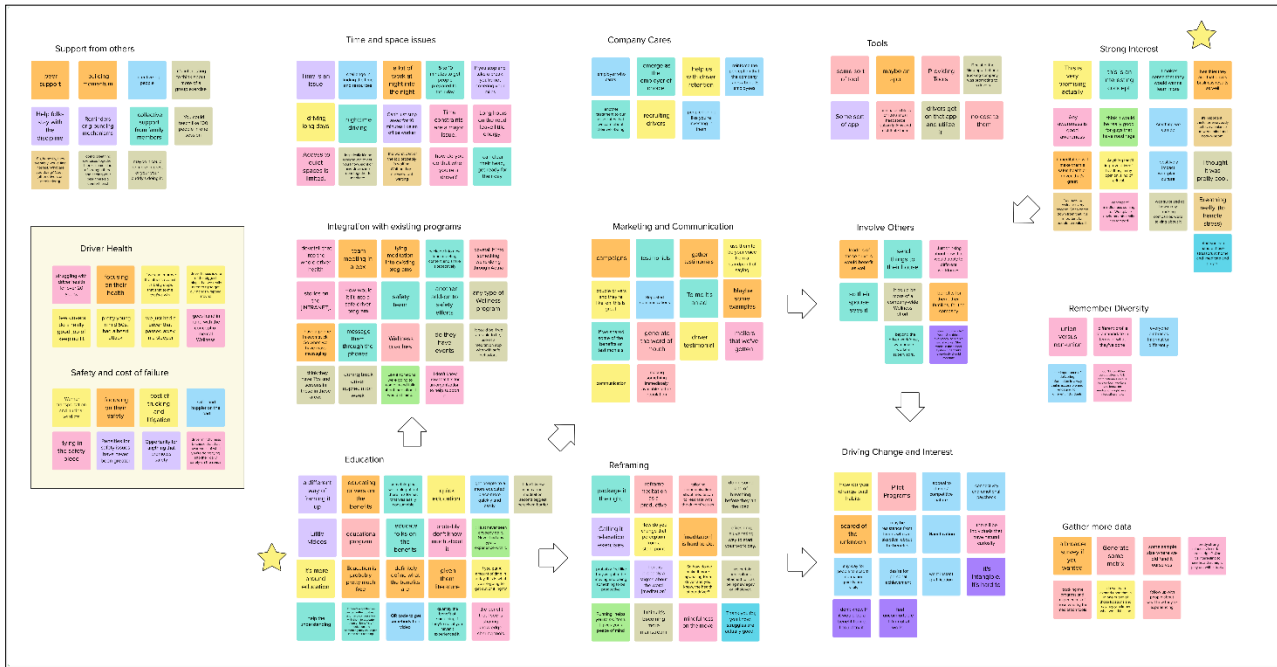


Figure 23: Affinity Clustering Graphic

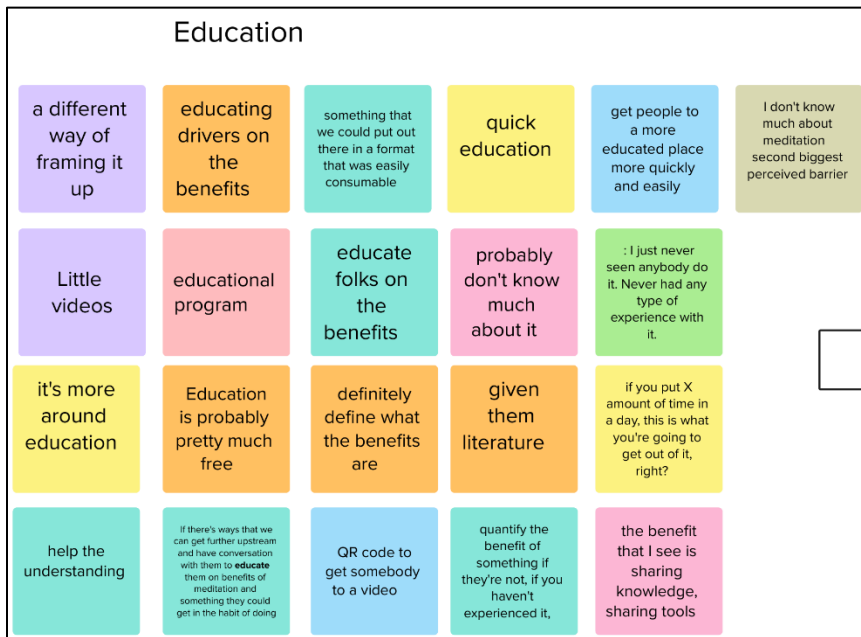


Figure 24: Education Cluster

Several themes revealed themselves through this exercise, specifically: interest in pursuing the topic, the need for education (Figure 24), the idea of reframing driver perceptions (Figure 26) of meditation, and the possibility to integrate the education and practice into existing programs within the company.

When looking at these themes, it became apparent that they were very interconnected.

Communication would be necessary for education and reframing. Education and support might be components of reframing. Marketing might be key to driving change, and more. It was important to take these connections into account while moving through the remaining methods via the workshops.



Figure 25: Strong Interest Cluster.



Figure 26: Reframing Cluster.

Problem Tree Analysis

Conclusions drawn from the Affinity Clustering exercise, along with data from background research, questionnaires, and observation were combined to create a Problem Tree. This helped researchers and participants in the workshops understand the underlying roots and possible effects of the problem of professional drivers facing barriers to taking up a practice of meditation.

This exercise reinforced the outcome of Affinity Clustering as it highlighted what the student researcher heard from leader and driver interviews and was supported by the background research.

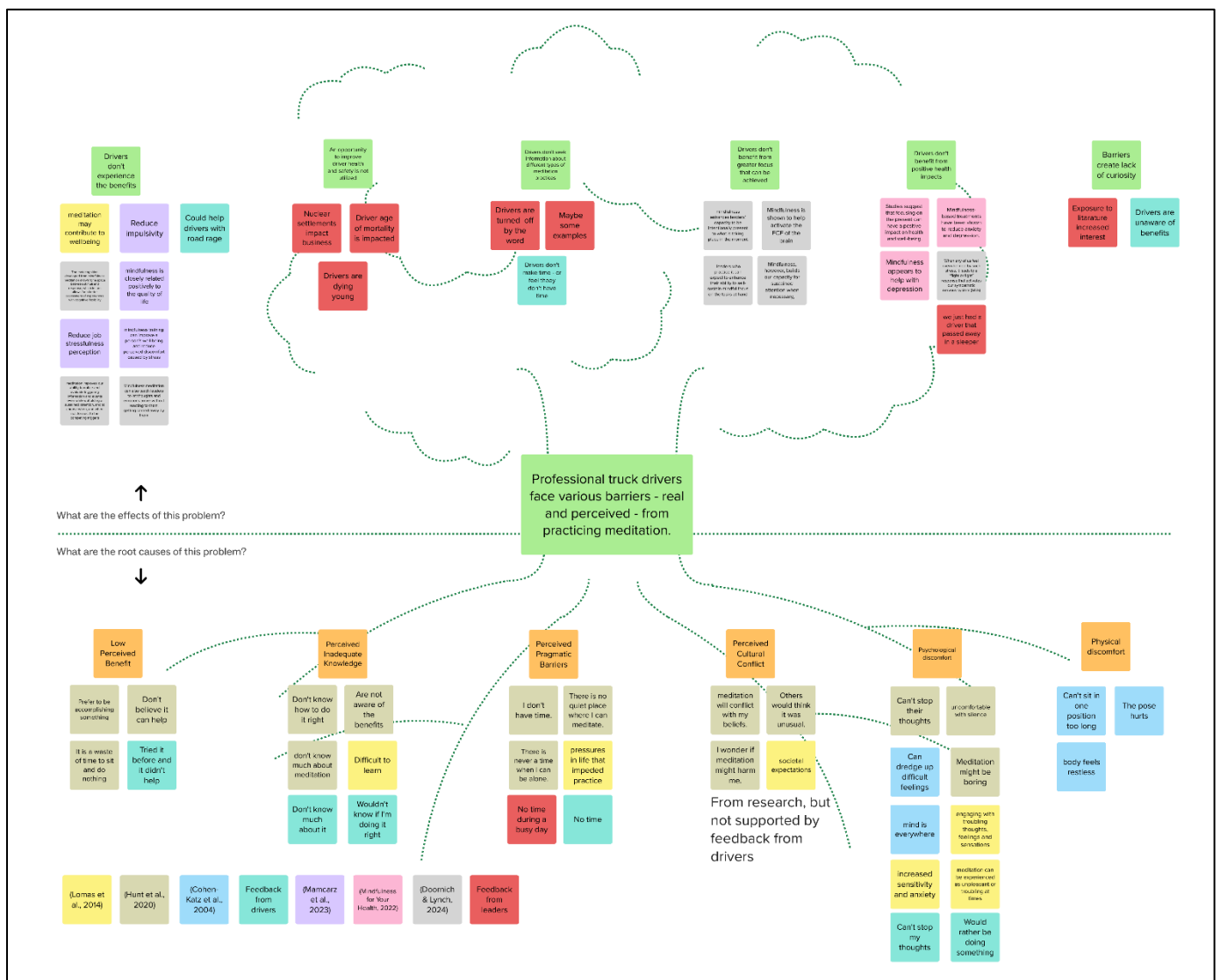


Figure 27: Problem Tree Analysis

The Problem Tree Analysis found, as has been discussed, that the causes of the problem fit into categories such as “Low perceived benefit,” “Perceived pragmatic barriers,” “Psychological discomfort,” and “Perceived inadequate knowledge.” The effects of this problem are comprised of the categories “Drivers don’t experience the benefits,” “The opportunity to improve driver health is not utilized,” “Barriers create lack of curiosity,” and more. Most findings are consistent with previous findings and research.



One root cause (see Figure 28) that was pulled from background research but was not supported by feedback from drivers was “Perceived cultural conflict.” This was a question pulled from previous research (Hunt et al., 2020) and supported anecdotally (Kahaner, 2018) but may be an undeserved stereotype of this particular demographic. In fact, many of the drivers who participated in the questionnaire showed interest and curiosity in learning more about meditation. When asked if they were concerned that meditation might conflict with their beliefs on a scale of 1 to 5, the vast majority placed it as a 1. Additionally, most drivers felt that other drivers would not consider it unusual if they knew that another driver meditated (see Figures 29 and 30).

Figure 28: Detail from Problem Tree Analysis

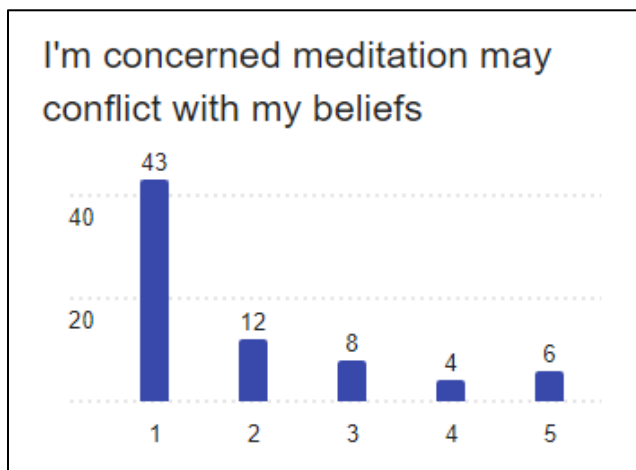


Figure 29: Conflicts with Beliefs

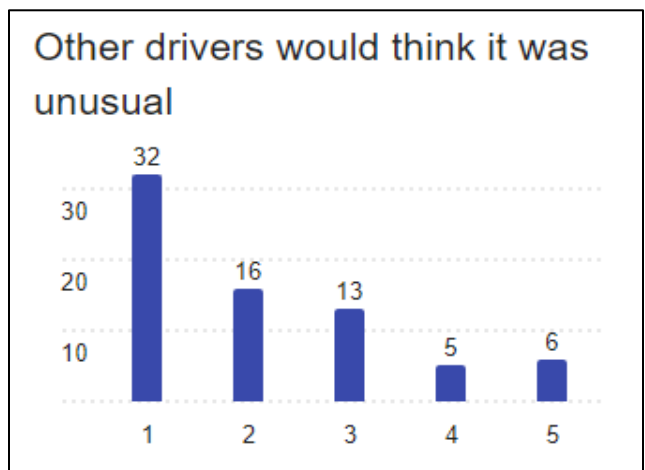


Figure 30: Drivers Would Think It Was Unusual.

Phase 3: Leader Workshops

Two separate Leader Workshops were convened wherein participants used Design Thinking methods to work toward solutions to addressing barriers to meditation for professional truck drivers. For these workshops, the student researcher prepared a short PowerPoint presentation (Appendix O) to walk participants through the Design Thinking process and previous findings.

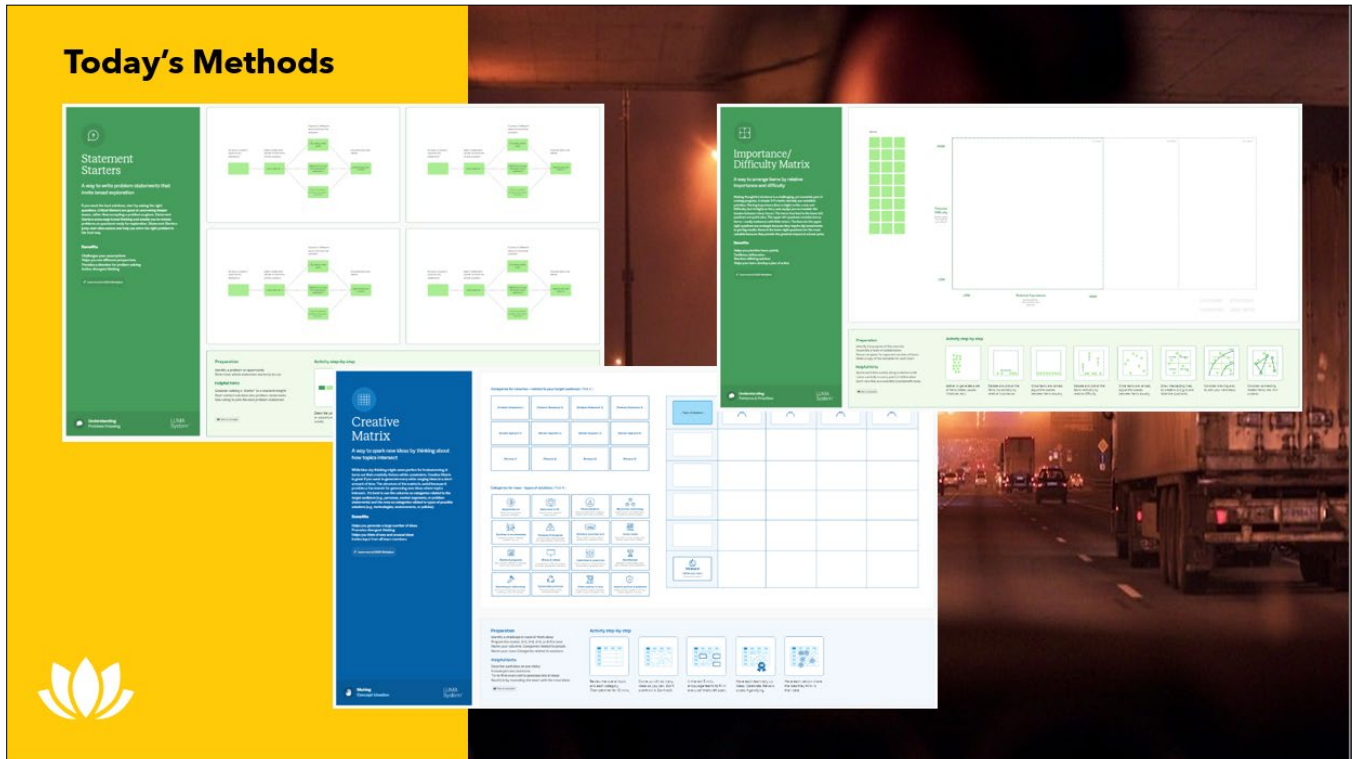


Figure 31: PowerPoint Presentation to Introduce the Leader Workshops

The first group included four people and the student researcher, who acted as a facilitator for the participants. Group 1 consisted of three men and one woman. Two of the group members were vice president level. The other two were manager level. The second group consisted of five participants plus the student. Group 2 consisted of four men and one woman. One group member was vice president level, and the other were director or below. Of the groups, Group 2 consisted of people who would be considered “closer to the work.” Each workshop lasted 60 minutes and occurred via a virtual Teams meeting.

Statement Starters

The two leader workshops began with the groups working with the Statement Starter method. This method is used to help focus and reframe problems. It helps a group look at the problem from different directions so that it is clearly stated before moving to the next method (see Appendix P).

Group 1 began with the Statement Starter method. For their first exercise, they worked with the problem “Drivers lack knowledge about the benefits of meditation.” They turned it into a how-might-we statement by changing it to “How might we educate drivers on the benefits of meditation?” Next, they reframed it in three ways: “How might we ask drivers if tools to relieve stress would be a benefit?” “How might we do something proactive to address driver behavior?” and “How might we get drivers excited to engage?” Finally, they chose to reframe again into “How might we introduce meditation as stress relief and wellness program?”

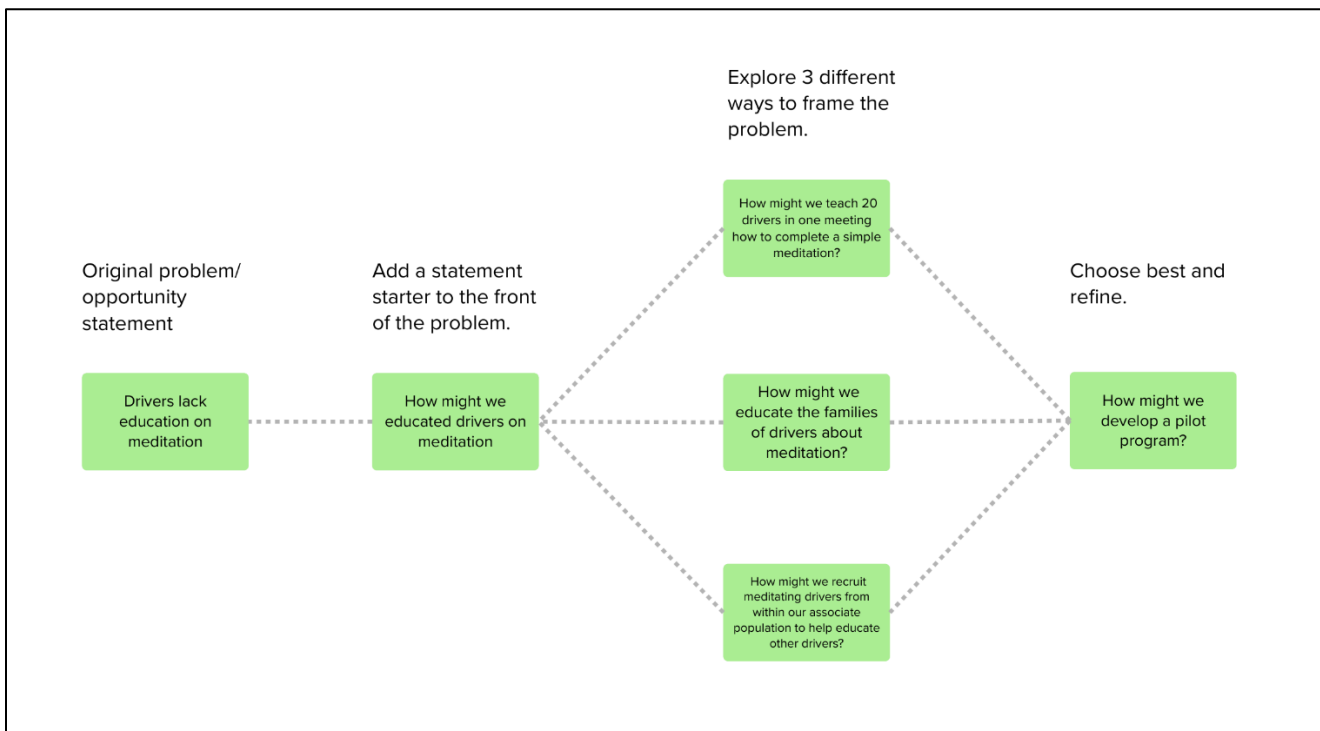


Figure 32: Completed Statement Started Template

Group 1 continued to work through the method three more times with the following results:

Problem 2: Drivers might not see the value

1. How might we change mindset?
2. How might we change the mindset to be “for yourself” not “for work”?

3. How might we include their family?
4. How might meditation help a driver be better?
5. How might meditation help a driver be a better driver AND person/family member?

Problem 3: Drivers lack information on the “right way” to meditate

1. How might we educate drivers on how to meditate?
2. How might we share/distribute an app?
3. How might we send information to the house?
4. How might we engage family?
5. Might we send information to the driver’s home, thus engaging the entire family?

Problem 4: Drivers have misconceptions about meditation

1. How might we change the mindset about meditation?
2. How might we start a pilot program?
3. How might we engage drivers to share their stories?
4. How might we make this a “Game” or competition?
5. How might we start a pilot program that includes peer testimonials?

Group 2 met independently of Group 1 and came up with the following.

Problem 1: Drivers lack education on meditation

1. How might we educate drivers on meditation?
2. How might we teach 20 drivers in one meeting how to complete a simple meditation?
3. How might we educate the families of drivers about meditation?
4. How might we recruit meditating drivers from within our associate population to help educate other drivers?
5. How might we develop a pilot program?

Problem 2: Drivers have no time!!!

1. How might we help drivers find the time?
2. How might “Corporate” reconcile the drivers time with the job of driving?
3. How might we help drivers find space? Encourage the behavior?
4. How might we motivate the driver to meditate (on their own time)?

5. Might meditation improve driver efficiency such that corporate could justify using company time for the practice?

Problem 3: Drivers are unaware of the value/benefits of meditating

1. How might we show the benefits to drivers?
2. How might we incorporate meditating into a walk? or other parts of day, dancing music etc.?
3. Might we share military, execs, etc. to show range?
4. How might we convince top leaders to share their meditative experience?
5. How might we make meditation feel like a "cool thing to do"?

Problem 4: Drivers don't have access to meditation tools

1. How might we provide tools to drivers?
2. How might we give drivers access to apps?
3. How might a subscription work?
4. How might we create our own driver meditation app?
5. How might we discover what drivers want in an app?

While each group went down a few different paths, there was a great deal of cross over between the two (see Figure 33). Areas that were identified by both groups include:

- The need for education
- The need to shift mindset
- Engaging the family
- Offering an app
- Developing a pilot program
- Leveraging peer support or testimonials



Figure 33: Statement Starters Overlapping Ideas

Creative Matrix

Once the groups used Statement Starters to help frame and focus the problem, they moved some of their favorite “themes” to the X-axis of the Creative Matrix grid. As a group, they chose which enabling solutions to use to populate the Y-axis.

Group 1 chose “Pilot Program,” “Onboarding Programs,” “Education,” and “Reframing” for their X axis themes. For the Y axis, they chose “Events & Programs,” “Technology,” “Gamification,” “Personalization,” and “Communications.” Group 2 chose “On or Off the Clock,” “Motivation,” “Education,” and “What’s in It for Me” for their X-axis themes. For the Y-axis, they chose “Technology,” “Facilities & Environments,” “Internal Policies & Guidance,” “Events & Programs,” and “When and Where” (see Appendix Q).

There was some obvious overlap between the two groups: for the X-axis themes, Education was repeated. For the Y axis enabling solutions, Technology, Events & Programs, and Communications were repeated. Group 2, the group comprised of people who might be “closer to the work” of the drivers, focused a bit more on the practical implications of how different implementations might impact the day-to-day work as well as possible perceptions by the customers. For instance, they

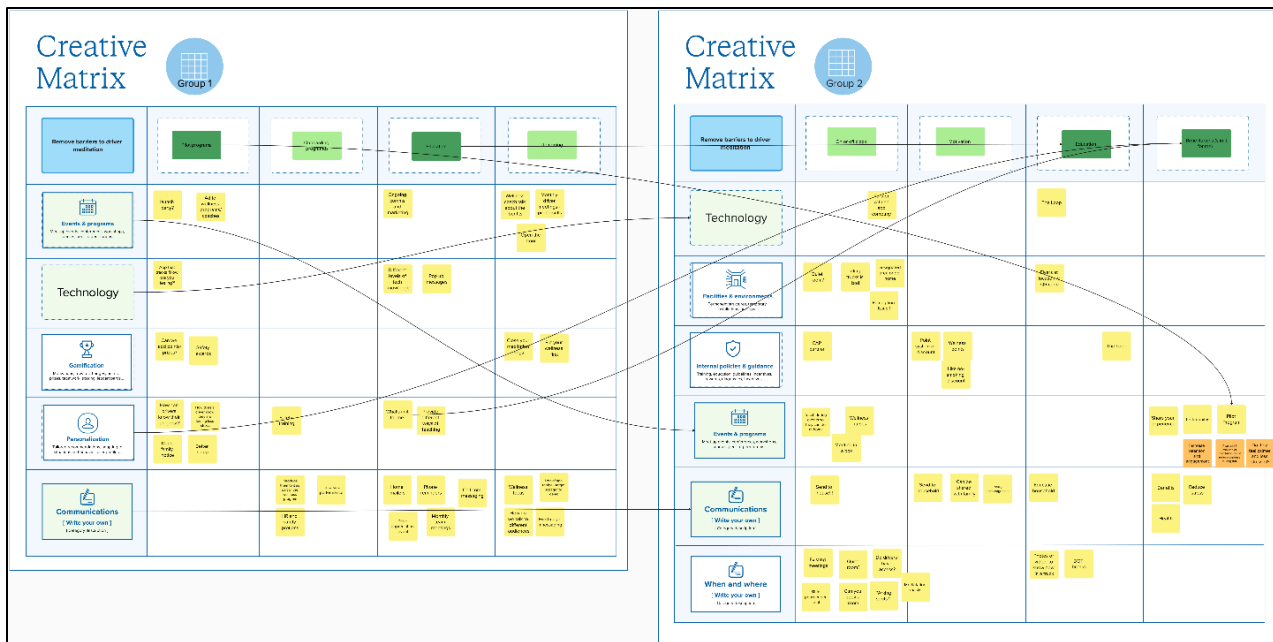


Figure 34: Further Analysis Shows Connections

discussed if trucks could be left idling while the driver meditated in the passenger seat (no!) or where a quiet space might be found within the building (it could be difficult).

Further analysis of the two groups combined revealed several additional themes that spanned both groups. For instance, both groups mentioned the importance of engaging families, using technology, communicating the “what’s in it for me,” and integrating with existing events and programs (see Figures 34 and 35).



Remove barriers to driver meditation	Education	Pilot programs	Benefits (what's in it for me)
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Loop Different levels of tech knowledge Pop up messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> App that tracks "How are you feeling?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> App that tracks "How are you feeling?" Can we add points/prizes?
 <p>Events & programs Meet-up events, conferences, workshops, courses, peer-to-peer forums...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing comms and marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> launch party? Ad to wellness programs/coaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share your experience Testimonilas Pilot Program Do they feel calmer and less stressed? Point system or discount Wellness points
 <p>Communications [Write your own] (Category description)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home mailers Phone reminders Cell com nessaging Drive appreciation event Monthly team meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share your experience Testimonilas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits Family encouragement Health Family encouragement

Figure 35: Overlapping Themes from Groups 1 and 2.

Importance Difficulty Matrix

After working through the Creative Matrix, each group chose their favorite ideas from the board and moved them to the Importance/Difficulty Matrix (see Appendix R). First, they organized them along the “Importance” axis in from least to most important. From there, the team moved them up the Y axis in order of least to most difficult. Once that was complete, the student researcher defined the quadrants as “Strategic” (most important, but highest difficulty), “Best Bets” (most important and lower effort), “Targeted” (lower importance and lower effort), and “Luxuries” (lower importance but higher effort).

The student researcher then looked for similarities between the ideas developed by the two groups (Figure 36). Within the Best Bets quadrant, both groups identified the importance of using messaging that explained “What’s in it for me?” In the Strategic quadrant, both groups identified creating a pilot program as a priority. Additionally, both groups identified the importance of tracking and capturing metrics for further analysis. Group 2 placed it in the Strategic quadrant, while group 1 placed it in Luxuries.

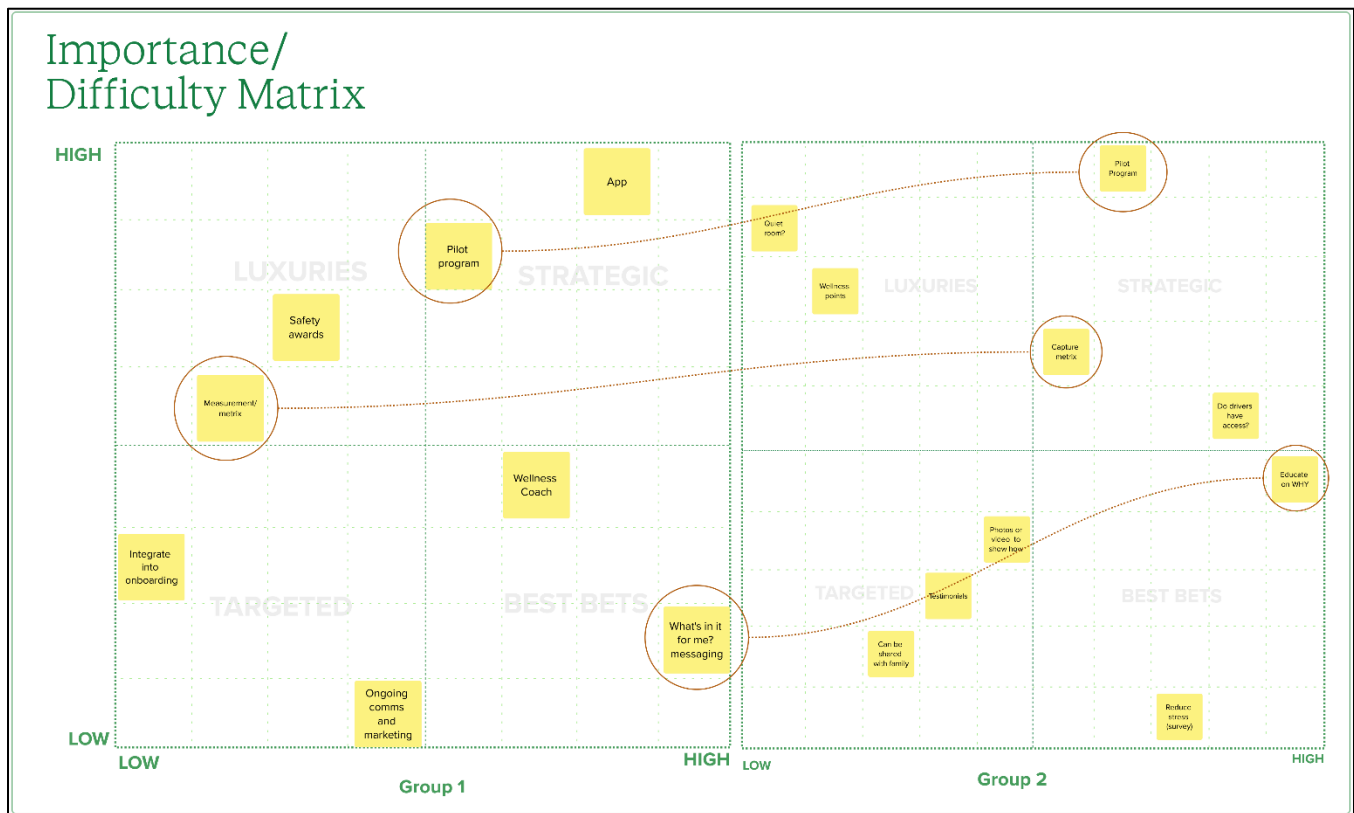


Figure 36: Side-by-Side Groups 1 and 2.

Ideas that were placed in the Best Bets quadrant of the board by just one group include the need for drivers to reduce stress and the importance of involving existing wellness coaches in educating drivers about meditation.

Additional areas identified were as follows:

Best Bets

- Use meditation to reduce stress
- Involve existing wellness coaches in engaging drivers

Targeted

- Integrate meditation training into onboarding
- Create ongoing communications from the company
- Develop training videos
- Distribute testimonials
- Share meditation materials with driver's families

Strategic

- Ensure drivers have access – no matter the technology they use (or don't use)
- Create a custom app

Luxuries

- Designated quiet rooms
- Offer "wellness points" for participation
- Integrate into "safety awards"

Phase 4: Researcher Prototyping

For testing purposes, the student researcher developed a pilot program as a minimum viable product that included a concept poster to promote (communicate) visits to two locations where the student distributed Quick Reference Guides (instructional flyers) to interested drivers.

Concept Poster

The student researcher took several cues from the previous phases and created a Concept Poster to raise awareness. The poster incorporated language discussed during the leader workshops where it was determined that it was of great importance to tell drivers, “What’s in it for me?” To that end, the poster included a list of benefits the driver might experience, such as “Lower stress levels” and “Sharpen focus” (see Figure 37). The poster was hung in the driver lounges in the two locations the student investigator had previously visited with the driver questionnaire to drive interest for the distribution of the Quick Reference Guide.

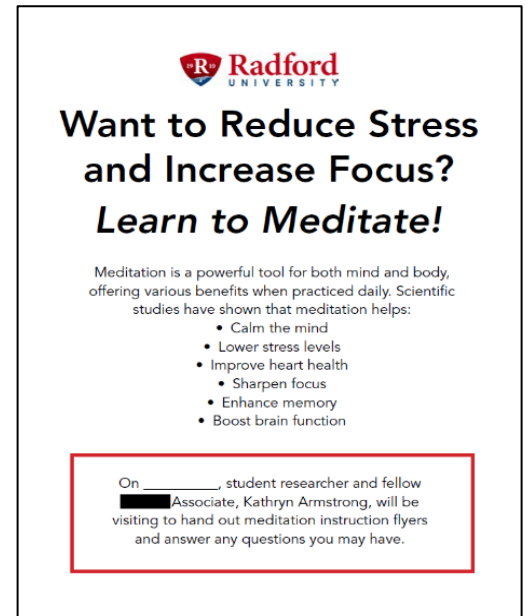


Figure 37: Concept Poster for Driver Meditation Flyer Distribution.

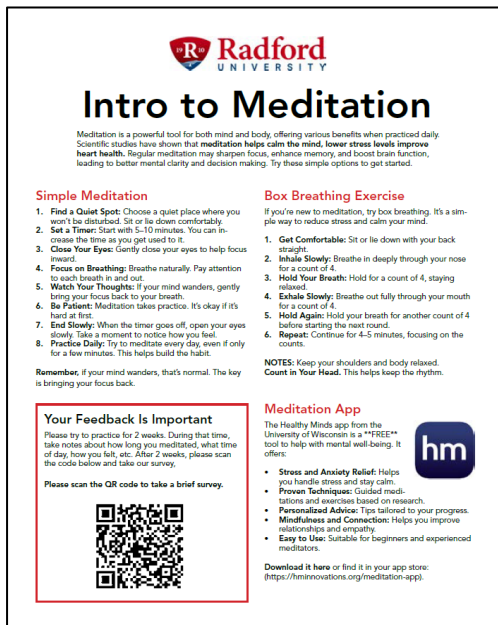


Figure 38: Quick Reference Guide Meditation Flyer for Testing.

Quick Reference Guide

For testing purposes, the student researcher developed a Quick Reference Guide (QRG) that functioned as an instructional flyer (Figure 38). The flyer included easy to follow instructions for a simple meditation, a box breathing exercise, and a guide to download a free meditation app. Within the flyer, the student again used wording that focused on the “What’s in it for me?” messaging that was discussed during the previous leader workshops.

Phase 5: Solution Testing

The student researcher again visited the two facilities where the driver questionnaire had been distributed and handed out QRGs to interested drivers. At location 1, 34 QRGs were handed to interested drivers. Six ($n = 6$) drivers specifically said they were not interested. Several more rushed through without interacting. An additional 66 QRGs were left behind in the break room, where anyone might pick one up.

Of the 34 people who took QRGs, several commented that they either already meditated or were very grateful for the information as they felt it might help them.

At location 2, 43 QRGs were handed to interested drivers. Of those drivers, two ($n = 2$) mentioned that they already practiced meditation. Only one driver ($n = 1$) specifically declined to take a flyer. An additional 57 flyers were left behind on the dispatch desk, where anyone could pick one up.

While the drivers seemed willing to try meditation for the two weeks suggested on the flyer, they did not follow through with completing the testing questionnaire. This may suggest that future testing will require a more hands-on approach that spends time supporting the drivers in their initial experience with meditation. While this result is disappointing, it does not necessarily mean that drivers will not be willing to begin a practice if given the needed support. More research is needed.



“Anything that'll improve drivers' health is, in my opinion,
kind of critical.” – Company Leader

Discussion

Summary

Overall, professional drivers and leaders within this study showed interest in learning about meditation and possibly trying it. After analysis, it was determined that a lack of education about meditation and how and why one might practice it were the greatest barriers to drivers beginning a practice. Happily, these barriers were also determined to be the easiest and least expensive to overcome. Additional barriers were revealed, such as perceiving meditation as a waste of time and challenges in finding time and space.

One promising finding from the driver questionnaires was that many drivers are either interested in learning more about meditation (34%) or are open to the possibility (44%). The greatest obstacle to meditation, as identified by the surveyed drivers, was a lack of sufficient knowledge about meditation. Many drivers said they would not know if they were doing it right or did not understand how it could benefit them. This gap in knowledge presents an opportunity to make meditation more appealing to drivers by educating them on the proven benefits, such as improving their well-being, reducing stress, and boosting job performance.

Interestingly, many drivers expressed a desire to stay productive and accomplish something during their day. One driver explained, “I’d rather get up and go to work every day because I enjoy trucking.” This mindset led many to view meditation as being unproductive, with the perception that “It’s a waste of time.” Overcoming this barrier will require reframing how meditation is perceived by presenting it in a new way. It may be possible, with education, to show drivers that meditation is not “doing nothing” but actually a means of improving themselves and their lives.

Leaders within the company also expressed strong interest in supporting meditation initiatives after being exposed to research on its benefits. Leadership support, including from the company's president, was consistent throughout the study. Leadership's desire to do everything possible to help drivers improve their mental and physical health is especially encouraging, as leadership endorsement may be a key factor in successfully promoting these wellness programs.

The research conducted during this study suggests that education will play a key role in shifting the perception of meditation from "a waste of time" to a practice beneficial for stress relief, mental health, and job performance. As the trucking industry continues to try to recruit a new, more diverse pool of drivers, promoting practices like meditation could help attract new drivers who bring fresh perspectives, like embracing mindfulness. Addressing these barriers through targeted education could improve driver wellness and job satisfaction, helping the industry maintain or even increase its pool of drivers.

Interpretations

As the trucking industry works to attract new drivers and retain current ones (de Croon et al., 2004), it is encouraging to see that both drivers and company leadership are open to exploring meditation as a potential solution. If meditation proves effective in helping drivers manage stress, improve concentration, and enhance overall health, it could make the profession more attractive. Additionally, tackling the health issues drivers often face, such as chronic conditions tied to their work (Levy, 2022), is vital for their well-being. Advancing this research could play a key role in making truck driving a more appealing career option.

Positive Interest from Drivers

One of the exciting results revealed by the driver questionnaires is that the majority of drivers who responded are either interested in learning more about meditation (34%) or are not sure (44%). Additionally, one of the greatest barriers to meditating identified was that drivers did not know much about meditation (mean score of 2.93 out of 5) or would not know if they were doing it correctly (mean score of 2.78 out of 5). These data reveal that bridging the knowledge gap may make meditation a more desirable activity for professional drivers.



I feel uncomfortable if I'm not at work. I'd rather get up and go to work every day because I enjoy trucking. I truly do. (Driver 3 interview)

As revealed by drivers, the greatest barrier to meditation was that they “preferred to be accomplishing something,” and the second greatest barrier was “It is a waste of time to sit and do nothing.” These barriers could be interpreted as a mindset that may be shifted if drivers are educated about the benefits of meditation and realize that meditating is doing something very important as it may enhance not only their mental health but also their physical health and ability to do their jobs at a high level.

Additionally, the leader questionnaire results revealed that when leaders were exposed to literature on the benefits of meditation, their level of support for helping drivers find ways to take up a meditation practice increased. It would be interesting to explore if that same shift may occur in the driver population. If drivers are exposed to more information on the benefits of meditation, will they show more interest in engaging with the practice? It is worth investigating further.

Excited Interest from Leaders

Participating leaders throughout the company expressed high levels of interest in the survey results, especially the drivers' willingness to explore meditation as a potential wellness practice. All participating leaders were enthusiastic about supporting an initiative to promote meditation among drivers, offering suggestions, resources, and their time to help educate and assist drivers in adopting meditation. Many emphasized that driver health and safety are top priorities for both the company and the industry, reinforcing the importance of this initiative (Thomas, 2018b).

Leadership support, particularly from the company's president and several vice presidents, was consistently strong throughout the entire research process. This commitment is especially encouraging, as having the backing of top executives is often a critical factor in the successful implementation of any wellness program (Corporate Wellness Magazine, n.d.).

Implications

As noted in *Prevalence of Mindfulness Practices in the US Workforce: National Health Interview Survey*, “Although overall rates of engagement in mindfulness practices, such as yoga and meditation, are increasing in the workforce, variation in rates of engagement in mindfulness practices exists across occupational groups. Mindfulness practice can address multiple workplace wellness needs, benefiting both employees and employers. Development of workplace mindfulness programs should target occupational groups that have low rates of engagement in such practices (i.e., blue-collar and farm workers), placing emphasis on men and on socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups within these occupations. This development should be done both by improving institutional factors that limit access to mindfulness-based wellness programs and addressing existing beliefs about mindfulness practices among underrepresented worker groups.” (Kachan, 2017, para. 25).

Education Must Play an Important Role

One key objective of this research was to identify the barriers that blue-collar workers, specifically professional truck drivers, face when it comes to adopting wellness practices such as meditation. One primary barrier emerged through the application of design thinking methods: a perception of inadequate knowledge regarding meditation (Hunt et al., 2020). Many drivers expressed uncertainty about how meditation could benefit them, which prevented them from engaging in the practice.

Design thinking techniques were used during leader workshops to explore this barrier in-depth. For example, some drivers said, “I’d rather do something,” when discussing meditation. This insight highlights a common challenge: Many drivers see meditation as unproductive. As mentioned in earlier research sections, this attitude reinforces stereotypes about truck drivers’ reluctance to adopt non-traditional wellness practices. The research suggests that education can play a key role in addressing this challenge by reframing how drivers view meditation. Rather than seeing it as idle or unnecessary, drivers could be encouraged to see meditation as a tool that enhances both their focus and overall well-being. This reframing is essential because, as research shows, meditation helps reduce stress, improve mental clarity, and even boost job performance (Shiba et al., 2015). In essence, practicing meditation may not be a distraction from their work—it may be something that actively improves their ability to do their jobs and balance the pressures of life on the road.

It Is Important to Rethink Driver Stereotypes

As noted, the trucking industry has long been associated with certain stereotypes about its drivers. Historically, truck drivers have been seen as predominantly male, middle-aged, and resistant to change, particularly regarding wellness practices such as meditation or mindfulness (Kahaner, 2018). However, as one industry leader noted during his interview, the demographics of truck drivers are shifting. His company's new pool of drivers is far more diverse than previously. This observation highlights the idea that the industry may be evolving, and the public and even those within the trucking community will need to rethink their assumptions about who is sitting behind the wheel.

Driver Retention (and Recruitment) May Be Improved

Leaders noted that providing access to meditation education and tools might help drivers feel like the company cares about them and their well-being, thus aiding in employee satisfaction and overall feeling that the company is an employer of choice. This perception change is significant for several reasons: As previously noted, the driver shortage makes retaining and recruiting drivers difficult (Costello, 2019). Additionally, training new drivers is costly (Lulendo, 2023). Associates who feel valued are often better, happier employees (Castrillon, 2022).

Engaging the Driver's Family may Play a Role

During the Leader Workshops, both groups identified the importance in engaging the drivers' families to encourage adoption of a meditation practice. Hopefully the family might also begin a practice. As family support has been shown to benefit patients trying to lose weight, support for maintaining a meditation practice may have a similar affect (Lemstra et al., 2016). Measuring the impact of family support on adoption as well as adherence could guide future strategies for rolling out meditation programs.

Validity and Limitations

Threats to validity include variations in age, gender, health, and education levels. To help control for these variables, demographic data was collected as part of the questionnaire. The ability to filter responses by "is a current meditator," "has never tried meditating," or "is under 50 years old" was important during the analysis phase. The sample for this current study was predominately male and over the age of 40, consistent with U.S. demographics of current truck drivers (Truck Driver

Demographics and Statistics [2024]: Number of Truck Drivers in the US, 2024). Importantly, the questionnaire used for this investigation was an established survey (Assessing Perceived Barriers to Meditation: The Determinants of Meditation Practice Inventory-Revised (DMPI-R)) with a strong reliability coefficient (.87) (Hunt et al., 2020). These factors help improve the accuracy/validity of the results.

Limitations of this study include the sample being pulled entirely from one company which affects the external validity of the findings. While it is likely that the drivers will be representative of other companies, it is not absolute. Additionally, as one investigator works for the same company, some subjects may not have felt completely comfortable being honest when completing the questionnaire.

To improve the reliability of the study, the student investigator utilized numerous Design Thinking methods to analyze the qualitative data. This triangulation i.e., using multiple methods to collect data, helped to enhance the validity of the findings. Furthermore, the interviews were audio-recorded to improve accuracy while providing transcripts of the interviews which are included in the appendices for increased transparency in the findings.

Subjective Nature of Questions

The questionnaire asked questions about attitudes and opinions, which are subjective. How a person is feeling on a particular day may sway an answer. Because we are not surveying subjects more than once with a span of time separating sessions, we cannot average response levels to see if attitudes are different in the morning or evening or in the summer or winter.

The investigator who administered the questionnaires also noted that, on average, the drivers who outwardly appeared to be more stressed were less likely to have the time or interest to participate, so the overall results could be slightly skewed in favor of less-stressed drivers participating.

Medical Professionals Were Not Involved

The student investigator in this research is not a medical professional and did not have access to tools to measure physiological changes such as blood pressure or heart rate. For researchers to understand if meditation had a positive physiological impact on drivers, it would be necessary to engage with a medical professional.

Need Measure Adherence Over Time

To reap the benefits of meditating, it is essential to habituate the practice (Lacaille et al, 2017). The student researcher did not follow up with drivers to ascertain if they continued to practice every day. This research might be important for understanding how people turn a test into a habit and whether they can maintain it over time.

Recommendations: Avenues for Further Studies or Analysis

Shifting the Mindset

In *Determinants of Meditation Practice Inventory*, Hunt classified “I prefer to be accomplishing something” as “Low perceived benefit” (Hunt et al., 2020), but could educating the population on the benefits of meditation shift their perception? If drivers were supplied with evidence of the benefits of meditation, might they shift their perception to look at meditating as accomplishing better health or greater ability to manage anger or stress? Since “I prefer to be accomplishing something” was identified as one of the greatest barriers to meditation, this might yield interesting results.

As noted in the results of the Leadership Questionnaire, after being exposed to literature that discussed the benefits of meditation, leaders’ support for driver meditation increased from an average of 3.85 to 3.99. It would be interesting to test if there is a similar lift among drivers.

Develop a Pilot Program

Several leaders within the study recommended launching a targeted pilot program that focuses on specific groups of drivers. This approach could test the effectiveness of meditation interventions on a smaller scale before a broader rollout. By selecting a small group of drivers, researchers could experiment with various meditation practices, such as brief, daily sessions, to evaluate their impact on stress reduction, sleep quality, and overall mental health. Feedback from these participants would help refine the program, ensuring it meets the unique needs of drivers.

To encourage participation, early adopters could act as ambassadors, sharing their positive experiences with peers and fostering interest within the driver community. This peer-led model could help overcome initial skepticism, making the program more appealing to a larger audience.

Researchers could also track key health outcomes, such as blood pressure, sleep patterns, and stress levels while examining how meditation impacts job performance, safety, and driver retention. These insights would benefit drivers and offer tangible advantages to the industry by improving workforce health and efficiency.

Given the unpredictable schedules of truck drivers, researchers could explore different delivery methods for the meditation sessions. Tools like mobile apps, podcasts, or onboard systems could provide drivers with flexible, convenient access to meditation during their breaks, ensuring the program aligns with their lifestyle.

Create an App Targeted to this Demographic

Developing a meditation app specifically for truck drivers offers a way to help manage stress and improve well-being in a group that faces distinct challenges. Based on data from driver questionnaires, observations, and interviews, it is clear that while most drivers aren't regular meditators, there is some openness to trying it if introduced in the right way.

Truck drivers deal with significant stress from factors beyond their control—like traffic, weather conditions, and shifting schedules. Many drivers report being stressed for much of their workweek, but they rely on personal coping strategies like patience or breathing techniques to get through. This revelation suggests that drivers are already aware of their stress levels and may be open to adding tools like meditation—provided that they are easy to use and fit into their daily routines.

A meditation app designed with drivers in mind could tackle some of the key barriers identified in the research. A major barrier is the perception that meditation is unproductive or a waste of time, with many drivers preferring to feel like they are “getting something done.” The app could address this by presenting meditation as a practical tool for improving focus, reducing stress, and boosting job performance rather than an activity that takes away from their day. Short, guided sessions under 10 minutes might work best for drivers, who often have unpredictable schedules and little free time.

Another major barrier is the lack of knowledge about meditation. The app could offer simple educational content to explain the practice and provide techniques that are easy to follow, especially

for beginners. Features like reminders, progress tracking, and even rewards or incentives could encourage regular use, appealing to drivers' desire for measurable achievement.

Additionally, an app could make it easy to track adoption. Incremental changes within the app would make testing new ideas feasible. Finally, tracking behavior would enable the company to offer rewards for usage, making it more appealing for drivers.

Measure Job Efficiency Improvements

During the Leader Workshops, Group 2 discussed the possibility that drivers who practice meditation might be able to improve their work efficiency such that the time saved due to the practice would be more than the time spent meditating. They asked the question: "Might meditation improve driver efficiency such that corporate could justify using company time for the practice?" This could be an interesting avenue for future research.

Conclusion

As the trucking industry works to attract new drivers and retain current ones (de Croon et al., 2004), it is promising to see that both drivers and company leadership are open to exploring meditation as a potential solution. If meditation proves effective in helping drivers manage stress, improve concentration, and enhance overall health, it could make the profession more attractive. Additionally, tackling the health issues drivers often face, such as chronic conditions tied to their work (Levy, 2022), is vital for their well-being. Advancing this research could play a key role in making truck driving a more appealing career option.

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Appendices

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Appendix A: Driver Recruitment Poster



DRIVERS: Can I Have a Few Minutes of Your Time?

I am a fellow [REDACTED] associate and am currently working on my thesis at Radford University. I am doing research on professional truck drivers and their attitudes toward meditation. To help me complete my research, I would appreciate your assistance.

How can you help?

Take my survey (about 5 minutes)
Sit for a quick interview (about 5-10 minutes)

Participation is completely voluntary and my research is NOT associated with [REDACTED]

All information will be kept private and not associated with your name in any way.

For those who are willing to participate, **I will have snacks and gift cards!**
I hope you will stop by and see me.

I will be on-site _____

Appendix B: Driver Questionnaire Informed Consent



Informed Consent: Driver (face-to-face Questionnaire)

Title of Research:

Investigating the Mindset of Truck Drivers and their Employers Toward Meditation Amidst a Truck Industry Driver Shortage

Researcher(s): Joan Dickinson (principal investigator) and Kathryn Armstrong (student investigator)
kathryn.armstrong@[company].com or karmstrong1@radford.edu

You are asked to be a volunteer in a research study designed to: research truck driver and transportation industry executive's attitudes toward meditation. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a truck driver or transportation industry executive. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Participation is completely voluntary.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine attitudes toward meditation in the trucking industry. Your participation in the questionnaire will contribute to a better understanding of how truck drivers and executives in the trucking industry view meditation and its possible benefits.

Procedures: If you decide to be in the study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire. We estimate that it will take about 10 minutes of your time to complete the questionnaire. You are free to contact the investigator listed above to discuss the survey.

Risks or Discomforts: There is no more risk than what is encountered in everyday life with this study, and only the student researcher will have access to the data during data collection.

Compensation to You: There is no compensation from being in this study.

Benefits: If you participate in this research, you may learn meditation techniques that may benefit you. The results of this research may benefit truck drivers and the companies they work for by introducing them to meditation techniques that may help increase focus, improve health, and/or reduce stress.

You can choose not to be in this study. If you decide to be in this study, you may choose not to answer certain questions or not to be in certain parts of this study.

There are no costs to you for being in this study. There is no compensation for you to be in this research.

If you decide to be in this study, what you tell us will be kept private unless required by law to tell. If we present or publish the results of this study, your name will not be linked in any way to what we present.

Confidentiality: The data collected in this research study will be kept confidential. Participation in research may involve some loss of privacy. We will do our best to make sure that the information about you is kept confidential, but we cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your personal information may be viewed by individuals involved in the research and may be seen by people including those collaborating, funding, and regulating the study. We will share only the minimum necessary information in order to conduct the research. Your personal information may also be given out if required by law, such as pursuant to a court order. While the information and data resulting from this study may be presented at scientific meetings or published in a scientific journal, your name or other personal information will not be revealed.

Costs to You: There is no cost to you to participate in this study.

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant: If at any time you want to stop being in this study, you may do so without penalty or loss of benefits by contacting: *Kathryn Armstrong at* [kathryn.armstrong@\[company\].com](mailto:kathryn.armstrong@[company].com) or karmstrong1@radford.edu If you choose not to participate or decide to withdraw, there will be no impact.

If you have questions now about this study, ask before you sign this form.

If you have any questions later, you may talk with *Kathryn Armstrong at* [kathryn.armstrong@\[company\].com](mailto:kathryn.armstrong@[company].com) or karmstrong1@radford.edu

This study was approved by the Radford University Committee for the Review of Human Subjects Research. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject or have complaints about this study, you should contact Dr. Jeanne Mekolichick, Institutional Official and Associate Provost for Research, Faculty Success, and Strategic Initiatives, jmekolic@radford.edu, 540-831-5114

It is your choice whether or not to be in this study. What you choose will not affect any current or future relationship with Radford University.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records upon request.

If all of your questions have been answered and you would like to take part in this study, then please sign below.

Signature

Printed Name(s)

Date

I/We have explained the study to the person signing above, have allowed an opportunity for questions, and have answered all of his/her questions. I/We believe that the subject understands this information.

Signature of Researcher(s)

Printed Name(s)

Date

Note: A signed copy of this form will be provided for your records upon request.

Appendix C: Driver Questionnaire

PART 1: ABOUT YOU

You DO NOT need to disclose your name, phone number, or email address unless you wish to. Identifiable information will be used ONLY to contact you for follow up questions or to participate in additional activities related to this study.

Name (optional): _____

Phone number (optional): _____

Email address (optional): _____

May I contact you with questions? Yes No

Would you be interested in participating in the next phase of this study? Yes No

In which of the following ways would you be willing to participate? (Choose all that apply)

- A brief phone or Zoom interview (will take approximately 20 minutes)
- An online workshop (will take approximately 40 minutes to one hour)
- 2- week meditation try-out (will take approximately 10-15 minutes per day for 2 weeks)

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Religion if any: _____

Country of birth: _____

Type of route you drive: _____

Type of truck you drive: _____

Years you have been a professional truck driver: _____

Have you ever tried meditation? Yes No

How many days of the week do you experience stress in your job?

On a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) how stressful is your average workday?

Do you currently practice meditation? Yes No

Appendix C - Driver Questionnaire (cont'd)

PART 2: YOUR THOUGHTS ON MEDITATION

Following is a list of statements that some people may agree with, and other people may disagree with. Please select the response that best represents your thoughts or opinions, where 1 is equal to "strongly disagree" and 5 equals "strongly agree."

For reference, here is a basic definition of meditation:

Meditation – a mind and body practice used to improve mental and emotional well-being by increasing relaxation, increasing focus, managing mood, or cultivating an attribute. Some forms of meditation require the practitioner to keep their attention fixed on a specific feeling, such as their breathing, a sound, a picture, or a mantra, which is a word or phrase that is repeatedly repeated. The practice of meditation, which entails keeping attention or awareness on the present moment without passing judgment, is one of the other types of meditation.

It may be difficult for me to meditate because:

<i>Strongly Disagree</i>				<i>Strongly Agree</i>
I prefer to be accomplishing something				
1	2	3	4	5
Meditation might be boring				
1	2	3	4	5
It is a waste of time to sit and do nothing				
1	2	3	4	5
I don't believe meditation can help me				
1	2	3	4	5
I don't know much about meditation				
1	2	3	4	5
I wouldn't know if I were doing it right				
1	2	3	4	5
There is no quiet place where I can meditate				
1	2	3	4	5
There is never a time when I can be alone				
1	2	3	4	5
I don't have time				
1	2	3	4	5

Appendix D: Driver Interview Informed Consent



Informed Consent: Interviews

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the initial survey and agreeing to participate in additional research. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Participation is completely voluntary.

Title of Research:

Investigating the Mindset of Truck Drivers and their Employers Toward Meditation
Amidst a Truck Industry Driver Shortage

Researcher(s): Joan Dickinson (principal investigator) and Kathryn Armstrong (student investigator)
kathryn.armstrong@[comapny].com or karmstrong1@radford.edu

You are asked to be a volunteer in a research study designed to: research truck driver and transportation industry executive's attitudes toward meditation. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a truck driver or transportation industry executive. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Participation is completely voluntary.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine attitudes toward meditation in the trucking industry. Your participation in the interviews will contribute to a better understanding of how truck drivers and executives in the trucking industry view meditation and its possible benefits.

Procedures: If you decide to be in the study, you will be asked to speak with the student research via Zoom and answer questions. Approximately 5 people from the truck driver group and 5-10 people from the leadership group will be asked to participate in this portion of the study. We estimate that it will take about 10 to 20 minutes of your time to participate in the interview by Zoom. Interviews will be audio recorded. You are free to contact the investigator listed above to discuss the interview.

Risks or Discomforts: There is no more risk than what is encountered in everyday life with this study, and the student researcher will have access to the data during data collection.

Compensation to You: There is no compensation from being in this study.

Benefits: If you participate in this research, you may learn meditation techniques that may benefit you. The results of this research may benefit truck drivers and the companies they work for by introducing them to meditation techniques that may help increase focus, improve health and/or reduce stress.

You can choose not to be in this study. If you decide to be in this study, you may choose not to answer certain questions or not to be in certain parts of this study.

There are no costs to you for being in this study. There is no compensation for you to be in this research.

If you decide to be in this study, what you tell us will be kept private unless required by law to tell. If we present or publish the results of this study, your name will not be linked in any way to what we present.

Confidentiality: The data collected in this research study will be kept confidential. Participation in research may involve some loss of privacy. We will do our best to make sure that the information about you is kept confidential, but we cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your personal information may be viewed by individuals involved in the research and may be seen by people including those collaborating, funding, and regulating the study. We will share only the minimum necessary information in order to conduct the research. Your personal information may also be given out if required by law, such as pursuant to a court order. While the information and data resulting from this study may be presented at scientific meetings or published in a scientific journal, your name or other personal information will not be revealed.

We will collect your information through recordings, interviews. This information will be stored in a restricted access folder and/or an encrypted cloud-based system. Anything written down will be stored in a locked office cabinet.

Audio recordings will be collected during this study and used to allow the researcher to review interviews at a later time. The recordings will be destroyed after 3 years. The recordings will not be shared with the general public. You do have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in this part of this study.

If you give the research team permission to quote you directly, the researchers will give you a pseudonym and will generalize your quote to remove any information that could be personally identifying.

Your information will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

Costs to You: There is no cost to you to participate in this study.

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant: If at any time you want to stop being in this study, you may do so without penalty or loss of benefits by contacting: *Kathryn Armstrong at* [kathryn.armstrong@\[company\].com](mailto:kathryn.armstrong@[company].com) or karmstrong1@radford.edu

If you choose not to participate or decide to withdraw, there will be no impact.

If you have questions now about this study, ask before you sign this form.

If you have any questions later, you may talk with *Kathryn Armstrong at* [kathryn.armstrong@\[comapny\].com](mailto:kathryn.armstrong@[comapny].com) or karmstrong1@radford.edu

This study was approved by the Radford University Committee for the Review of Human Subjects Research. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject or have complaints about this study, you should contact Dr. Jeanne Mekolichick, Institutional Official and Associate Provost for Research, Faculty Success, and Strategic Initiatives, jmekolic@radford.edu, 540-831-5114

Appendix E: Driver Interview Questions

Thank you for taking the time to complete my questionnaire and agreeing to speak with me. I'd like to learn more about your day-to-day life on and off the job.

1. Tell me about how you currently handle job-related stress?
2. Do you currently practice meditation? Why or why not?
3. Do you have any hobbies that help you relax? Tell me about them.
4. What time do you generally start work?
5. Please describe your job and what you do. Can you walk me through your day so I can experience what it's like to do your job? (Walk a Mile)
6. Do you enjoy your job? Why or why not?
7. What's the best part of your job? Why?
8. And the worst? Why?
9. How stressed do you usually feel during your workday? Outside of work?
10. What part of your day causes the most stress? Why?
11. How much time do you have for yourself on an average workday?
12. How do you use that time?
13. Would you be interested in learning more about meditation and its benefits? Why or why not?
14. What if the company supported meditation?
15. How do you think your family would react to you taking up a meditation practice?
16. How do you think your peers would react?
17. Is there anything that would make you want to practice meditation?
18. Would it make you more interested if you knew there could be physical and mental health benefits? Why or why not?
19. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your attitude toward mediation?

Appendix F: Driver Interview Transcripts

Driver 1 Interview

KA: So tell me about how you currently handle job related stress.

Driver 1: I'm basically just like, I use patience. Stuff starts to get overwhelming. I tend to slow down. That's how I deal with it.

KA: Cool. Do you currently meditate?

D1: No

KA: Do you have a reason why or why not?

D1: I just never seen anybody do it. Never had any type of experience with it. Or know anyone has had experience with it.

KA: Gotcha. Okay. Do you have any hobbies that help you relax?

D1: Driving.

KA: Driving? Really? It's a hobby? Yeah. Cool.

D1: I love driving. That's why I chose to be a driver.

KA: Yeah. That's amazing that you can do, you know, meld your things you like together with your profession.

D1: Yeah, like driving. Awesome. Running, stuff like that.

KA: Do you like? Yeah. Ah, my husband does that too. He loves to run.

D1: It helps you relax. Yeah. It gives you a peace of mind.

KA: Yep. That is I've tried to talk him into trying meditation with me before and he said that's what running is. Yeah. So I can, I can see it. What time do you generally start work? I guess about now.

D1: No, I actually just came in early as a stand in, I mean stand by. I usually start around between 12 and 3.

KA: Okay, and then do you drive into the night?

D1: No, I drive. I'm, I'm PM, but I usually get back. It'd be dark by the time I get back, yes.

KA: Okay can you just sort of walk me through your, an average day? Or do you not have average days?

D1: No, every, every day I come in, get my paperwork. I go grab a truck. I go grab my trailer. It's all on paperwork, what I gotta do. Put my own truck and trailer together and do my pre trip. Look at my route see where I'm going and do all my paperwork and then I just take off.

KA: Cool, and then you just make your deliveries and come back the same day? All right, and you've said already you enjoy your job. So that was my next question. What's the best part of your job?

D1: Driving? Yes. I love driving.

KA: What's the worst?

D1: The worst is the people is like They don't know how to drive around a truck.

So, they're cutting us off. They don't know how to stay in their lane. They speed in front of you and then slam on the brakes. I've watched that happen. Stuff like that.

KA: Yeah, I'm sure, I mean that's gotta be so stressful.

D1: Yes, that's the stressful part.

KA: Let's see. How, how stressed do you usually feel like during your work day? Like if you had a scale of one to ten?

D1: I'm usually not stressed, like I said. This is, this is my this is my place of peace when I come to work. That's nice. I work by myself. And truck by myself. Dispatch, I love them. They don't bother you. They don't call you. And they don't bother you at all. Nice. So you just work by yourself all day long. So you can imagine that, having to work and be on your own time. I mean, we have scheduled appointments, but we can, we can make that. So, it's never really a problem.

KA: Nice. And so yeah, I was just going to say, how much time do you have to yourself to, during the day, but you have. Your whole day to yourself. That's nice. And would you be interested in learning more about meditation?

D1: Like if someone were going to come in and talk about it or Yeah, I wouldn't mind.

KA: Okay. And what if the company supported it? Would that be

D1: Yeah, that's, that's

KA: Alright. What do you think? Do you have kids married and like, yeah? Do you think they would like, what do you think they would think if they walked in and saw you meditating at the kitchen table?

D1: Well, I have a two year old. So he doesn't know what he looks like. When he sees me, I'm Muslim, so when he sees me pray, he likes to stand around and get in the way and all of that.

KA: Yeah, I can see that. And I guess that's about it. I just, you know, it's mostly just, you know If there would be anything that would make you more interested in learning more about it.

D1: Like I said, I think it would be really good for guys that have road rage.

Because I have road with guys in the truck and not in the truck that have road rage. So I think it would be helpful for the guys that have road rage.

KA: Yeah, you seem like you're very chill with the whole thing.

D1: Yeah, I'm just, that's just me, period.

KA: Well thank you

Driver 2 interview

KA: Okay. So, um, can you tell me how you currently handle job related stress?

DRIVER 2: Breathing, really. Trying not to think too much about it. Once it's happened, it's happened. So, just kind of processing and trying to move on.

KA: Um, do you currently practice meditation? No. No. Okay. Do you have a specific reason why not?

D2: Uh, no really. Just haven't taken the time or it hasn't been like a prevalent thought really.

KA: Do you have any hobbies that help you relax?

D2: Um, yeah, I play video games sometimes. Um, I have a 96 Camaro that I'm slowly trying to restore and do some things with. We have chickens out back. Um, and two kids, you know, keep me distracted, so.

KA: What time do you generally start work? Is this you coming to work? About four.

D2: No, I'm done now.

KA: Oh, okay, four in the morning. Yeah, yeah,

D2: three or four in the morning.

KA: Um, so what's your normal day like? Um,

D2: Um, I need to get up like an hour and a half before work. So like today to get here at four, I'm up at two 30. Um, I'm about, I'm about a 45 minute drive, but I need that extra 45. You just can't move in and out of that. Sometimes I go right back and lay on the couch for 10 more minutes, but then come here.

Um, I don't generally work more than like 10 hours on a bad day. Um, go home, pick up my son. The other comes home from school. My wife comes home from work. And that's baseball and all type of, yeah. It's, it's pretty, pretty constant.

KA: So you have a decent amount of your day to spend with them.

D2: Yeah. Yeah.

That's cool. Which is nice, yeah. Like, especially getting home early today. Like, once they're done home, getting home from school, it's gonna be nice.

KA: Yeah. And so, you like your job?

D2: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I love it here.

KA: Cool. And, uh, what's the best part of your job?

D2: Probably the lack of s Nice. And, like, the lack of, uh, Well, yeah, not just stress, really, because, I only have a few stops a day, and the most stressful part is probably fighting through traffic and pulling into parking lots. Besides that, like, the work itself is, it's effortless.

KA: Nice. What's the worst part?

Probably pulling into parking lots and traffic, right? Yeah, the worst part would be, yeah, going into New York during high traffic times.

KA: Oh, you go into the city?

D2: Oh yeah. Oh, wow. And that's one of the reasons, like, I don't come in later than 3 or 4, because if I'm at the George Washington before 6 I can get through, if I'm not, it will take an extra hour to get right.

KA: So you drive a semi?

D2: Oh yeah, yeah, driving a 48. Yeah, it's definitely an experience going out there. So, but besides um, the worst part, the worst part of the job probably is waiting. Waiting. I get stressed out waiting. And that would be like, Some days I do doubles, so I'll do two trucks, and if I gotta come back and the paperwork's not ready, the truck's not loaded, I'm like, come on. That's immediately, I'm like, now my time is falling behind my day, and my mind just hangs in there.

KA: Um, so I guess, how much time do you have to yourself, like for yourself on your average day?

D2: To myself? Between work and family, and Two hours. An hour and 45 before work, and then 15 minutes before bed. Yeah.

KA: What do you do at that time? Do you just?

D2: It's, yeah, it's all decompression. It's all just preparing mentally for, you know, like with the kids if they got baseball or something. So I come home from work relaxing and then boom, right to that. Um, a day like today will be nice. I'll get home early enough where I can have like three or four.

KA: Would you be interested in learning more about meditation?

D2: Oh, for sure. Yeah. Cool.

KA: Well, that's what I'm here to learn. I will, I will be, I'll be letting management know everything I learn too, just because they're interested. And, you know, I've been asking them to take surveys as well, just asking, you know, their thoughts on it. And I've gotten very positive feedback on it. So maybe we'll bring it in.

KA: Um, let's see. What do you think your kids and your wife would think if they walked in and saw you meditating at the kitchen table?

D2: Um, by surprise they'd be like, oh okay, you're probably a little weird, but um, not that, it's not like we're not open to the practice of it, yeah.

KA: Okay, cool. And what do you think the other drivers would think if you were like in the break room?

D2: I don't know, like I said, everyone here is pretty like, pretty cool, easy to talk to, like even a lot, like I've dealt with some, you know, truck drivers. Mhm. And people who don't want to be around with it. I don't really get that from anybody here. So, honestly, they probably would find interest. What are you doing? Cool. Why are you here doing this?

KA: Alright, um, do you have any other thoughts? That you want to share?

D2: Um, no. I really do think it's, like I wrote down in my paper, **it's important, I think, for everybody to have a balance between mind and body wisdom.** With meditation, especially when you're out and you have to think and move constantly, like you're evaluating everything that's happening on the road.

You have to evaluate every second. So to come down from that, it's important for people to realize it.

Driver 3 Interview

KA: All right, are we going? Yeah. All right. So tell me about how you currently handle on the job stress.

Driver 3: To me, on the job stress is just, okay, if I had an argument with a manager or some idiot cut me off or, okay, here, here's a, here's a good example of a particular day of mine or just driving a truck. On January 25th, I was driving, I was done my route coming back. I was less than an hour away. It was raining. It was at night, foggy. There's something called a smith system, the defensive driving course. Okay? They would teach you to look further ahead during, you know, bad weather.

So, following your training, you're looking further ahead, this idiot runs the light. Now the light's green for me for a good ten, ten, eight to ten seconds. He runs the light, because he's technically smoking weed. And it's like, he's smoking weed. I really thought he was hurt. He hit the side of the truck and I really thought he, yeah, he runs the light.

He hits the side of the truck and I really thought this guy was hurt. So my stress level shot out the roof because I'm thinking this is a different conversation when I get back. Because as a truck driver, you only good as your last run. You can be perfect for 30 years. You have a fatal accident. Now everything is under a different microscope.

So does it cause gray hairs and stress level? Yes, possibly. But once you've done, you've done as long as I have, you just deal with it. **Now, thank God this guy was okay. But you know, it's just one of those things. It's just part of the job. You go through it every day.**

Yeah. And out of your control.

Yeah. I think, see, one of the reasons why I got pissed at that particular moment is I believe I should be if I see it coming I can handle and get out of anything Because I've been doing it for so long even in my own personal car I think I can handle and get out of anything, especially if I see it coming This is one of those incidents that he was coming down the ramp I kind of saw him but I didn't expect him to do what he did because I was paying attention to the other traffic and It is what it is.

Yeah, it wasn't my fault, but it is what it is

KA: I'm going to assume from your comments before you don't currently practice meditation. No. Do you have hobbies that you do to relax?

D3: Working on cars, playing PlayStation with my son shooting pool debating with my wife on anything.

KA: Do you generally, what time do you generally start work? Do you start early in the morning or are you coming in now?

D3: I'm a normally. Versus everybody else here because I don't have a shift I can start at seven o'clock on a Sunday night on a Sunday evening and by Saturday I'm finished it up Saturday morning Go from evening to night night today day tonight doesn't make a difference

KA: Does that cause you stress at all or do you like it?

D3: Because I'm a workaholic I'm a type of guy. I feel uncomfortable if I'm not at work. I I rather get up and go to work every day because I I enjoy trucking I truly do. Sitting in a warehouse or sitting in front of a computer and somebody looking over your shoulder every day. Ehhhhhhh. That's not for me.

KA: Alright so what's your normal day like? Or is it really just all over the place?

D3: What do you mean what's my normal day like?

KA: Like, you come in, you check in, you get your paperwork, you load your truck, you go to work. Do you route and you come back or is it different? Is that okay?

D3: We don't, we don't load, we don't load the trucks. We come in, get our paperwork. If you look behind you, we pick up our truck there. Come in and out.

Yeah. We pick up a truck there, then go out, get our trailer, do your pre trip, go out the door, make your deliveries, do whatever pickups you had to do, whatever backhaul it may be. And then turn around. You're done. You come back, go home, drop the truck off.

KA: Nice.

D3: And whatever family event or you have to deal with when you get home, you do.

Oh, I love trucking.

KA: What's the best part of the job?

Driver: Payday.

KA: And the worst?

Driver: The worst part of this particular job or trucking in general?

KA: Either. Or both. Whatever you want to tell me about.

Driver: Okay. I've done, I've done Lion Hall work. I've done food service, I've done very small regional but I have to say this is a different animal working here than anywhere else I've ever worked.

Good animal?

Alright, I, I used to, so this is the second company that's been in here since I've been here. I've been here ten years.

Okay? It used to be Ryder, then it changed to [COMPANY] two years ago and changed. I used to be one of the trainers or instructors, if you want to call it, to do the road test. I had, I had a whole, a whole speech for a driver, for the drivers that came in. I said basically, yo, listen, I would ask them what type of work they did, how long they were driving, and you sure you want this job?

And they would look at me like, what you mean? I want you to get this. I want you to make a billion dollars. I'm, I'm a driver first. I'm nobody's yes man.

If I tell you, you're not, this job is not for you. I'm truly trying to protect you because for the simple reason you could screw up and lose your license here very quickly. There's things that happen here that I've never seen happen anywhere else. There's drivers that come through here that in the 25 years of trucking, I've never seen.

It mind boggles me. And I don't know if it's just this particular place, or just that's the type of caliber of drivers out there now.

KA: Hmm. Yeah, I've been reading that, periodically, that it's, I think it's, like what I've been reading, is that it's harder to find drivers anymore. I don't think it's harder to find drivers.

D3: Good drivers? Quality drivers, yes. Because, All right, take for instance the automatic trucks. Hate them, can't stand them. Dislike them with a passion for two reasons. A, you're long for the ride. You are no longer controlling that truck. Coming from a guy who started with a manual, you can make that truck do things a manual can't.

And two, I think this is one of the first steps of taking the human driver out of the truck and replacing like, That's why I don't like Tesla. Oh, you want to make autonomous trucks? You're trying to put me out of business. Care less about it. You're probably trying to kill me too. I don't trust those things.

I would never trust an autonomous car that would drive on its own.

I don't care if it's for 30 seconds or 30 hours. But, that's just me.

So while you're driving, how do you feel? While you're driving, how stressed do you usually feel? Do you feel pretty calm or do you feel stressed or in between somewhere?

I'm always in between, you know, a lot of times I'd say, okay, I've gone on, I've left, I have left the job. Now, mind you, if I lived an hour away, I couldn't work here and do what I do, but I live three and a half miles that way.

That makes it easy.

I have worked a full day. Turned around, jumped in the car and drove 24 hours to Texas like it's nothing.

Now my wife hates it because for the simple reason, come driving around town. Oh yeah, you do all the driving. I'm going to sit in the passenger seat unless I have, unless I have to drive or I'm just choosing to drive right now. But going on a long trip, take for instance,

I've left here on a, I've got done on a Saturday after work coming in. six o'clock in the evening to start my route, turn around, work till Saturday morning because I did a double, and then turn around drove to Virginia like it's not.

Yep. Driving is not work for me, driving is, driving is just something that I do.

KA: Yeah, I've heard a lot of that from people that you just enjoy doing it, so. Yeah,

D3: yeah, you show me a successful truck driver, he doesn't take the driving part of his work.

Mm hmm. To me, give me a bag of Twizzlers. A cold drink and some good tunes. I can drive to China.

KA: Well, that's cool. Let's see. Would you be interested in learning more about meditation?

D3: Listening to my wife? Yeah. She thinks everybody, so she's a social worker. She works in the school system. She thinks everybody should meditate or have some form of counseling or Talk to shrink for what? But, I can be open to it.

KA: Okay, cool. So if the company was going to support it, you'd be like, okay.

Yeah. How do you think, obviously your wife would probably be happy from what you just said. How do you think like, you know. She would say yes. If she walked in the kitchen and saw you meditating, would she be like, oh my god.

D3: You know, I should probably take my pull back. Are you my husband? Who are you?

KA: That's funny. So, any, any other things you want to tell me about, sort of, like, your thoughts on meditation, or if you'd be interested in trying it, or if you think there's any benefit to it?

D3: I don't know if it would be a benefit to me. Would I try it? Sure. I could try it.

But, do I think it would be a benefit to me?

I don't know.

It's, it's it's intangible. It's hard to,

yeah, it's, it's one of those things.

Okay. Say you go through something traumatic, lose a loved one. I couldn't be the one to just sit at home looking at, Oh God, what about this person? No, send me back to work and do what I do. Let me be in my own element. Like a couple of days ago, we had a driver that passed away on the job.

Oh, I had just talked to him that Friday afternoon.

When he was leaving out, and we were talking, he said, yeah, come by the house, you know, we'll have dinner, you know, but we were talking about cooking, and then that Monday he passed away, and it was like, what, wait a minute, I just, I just talked to him, you know, and it's one of those things, me sitting around just meditating on that, and I'd rather just remember the good times, keep working and keep, keep my mind up, probably keep my body going.

Yeah. Yep.

KA: All right, cool. Well, thank you for taking the time to talk with me. I really appreciate it. Are you heading home now?

Driver 4 Interview

KA: All right. Um, what time do you generally start work in the morning or in the afternoon? Generally about 2,

Driver 4: 3 o'clock in the morning.

KA: Uh, can you describe kind of your normal day to day?

Driver: I just get up, get ready for work, get out the door, drive to work, grab my stuff. I don't really talk to many people, a few people here and there.

I do my job, I'm hyper focused on doing my job and completing the task ahead.

KA: Nice. Okay. Uh, do you enjoy your job?

Driver: I love my job.

KA: Nice.

Driver: I love my job.

KA: Um, what's the best part?

Driver: The freedom.

KA: Freedom?

Driver: The freedom that the company allows you to have to be on the road. You can be with yourself and your thoughts. Mm hmm.

And you can handle those stressors at home and meditate and prayer. All those things that you have come up.

Mm hmm.

And then you get, you see a lot of people out in the world. You get a, you gain a really good perspective. where you are in relation to other people. And then, and then you say, Lord, thank you for, for my struggles.

Yeah. Thank you for, you know, struggles are actually good.

Gratitude. Yes.

Yeah.

KA: What's the worst part of your job?

Driver: When we don't have enough work. That's the worst part. Um, I mean, I don't really know what to I really can't say.

Yeah.

Can't pinpoint. Well, that's good. Yeah. Right. Um, Let's see, uh, what part of your day causes the most stress?

Probably the drive home. Meaning the drive home from, whether or not you're on, because you usually leave it, leave in the city, so then you have to really concentrate on what other people are going to do or not do. So it's, you need a, a lot, you need to be hyper focused in that area and, uh, ready to adapt or adjust to whatever comes your way.

Yeah.

So. You gotta be a lot more attentive.

KA: Yeah, so that's sort of like, the time that's not going from stop to stop to stop. Right, right. How much time do you have to yourself on an average day?

Driver: Well, we're in a truck. We're out on the job most of the time, like 10 hours a day. Yeah. So you have a good six hours.

KA: Um, would you be interested in learning more about meditation and its benefits?

Driver: No, because I do practice that by, um, through, um, prayer. I encourage myself in the Lord through scriptures. Also listen to preaching sermons and then also listen to Christian music too. You know, whenever I'm down, I encourage myself in the Lord.

It's my strength, my hope.

Um, let's see. I think that's about it. Is there anything else you want to tell me?

Appendix G: Leader Cover/Recruitment Letter (Questionnaire)

You are invited to participate in a research survey that examines driver perceptions regarding the practice of meditation. The study is being conducted by Dr. Joan Dickinson, Professor, Department of Design at Radford University and Kathryn Armstrong, Department of Design at Radford University, who is also Senior Manager – Digital Products at your company (karmstrong@radford.edu or [kathryn.armstrong@\[company\].com](mailto:kathryn.armstrong@[company].com), 610-796-4392).

The purpose of this portion of the study is to examine attitudes toward meditation in the trucking industry. Your participation in the survey will contribute to a better understanding of how truck drivers and leaders in the trucking industry view meditation and its possible benefits.

We estimate that it will take about 10 minutes of your time to complete the questionnaire. You are free to contact the investigator at the above email address and phone number to discuss the survey. You must be over the age of 18 to participate in this research study, and your participation in this survey is voluntary.

If you agree to participate, *please click here to begin*. This will bring you to the electronic informed consent form, to which you will need to agree. Once you have agreed, you can begin the questionnaire.

If you decide you do not wish to participate, use the X at the upper right corner to close this window and disconnect.

Thank you,
Kathryn Armstrong

Appendix H: Leader Electronic Informed Consent (Questionnaire)



Informed Consent

The research team will work to protect your data to the extent permitted by technology. It is possible, although unlikely, that an unauthorized individual could gain access to your responses because you are responding online. This risk is similar to your everyday use of the internet. Identification numbers associated with email addresses will be kept during the data collection phase for tracking purposes only. A limited number of research team members will have access to the data during data collection. Identifying information will be stripped from the final dataset.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may decline to answer any question, and you have the right to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. If you wish to withdraw from the study or have any questions, contact the investigator listed below. If you choose not to participate or decide to withdraw, there will be no impact on your employment.

If you have any questions or wish to update your email address, please call Kathryn Armstrong at 610-796-4392 or send an email to [kathryn.armstrong@\[company\].com](mailto:kathryn.armstrong@[company].com) or karmstrong1@radford.edu. You may also request a hard copy of the survey from the contact information above.

To complete the survey, click on this link: [\[http://link to survey url\]](http://link to survey url). Otherwise use the X at the upper right corner to close this window and disconnect.

This study was approved by the Radford University Committee for the Review of Human Subjects Research. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject or have complaints about this study, you should contact Dr. Jeanne Mekolichick, Institutional Official and Associate Provost for Research, Faculty Success, and Strategic Initiatives, jmekolic@radford.edu, 540-831-6504.

Thank you,
Kathryn Armstrong

Appendix I: Leader Paper Informed Consent (Interviews)



Informed Consent

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the initial survey and agreeing to participate in additional research. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Participation is completely voluntary.

Title of Research: Truck Driver Attitudes Toward Meditation Research - Interview

Researcher(s): Joan Dickinson (principal investigator) and Kathryn Armstrong (student investigator)

You are asked to be a volunteer in a research study designed to: research truck driver and transportation industry leaders' attitudes toward meditation. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a truck driver or transportation industry leader. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Participation is completely voluntary.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine attitudes toward meditation in the trucking industry. Your participation in the interviews will contribute to a better understanding of how truck drivers and leaders in the trucking industry view meditation and its possible benefits.

Procedures: If you decide to be in the study, you will be asked to speak with the student research via telephone and answer questions. Approximately 10 people from the truck driver group and 5 people from the leader will be asked to participate in this portion of the study. We estimate that it will take about 20 minutes of your time to participate in the interview either by telephone, Zoom, or Skype. Interviews will be audio recorded. You are free to contact the investigator listed above to discuss the interview.

Risks or Discomforts: There is no more risk than what is encountered in everyday life with this study, and a limited number of research team members will have access to the data during data collection.

Compensation to You: There is no compensation from being in this study.

Benefits: If you participate in this research, you may learn meditation techniques that may benefit you. The results of this research may benefit truck drivers and the companies they work for by introducing them to meditation techniques that may help increase focus, improve health and/or reduce stress.

You can choose not to be in this study. If you decide to be in this study, you may choose not to answer certain questions or not to be in certain parts of this study.

There are no costs to you for being in this study. There is no compensation for you to be in this research.

If you decide to be in this study, what you tell us will be kept private unless required by law to tell. If we present or publish the results of this study, your name will not be linked in any way to what we present.

Confidentiality: The data collected in this research study will be kept confidential. Participation in research may involve some loss of privacy. We will do our best to make sure that the information about you is kept confidential, but we cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your personal information may be viewed by individuals involved in the research and may be seen by people including those collaborating, funding, and regulating the study. We will share only the minimum necessary information in order to conduct the research. Your personal information may also be given out if required by law, such as pursuant to a court order. While the information and data resulting from this study may be presented at scientific meetings or published in a scientific journal, your name or other personal information will not be revealed.

We will collect your information through recordings, interviews. This information will be stored in a restricted access folder and/or an encrypted cloud-based system. Anything written down will be stored in a locked office cabinet.

Audio recordings will be collected during this study and used to allow the researcher to review interviews at a later time. The recordings will be destroyed after 5 years. The recordings **will not** be shared with the general public. You do have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in this part of this study.

If you give the research team permission to quote you directly, the researchers will give you a pseudonym and will generalize your quote to remove any information that could be personally identifying.

Your information will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

Costs to You: There is no cost to you to participate in this study.

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant: If at any time you want to stop being in this study, you may do so without penalty or loss of benefits by contacting: [Kathryn Armstrong at 610-796-4392](#) If you choose not to participate or decide to withdraw, there will be no impact.

If you have questions now about this study, ask before you sign this form.

If you have any questions later, you may talk with [Kathryn Armstrong at 610-796-4392](#).

This study was approved by the Radford University Committee for the Review of Human Subjects Research. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject or have complaints about this study, you should contact Dr. Jeanne Mekolichick, Institutional Official and Associate Provost for Research, Faculty Success, and Strategic Initiatives, jmekolic@radford.edu, 540-831-5114

It is your choice whether or not to be in this study. What you choose will not affect any current or future relationship with Radford University.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

If all of your questions have been answered and you would like to take part in this study, then please sign below.

Signature

Printed Name(s)

Date

I/We have explained the study to the person signing above, have allowed an opportunity for questions, and have answered all of his/her questions. I/We believe that the subject understands this information.

Signature of Researcher(s)

Printed Name(s)

Date

Note: A signed copy of this form will be provided for your records.

I do or do not give my permission to the investigators to quote me directly in their research.

The investigators may or may not digitally record this interview.

Participant Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

- Leaders



Informed Consent

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the initial survey and agreeing to participate in additional research.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to examine attitudes toward meditation in the trucking industry. Your participation in the interview will contribute to a better understanding of how truck drivers and leaders in the trucking industry view meditation and its possible benefits.

Major Requirements of Study: This portion of the study will consist of a virtual workshop with the student researcher.

Significant Risks: The research team will work to protect your data to the extent permitted by technology. It is possible, although unlikely, that an unauthorized individual could gain access to your responses because you are responding online. This risk is similar to your everyday use of the internet. Identification numbers associated with email addresses will be kept during the data collection phase for tracking purposes only. A limited number of research team members will have access to the data during data collection. Identifying information will be stripped from the final dataset.

Potential Benefits: If you participate in this research, you may learn meditation techniques that may benefit you. The results of this research may benefit truck drivers and the companies they work for by introducing them to meditation techniques that may help increase focus, improve health and/or reduce stress.

Duration of Participation: We estimate that it will take about 60 minutes of your time to complete the interview.

Title of Research: Truck Driver Attitudes Toward Meditation Research - Workshop

Researcher(s): Joan Dickinson (principal investigator) and Kathryn Armstrong (student investigator)

You are asked to be a volunteer in a research study designed to: research truck driver and transportation industry leaders' attitudes toward meditation. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a truck driver or transportation industry leader. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Participation is completely voluntary.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to determine attitudes toward meditation in the truck driver population and, using design thinking methods, to begin to find ways to overcome any barriers to participating in meditation practices that are discovered. There will be approximately 2-3 people participating in these interviews.

Procedures: If you decide to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in a virtual workshop via your computer. You will be interacting with approximately 2-3 people from the leader.

Leader workshop: The workshop will begin with the student researcher sharing their computer screen and showing the participants the digital Creative Matrix template and blank sticky notes via Miro or Mural. The columns of the creative are designated for categories related to people and the rows are designated for categories enabling solutions. These areas will be partially prepopulated by the student researcher based on information from the driver workshops. The leaders will have the opportunity to add their own information and then begin to complete the matrix, with the research adding stick notes to the digital board. --This activity will take 20 minutes.

Next, the student researcher will guide the leaders through an Importance/Difficulty Matrix exercise where they place the sticky notes from the Creative Matrix on an X/Y axis where X=relative importance or impact and Y equals relative difficulty/cost. As in the last exercise, the student researcher will manage the digital manipulation of the Miro or Mural board. --This activity will take 20 minutes.

Risks or Discomforts: This risk is similar to your everyday use of the phone. Identification numbers associated with email addresses will be kept during the data collection phase for tracking purposes only. A limited number of research team members will have access to the data during data collection. Identifying information will be stripped from the final dataset. This study has no more risk than you may find in daily life.

Compensation to You: There is no compensation from being in this study.

Benefits: If you participate in this research, you may learn meditation techniques that may benefit you. The results of this research may benefit truck drivers and the companies they work for by introducing them to meditation techniques that may help increase focus, improve health and/or reduce stress.

You can choose not to be in this study. If you decide to be in this study, you may choose not to answer certain questions or not to be in certain parts of this study.

There are no costs to you for being in this study. There is no compensation for you to be in this research.

If you decide to be in this study, what you tell us will be kept private unless required by law to tell. If we present or publish the results of this study, your name will not be linked in any way to what we present.

Confidentiality: The data collected in this research study will be kept confidential. Participation in research may involve some loss of privacy. We will do our best to make sure that the information about you is kept confidential, but we cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your personal information may be viewed by individuals involved in the research and may be seen by people including those collaborating, funding, and regulating the study. We will share only the minimum necessary information in order to conduct the research. Your personal information may also be given out if required by law, such as pursuant to a court order. While the information and data resulting from this study may be presented at scientific meetings or published in a scientific journal, your name or other personal information will not be revealed.

We will collect your information through recordings, interviews. This information will be stored in a restricted access folder and/or an encrypted cloud-based system. Anything written down will be stored in a locked office cabinet.

Audio recordings will be collected during this study and used to allow the researcher to review interviews at a later time. The recordings will be destroyed after 5 years. The recordings **will not** be shared with the general public. You do have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in this part of this study.

If you give the research team permission to quote you directly, the researchers will give you a pseudonym and will generalize your quote to remove any information that could be personally identifying.

Your information will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

Costs to You: There is no cost to you to participate in this study.

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant:

If at any time you want to stop being in this study, you may stop being in the study without penalty or loss of benefits by contacting: [Kathryn Armstrong, 610-796-4392](#) If you choose not to participate or decide to withdraw, there will be no impact.

If you have questions now about this study, ask before you sign this form.

If you have any questions later, you may talk with *{list person and contact information}*

This study was approved by the Radford University Committee for the Review of Human Subjects Research. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject or have complaints about this study, you should contact Dr. Jeanne Mekolichick, Institutional Official and Associate Provost for Research, Faculty Success, and Strategic Initiatives, jmekolic@radford.edu, 540.831.5114

It is your choice whether or not to be in this study. What you choose will not affect any current or future relationship with Radford University.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

According to Federal Regulations, this study is eligible for waiver of signed consent. If you do not wish to sign this consent, please remove it, keep it for your records and return the survey in the self-addressed stamped envelope {or use whatever is applicable for your study}.

{If waiver of signed consent is not used, insert the following}:

If all of your questions have been answered and you would like to take part in this study, then please sign below.

Signature

Printed Name(s)

Date

I/We have explained the study to the person signing above, have allowed an opportunity for questions, and have answered all of his/her questions. I/We believe that the subject understands this information.

Signature of Researcher(s)

Printed Name(s)

Date

Note: A signed copy of this form will be provided for your records.

I do or do not give my permission to the investigators to quote me directly in their research.

The investigators may or may not digitally record this interview.

Participant Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix J: Leader Questionnaire

PART 1: ABOUT YOU

You DO NOT need to disclose your name, phone number, or email address unless you wish to. Identifiable information will be used ONLY to contact you for follow up questions or to participate in additional activities related to this study.

Name (optional): _____

Phone number (optional): _____

Email address (optional): _____

May I contact you with questions? Yes No

Would you be interested in participating in the next phase of this study? Yes No

In which of the following ways would you be willing to participate? (Choose all that apply)

A brief phone or zoom interview (will take approximately 20 minutes)

An online workshop (will take approximately 1 hour)

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Religion if any: _____

Your level within the company: Supervisor Director C-Suite

Were you ever a truck driver? Yes No

Years you were a professional truck driver: _____

Have you ever tried meditation? Yes No

Do you currently practice meditation? Yes No

Leader Questionnaire (cont'd)

PART 2 – ATTITUDES DRIVERS MAY HOLD

Following is a list of statements that some people may agree with, and other people may disagree with. Please select the response that best represents your thoughts or opinions, where 1 is equal to strongly disagree and 5 equals strongly agree.

For reference, here is a basic definition of meditation:

Meditation – a mind and body practice used to improve mental and emotional well-being by increasing relaxation, increasing focus, managing mood, or cultivating an attribute. Some forms of meditation require the practitioner to keep their attention fixed on a specific feeling, such as their breathing, a sound, a picture, or a mantra, which is a word or phrase that is repeatedly repeated. The practice of meditation, which entails keeping attention or awareness on the present moment without passing judgment, is one of the other types of meditation.

It may be difficult for drivers to meditate because:

<i>Strongly Disagree</i>				<i>Strongly Agree</i>
They feel that they should be accomplishing something				
1	2	3	4	5
They feel that it is a waste of time to sit and do nothing				
1	2	3	4	5
They feel that there is no quiet place where a driver can meditate				
1	2	3	4	5
They feel that there is never a time when a driver can be alone				
1	2	3	4	5
They feel that they don't have time				
1	2	3	4	5
They feel that other drivers would think it was unusual				
1	2	3	4	5
They feel that their manager would think it was unusual				
1	2	3	4	5

PART 4 – INFORMATION ABOUT MEDITATION

According to research (Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010), “A wandering mind is an unhappy mind.” Industry publication, FleetOwner published an article that emphasized “mind-wandering definitely is a major cause of accidents” (Kahaner, 2017, para. 7). The article goes on to quote Jonathon Schooler, PhD who states “The best way to prevent mind wandering is to know when you're doing it. The technique that seems to be the most well-documented for aiding with mind-wandering is meditation.”

Please read the following peer-reviewed information from University of California Davis Health on the benefits of meditation (*10 Health Benefits of Meditation*, 2019):

10 reasons to meditate

“It clears and sharpens my mind so I can be kind to myself and useful to others. Most important, it creates a buffer between me and reactivity.”
— Philippe Goldin

Research has documented many health benefits of regular meditation:

1. **Reduced stress:** Meditation may decrease stress. It also can improve symptoms of stress-related conditions, including irritable bowel syndrome, post-traumatic stress disorder, and fibromyalgia.
2. **Improved memory:** Better focus through regular meditation may increase memory and mental clarity. These benefits can help fight age-related memory loss and dementia.
3. **Increased attention:** Meditation helps with attention span.
4. **Enhanced will power:** Meditation develops the mental discipline needed to avoid bad habits.
5. **Better sleep:** Meditation can shorten the time it takes to fall asleep and improve sleep quality.
6. **Less pain:** Meditation can reduce pain and boost emotion regulation. Together with medical care, this may help treat chronic pain.
7. **Lower blood pressure:** Blood pressure decreases during meditation and over time in people who meditate regularly. This can reduce strain on the heart and blood vessels and help prevent heart disease.
8. **Less anxiety:** Regular meditation helps reduce anxiety and related mental health issues like social anxiety, fears, and obsessive-compulsive behaviors.
9. **Less depression:** Meditation can help reduce the occurrence of depression.
10. **Greater compassion:** Meditation can help you better understand yourself, find your best self, and increase positive feelings and actions toward others.

Appendix K: Leader Recruitment Letter (Additional Involvement)

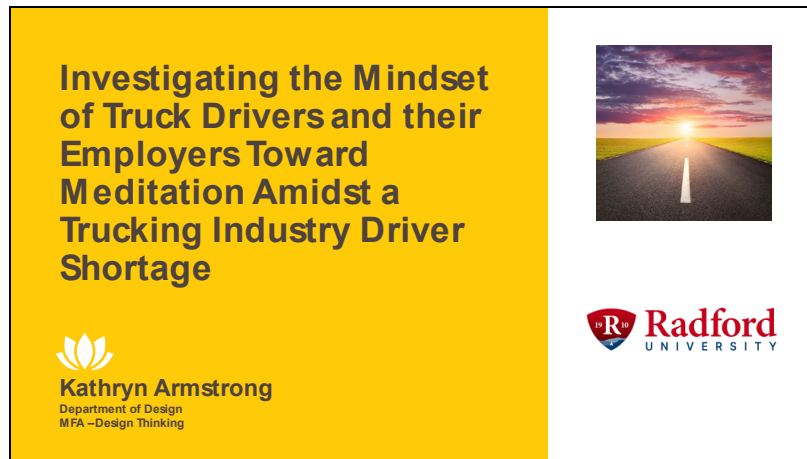
Thank you for completing the survey that examined driver perceptions regarding the practice of meditation. Because you indicated that you would be interested in additional participation, I am contacting you to seek your participation in _____ (interview, workshop).

If you are still interested, please visit [this link](#) to select a times/dates that are convenient for you. You will receive an additional email with a Zoom invitation for your date/time to join the call.

Thank you again,
Kathryn Armstrong

Appendix L: Leader Interview Guide

Slide 1

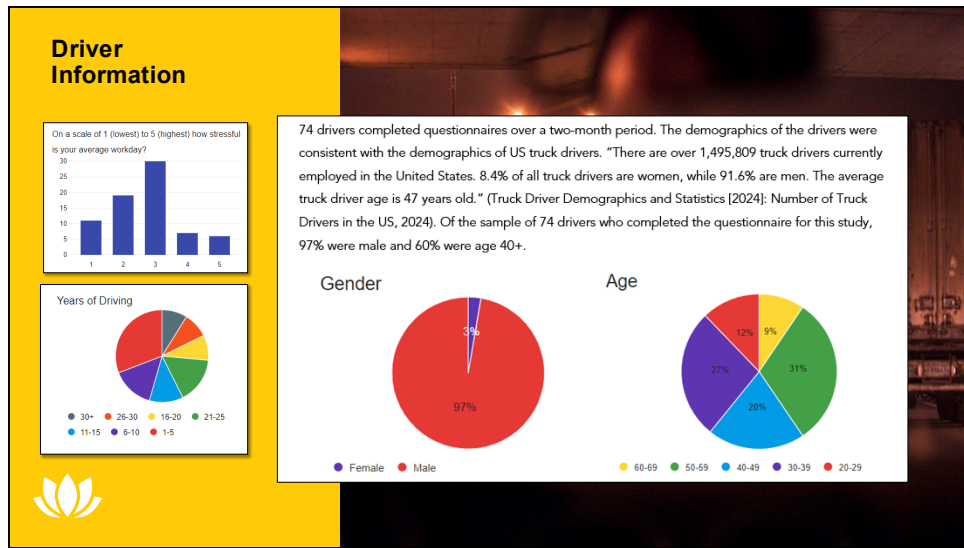


Welcome! Thank you for taking the time to complete my questionnaire and agreeing to speak with me! I want to confirm that you have consented to be recorded. I'm going to start/have started the recording.

The purpose of this study is to examine attitudes toward meditation in the trucking industry. Your participation in the interviews will contribute to a better understanding of how truck drivers and leaders in the trucking industry view meditation and its possible benefits.

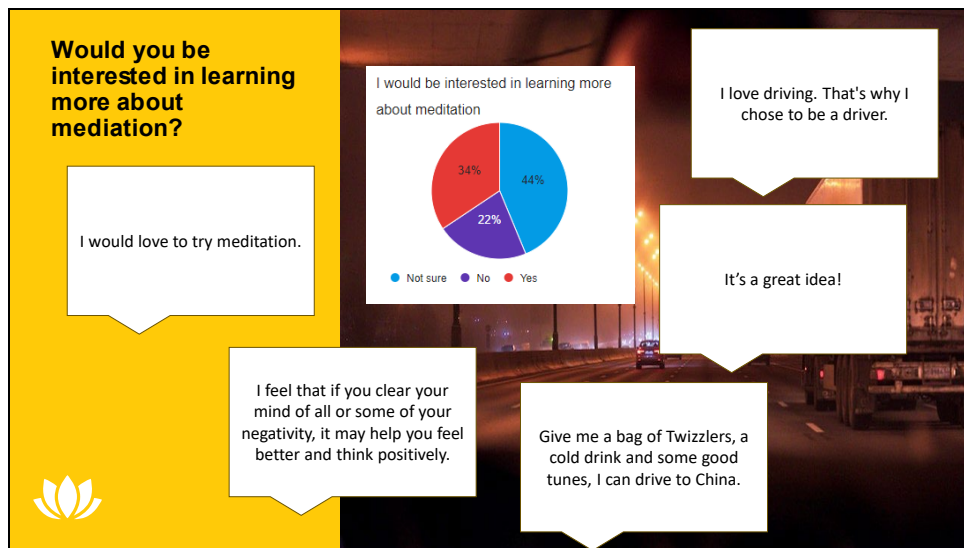
The data collected in this research study will be kept confidential. Participation in research may involve some loss of privacy. We will do our best to ensure the information about you is kept confidential, but we cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your personal information may be viewed by individuals involved in the research and may be seen by people including those collaborating, funding, and regulating the study. We will share only the minimum necessary information to conduct the research. While the information and data resulting from this study may be presented at scientific meetings or published in a scientific journal, your name or other personal information will not be revealed.

Slide 2



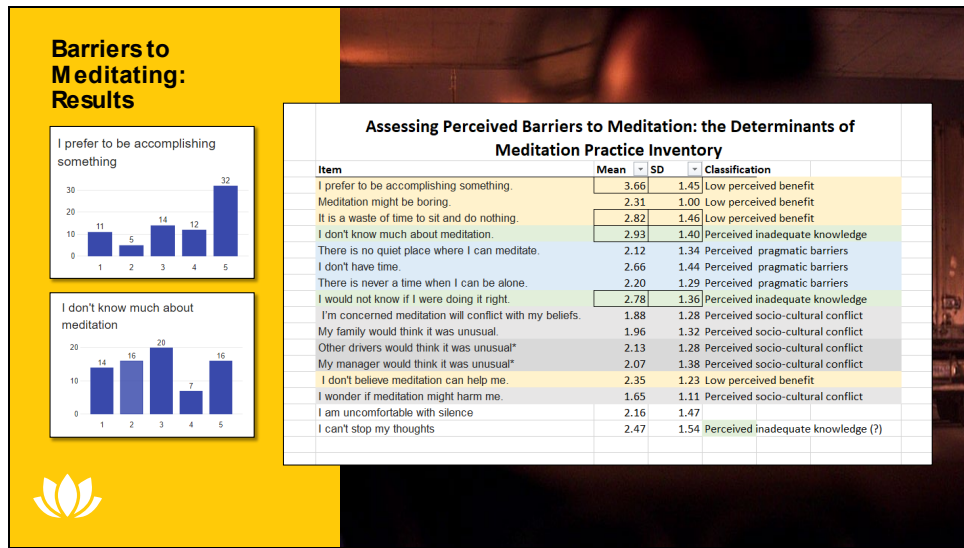
Discussion 1: I surveyed 74 drivers at 2 locations. These are the results. Does this seem consistent with the average location? Does anything you see here surprise you?

Slide 3



Are you surprised by the number of drivers who are interested in learning about meditation? Why or why not? Do you have any other thoughts?

Slide 4



I'd love to hear your thoughts on the barriers to meditation that are perceived by the drivers. Let's talk about some of them. Do you have any initial thoughts on how we might overcome some of those barriers?

Slide



From the leader questionnaires, I found that support for meditation was high and increased more after the leaders were exposed to scientific literature that discussed the benefits of meditation. Does this surprise you? Do you think there is an opportunity here?

More questions:

Do you believe that bringing meditation to the drivers would be a benefit?

Do you have any additional thoughts or ideas you would like to share?



Appendix M: Leader Interview Transcripts

Leader 1 Interview

L1 - Senior Vice President

KA:

You know, the purpose of the study, which is to kind of understand drivers' attitudes towards meditation and if there's any ways to solve for it, if there's anything we can do to help them embrace it, it's just IRB stuff that my university requires.

L1:

But as long as you're not putting me on the cover of Newsweek saying whatever I say, that's fine.

KA:

I will not.

I won't even use your name, actually.

So yeah, I think you, you took the time to do my survey, which I really appreciate.

And I just, I basically I went to a couple facilities and had drivers complete a questionnaire and then I sort of looked at.

The data that came back and I just wanted to run a little bit of it past you and get your feedback.

So that's the purpose of this.

So let me get to our next slide, which is.

So, this is just the demographic information that came back.

I compared it to sort of national averages.

I think it's pretty consistent with national averages and.

I'm pretty sure it's consistent across [COMPANY] from the feedback I've gotten from everyone else.

You are my last interview, so

L1:

OK, all right.

The thing that I thought that I added in here, I asked them on a daily basis like how much stress they felt on a scale of one through 5.

And you know, five was actually the lowest.

Most of them said three, so kind of average, which I thought was.

I don't know.

Good.

A little.

I I was, I was actually a little surprised, but I'm wondering your thoughts on that.

L1:

So you your expectation was it would have been a little higher than that.

KA:

I kind of thought so.

L1:

I mean, yeah, I mean I think, I don't know.

I think uniquely if you're a driver you would expect it to be like a moderate level of stress.

So maybe that's how the three in the middle sort of lands in the highest ranking.

I would, I would think somebody who viewed driving as very, very stressful probably wouldn't be a driver very long.

Vice versus somebody who didn't find it stressful at all probably wasn't as acutely doing all the things they should do to be a successful driver.

Like there's a certain amount of probably, you know, if you're striving to do a good job, like there's a certain amount of stress that comes with like performance.

So I'm sure that doesn't surprise me terribly.

KA:

OK, cool.

L1:

I guess.

I guess it tells you the job is relatively stressful.

So the middle to be that middle scale of stress on a regular basis is, you know, why you're why you would see the need to do what you're pursuing.

KA:

Yeah.

I mean, I just, I guess looking at it from my perspective, I think I would find it stressful every single day.

Really, really, really stressful.

But I'm also not a professional driver and there's probably a reason for that.

So yeah, trying to look at it from their perspective, you know, they are professional drivers.

They do it every day.

They're probably really, really good at it compared to me who would, you know, just find it really stressful.

But yeah, interesting.

So yeah, I still think that's probably more stress than is ideal,

L1:

but oh, I would agree.

Yeah, for sure.

All right.

KA:

And so, then I did, I asked them at the end of the questionnaire, I asked them if they would be interested in learning more about meditation.

I gave them yes, no, and not sure.

Highest level was not sure at 44% and then over a third said yes.

So I was like, I was very pleasantly surprised by that.

L1:

Yeah, that's great.

Yeah.

KA:

So does that surprise you at all or are would you expect that?

L1:

I mean the not sure.

I mean kind of yes or no, but I mean the not sure seems like a high number that sort of seems like a cop out on the people who answered not yes and not no.

But yeah, I mean if it's

KA:

I'm kind of looking at it as an opportunity because I think not sure they are open to learning more and maybe they don't aren't ready to try it yet, but they're at least interested in learning more.

L1:

So yeah, yeah, I think the non-committal.

Of the not sure means more likely a potential yes to somebody who's absolutely no.

KA:

Yeah, yeah, I hope that's true.

So I just, I also wanted, I put in a few quotes from different people just like I I think I was so happy to see just how much a lot of the drivers really love their job.

Like, I can't tell you how many of them just in passing was just like, I love to drive.

I just love to drive.

Yeah.

So it was, it was a kind of, it was a cool experience talking with them.

L1:

That's awesome.

KA:

Yeah.

So this is, these are the questions that I asked them.

I pulled them from another survey that was done just so I could kind of compare our demographic against the demographic that that survey used, and they had categorized them into.

Low perceived benefit, perceived inadequate knowledge, perceived pragmatic barriers, and perceived socio-cultural conflict.

And the four that were the highest, two of them fell into low perceived benefit, which is I prefer to be accomplishing something and it's a waste of time to sit and do nothing.

And then two were perceived inadequate knowledge, which is I don't know much about meditation, which aligns with our previous slide, and I wouldn't know if I were doing it right.

And as I thought about it, I think like if you if you know the benefits, if you look at the research and you know what the benefits of meditation are, I think you can make an argument that the two that fell into low perceived benefit could actually fall into inadequate knowledge because they don't understand the benefits and that they could be, you know, improving their health, improving their stress level, improving their focus, improving their ability to do their job well.

And just improving their overall health.

So I'm just wondering you know if you have any thoughts on that and you know if you see any opportunities there.

L1:

Yeah, I would agree in that the top three you could certainly steer to.

I mean some portion of them you could steer to being not educated in the overall benefits and need to really truly understand it.

I don't know.

I'd have a hard time saying 100%, but some percentage of folks you could say easily would be in that unknown bucket of you know where the folks are that just would need to understand more and take the time to have it sink in and maybe hear it the right way more than once.

So they actually recognize the importance or benefit to them personally.

KA:

So this is actually, this is from the survey that you took.

And I know since you took it, I asked about the level of support, which obviously, as you can see, it was quite high to begin with.

But after reading through the benefits, which came from, you know, peer-reviewed studies, it notched up to even being a little bit higher level of support for trying to come up with some way to roll out some kind of program or at least support drivers in their efforts.

So I was wondering A does it surprise you and do you think there is an opportunity here?

L1:

No, it doesn't surprise me at all.

As I as I was filling out the survey and I didn't go back and check my answers because I was like, well, whatever I said the first time around was the first time around.

So it is what it is, but.

I certainly, you know, I took to heart, and I recognize like people were going to answer differently the first time through the general set of questions versus the second time through the set of questions.

And the education around it would lead people to having maybe a different initial perception of an opinion to then want to learn more and seek out more information.

So no, it doesn't that surprise me at all.

KA:

OK, cool.

And then.

KA:

Yeah, I'm just do you personally believe that bringing meditation to the drivers would be a benefit?

L1:

Yeah.

I mean I had a similar conversation with Marcus who I think you interviewed as well.

He and I both agree like **any anything you can do**.

Yeah, everyone adopts or relates to things differently.

The more **things we can bring forth to expose them to any benefits** that.

Yeah, as long as we know they're safe, right?

As long as we know they're a benefit and they're legitimately safe and that they're a good, a good fit for the team to engage in, **the more the merrier**.

And I think, I think there's a **added separate perception and that even the idea of somebody sharing something as an option for you is still an employer who cares, who's trying to give you options to make you**.

You know, **more connected with your work**, a **better associate**, all the things that go into that connectivity and that, you know, sort of **emotional paycheck** that why people actually come to come to work and stay at work.

KA:

And I'm just if you have any other thoughts, like any ideas of, you know, how are there good ways to communicate with people?

Are there good ideas that you've seen people adopt quickly before or just any ideas you'd like to share?

Cause I'm.

I'm in the sort of like gathering as much data as I can phase of things and then I'm going to kind of workshop through a bunch of different ideas.

But any ideas you have, I'd love to hear.

L1:

Yeah, I mean it's so a people, **everyone embraces information differently**.

We're also, we're in this sort of like world of **instant gratification** and like you want to see it quickly in a way that's easy.

Whether it be a **QR code to get somebody to a video** that helps them learn about something.

I'm not gonna say people don't read books and don't want to read things, but any way for people to absorb information quickly and easily that gets them to again, sort of enhance that level of education. However, we get people to that and again, that's societal in general.

However, you get people to a more educated place more quickly and easily. Everyone embraces information differently. So you got to tailor the message differently to different people.

And then and then sadly incentivizing people, whether it be a point scale or some level of a competitive, I don't know, like landscape of you, you, you took part in this 22 times, so you're leading on a scale of the other people like if there's some level of like. Even if you're keeping track on your own, but you kind of like know where other people are self-reporting that that could go a long way. But no, I mean those are those are my thoughts. Do you think people would have a magic wand?

KA:

Do you think they'd be incentivized just by the competition, or do you think that, you know, having prizes or some people, I mean everyone's different.

L1:

So some people are incentivized by exceeding their own personal milestone.

So I have a Peloton.

And I don't like when you get on this stupid bike, you ride it and like you try and you try to outpace the whatever the there's gonna output score like you try and outpace your your your personal best.

So like everyone's different whether it's competing against the general population, competing against a friend who you know people have small group clusters of like step competitions per day or.

You know, trying to lose X amount, whoever can lose the most weight in a window of time, whatever, whatever drives people to have that really comes down to your own personal accountability and you investigating yourself at the end of the day.

But whatever makes people do that, sort of creates that trigger and trigger environment to get that done.

Like that's probably what you're trying to, you know, well, from my opinion, that's what you're trying to get after.

KA:

Yeah, cool.

Yeah, that's kind of, you know, it's.

A combination of the delivery and then the incentive as well is kind of, yeah.

And you know, and obviously there has to be the, you know, how do we help people find the time, how do we help people find the resources and that kind of thing.

But yeah, I was just excited to see how many people were interested, you know, just from the get-go, you know,

L1:

yeah, that's awesome.

KA:

And I actually, the one, I think it was [CUSTOMER1] that I was at the they asked me at the end of my second day, like, are you going to come back and teach us how to do this?

I was like, sure, I'll come back.

Yeah, absolutely.

But yeah, I was excited to see that there was some interest, you know, definitely more than I anticipated.

L1:

So cool.

Different things make every the world goes round with different people doing different things, so.

I mean, that variety goes a long way.

And they get back to **people feeling like you're investing in them.**

Like, that's what makes people come back to work and hopefully they're happier and healthier at the end of the day.

KA:

Yeah, definitely.

All right, cool.

Well, if you have any further thoughts that you'd like to share.

L1:

No, I'm good.

I appreciate you including me and it's exciting and hopefully.

All this works out for you, and it goes real well.

KA:

Yeah, I hope so.

I mean, I'm obviously gonna finish up my thesis and write up all my everything that I learned, but I'm.

I'm invested in trying to bring it to the company too, if there's interest.

I mean, even though it's not like, you know, my day-to-day, I work in marketing.

L1:

So yeah, no, I got you.

KA:

But yeah, I mean, I definitely would love to pursue it, you know, in my quote UN quote downtime, you know, if it can help the drivers because you know they're really, you know what keeps our business running.

L1:

So yeah, yeah, we want to be **safer and happier on the road.**

That's always good.

Safer, happier.

That's good.

KA:

Yeah, absolutely.

Well, I will.

I'll let you know what I end up with for.

I'm gonna do some workshops with people and come up with some, you know, possible solutions and.

I will definitely get back to everybody with what those are and see if we can implement anything.

L1:

So that's very much appreciated.

I appreciate it.

Absolutely.

KA:

Thank you so much for your time.

I appreciate it.

Leader 2 Interview

L2 - President

KA:

I'm getting my master's at Radford University and my focus is on design thinking and so it's about, you know, finding a problem and looking for different ways to hopefully find a solution.

Um, I have a personal interest in meditation, and I was doing some research and there's a ton of literature about how meditation helps executives and helps knowledge workers.

But there's very little research on blue-collar workers and none specifically on drivers.

So, I really thought about the benefits that meditation holds for, you know, knowledge workers.

And I thought, could this translate over to drivers?

And so, um, my specific interest in this is getting information from the drivers on their level of interest and then working with leadership to look at different solutions for how to bring either overcome the barriers to their having an interest or find solutions to make it more accessible for them.

So, I've conducted the research with the drivers.

I gave out questionnaires to about 74 drivers between.

[CUSTOMER2] and [CUSTOMER1] and got their responses.

So I put together a small PowerPoint deck of that and I just kind of wanted to talk through it with you and get your thoughts and your feedback.

And that's what I'm doing with about like 8 different leaders and.

And we're gonna do workshops and see if we can figure out any, any ways we might be able to make meditation more accessible for drivers to help them, you know, with their focus and their health and their stress and all those things.

L2:

That's great.

I think that's excellent.

Yeah.

KA:

Cool.

Well, I wanna.

I know you answered the questionnaire.

Let me share my screen with you.

Can you see it?

L2:

I can.

KA:

So, like I said, I got surveys back from 74 drivers at two locations.

And looking at it and comparing the demographics to you know demographics I found published online, it feels pretty consistent with the drivers that are out in the field.

Um - I think the one, the biggest difference that I have discussed with people is that these are all dedicated drivers.

They're out and back every day.

They have a pretty consistent schedule.

And so, and they're [COMPANY] drivers.

So, you know, they probably hopefully are slightly less stressed and have better working conditions.

So, they're on a scale of one to five.

The majority ranked their daily stress level around a three, which seemed.

I was actually pleasantly surprised by that.

If I had to do their job, I'm pretty sure mine would be at a 10.

But yeah, I actually, you know, but talking to Andy and Aaron, you know, they said that they are the dedicated drivers do have a much more predictable life, you know.

So, they still have traffic, they still have other drivers, they still have schedules, but they don't have some of the stressors that other drivers out in the rest of the field might face.

So, I'm just interested to hear your thoughts.

L2:

So, my thoughts are I agree with all that.

However, I would say out of our driver population, the [CUSTOMER2] drivers is one of the tougher jobs because there's physicality involved because they unload, they have to go into the stores, they have to deal with the store workers.

Maybe customers.

So, it's very predictable.

They're on the same route every day.

That's all great.

And they work at a lot of work at night into the night.

So, the shift isn't great.

So, you have not the greatest shift, but it's predictable.

The income's very high.

We pay them up, you know, you know, we pay them for the work.

Wherever the market lands for this type of work, we pay them.

I think our wages, our wages across all of our work groups are really high with drivers.

We're in the high percentile.

The [CUSTOMER1] work is easier physically, but still physical work.

So whatever it's work, we have other driving jobs that are more dedicated, but it's easier work.

KA:

Yeah.

And also, just listening to them talk about their routes.

You know, some of them are driving over the George Washington Bridge right as rush hour's hitting.

And so yeah, I think the Northeast is definitely a challenge, I would think.

But you know, just as a FYI, you know, this isn't necessarily related to my thesis, but the the drivers are quite amazing.

Some of the, you know, I moved to the next slide.

And just some of the quotes that they said about, you know, so they just all talked about loving, driving and for some of them it was kind of like a meditative experience just doing that.

But interesting.

So, I asked them at the end of their survey, you know, would you be interested in learning more about meditation?

I gave them yes, no and not sure.

The highest response was not sure, but the second highest was yes and that was over a third of them.

So, I was actually positively surprised by that and.

I'm wondering what your thoughts are.

Are you surprised or you know, never really thought about it.

L2:

I mean, I I think I answered your question as you probably are.

I mean, I meditate.

I go in fits and spurts, and I try to do it regularly.

But you know, they have a lot to think about to your point.

I would want to do their job, but as I tell people who manage the drivers, they have 10 hours a day to think about what they're going to say to you when they get back.

So be ready for that.

They have a lot of time in their hands, and they have a lot of stress.

So, I guess I'm not surprised.

I'm pleasantly surprised.

I think, I guess maybe that you have that much interest.

One out of three would be interested in it and then you know half of almost half are undecided.

I think it's good because as Aaron probably shared and others focusing on their health just huge with our focus on fatigue management.

The safety of them on the road, their safety, their health drivers are not the healthiest.

So and from a financial standpoint, you were self-insured healthcare, the healthier they are, that drives business results as well.

So there's a lot of benefits for them, their families, for the company.

And if meditation will make them a safer, healthier driver, that's great.

KA:

So yeah, cool.

So, my next slide is showing this was what I surveyed them on.

Besides gathering their demographic information, I asked them to rate different barriers to taking up a practice of meditation.

This is a list that I got from another survey that was similar but talking to a different demographic.

And so, I tried to use the same list just to be consistent and be able to compare it with other people's results.

Um The highest barriers seem to relate to a combination of what the other group classified as a low perceived benefit, which is I prefer to be accomplishing something and it's a waste of time to sit and do nothing.

And the second, the other.

Kind of classification was perceived inadequate knowledge, which was I don't know much about meditation, and I wouldn't know if I were doing it right.

And so, my thought on the first two of the perceived low perceived benefit is that, you know, you could reframe it to say you are doing something, you're accomplishing something, you're improving your health, you're becoming a more safe and focused driver.

And so, you know, maybe it's a matter of shifting mindset.

But yeah, I'd love to hear your thoughts on that as well.

L2:

Yeah, I think some people are just scared of the unknown, and I'm not sure.

I think you're right.

I think folks in more white-collar world are more attuned to it.

And people who work in an office and maybe more educated would understand it.

I know what you mean.

When I started, probably 10 years ago, I didn't really know much about it.

It's hard to do.

It's still hard to do.

You know, if I do a 10-minute meditation, if I actually meditate for three or four, that's success for me.

So, I think defining success is really would be important because, you know, just in my personal experience, yeah, if you meditate, it's it's not easy.

It takes, it takes.

Training at times and educating them about it.

I mean, I think you hit the nail on the head.

You know, if you rolled something out, we'd have to definitely define what the benefits are.

Maybe some examples of other drivers or other folks they can relate to, but I'm, you know, I'm surprised.

KA:

It is on there.

I I don't have time and it's it wasn't quite as high as these other ones.

But yeah, I think, I think everybody's pressed for time.

Even I find myself doing the same thing, even though I schedule it.

So, this is.

Actually, when you filled out my questionnaire for leaders and you probably saw I asked the same question twice after I exposed you to some of the, you know, peer-reviewed literature out there to the benefits of meditation.

And I saw a shift across the board in support for meditation.

I mean, it was very strong to begin with, but after people read the benefits of, you know, scientific literature, they shifted even further to being in favor of doing something to support drivers.

So, I'm wondering, you know, I think this goes to support the idea that giving them that same level of education and maybe, you know, spelling it out in a little more detail might help them be interested.

And I'm, I'm just wondering your thoughts on that as well.

L2:

Yeah, I think we have a lot of **campaigns** around, as you know, just in general [COMPANY] on health, we do some specific things for drivers around fatigue.

KA:

I used to be a creative, so we made those postcards.

L2:

OK, so you know, so I mean to me this ties to the **fatigue** too.

That's one **benefit**.

You'd think you would sleep better if you meditate, your mind's clearer, whether you do it at night or morning, what have you.

But yeah, I guess I I agree.

It's given them **literature** would be would definitely be good, whether whatever medium we decide works best along with whatever, whatever you decide an app or.

Or what have you.

It's probably this is not a big lift too, which to me is another enticing thing about it is that this sounds pretty easy, like a little **education** and maybe an **app** and you're done.

And I don't know, I'm not sure how much of anything it would cost us, you know

KA:

Yeah, I mean.

Education is probably pretty much free.

I mean, it's just getting it **distributed**.

I know that's always a challenge with the driver population, but you know, it's one of the things, one of the one of the things I'm trying to solve for is how do we do this?

So you know, maybe that's something I can, I can that can come out of this research.

L2:

Yeah, a common communication channel that we use is there their **The Celcom** phones that they, they all have.

It's not a personal phone.

They **have a phone in each truck**.

So, when we **have mass messaging**, we use the phone a lot.

We do surveys on the phone.

You know, you get if you want to do a broader survey and you you'd have to run it by.

12:50

Have you talked to [MM] on any of this?

KA:

He did answer my survey and I have him scheduled for an interview; I think next week.

L2:

Yeah, I would say he's the decision maker on.

Implementing anything, any of this, you know, So if he supported it, we definitely you could do **a broader survey if you wanted**.

If we decided it works and you want to send out some **messaging**, you know, we do things as you probably know through the phone at home.

There's different ways.

Yeah, we have, we have a team, we have a formalized team meeting deck now that we use that we send out.

It's kind of a **team meeting in a box**.

We cover things like this in it.

So, **there's a lot of different ways**.

KA:

Cool.

Yeah, that sounds really interesting.

And I think, I think it was Aaron who suggested, you know, like we could maybe run a pilot at one of the more local areas and then use that to be able to get, you know, testimonials from some of the drivers to help make it more appealing, which, you know, I think peer pressure works in both directions.

So, you know, I mean, I was actually kind of worried that there would be, you know, the other type of peer pressure where they would feel like, you know, other drivers would look at them oddly or.

But that that didn't seem to be very high on the barriers for them.

L2:

So yeah, maybe 20 years ago, probably people think it's a little out there, but I don't know now.

OK, Yeah.

KA:

So I think we pretty much covered the idea of the, you know, do you believe that bringing meditation to the drivers would be a benefit?

But you know, I so and my last question is really just if you have any other thoughts you'd like to share or any ideas.

L2:

No, I think this is good work.

It's good that you can support your thesis with this and it can benefit the business as well at the same time.

So yeah,

KA:

I'm, I'm, I'm hopeful that, you know, even once I finish my thesis, I'd love to continue to do what I can to support the drivers with this because I personally think it would benefit them.

I know it, you know, it helps me personally and manage stress and focus.

And so yeah, I agree.

I go ahead.

I was gonna say at [CUSTOMER1] after my second, I observed there for two days and I observed at [CUSTOMER2] for two days as I had the drivers fill out the questionnaires.

And at [CUSTOMER1] they did ask if I would come back and you know, train them.

So I thought that was a really positive response after, you know, chatting with them a bit and I think they just don't know and they were curious and.

You know the few, the ones that I did talk to, especially cause I was sitting there all day.

So I got to talk to the some of the leadership and like the people who you know hand out the keys and the and the routes quite a bit and the longer we talked the more the interest they had.

So I think it might be a matter of exposure.

L2:

Yeah.

The only additional thought I would share not to expand your scope, but the leaders of these drivers would benefit as well.

So maybe you have a, you know, if we rolled out, you'd have a driver focus, but maybe there's a leadership component as well in this cause one of the most stressful jobs we have are the folks who are directly leading the drivers.

KA:

So yeah, I'm sure I sat with them for, well, four days combined and watched.

You know, I was at [CUSTOMER1], I think it was the day that the police were having a shootout on the Commodore Barry Bridge and one of our drivers was trapped in the traffic there and sat there for I think 4 hours and had to have an emergency driver come out to relieve him cause of his hours of service.

And yeah, it's I could see how it could get quite stressful being back at the hub too.

L2:

It can, it can be.

So no, I think it's great work and good luck with it.

I support it.

KA:

Thank you.

Yeah, yeah, yeah I appreciate your time.

So if you have any further thoughts, feel free to reach out to me.

But besides that, I really appreciate your time.

Have a good weekend.

L2:

Yeah, you too.

Leader 3 Interview

L3 - Vice President

KA:

There we go.

So thank you so much.

I really appreciate you taking the time to complete my questionnaire and agreeing to speak with me.

I'm finishing up my master's degree in design thinking.

I've actually, I've finished all my classes.

I just need to finish my thesis.

So I am, you know, ABD.

L3:

You see the light at the end of the tunnel, right?

KA:

Yeah, yeah And I chose this topic just because I'm personally interested in it.

I've been, I used to be really good at practicing meditation every day and I've fallen off the wagon a little bit, but I'm trying to get back.

Um But I'm also really interested in the health and safety of our drivers and anything I can find that can help them and benefit them.
And in doing research, I discovered that there has not been a lot of research done on blue collar workers, none that I could find on drivers.
Lots and lots on executives and all very positive.
So that's why I sort of went down this path to say, like, can we take that information and translate it into something that could help improve the lives of drivers?
And to me, the first step felt like taking the temperature of their attitudes and what might be their barriers.
Hence the questionnaire that I sent you.
I had drivers fill out a shorter version of that questionnaire.
And so today I wanted to show you some of the results that I have and just get sort of your thoughts on what you're seeing.
And so I'm going to share my screen.
So you're seeing, you should be seeing my slide deck.
I went to the [CUSTOMER2] location and the [CUSTOMER1] location in [LOCATION] and I had questionnaires filled out by 74 drivers and comparing it to the data I see out in the world.
I think my sample is pretty consistent with, you know, the average age, length of length of time driving and gender of drivers in the world.
So. Happily, I think I'm able to sort of, you know, look at this and look at it across other populations.
I mean, our drivers are all sort of the home everyday drivers who have fairly consistent schedules.
So I think, you know, and I talked to Andy a little bit about this, you know, that could account for why their stress level is a three and not a five or a four that they are, you know, they have traffic and things like that to deal with, but they don't necessarily have the long.
Days and days on the road or kind of inconsistent schedules to deal with.
But you know, I I think the the feedback was that they pretty much do experience a consistent level of stress and that it's in a medium range.
So I just wanted to ask you if any of this is not consistent with what you would have expected or if it sounds about right.

L3:

No, it sounds about right.
I mean, I think when you look at the [CUSTOMER1] and the [CUSTOMER2].
I mean the [CUSTOMER2] account, that's, I'm sure you understand that that that's, I mean that's a hard job, right?
I mean if it's good money as a driver, but they're they're hustling, right.
They're hitting 5-6 doors or unloading, they're putting stuff on the on the floor.
So you know, I'm kind of, I'm actually a little surprised that that you know, stressful is not a little higher, but I'm not surprised to see it kind of in the medium, if that makes sense.

KA:

Yeah, I was actually, like I said, I was expecting it to be higher.
I know for myself, if I did that job, my stress level would be out of five every day, all the time.
But I think, you know, it's not something I do every day.
It's not something where I have a lot of experience and have honed my skills.

L3:

Yeah, I mean, you know, and the other thing, I'm not sure, I'm not sure where you live, but you know, this population driving in Southern Jersey, they're going north.
You know, they're going South.
I mean that that area up there, just the motoring public is crazy, you know
Oh, I know, you know
So they definitely are operating in an environment that is can be stressful.
I guess if you're a driver, you get used to it.

KA:

I think so.

I don't know.

I I don't know.

I can't remember if it was at [CUSTOMER2] or at [CUSTOMER1].

I think it might have been [CUSTOMER1], but the day, one of the days I was there.

One of the drivers came back from, I guess he had just come back from a run that took him through Rhode Island and it was snowing really badly.

I mean it was fine in in South Jersey, but it was snowing coming back through Rhode Island.

And he was obviously incredibly stressed by the time he got there cause he had terrible road conditions to deal with and bad drivers.

And one of the other drivers got stuck in a four hour.

shutdown of the Commodore Barry Bridge because there was a police shootout going on.

And, you know, he just, there was nothing he could do about it.

I I think in the end they had to send out a driver to replace him because he was going over hours and, you know, crazy things like that.

So it was, it was very interesting, you know, being on site for the few days I was there just watching the comings and goings.

And so anyway, I'm going to take you to my, this is um I asked them as part of the questionnaire, I asked them at the end if they would be interested in in learning more about meditation.

And I gave them the option of not sure just because I I want didn't want it to be completely binary.

I wanted them to have a, you know, some wiggle room if they weren't sure, honestly.

And I was quite pleasantly surprised that, you know, not sure was the top answer, but after that was yes, I had 34% say that they would be interested in learning more and.

You know, some of the feedback I got was that they would love to try it.

It's a great idea.

Some of them already felt like driving almost was their meditation, you know?

I'm happy to report that our drivers left their job.

Quite a few people tell me they just love to drive.

L3:

Yeah, I mean, you know, I think it, you know, I think it definitely takes a certain DNA to do that job.

And you know, I think when you look at the longevity of our drivers and how long they've been a professional driver with us or another company, it's definitely, it's definitely a career, right.

So I think this is very positive from a standpoint of you only have basically you know 1/4 of folks saying hey, they're not interested.

The other 75% basically are hey, I'm.

I'll look at it, not sure if I'll do it or not, but I'll look at it and I'll even try it.

So that that's a I'm, I'm kind of surprised this is that high as well just to be honest with you because you know **driver fitness is one of the biggest things that we really need to try to get our hands wrapped around** not just as a company but as an industry, right.

I mean we you know unfortunately.

Unfortunately, **we just had a driver that passed away in a sleeper,** right?

And you know, **pretty young in mid 50s, had a heart attack.**

But you know, you, you know, some drivers, I very, in my opinion, **few drivers do a really good job of keeping fit.**

And because they're driving long, you know, they're **driving long days,** they get home, they're tired and the last thing they want to worry about is potential exercise and we're on the road.

You know, I travel a lot.

The food options are not always the best, you know, when you're trying to grab something quick.

So, but I'm, I'm surprised at this.

This is very promising actually.

KA:

Good.

I'm glad to hear it.

That was going to be one of my questions is, you know, what are your thoughts and just, you know, do you feel like there's opportunity for us here, you know, as as a company and as an industry, I think.

L3:

You know, I think as a company I don't, I don't know where your where your mind's going, but you know you got two locations where you did a questionnaire.

Is this something where you know do we try to expand upon that in in one or two of those locations and say hey you know what would this look like and you know what would that, you know what would that help us with, right.

Is it gonna help us, you know obviously hopefully increasing the fitness level of our driver.

But you know, that could in turn, you know, I don't want to say everything's dollars, right.

But in turn, it could help us with driver retention, you know, keeping drivers longer.

It could help us from a standpoint of recruiting drivers and hey, we have certain driver fitness programs and here's one of them that you can volunteer to go into.

It's nothing mandatory type of thing.

So I mean, there's a ton of, ton of things out there that kind of get my head kind of spinning on potential options.

KA:

Yeah.

And that's part of what, you know, my major is design thinking, which is problem solving, is trying to find unique, innovative ideas and ways to help solve problems.

So, you know, while that's not what my thesis is right now, my thesis is sort of taking it up to a point, but, you know, I'm absolutely interested in this area.

So I would love to, you know, once I get all my results completed, You know, continue to follow up on this cause I I do feel like the benefits, you know, as far as health benefits, as far as ability to focus, ability to manage stress, ability to manage anxiety, you know, they've all been proven out in other populations.

So it it I think it would be a really interesting thing to pursue.

L3:

Yep.

KA:

So this was I asked them and I think I asked this in.

The leader survey as well, just what what would be the barriers.

This is based on another study that somebody else did, but to see what their response was and the top barriers were I prefer to be.

I prefer to be doing something else and I don't know much about meditation followed by it's a waste of time to sit and do nothing and I wouldn't know if I were doing it right.

And so, you know, if those are the greatest barriers, I'd love to hear your thoughts on, you know, do you think there are ways we could help drivers overcome those barriers?

L3:

You know, I think that the third one there could be a waste of time.

I mean, I think it's more about.

How do you change that perception from a standpoint or just some like quick education, right.

So you know, if you, if you find time to do meditation, you know, this could potentially help you, right.

So like we're going through this whole sleep apnea thing, right.

So to address fatigue driving behind.

But you know, if we address sleep apnea, hopefully it's going to decrease our number.

Of fatigue events.

But for the driver, it increases your health.

It reduces your risk of a heart attack.

It reduces your stress.

You know, there's a number of different health benefits to it, right?

So, so you know that kind of approach when you look at this and say, OK, well, it's a waste of your time.

Well, yeah, you might think that, but let me tell you, if you put X amount of time in a day, this is what you're going to get out of it, right?

And for some people, it might be boring, right?

Other people might be like, hey, this is the greatest thing since sliced bread.

I mean, everyone's different, right?

So, you know, you're never gonna get a glowing response on anything.

Everyone's gonna be aligned, right?

So, yeah, I mean, I think the rest of them, they're it's more around education and communication, in my opinion.

KA:

Yeah, yeah, I would.

I would say I agree with you.

In fact, I it's part of what I've been writing in my thesis is that, you know, they, the people who wrote this study originally categorized these things as low perceived benefit, but or two of them that the ones about, you know, I want to be accomplishing something and that's a waste of time to sit around.

But if it was an educational.

If if we took the opportunity to educate people on the benefits and that they are actually, you know, you're pampering yourself almost, you know, kind of what you tell women when they say, oh, I don't have time to take care of myself.

You have to take care of yourself or you can't take care of your family.

So you're not wasting your time.

You're not being selfish.

So.

L3:

Trying to do is, you know obviously me saying, hey this is gonna help you like from a sleep apnea standpoint, right.

We're trying to get some driver testimonial.

So we've had some folks that have that we've put through the program, you know they've come back and said this is this is life changing like you know just from a so many different benefits, right.

But it's a hurdle, right.

You hear about C paps and all that.

It's like you know but once you get over that you know it helps you.

So you know how do you do the you know how do you potentially.

You know, let's say you went down the path of doing a pilot and you got a couple drivers and they're like, oh, this is great.

And then, you know, use them to be your voice from a standpoint of saying, hey, you know, here's an opportunity for you from a standpoint of of, you know, potentially helping you with the mental.

And correct me if I'm wrong, I think meditation can also help you from a physical standpoint, you know, health, so.

Anything that'll improve drivers' health is, in my opinion, kind of critical.

KA:

So, yeah, yeah, I would agree.

And actually, some of the results that, you know, they found in the leadership population is that it helps with focus.

It helps with things that would help them with their safety as well.

So, yeah.

And this I just wanted to, this is sort of I think supporting the idea of educating people because this was from the leader survey where I asked about the level of support that that the leaders would have for different opportunities within the company.

And then I exposed them all to, you know, peer-reviewed scientific journal.

Information about the benefits of meditation.

Then I asked the same questions over again and it shifted everybody.

I mean, it was very positive to begin with, but it shifted everybody's opinions even more toward the side of supporting doing something to help the drivers learn to meditate and take up a practice.

So I think it just supports.

That idea, right.

And I guess my question for you is does it surprise you that the people you know or that that we have so much support within the leadership of the company and do you think there's an opportunity here to use that to.

L3:

Yeah, I mean I I that doesn't, you know that doesn't surprise me.

I don't know how long you've been with the company.

I've been with the company about 15 1/2 years now and you know

Doesn't surprise me for a couple of reasons.

And the first would be is, you know, whenever, you know, whenever you hear Roger talk, he talks about human capital and that's the number one advantage that we have as a company, right.

And you know, I remember I used to sit in a room and I'd have eight years under my belt and I'd still be a rookie sitting there, right.

I'm like, you know.

I can't even start to brag about my time with this company until I get to at least a double digit.

I could, I could no longer be a single digit midget is what some folks call me, you know, but you know, I think, OK, so you know, so you probably worked at other companies like I have before I came here.

And I mean I do think they really value the human capital.

I think you know we're a company that you know Allows folks to make mistakes and learn from them.

You know, I know in some companies, oh, you know, that's time to get rid of them, you know Well, no, it's a, it's an opportunity for growth.

It's a teachable moment, right.

So how do we correct that?

So you know, when we look at drivers, especially in our businesses, 10,000 professional drivers and the driver market's tough, right.

So how do we **make it more appealing** for a driver and you know, the **health** of our driver?

I don't, you know, I I especially in the DCC side of the business, they dedicated contract carriage.

I'm not surprised to hear any of the leaders say, hey let's at least take a look at it and see what what we think that can do for us, right.

You know and I I don't know how much we I I got into the whole just **cost of trucking and litigation** and all that.

But it's you know if you get time go out and research like Warner.

Warner transportation and nuclear verdicts, I mean it is absolutely crazy what the trucking industry is up against, right.

So you know we're a business obviously there's money involved with you know all decisions when it when it comes to this kind of stuff.

But you know if we can **improve the fitness** even if it's baby steps that that to me that's a win, right.

That's a **huge win** for us.

So I'm not surprised that this.

Just because these are [COMPANY] leaders internal to [COMPANY], I think it'd be interesting if you did it like you know, cross-functional if you know, not that you need to, but if you had three or four different companies and you compared those companies and I think if I think you would see companies with the lower response. would probably have, if you compared their retention rating, they probably had higher retention issues than other companies, but yeah, so.

KA:

Yeah, that's interesting.

I I mean, I was I was not surprised actually.

I was, I think the only thing that surprised me was the openness to the idea of something that's sort of you know often seen as like sort of a hippie dippy kind of But I think, I think our leaders are very educated in that area too though.

So I, you know, like I said, I was not terribly surprised.

But yeah, I'm, I'm always so happy to see, you know, just how, how much our leaders care about everybody, especially the drivers.

So and.

I guess my last questions are, you know, do you believe bringing meditation to the drivers would be a benefit?

And I I think we've pretty much covered it, but, you know, I'd love to hear your thoughts if you have any more or if you have any other additional ideas or thoughts.

L3:

Yeah, I mean, I just, I think it's, I think it's a potential tool in the toolbox that, you know, I think, you know, we should look at, right.

So, you know, it's, it's

How do you change bad habits, right?

It's just like as a driver, right?

When you, you know, when you think about a driver and we have the camera systems in the in the track, you know, whole reason we put those in was to change at-risk behaviors.

Well, you when you got a driver who's been driving 15 years, it's kind of hard sometimes to break bad habits.

But you know, how do you encourage, you know, better habits?

And you know, I think it, you know, look, it's all going to come down to the individual.

There's a reason why everyone in the US doesn't go to meditation, right?

But it benefits some people.

So if it can help benefit part of the population, then, you know, I think that's a a win.

That's kind of where where my, you know, head's at.

And look, we got a lot more locations than just the two that you looked at, right.

So, you know, I think between those two.

You're probably at 300 drivers, right?

Roughly, yeah.

So I know both of those locations pretty well.

You know, that's let's say 350 drivers out of 10,000.

So there's a lot, you know, the interesting thing about [CUSTOMER1] and I don't know who you met with up there, but unfortunately we've had a number of issues up there with drivers and their Wellness.

I mean, you know.

In the last six months, we've had two drivers pass away from health issues.

So it's very unfortunate.

KA:

So, you know, yeah, that doesn't actually surprise me based on the research I did.

Just the, I think, I think driver, like, I don't know how to phrase it exactly, but the age at which they pass away, yeah, is probably the lowest.

I think it was of any profession.

Aside from maybe social work.

L3:

Yeah.

So I mean they're they're in a truck, they're in a seat, they're driving, they're not moving around too much.

KA:

Yeah, I'm not surprised.
I'd be, I'd be interesting to know what that age is.
But yeah, that's, you know, I'd have to find the research again.
It was, I had a hard time tracking down the actual study.
It was some kind of census study that they did and I it was.
A lot of it was kind of anecdotal.
I had a lot of trouble finding the precise study that that came to that conclusion.
But it was repeated over and over again that that the drivers have one of the, you know, I don't want to say danger, most dangerous jobs in the in the country, but I think it is a lower life expectancy.
Yeah, a lower life expectancy.
And I think it's, you know, it's not because they're rushing into, you know.
Gunfire or a burning building, but it's just because of the lifestyle that they end up adopting because of their jobs.
And I think in many cases I do still think stress level, you know, that contributes to heart disease, it contributes to all kinds of other things, so.

L3:

Yeah, I mean, I think if you would ask a person this, you know, from a stereotype standpoint, describe a driver for you, right.
I don't think the first thing you're gonna say is, you know, a six foot lean, you know, you know, I mean, unfortunately, you know, and if you, you know, I'm thinking right now, you think about some of our more experienced drivers that have hit our 20 year diamond club, right.
You know, some of those guys are 65-70 years old, but they're.
But they're in shape.
I mean they, you know, they're not trying to stereotype, but yeah, I mean it's a concern, it's a big concern.
And I, you know, the dot, I'm sure you know, does a pretty good job of a fairly good job from a standpoint of monitoring drivers.
They have to go in for a dot physical every two years and then depending if they're diagnosed with something, that dot physical turns into a one-year physical.
You know what I think part of the challenge is, is I don't think we're doing enough.
And I talk about sleep apnea just because we're working, we're we're getting ready to launch a major thing on sleep apnea for the company.
And like Harvard Medical School says like like 31% of drivers are driving today with undiagnosed sleep apnea.
That's dangerous like.
So why isn't the government got like?
I don't know.
My head's just like, why isn't the government gotten involved to say, hey, we need to address this.
And it's been brought up several times and they don't wanna touch it, but we're we're gonna touch it.
We're gonna, we're gonna touch it.
We're gonna really, we're gonna, we're gonna touch it so hard we're gonna hug it.
So I think it's been great.

KA:

Yeah, I think I actually, before I worked at [COMPANY], I worked at a hospital and I did work on with the sleep. Study department.
Yeah.
Sleep, sleep studies, just all the different things that they do to diagnose it.
And it is, I mean I think it's costly to diagnose, it's costly to treat.
It's, you know, it's it's an an expense that is, you know, hits the insurance companies and it's it's and it's not it.
It's something that requires a great deal of patient compliance.
It's not something where you can just be like, OK, take a pill every morning and you'll be good.
You know, it does require.
Not just compliance, but also lifestyle changes and things like that.

So it's it's difficult.
And even just getting getting the test done takes an overnight stay in the hospital with all kinds of wires.

L3:
And yeah, well, we're we're gonna make that investment at no, no, no cost to the driver.
So more coming.
Yeah, just comes back to, you know, making that investment.
We're gonna make it.
So yeah, it's good.
Perfect.
25:19

KA:
Well, thank you so much for your time.
I really appreciate it.
I'm you guys over in logistics have been incredibly generous with your time and it's, I hope I I'm able to come up with some solutions and at least some data that helps us.
Yeah, I mean move in a positive direction.

L3:
Yeah, once you get, once you get done, you know, you know, please share it with me and you know, you know once you celebrate and get, you know the fee to submit it, so.

Leader 4 Interview

L4 - Senior Vice President

KA:
Thank you so much for taking the time to help me with this.
I'm Working on my master's at Radford University.
And so my topic is mindfulness and driver attitudes towards meditation.
And just from research I've done over the years, there's a strong correlation between mindfulness and meditation and, you know, better focus, better health, less stress, et cetera, et cetera.
But there's not been a lot of research done on blue collar workers and particularly drivers.
There's been tons of research done on executives and like knowledge workers, but I wanted to kind of start to explore the potential of bringing meditation to drivers.
So that's what I'm working on.
And part of it is I collected data from drivers from two of our locations, so the [CUSTOMER2] and the [CUSTOMER1] down in [LOCATION].
And I'm gonna move to that slide.
But I had 74 drivers who completed the questionnaire.
And um so the demographic information for them looks to me like it fairly closely aligns with sort of national demographic information for drivers.
But I just wanted to get your feedback on if it seems consistent with what our driver population is.
I mean, obviously significantly more male than female, probably older rather than younger.

L4:
Yeah, it looks, it looks like an accurate representation of our driver population.
Yeah.

KA:

And then the other thing I wanted to just.

Point out was I asked them to rate their stress level on an average day from 1:00 to 5:00 and I was somewhat surprised that it was primarily 3 and under as the high as the highest levels, which I was pleasantly surprised by that.

Does that seem about right to you or are you surprised?

L4:

I'm I'm a little bit surprised that I mean that both those both those operations that you mentioned [CUSTOMER1] and [CUSTOMER2], those drivers have high touch [CUSTOMER2] in particular high touch a lot of stops nighttime driving.

So it's it's good if that's the way they feel that we're doing that we're doing something right with our training and the support and the safety that we're delivering to them.

So that's good.

KA:

Oh great.

And then I did.

After the survey, I asked them if they would be interested in learning more about meditation.

I gave them a yes, no, and also a not sure option.

And so 44% picked not sure.

But then 34%, so over a third picked yes, which I was surprised.

So I'm I'm wondering if you also are surprised by that or if it seems.

L4:

I think most of them are probably curious by nature.

They spend a lot of time in the truck, so maybe the thought of how they can clear their head, get ready for their day, they really are.

You know, sole contributors, they're they don't have, they don't have people next to em, watching em, monitoring their work or their behavior.

So I think it makes sense that they would wanna learn more.

KA:

Cool.

I just have to say they were. I. sat there for two days at each site and, you know, chatted with people too, as well as having them fill out the surveys.

And they all seem like such dedicated people.

And I can't tell you how many of them said they just love to drive.

L4:

Yeah, that's good.

KA:

It was a really, it was a great experience because I had not done that before.

This is, these are the questions that I asked them.

I asked them to basically assess the barriers to meditation and I pulled these from another study that was conducted with a different demographic of people.

So I wanted to see how it compared.

And so the top four I've highlighted and two of them are on the theme of sort of they feel like they should be doing something and two of them are on the theme of they don't really know much about it and they wouldn't know if they were doing it right, so.

According to the people who wrote the original research, it was low perceived benefit and perceived inadequate knowledge.

But I actually was thinking about this and I thought the low perceived benefit could actually be a gap in knowledge as well because they don't realize that they are doing something and they're doing something positive for themselves.

So I'm wondering what your thoughts are on that.

L4:

Yeah, I think I I I think it's hard to.

Understand or **quantify the benefit of something if they're not, if you haven't experienced it**, if you haven't gone through it.

So you may have some instances where you know they don't understand the benefit because they haven't invested the time into exploring this.

So that could skew the the feeling there for sure.

Just looking at some of these scores, yeah, I think by nature, you know, they they **probably feel like they've got to be moving and doing something to be productive** for lack of a better term.

But I think, I mean this is an interesting concept.

Is there, you know, we we I I liken it to, you know, like on the warehouse floor they'll do shift huddles and we'll do stretching exercises and.

Take, you know, 10 minutes, 5 to 10 minutes **to get people prepared for their day**.

A driver, you know, very similar in nature.

I think they got a lot going on.

They have, they really have to be on their game, you know, in the back of a dark truck with 15 stops, making sure the right product gets to the right store on time.

So it's, you know, **this is an interesting concept** I think for sure.

KA:

Cool.

And I think I know you took the leader survey and so you're familiar with the the fact that I presented a couple of questions about leadership support at [COMPANY] or in the organization.

And then I get I spelled out some of the benefits with evidence-based research and then I asked the same questions and.

The research or the the support was across the board very good before that, but after people read the benefits, it increased even then.

And so I guess I'm wondering if this, you know, does that surprise you at all and do you think there's an opportunity here?

Do you think that the education aspect would spill over to the drivers if we were able to?

L4:

Yeah, I think.

I think **if we shared some of the benefits or testimonials** from from individuals that subscribe to meditation and have done so consistently.

That may **help the understanding**, the overall understanding of the benefits.

So I do you know anytime you can **educate folks on the benefits** and how it will impact them as an individual.

I think it's that that would certainly help their buy in or desire to learn and understand more.

KA:

Do you have any thoughts on best ways to reach them?

L4:

I mean, there's a lot of a lot of different ways.

We **message them through the phones** that they take to work.

So when they sign in to log on to start their day, we we can have prescribed messages that pop up.

We routinely **send things to their house** cause really we try to do that.

Not only so they have something tangible that they can hold and read while they're not in the heat of the work environment, but **so their spouse sees it**, especially if it's something medical or benefit related, which you know, this, you know, **well-being falls, it falls into play here**.

So if you can send something to their house and they can get **collective support from family members**, I think that that's that's always helpful as well.

KA:

Interesting.

All right.

And that's, I guess my last question to you is, do you believe that bringing meditation to the drivers would be a benefit?

L4:

Yeah.

I mean, I think it goes hand in hand with a lot of **the safety efforts** we have in place.

So, you know, we are working on combating fatigue every single day.

A lot of our **drivers are out at night**.

They have to be very disciplined with their sleep schedule.

You know, a lot of times they're sleeping during the day when there's potentially people in their house moving around making noise.

And you know, you have to be, they have to be very disciplined with their sleep schedule to make sure that they're **fit for duty**.

I think this is **another add-on to that** and I would.

I don't know who all you interviewed, if anyone from the **safety team** was was part of this, Aaron Henderson or Rob Hellstrom or Joy Ford, you know those those folks and their team members are very close to kind of what we're doing.

We're embarking on looking at sleep apnea now and how that impacts the driver's ability to get a good night's rest.

So there's a lot of different things we're doing, but.

I mean this, this feels like it fits in that same vein and **something we should probably explore further**.

KA:

Well, yeah, I did.

I spoke to Aaron yesterday.

I think I sent Lajoy a a questionnaire, but I don't know that it was filled out while I was at.

I think it was while I was at [CUSTOMER1], there were actually safety people there doing training and they were very interested in it.

So yeah, yeah, I could, I could see that it could be another, you know, sort of tool in the tool belt.

L4:

Yeah, yeah I mean it's it's not obviously A1 size fits all, but it's something that if we **package it the right** way, those folks that want to embrace it or want to learn more could have a Ave. to do so.

I I don't see it having a negative impact.

If anything, it's it's **another testament to our associates that we care about their well-being** and we care about them and we want them to be, you know, successful, happy, healthy.

To me it's an ad.

You know, we're always looking for ways to **emerge as the employer of choice** in the eyes of our people.

And this just another benefit that we would bring to the table for them.

KA:

Cool.

And I'm just wondering, do you have any additional thoughts or ideas you'd like to share with me just as I move forward with this?

L4:

No, I'm happy to continue to support however you need me to.

I think it's an, it's an interesting thought and it's a population that, you know, we don't.

Always take the time to probably understand their mental well-being when they're starting their day.

You know, it's here's your dispatch sheet, there's your truck.

Have a good day.

If there's ways that we can get further upstream and have conversation with them to educate them on benefits of meditation and, you know, something they could get in the habit of doing, you know.

When they first sit in their truck or when they first, you know, before they leave for the for the for the warehouse, I I think that's important.

KA:

Thank you so much for your time.

I really appreciate it.

And I will, as I've been telling everybody as I get further along and I have more results and more information, I will share it with everybody and I'm keeping.

In contact with HR and legal on all this.

And so yeah, I hope to have next steps is to pull together some working sessions with leadership to just sort of work through, you know, fleshing out the ideas, figuring out the things that are, you know, that are.

Doable short term, doable long term, put together something of a plan.

And you know, this obviously it's gonna be part of my thesis, but I also want to be able to pass it on to people within the company and maybe supply, you know, some educational pieces to at least [CUSTOMER1] and [CUSTOMER2] where I was and get reaction to it.

L4:

Yeah, no, I think it's great.

KA:

I was gonna say when I was at [CUSTOMER1] I was there for two days and when I was leaving on my second day, a bunch of the people who are more in the office, like the dispatchers and those types of people, asked if I would be coming back to teach people.

And so and so I it was received positively.

L4:

So I'm that's what I was gonna say.

I mean, you know, beyond the driver workforce, I mean it's.

Benefit probably, you know, warehouse workers, supervisors, there's a host of people that I think, you know, and like I said, not everyone's gonna jump at the opportunity, but to have something that we could put out there in a format that was easily consumable, they would know where to go to get the tools, the resources, the support they need to, you know, at least try and see if they saw some benefits and identify best practices, you know

What you're setting need to be like where where's the best place to do this?

How are how far before you start your work should you.

I think all those little things would be you know we could package those in new team meeting content and make sure we're sharing it proactively and encourage it in a in a positive light and share you know share testimonials from associates that have.

Used meditation and found it beneficial.

So I think really a good, good idea, good thought.

And it goes hand in hand with, again, trying to continuously find new ways to emerge as an employer of choice for our people.

So good stuff.

Yeah.

KA:

Well, thank you.

And I will, like I said, I will get back to you further down the road when I have more to share and we'll see what we can do to move it forward.

Thank you so much.

I really appreciate your time.

Leader 5 Interview

L5 – Senior Vice President

KA:

Think I have it recording.

Well, thank you so much.

I really appreciate it.

I'm working on my thesis and I'm I, I put out a questionnaire to a lot of drivers.

I think I got 74 responses.

And I also put out a questionnaire to some of some leaders and I got about 31 responses.

L5:

Wow.

KA:

So I just, I wanted to just talk you through some of the results that I got and get your feedback on some of it.

So, OK, the 74 drivers that responded, average age seemed to be between 40 and 59 or OK, well, maybe I mean the bulk were definitely between 40 and 59 and the bulk were male.

And the years of driving was sort of looked like the bulk were about 26 to 30 years of driving.

And surprisingly, I asked them to how stressful their average workday was between on a scale of one to three.

And I got back, the bulk of the answers were three.

I was expecting it to be higher.

So I was pleasantly surprised by that.

And I guess I just not stressful or three was stressful, three was medium.

So if one was the least stressful, five was the most stressful, three was OK, medium.

And the lowest one was 5, which I thought was, I mean, to me, I think I'd be stressed all the time if I were a driver.

L5:

Right.

KA:

So I just wanted to, you know, does that surprise you at all or does that seem consistent with what you know about our drivers?

L5:

It does.

I mean, ultimately, you know, there's a million different driving jobs within our group of drivers.

Generally the things they do vary widely.

So I would imagine that once one gets control of the domain, whatever the particular job is, then yeah, it wouldn't be wildly stressful day-to-day.

Certainly traffic and things like that might, you know, 'cause some stress and things.

But you know, we we're largely a business of somewhat static, more static than dynamic schedules.

Someone with someone with a highly dynamic schedule would probably experience more stress not knowing when we get to get home.

That would be stressful.

Most of our business is much more predictable.

And, you know, with people driving for that long on average, again, you know, if you're doing a certain job and you've been doing it a while, you get into a comfort zone with it.

Yeah.

I could see where they wouldn't be crazy stressed every day.

KA:

Cool.

And so I, because my thesis is on driver attitudes towards meditation, I asked them would they be interested in learning more about meditation.

And I'll start with some of the comments I got back was I would love to try meditation.

I had a lot of drivers say they love driving and that's why they chose to be a driver.

They said it's a great idea.

They feel like if you clear their mind it helps with positivity.

And so I offered them the options of yes, no, and not sure.

And the greatest response was not sure at 44%.

And then 34% said yes, they would be interested in learning more about meditation and only 22% said no.

So, OK, I was just wondering, you know, are you surprised by that at all?

Why or why not?

And if you have any other thoughts?

L5:

It's probably a new concept for many.

So the idea of being not sure I could see.

I mean, I think time is an issue.

I mean, the one of the tyrannies of driving is that, you know, unlike other jobs, like in your job or mine, if we need to take like 10 minutes to go do something, we can just go do it.

I mean, if you're driving, you know, you really, of course you could stop and take a break, but then you're not covering those miles.

So, you know, finding the time to do something like that would be a twist for many, I'm sure.

KA:

And I so I asked them to assess barriers to meditation.

And of course one of them was time.

I don't have time, right?

Some of them were I prefer to be accomplishing something.

Meditation might be boring.

The one that was the highest was I prefer to be accomplishing something followed by it is a waste of time to sit and do nothing.

And I don't know much about meditation and I would not know if I were doing it right where the top 4 barriers.

And so, you know, we, we already talked about the time, but do you have any, do you, do you have any thoughts on that?

And do you have any ideas on how they might overcome some of those barriers?

L5:

I mean, inevitably, I think some sort of app would be, would be the solution to a bunch of that.

I mean, an app that could recenter someone who's trying to master some new thing like meditation.

So if I had an app I could go back to that had some reminders or grounding mechanisms, help me re-find my groove, so to speak, keep that being helpful in this sort of thing.

So that's sort of what comes to mind.
You know, today I have various personally, personally, physically oriented things I do.
And inevitably I have personal physical therapist or personal trainer type thing.
And inevitably I always **have little videos** to go back to.
That reminds me, all right, what am I supposed to be doing here?
Oh yeah, that's right.
But you can't have your hip turn this way when you're doing this thing or something, you know?
Oh, yeah, I forgot that.
So, yeah, I would think that sort of thing would be helpful.
Folks trying to **stay with it a discipline** like that.

KA:

Another interesting thing I found from on the leader survey.
I asked, you know, I believe just a level of support.
So I believe meditation may benefit driver's health.
I believe supporting drivers in developing a meditation practice could benefit the company.
Questions like that.
And so I asked the question once and then I provided a page of like peer reviewed scientific literature that discussed the benefits of meditation.
And then I asked the question again and it did move the needle into a more positive direction.
I mean it was very positive to start, but it actually it did increase positive support.
And so I guess questions, my questions for you is, does that surprise you at all?
And do you think there is an opportunity here?

L5:

There's an **opportunity for anything that promotes safety** and well-being.
So to the extent that meditation could do that, I think.
I mean, that's what really comes to mind for me.
And because it's, **it's very, very important to the company, it's very, very important to the drivers.**
It's everything, right.
But the, the **penalties for safety issues have never been greater.**
They're dramatically increased, which is a source of great concern to everyone in the trucking industry.
So there again, anything that could be helped alleviate some of that would be very interesting.
I'm sure to some in the industry, **there's probably a stigma about the word** would be my guess.
And so if I were selling it, I'm not sure I'd frame it up as such necessarily, but I don't know that that's I'm just supposing.
So might be **a different way of framing it up.**
I know myself when I drive any distance, at some point I'm pulling over and I'm shutting my eyes for 10 or 15 minutes, and then I seem like I do, man, so and so.
But I don't know the extent to which meditation creates that same feeling as a quick little short nap or not, you know, no experience down that path.

KA:

It, I've, I've been considering the idea of, you know, calling it breathing exercises, **calling it relaxation exercises**, things like that.
Just because, yeah, I, I've, I've heard there is a stigma associated with just, you know, it feels tree huggery or touchy feely or.

L5:

Yeah, I would think so, yeah.

KA:

And so I think, yeah, I think we already covered the, you know, do you believe that bringing meditation to the drivers would be a benefit?

But it's on my list of questions, so I do want to ask it there.

L5:

Again, I think it depends to some extent on the type of work.

It may depend somewhat on the type of work.

So if I'm on a [COMPANY 2] route and I'm in and out of my truck 15 times a day, my day is broken up constantly.

I'm not just driving right, man, I'm out.

I'm stocking shelves, I'm back, I'm fiddling with my handheld device and entering data.

You know, I'm doing all this stuff.

So I differentiate that between someone like who works for [COMPANY 3], you know, that's just doing longer haul trucking.

I get behind the wheel and I get to cover 500 miles today.

I, I, so I don't know if there's not some portion of the driving universe where something like this would be more beneficial perhaps than across the whole driver universe.

Again, not qualified to say, but something that I think about.

KA:

Of the 74 drivers that answered the questionnaire, I'd say probably like 40.

Some were from the Wawa location in South Jersey.

L5:

Oh, there you go.

KA:

So the, the, the location's great.

The, the drivers were amazing.

L5:

I'm not surprised.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

KA:

And the, the management staff there is great too.

Like they were really helpful.

L5:

They're one of the highest paid drivers in the company, by the way.

KA:

Ah, OK, good to know.

Yeah, they, they, they are like they have it down and, and the warehouse too, because that they gave me a tour of the warehouse.

But yeah, they have it down to like they are a machine, right.

They're really good.

So last question, just do you have any additional thoughts or ideas that you would like to share?

L5:

There's a few people in the company that I consider the absolute experts, like in this realm.

No, I don't count myself among them.

You're getting kind of just a management perspective for me, I would say, but I don't directly work with drivers or observe their habits or anything like that.

But I don't know if he's talked to Rob Hellstrom in safety.

KA:

Hellstrom, I talked to a few people in safety, but I don't know if he is on my list.
I can send him the questionnaire, though, and see if you would be interested in participating.
Did you say Rob?

L5:

Yeah, HELSTROM, Rob typically is somebody who leads a lot of initiatives within safety, I would say.
OK, so he's thinking about this stuff all the time.

KA:

Oh, cool.

L5:

And I just respect Rob.
He's very bright.
And so he's somebody that comes to mind for me.
The other is John Bilac.
Yeah, I don't think it's one of our receipts of operations.
John is VP of operations for VCC.
Yeah, career ***** industry leader.
I generally consider John probably the most dialed in for drivers.
Any [COMPANY] leader, you know, just based on his nature and how he's approached his work over the years,
and he's somebody that still engages with drivers regularly.
And I just, John, it's just the real deal.
You would pick up on that instantly if he spoke to him.
I would.

KA:

OK, great.

L5:

A couple of other leaders that, you know, really would know this domain and perhaps have some relevant, you
know, content for you.
I they were not on my list.
Yep.
But great additions.
Thank you.
All right, this is my name with them.
No problem.
Yep.
Absolutely.

KA:

OK, Well, thank you so much.
I appreciate it.

L5:

Congratulations on getting getting all the way down the path with this.
So, yeah, keep going.

KA:

Thank you for your time.
I really appreciate it.

L5:
Anytime you know that.

Leader 6 Interview

L6 - General Manager

KA:

I wanted to thank you for taking the time to fill out my survey and also to chat with me today. Just to give you a little bit of background, the purpose of the study that I'm working on, I'm getting my master's in design thinking at Radford University. Purpose of the study I'm working on is to examine attitudes towards meditation in the trucking industry. So basically I already surveyed about 74 drivers from two different locations. One location is the [CUSTOMER1] in South Jersey, the other is the [CUSTOMER2] in [LOCATION]. And so I put together some of the data from that, and I just wanna kind of talk through some of it with you and get your feedback. So let me just click into my first slide, which is, this is kind of the demographic information from the people I spoke to, or not spoke to, surveyed. I compared it to demographic information that I found online for just trucking industry in the United States in general and it seems pretty consistent with standard, you know, demographics. I was just wondering if you think this is consistent with our other locations and if anything about it surprises you. Let me, like I said, teams and I today, let's try this again.

L6:

Let me, let me So I've got about 90%, 97% male versus 3% female. I think there's probably a few more women in the industry, but it's probably close. Hold on, let me just, let me just look it over here for a second. I'm glad to see that they're not on the majority saying their day is super stressful.

KA:

Yeah, I was actually pleasantly surprised by that too, that, you know, they're kind of in the medium zone, right?

L6:

If it's what you do every day.
All right.
So then you're driving.
OK, I got that.
Gender.
OK, 74.
OK, Yep.
No, that that's all in line with expectation.

KA:

Yep, cool.
I just wanted to make sure I didn't have a sort of randomly different demographic than most places.

L6:

No, I think your sample size is good, I think.

I think those operations were two that I'm most responsible for, right.
So yeah, you're those locations have some physicality that would lend itself towards a younger person being more successful just by the physical strength.
Now it's not required.
We have plenty of more mature in both.
I would if all if anything were to be a little bit.
Different than a more national view of our, you know, of our 11,000 drivers, right, which you can get from HR.
I mean I think it's a known number in our world.
I you know that that age might be a little bit higher.
In our in our across the board, which isn't today, there's anything wrong with what you have there.
You just asked me if anything stood out.
So if the if the average age in the US is forty-seven, I think at one point I remember seeing a [COMPANY] internal statistic that we were like fifty-two.
OK, now this is going back a minute, right.
So you know we added a whole bunch of drivers when we acquired Blackhorse and you know within the Aldi network, so.
If anything, the those numbers you might check with I guess HR in our world and just see how that sample size is comparative to our national sample size just for point of reference for you.

KA:

Thank you.
So I am moving to the next slide I.
For one thing, I just have to say, I can't tell you how many drivers told me they just love to drive.
So I was, I loved hearing that.
Um, but I did ask them, would they be interested in learning more about meditation?
And I gave them yes, no and not sure, just because I wanted to not be totally binary on it.
So the largest percentage was not sure at 44%, but the second was 34% said yes, they actually would like to learn more about meditation.
So I I think that.
I was surprised by that.
So I'm wondering if you're surprised by that and you know why or why not?

L6:

If those are the three choices, right, that's the I'm not surprised.
I think the yeses are going to be the yeses.
I think the the no and the not sure might be all one bucket.
We're not necessarily all one bucket, but I think.
You know, if someone is asked a question and and you know, they maybe feel a little like, well, should I be with something like, right.
Like so not sure is a safe answer.
I would have expected to see more nos just and that's being very stereotypical, I understand.
But I this is people I interact with, right.
So and not all day, every day by any stretch.
So just asking me as a general manager what I was expecting.
I am a little surprised that the yes is over a third, you know, a little bit over a third.
That's cool.
Just cool in that, you know, people are open to something that I wouldn't typically associate with just that career choice, which is I think is good.
I don't know what I would do with the the other piece I was thinking, which is that.
Some of that not sure probably is no, just, you know, said not sure so that they're not quote UN quote in trouble.
But I don't know, maybe not.
It's just, you know, could vary.
Or it could just be that that large bucket of folks are like, I never even gave it a thought.

So I'm not sure, right.
Because I don't have really any sum of experience around it.
So I think, yeah, OK, that's good.

KA:

Well, it actually kind of leads me into the next slide, which is.

This these were the questions that were on the survey that I gave them and it was developed from a survey that was put out by somebody else before me so that you know, I could kind of compare what my answers to what they had.

And so it was asking them to rate the barriers to meditation for them.

And so the top two were basically I prefer to be accomplishing something and I don't know much about meditation.

And so and then after that was I would not know if I were doing it right and it is a waste of time, time to sit and do nothing.

So I think that that kind of lends itself to the not sures that some of them just don't know what it is and some of them don't know if they're doing it right and so wouldn't know how to start.

So, but I'd love to hear your thoughts on anything else that you got from this and just your knowledge of the drivers and if you have any thoughts around it.

L6:

No, no, nothing stands out as like, no.

So I'm curious like what you're thinking to do next, like what, what or you'll get into it.

But next slides, I guess.

KA:

Yeah, well, basically I kind of looked at.

The ones where they're say I prefer to be accomplishing something and it's a waste of time to to sit and do nothing is that those could be barriers that in my mind could be perceived as educational barriers as well.

Because sure, you know if they if they are educated on the benefits.

And the fact that, you know, there's peer-reviewed, scientifically evidence-based studies out there that say that meditation can help you with stress, helps you with your health, helps you be more focused, et cetera, et cetera, then it's no longer doing nothing and that it's actually helping you be more successful in your life and in your job.

So that's sort of my thought is that, you know, maybe one of the solutions that we wind up with is is some kind of **educational program**.

L6:

Within this presentation, do you get to any sort of recommendation or within the scope, not within this yet.

KA:

This is still building up to a little bit more research I've gotten.

I'm getting, I'm interviewing about eight people.

So I talked to like [L5] and [L2] and a couple other people and I still have a few more interviews to do.

But yeah, I mean they're actually very supportive, which kind of gets me to the next slide.

Giving some feedback on my results from asking leadership if they would support different things within the company to support meditation.

And you took the survey so you know that I asked the question and then I gave some scientific evidence about the benefits and then I asked the questions again.

And so people were very supportive to begin with and then after reading the benefits.

It's tipped the scales a little bit further towards being supportive and so it did increase support.

So I think that to me that reinforces the idea that being informed and being educated will increase people's desire to maybe participate or learn more.

So you know, that was just, that was what I thought.

I was wondering if you have any thoughts on that as well.

L6:

No, I completely agree.

And then I have some thoughts around kind of a next, but I don't want to presuppose anything that your presentation has.

So maybe we'll get to the end of that and then we'll.

KA:

No, this is pretty much the end of the presentation.

I get to the point where I say, you know, do you have any more thoughts?

Which is exactly like the the point of of my thesis is really to.

Work on finding solutions with the people who are involved and who are the decision makers.

So I haven't gotten to that yet.

I'm still doing the research part now, so I'd love to hear your thoughts.

L6:

Yeah, so this dovetails a little with my own personal journey, right?

So I have been someone who's been interested in self-reflection and improvement, mostly in the world of, you know, leading leaders for a long time.

And so I've and then I'm physically active and fit, right?

So I I do things intentionally around trying to.

To improve in those areas and just through life's circumstance, had not spent any time in the world of meditation.

And then about, I don't know, four-ish months ago said, you know what, I'm gonna do more than just dip my toe in the pool.

So I read a couple of books and then I signed up for Headspace.

And I'm not as disciplined about doing it as often as I would like, but I'm definitely.

And you know, one of the things that gets a little bit like when you read, you know, about the, you know, making it a that's why it's the word practice is because you're just always practicing and that there's certain benefits that come from the, I'm gonna call it the muscle memory, but it's almost like not using the muscle, like the benefits that come from.

A duration of time in that, you know, employing the things you're you're learning that are a function of doing it for time, right.

And so, you know, at 55, when I read about, hey, you know, practice this for a minute and then you'll get good.

And by a minute, I mean 20 years, like that's what some of the people who are in this space, you know, talk about.

Then it becomes, all right, well, you know, I don't know if I'll have, you know, hopefully I'll have enough time left to do it for 20 years.

But so anyway, you know, again, it dovetails a little bit of of my own, which was interesting when you reached out.

I'm like, huh, well, that's kind of curious because I did not that long ago.

And hold on a second.

I'm looking for what was the first thing that I.

It's on my freaking nice.

Oh yeah.

So the first thing I I read was wherever you go there you are sort of, you know in the space, right.

And so and that was one of the things that that was in that was like you know try it for a minute and by a minute I mean 20 years and not being like flip or anything just that that's part of what the the benefit comes from over time cause you kind of stop thinking about am I doing it right and what am I, you know like you get into just.

The experience for the for the sake of the experience and and all the things, right.

So, so anyway, I, you know, I personally have enough experience in a limited way to have a more than intellectual connection with it being something that would be helpful, healthy, which I think is certainly part of the journey for someone who says, you know, OK, I understand the words, but is it really gonna? Have an impact and then and then to your point around the education.

So one of the things that I'll I'll share with you that I feel like this would garner some interest is pre COVID we do it.

We do it still some post COVID, but pre COVID we were evolving to a place where we had **Wellness coaches**. Through our insurance company, right.

There was I think through Liberty Mutual or through somebody we had and to this day still have **in some locations Wellness coaches that came like once a month** and particularly larger locations and folks that you necessarily just by stereotypicalness wouldn't expect would choose to speak to the Wellness coach, **Wellness coach** every time they came.

So along those lines of **making something immediately available to the population** at **no cost to them**, I believe would have folks who are interested in it and something along the lines of what I said, while we wouldn't advocate necessarily a particular product, I think if we were to if you know if as an extension of what you're working on, a recommendation is we you know **purchase a block of 100 annual headspace subscriptions and distribute them around and then have some follow up with people about how you know what how they're experiencing** it and then share that with a broader population.

I feel like would **generate the word of mouth** around that.

I expect would be necessary for it to become something that more than a handful of folks might do.

Does that make sense?

KA:

Yeah, it does.

And I can tell you just sort of, I sat in, well, I sat at [CUSTOMER2] for two days and I sat at [CUSTOMER1] for two days and I think it was at [CUSTOMER1] when I was leaving for my after my second day.

A couple of the people who were there and saw me all day said you're coming back at some point to teach us how to do this, right?

So I think there definitely was some interest, you know, and people who, you know, from popping in and out and chatting with me and just, you know, those were more the dispatcher kind of people who were there all day with the drivers.

But you know, I think there is some interest and I think there is, if you're interested, there's also there is an app. It's from the University of Madison, Wisconsin, Wisconsin at Madison.

They developed an app that they distribute free of charge because they pay for it with grants.

And it's called Healthy Minds, which, you know, could easily be made available because it's free.

So it's and it's a pretty good app.

It's it's not quite, it's a little more academic.

It's not quite as sort of.

I don't know if fun's the right word for Headspace, but it it does kind of walk you through different things though, which is nice and you can keep track of stuff.

And you know, I think I use or I started when I first started with my practice, I used the Calm app, which, you know, it it could be seen as a little touchy feely, you know, it's a little I I did, I I I dabbled like I I also did a little bit of, all right, what do I want to, you know, just.

L6:

Like anybody, I went to Google and said, hey, what are the best ones?

And I read some.

I tried Calm for a second, a second, you know, a minute, right?

And like to that, yeah, a little touchy feely.

And what was one other one I tried?

Tried Calm, I tried one other one and I tried Headspace and I just, I I found that Headspace was, you know, I like it's different every day, although a lot of the core stuff is sort of the same.

And you know, there's a when you wake up, there's a just a daily, there's a I don't have trouble sleeping thankfully for me, but I don't plenty of people who do like, I don't know, I just, I and it's certainly not cost prohibitive, right.

If you're going to get any benefit of it, the annual was nothing comparatively to other things you would choose to do, right.

So and you know that there's some metrics for anybody **who's competitive, which I'm told I'm mildly in that.**

Like there's some like, you know, you've done it for this many days out of this many.

OK, yeah, look at me, right.

Like, you know, and so, yeah, I like that.

It's I I like and not that there aren't others that not particular advocate of that tool, but I like that tool in that it's not so much trying to teach you as **get you in a habit**, right.

Yeah.

So there's not, there is a, you know, there's some, there's a basics quote UN quote course, right, that you listen to, hey, this is meditation, blah, so on and so forth.

But really it's just do it right.

And it's, you know, get in a comfortable chair where your back is this and do get in the surrounding and then just, you know, start breathing and doing this like that guided piece.

I wasn't sure that I would appreciate that because I felt like maybe it would feel too like.

You're coaching every dribble like you're in my ear, right.

You know like but I I find that it's that it's good, right.

Right So I do feel like if we had some folks who were intellectually interested that in having them have **some sort of tool** that we ultimately I'm not saying as a company we should you know get a subscription free for everybody if that's not.

But like I think having **some sample size** where we did fund it ourselves and then.

Create a little bit of **word of mouth** or you know, whatever.

If we could **dovetail it into something we're doing through Aetna.**

If there's another thing that's available just at along the exact same lines as I didn't expect that people would participate to the level that they do with the Wellness coaches.

I believe the same sort of thing would happen here.

Yeah, yeah, I was.

KA:

When I went, I first approached HR and legal about doing this.

You know, I was warned like don't expect anybody to even take your survey.

And so, you know, the fact that I had seventy-four respondents, I think, you know, I took that as a huge win because I, you know, I only went to two locations and I sat there for two days and you know, there were days when people were really busy and just didn't have time.

But, you know, I had 74 respondents, which I, you know, well, that's great.

L6:

I mean, yeah, so 74 drivers out of a pool of probably like 2 and a quarter.

So that's really good, I think.

KA:

Yeah.

And they were great.

I mean, I honestly, you know, there were a few that were a little grumpy, but the majority of them were really great.

And um, cool.

Yeah, just.

Yeah, I am.

I was very impressed by both locations, honestly.

You know, it was, it was a really good experience and just observing them coming and going and like the things that the people even in the dispatch area have to deal with every day.
And you know, it was, it was, it was definitely interesting.

L6:
I'm glad you got it.

KA:
Educational.
Yeah.
But yeah, all the people in the in the office there are great too, like both locations.
It was really, it was really nice to see and they seem to have like really good camaraderie and.
No, it was just, it was a really good experience.
Do you have any additional thoughts or, you know, I think I covered most of what I wanted to.

L6:
Nope.
I think I'm good.
Thank you.
All right.

KA:
Well, I will record all your answers and I'm kind of analyzing everything.
We're gonna do some working sessions with people to try to figure out like what are the, you know, kind of.
Easiest, fastest things we can do and, you know, maybe long-term planning.
And I'm hoping to be able to maybe bring a brochure or a flyer or something back to the two locations just to give them some, you know, quick, easy things they can try.
And, you know, then we'll take it from there.
But thank you.
I really appreciate your time.

L6:
You're welcome.

Leader 7 Interview

L7-Director

KA:
I really appreciate you taking the time to chat with me.
I'm talking to a bunch of different people throughout the company, primarily in logistics, but a few in marketing too.
Just people who see across the business and you know, know some things.
So let me share my screen with you.
I just wanted a little bit of background, which you probably saw when I sent you my original message, but I'm working on my MFA in design thinking, and this is my thesis that I need to submit in order to properly graduate.
I've finished all my classes, but you know, we're now waiting on me to finish this work.
I did my first round of research already, which was having drivers and some leadership fill out.
Two different questionnaires.
And so, I put together some of the results.

And so, I want to basically walk you through some of the initial results and then just ask you a few questions and get your take on what you're seeing.

And so that's basically it.

So, the purpose of the study is to examine attitudes towards meditation in the trucking industry.

And basically, when I did my initial research, the demographic of blue-collar workers and specifically truck drivers is really badly researched.

There is a lot of research done on executives and knowledge workers about the benefits of meditation, but very little has been done with people who are not sort of like in the executive community.

So that was, I decided where my focus would be, especially since, you know, working at [COMPANY], I have an interest in drivers and helping them maintain their health and things like that.

I had 74 drivers from two different locations complete the questionnaire.

Yeah, it was interesting.

I was really pleasantly surprised because when I went to HR to get approval to do this, they're like, oh, don't expect anybody to talk to you.

L7:

Well, yeah, this is, these are good numbers.

KA:

Yeah.

So, I had 74 drivers complete the questionnaire.

I actually, you know, I sat and chatted with a few of them as well and I, you know, officially interviewed a couple of them.

But I also just sat for the day for two days at each location and observed and so really got to kind of know what their routine was, and you know, their demeanor.

And yeah, it was really interesting.

So, comparing my demographics to driver demographics across the country, I think I got pretty close to what the driver demographics are just in the industry as well.

And you know, the big difference is that all of the drivers at the two locations I observed are dedicated.

So, they, you know, they have a fairly set schedule.

They go out every day, they come home every night.

Um And so that is **one level of stress that's not part of their day as it could be with like long-haul drivers or carriers** who just don't know what they're doing from day-to-day to day.

So, I was actually somewhat surprised that their stress level wasn't higher.

On a scale of one to five, the majority reported 3, although they did most of them did report that they had stress every day, but it wasn't quite as high as I thought it might be.

But I mean, that's good news for us.

L7:

Yeah.

And maybe it's that routine that you were talking about because of their scheduling.

They know what to expect every day.

For the most part.

KA:

Yeah.

And that's why I did an interview session with [L3] and he and also [L5].

You are my third.

And they both sort of said the same thing, like, you know, working for us that it's a.

Especially the one location, you know, they're fairly well paid, especially for industry standards and they do have very specific schedules.

And so, there is a routine, and they also are, if you look at their years of driving, most of them have been driving a pretty long time.

So, they're very well experienced and so you know that's one area where I think it probably differs from stats that you'd get across the country.
But yeah, I just thought it was.
I was pleasantly surprised that they weren't more stressed than they are.

L7:
So, yeah, interesting.

KA:
Yeah.
And so, then I, at the end of the questionnaire, I asked them if they would be interested in learning more about meditation, because obviously that's the key thing I want to know.
And so, I was actually pleasantly surprised.
I gave them the option of not sure because I felt like, you know making it totally binary would force them to choose and they maybe are not ready to choose.
But so, and the largest number came back as not sure, followed by, you know, a little bit more than a third said yes.
So, I don't know.
I don't know how much.
Yeah, I was gonna say I don't know how much you know about drivers, or you know what your preconceived ideas are, but does that surprise you?
Like what?
What would you have thought?

L7:
Yeah, I would have thought it's lower.
I think my perceived notions too, just a male-dominated industry, older, probably more resistant to kind of new ways of thinking or, you know, new wellness types of programs.
So yeah, I would have thought this would have been a little bit lower.
So that's a pleasant surprise.

KA:
Yeah, I was actually at one of the.
One of the, I think it was at the [CUSTOMER1] distribution center.
A couple of them asked me, like, will you come back and teach us this?

L7:
Sure.
You got a side gig.

KA:
Yeah, yeah But yeah, I was.
Could be.
You never know.
But yeah, I just thought it was.
I was surprised too.
So, I'm, you know, I didn't know if it was just me being.
You know, having some sort of stereotypical idea in my head or if it is sort of what people expect.
So.

L7:
No, it's good.
It's actually good to see the openness there.

KA:

Yeah, And so when one of the sections of the questionnaire I gave to them was just asking them to rate their level of, you know, agreement with the perceived barriers.

And they came from another study that had already been done.

So, I tried to use the same questions so that I could compare.

Um And so all the way on the right in the classification, that is how the other study classified the answers.

So, it was either low perceived benefit, perceived inadequate knowledge, perceived pragmatic barriers, or perceived socio-cultural conflict.

And um the highest barrier came back as I prefer to be accomplishing something.

And that was classified by them as low perceived benefit.

But in looking at it, I also thought, you know, is it a mindset change that it's not that they're not achieving something or accomplishing something like could it be, could education help with that, the low perceived benefit and turn it into a?

You know, like are they classifying it correctly?

I guess is my question that I was sort of thinking to myself.

L7:

Does it tie in with the third one there is a waste of time to sit and do nothing like they they're perceiving it as wasting time and getting nothing done and they should be driving and unloading their truck instead of meditating.

KA:

Yeah.

Or spending time with family or doing their hobbies or, you know, any of those things.

L7:

But yeah, because just a quick question, Kathryn, like and maybe this will come up later, but is the meditation, is it to be, is it?

What am I trying to say?

I guess, could meditation be done?

Is it more like on the job meditation or could it be done anytime outside the workplace?

KA:

Yeah, it can be done anytime.

I mean, it's one of those things where, you know, I mean people who are serious meditators, you know, like, you know, some of the studies I've read, you know, go into people who are sort of.

Like Buddhist monks, you know, to see what they do.

And but most people do it sort of, you know, habitually, like, you know, you get up, you brush your teeth, you take a shower, you sit down, you meditate, you do this, you do that.

Um And other studies, studies I've seen have shown that as little as like 10 to 13 minutes a day can improve your ability to focus, your ability to manage stress.

And so, yeah, it could be like if I have tried to work it into my daily routine and sometimes, I succeed and sometimes I don't, it's but it is that, you know, sort of habit forming.

You know, it's hard to form a habit.

And once you do though, it's much easier to keep it once you form it into a habit and, you know, kind of mark it in your day as a thing you do every day at this time.

Or so, yeah, it doesn't, I'm not even sure they could do it on the job.

I mean, that's one of the questions to ask down the road.

Like, is there a way to work it into, if it's important enough and it shows results, is, is there a way to work it into?

But you know, like walking, if you've sat in any of the distribution centers where the drivers come in and out, there really is no quiet space.

Yeah.

L7:
Yeah, I can.
I can imagine.
Yeah.

KA:
I mean there is when there's no drivers around, but as they're coming in and they tend to start, you know, a lot of them, they crisscross with each other and it's, you know, it's a small space and it's not private. And so, I don't, you know, maybe that, I mean as you know, this is a problem-solving exercise. So maybe there is something there, but I think that would be one of those like, you know, very high-cost kind of low benefit. Results, although I don't know, we haven't gone down that road yet. But yeah, and so I, you know, looking at all of this, do you have any thoughts? Because you do research for a living. So just wondering,

L7:
Yeah, it's interesting when you mentioned, you know, you were working on this project, I. Of course, was curious enough to look it up to see what's happening in the world of transportation with meditation. And I was surprised at how many trucking companies were talking about it and publishing articles or things on their on their blogs, on their company blogs or websites. Just about here's some tips to reduce stress. Here's a There was an app out there, Declutter the Mind app that one trucking company was promoting to its drivers. So yeah, it was one of those things I haven't thought much about until you mentioned your project. And then I thought it was pretty. I thought it was pretty cool. Like it. It's definitely something that's being talked about. And some companies are definitely promoting it. So and that was just based on a quick Google search. So no, no comprehensive look, but it's, I think it's a really interesting topic.

KA:
And I think that's really new because like, I mean I started this research a year or two ago, just all the background research and when I started there was almost nothing and it is growing. I have seen more and more. So, I think it is kind of like. You know that that curve is starting to shift.

L7:
But so, the results here on, I don't know much about meditation. So that was like the second biggest perceived barrier, right? Yeah. So, if I'm reading this, so the ones so that I just wanna make sure I've got the. The one through 5, correct. So, if you answered one, that means you do know a lot about meditation or is the 123 you don't know that much. KA:
One is five is very much agree, one is very much don't agree. So, if you said I wouldn't know if I'm doing it right and you put it five, that means you very much agree with I don't know.

I wouldn't know if I'm doing it right.
I got you.
OK, got it.
Yeah.

L7:

So.

Like, that's surprising to me then, because a lot of people are saying they do, they that they do know about meditation, right?

KA:

Yeah, I think more than I expected.

You know, it is, you know, giving them a one through five and then mashing it all together.

You know, there's a lot of it was probably more in the middle than I expected.

The one that stood out to me was that, you know, these are, these are really like most of the people I talk to, they're like, they want to be doing something all the time.

L7:

Yeah.

KA:

Yeah Like they're definitely sort of go-getter people who are very, you know, they don't like to be sedentary or they don't, I guess maybe it's not sedentary in the way we think about it from a health perspective, but like they'd like to be doing something and just another.

L7:

Again, you may be getting to this and I might be jumping ahead, but I'm assuming [COMPANY] doesn't promote meditation or doesn't have any resources in like the driver Wellness guide or whatever exists. I'm guessing we don't do too much or anything at all.

KA:

Not at the moment, no.

So that actually moves us to my next slide because I did, I did ask, and I think this was on the questionnaire that you filled out.

I asked sort of senior leadership what their thoughts would be on supporting [COMPANY] supporting drivers in, you know, maintaining, establishing, and maintaining a practice and then I put in a page of literature like research literature, just showing the benefits.

And most of those, you know, it's improved health and improved focus and things like that and ask the same questions again.

And you can see that the shift towards, I mean, the shift towards supporting it was already quite high, but it shifted even further once they read the benefits.

Because I don't know that all of them knew what the benefit, you know, what the scientifically researched benefits are.

Some of which are improved health, improved focus, improved safety.

L7:

And so except the folks, the folks in the threes though, the three category, they've, it looks like they went down. Well, I think they moved from three to four, you know what I mean?

So that's why the three went down and the four went up because they became more likely.

So yeah, five would be I'm very likely to support it and three and one would be I'm very unlikely to support it.

L7:

That makes sense.

So it's all interrelated.

If if one went down, something else went up.

KA:

So I thought that was just, you know, very interesting cause I think having senior leadership buy-in is hugely important to making it work.

L7:

So yeah, absolutely.

Yeah.

KA:

And so I'm, I'm, I wasn't really surprised.

I don't know.

What do you think?

Were you surprised?

Are you surprised at all that the leadership would be as supportive as they are?

L7:

Yeah, maybe.

I just think of our culture a little bit and just pretending to be more conservative.

So, you know, I think meditation **has certain perceptions attached to it as being new agey or whatever.**

But honestly, like my wife and I just bought a book on meditation.

Just cause we've been talking about it to and she started like these 15 minutes of concentrated breathing exercises.

I haven't started anything yet, but **I think it's becoming more mainstream,** and I think people do have stressful lives even, you know Trying to balance that whole you know work and your and your life and your kids and all the things going on.

So I know just from in my world I'm totally open to it.

So yeah I I can I can I can see you know maybe our executives you know maybe a shift there.

So that's I mean it's good to see I and it is a pretty high score so it's it's Yeah, maybe caught me a little little surprised, but but a a good surprised.

KA:

Yeah, I mean the feedback I got consistently was that anything we can do to help our drivers stay healthy and safe is something that they're willing to invest in.

And just for your own use, if you and your wife are interested, there is an app called Healthy Minds that is free. It's put out by a man named Richard Davidson who is with the.

University of Wisconsin at Madison and he does a ton of research into this.

He's written a few books.

He's very interesting, but it's all paid for by grants.

So it's, you know, I think they probably use it for research as well, just to see how people follow it and things like that.

But it's good and it's free and it can help you kind of on your meditation journey.

L7:

I just, I just wrote it down.

We we bought some book and I'm gonna butcher the title now, but it's had something to do with the.

Living like a catastrophe free life or something like that.

But it's it's by this like really well-known meditation expert, I think in the in Philadelphia and I forget the guy's name.

But yeah, it's I have, like I said, I haven't started reading it, but my wife has started doing some of the basic exercises.

We'll check out the app.

KA:

And I I have been not as good as I used to be.

I used to be very, very good about doing it every day.

But I have found that, you know, you do actually form kind of mind-body connections and.

Habits where if I'm feeling stressed, I can easily do a breathing exercise and and reduce my stress, you know

And I've learned it from kind of forming those pathways.

And so I I do need to get back into it more.

Yeah, it's more habitually, but I can't remember.

I fell off the wagon like when I went on vacation at some point and just never quite got myself back into where I was.

L7:

Well, you were already, you were stress-free on vacation and it just kind of continued, I guess.

KA:

But yeah, I mean, I'm definitely, I I definitely saw differences, you know, in how I felt and how focused I was and just things like that.

And so I do need to start again.

Anyway, that's pretty much it.

I mean, I just wanna, you know, do you believe that bringing meditation to the drivers would be a benefit is kind of my last question along with just any other thoughts you might have.

L7:

Yeah, I I I definitely do because you think about that job and as you started off like, OK, so maybe our dedicated drivers aren't as.

Maybe not as stressed as a like a for hire carrier or something like that, but you know it's still a stressful job.

So like other participants have been saying, **I would imagine any any type of Wellness program** we could offer and of course it would be optional, but you know you at least offer it to to folks.

Because I yeah.

What's the, what's the downside?

Yeah, I don't.

I guess I don't know what the downside would be to offering a program like this.

KA:

Yeah And [L3] suggested, you know, even like we could pick one of the more local ones and kind of run a pilot program and see if people adopt it and then maybe use.

People who who enjoy it or who feel a benefit from it as kind of like ambassadors or, you know, I mean part part of what I'm doing for my thesis is trying to work with leadership and you know, drivers are too hard.

They're just too busy to kind of engage in a group setting and try and do this with at the moment, you know, until we decide, you know, that is something we want to do.

But to do the research with them is just too complicated, but.

I can do it with the leadership and so you know talk through ideas and yeah,

L7:

I mean you mentioned the Healthy Minds app.

So is that is that like one potential solution like **drivers get on that app and utilize it** or is it more, I don't know if this is even possible, but like before they start a shift and like **if everybody's showing up at a certain time at the truck at the truck lounge.**

Or whatever.

Like before they start, maybe they spend 15 minutes in, you know, **doing some kind of breathing before they hit the road.**

KA:

I don't.

Yeah.

How do you kind of envision a potential solution, I guess is my question.

Yeah, I don't yet because part of the part of the journey of all of this is because it is, it's my major is design thinking.

So it's it's using.

Design thinking methods to work with leadership to talk through or to solve for things like, you know, what is the, how do you balance the cost say if that's something that's important, you know, can you, you know some of some of the drivers they're being paid, you know their cost is being.

Then sent over back to the customer and can we rationalize and justify paying, you know, X number of drivers times 15 minutes per day to, you know, and then having the customer pay for that?

Probably not, you know, so you know, looking at sort of like a cost benefit analysis or a, you know, an importance difficulty matrix like.

Can we do that?

Is it too hard?

Like, is that way just way too far out?

You know, can we supply them access to a free app that is being put out by a university?

Absolutely.

You know, that's that's a very low hanging fruit, free to us, free to them, you know, and you know, will they use it?

Don't know.

Like, does.

So is it going to yield the results we want?

You know, we don't know.

We won't know until we test it.

UmBut are there other things we can do?

Can we provide, you know, just simple Flyers to hang up with simple breathing exercise instructions?

Or, you know, could we supply education?

Because I think some of it is like so many people answered that they don't know.

Like, is it just a matter of education?

Because, you know, some of the barriers are, I wouldn't know if I'm doing it right.

You know, there is no right.

You know, but but reassuring people with that, could we supply videos or, you know, like, so yeah, those are, you know, that's just off the top of my head.

But sitting down with leadership and saying like, what are the possibilities that are out there and they know more about the constraints than I do, you know, like.

I didn't know that they were being, that all the costs got shifted back to the customers or that they're, I mean, there's literally no space in these places either and they don't all come in at exactly the same time.

So yeah like could you spend a day where you have, you know maybe you build in a little extra time or you do it at some kind of like, **do they have events**, you know like how we have the forum, do they have thank you events or, you know like those are things that you know I really need the leadership's input.

L7:

Yeah or or like during yeah or like **during truck driver appreciation week**.

I know I think we still have that this might be like a good session cause there's a part of me that thinks like if you are doing it as a group **there's maybe it could be more interest or your your buddy's doing it**.

OK, I'll give it a try and and you're if you're all together or.

I don't know.

I could, I could see some merit in that.

Although it sounds like **logistically it'd be really tough to get, you know, eight or nine drivers in a room together to meditate**.

KA:

But yeah, but for training, maybe, you know, maybe it's not a thing you can do every day.

L7:

Maybe it's a thing you can do once a month or once a corridor for reinforcement or or during Appreciation Week, if they're taught or like you go in, like they want you to come back.

You kind of teach.

You could teach like 100 people in one session and then they go back and implement it at their home base or whatever.

KA:

Or even teaching, you know, the people who work in the, you know, the dispatch area.

And then they can teach the drivers or having videos.

I mean, I.

I think they have TVs and screens in those in those areas where you could run a video that kind of walked them through it or, you know So yeah, I mean, great ideas.

That's That's kind of the point of this is to like, you know, the beginning was to do research and get data, but now the the second-half is to evaluate and solve problems and come up with ideas and, you know You know, my I, my goal in the end of this is to have something that I can send back to the two places where I was to, you know, distribute to the drivers who are interested.

And then, you know, there's a measurement there of how many people took something, you know, and that's, you know, that's a sign of success or, you know, I might even, you know, and I I like I said, I'm, I'm You know, problem solving without doing all the work yet.

But you know, as as the more I talk to people, the more ideas I get.

But you know, if I give them a brochure or something that gives them maybe three different ways that they can access meditation, one of them's the app, one of them's just simple instructions, and one of them's maybe just an easy breathing exercise, you know, and give them a QR code where they can go in and just if they choose to, you know Yeah, react to what they experienced and did they like it, did they not or did they even, did they even do it, you know, right.

L7:

Cause yeah, it's definitely, I can see the individual part of this where, you know, just individuals will have an interest.

But I still think there's like, yeah, it's interesting to think about a group, more of a group exercise.

If there's some way to manage that, but like you said, it might have to be done just out of training.

But I could see where that would be pretty cool.

Like even if there was a group of employees here at [COMPANY] who did something together, just being, you know, just doing breathing exercises together, there's some kind of strength there and seeing your peer or other, you know, there's a comfort level, I guess, yeah.

KA:

Yeah, I mean, honestly, the way I got involved in it was at a, I think it was a marketing pros conference.

And one of the opening sessions, you know, after breakfast, before the real session started was you could go into different sessions.

And one of them was a meditation session taught by one of the people who works at marketing pros but is a very long-term meditator.

And he just, you know, we all sat in the conference room and he walked us through a simple meditation.

And you know, and that was it.

And then I got interested in the topic and started pursuing it.

And but yeah, I mean it's, it took, you know, like what it's we did probably a 10 minute meditation and he did a little intro and a little closing.

So it was probably 15 minutes, maybe 20 at the most, you know So, I mean, we could do it at one of our forums if we brought in somebody who was a good teacher.

L7:

Yeah.

Yeah, that'd be interesting.

Yeah, it's it just seems like a really kind of a refreshing, rejuvenating way to start your work day. Before you turn on your computer.

KA:

And there are literally studies that show that over time it rewires your brain to be able to like you're basically training your brain to focus.

And so the more times that your mind wanders and you bring it back into focus, the more you're training your brain and rewiring it to rapidly refocus or regain focus.

And but it also in that same time, you're reducing stress, you're, you know, you're you're not ruminating and you're not anxiously predicting the future.

Which is like the two things that cause stress, right?

L7:

Yeah, I just, yeah, clearing the mind is a is, it is difficult.

KA:

But the more I mean it's not even totally clearing the mind.

It's learning the difference between, you know, ruminating and predicting and.

Being in the present.

So, you know, it's OK to feel the breeze.

It's OK to hear your dog bark.

It's OK to do all those things.

You don't have to be like in a, you know, like in a trance.

I think people sometimes think of it like that's not what it is.

It's just being present and you know, and just being present, even if the present is a little uncomfortable, it's generally better than the things you're ruminating over and the things you're predicting.

L7:

That's true.

KA:

You know what I mean?

Unless you're like, you know, stuck in a hole or drowning or something, your present moments generally kind of, you know, I'm OK.

L7:

Well, I think it's a really, yeah, I think it's a neat project.

So Congrats, Congrats on the on the school too, like on graduation.

KA:

Well, thank you.

Yeah.

L7:

So I'll have to keep an eye out for the next steps here, hopefully.

You're able to work with leadership and get something implemented.

KA:

Yeah, I was actually really pleasantly surprised by how many people in logistics leadership specifically were willing to take the time to fill out my survey and then were replied back that they would take the time to either do a working session or an interview with me.

And so, yeah, I have.
I talked to [L5] already.
I talked to [L3] already talking to you.
I have [L2].
I have [L8].
I have [L1], [L4], [L6], all scheduled for interviews.
And then I have a long list of quite a few people who are also willing to do working sessions.
So I'm excited for it.
Yeah.
And in the, you know, HR and legal, we're both really supportive, so.
Great.

Yeah, we'll see what, we'll see what comes out of it.
But I, I, I feel like, you know, past finishing my thesis, it may be something that the company is interested in pursuing.

L7:
So well, and beyond drivers too perhaps, you know, **it could be more of a company-wide Wellness effort.**

KA:
Yeah I mean it's, it's, it's almost a no cost, you know Thing that we can, especially if we use the app that's put out by Doctor Davidson.
And I honestly feel like if he knew he had an audience of people who are in a specific demographic, we could probably reach out to him and work with him to develop something for our drivers because it would just further his research.

Yeah, it's like I said, I don't know.
There's really no downside to this, right?

L7:
I mean, I can't like, **why not try to offer meditation on the job** or or **teach people meditation techniques away from the job.**
It's kind of seems like a no-brainer to me.

KA:
Yeah, yeah And there are, there are actually quite a few people at different universities researching it.
So if he doesn't come back, I mean, I picked him because he has the app that's available.
But there's, I think one at Columbia, a woman at Columbia, Wendy Suzuki, who was doing a bunch of research with students.
But, you know, she'd also probably be interested in having a demographic that's different than it's been, you know.
The fact that different companies are doing it now I think is really interesting, but they're not doing scientific studies on it.
They're just introducing it and you know, seeing, um seeing the benefits, but it's not, it's not, you know, it's anecdotal.
It's not, it's not, you know, actually being kind of followed and but you know, even anecdotal is good.
You know that that the different companies are seeing a benefit and seeing a value, so.

L7:
And the book I'm going to read is called Full Catastrophe Living by Jon Kabat-zinn.

KA:
Oh yeah, he's huge in the he's he's read a bunch of his books, actually.
I don't think I've read this one.

But yeah, he is like the pioneer, I guess, or the, you know, of mindfulness meditation.
Yeah. Even years ago, when I worked at a hospital, we were doing research on mindfulness.
And you know, one of the studies I actually read, they did a study on nurses within the hospital where I worked and their ability to sort of pick up and stick with a practice.

L7:

Interesting.

Yeah. I thought he was like a popular.

I'm not familiar with all the authors out there, but I knew he was kind of a big name.

So yeah.

KA:

Richie Davidson from the University of Wisconsin has a book out too.

That's really interesting.

I will have to find the name of it for you 'cause I don't see it sitting on my bookshelf at the moment.

But it's he's really fascinating and his is very much based in research, so you'll probably enjoy it, right?

L7:

I might just look up his name and see what's out there.

KA:

Yeah, his full name is Richard.

Davidson, but he Dave.

I think it's Davidson.

I'm always confused if it's Davison or Davidson, but he goes by Richie.

People talk to him about him as Richie, but I'm sure he's published under Richard and he's University of Wisconsin at Madison.

And I think he's even like gone and talked like on his app.

They have interviews with the Dalai Lama and stuff.

It's very interesting.

The downside of that is I feel like it does make it feel new agey where people might push back.

You know, I mean, who knows, maybe we could make our own app that is tailored to the demographic of the truck driver.

You know, I mean, we're capable of making apps and that way we could then collect our own data, you know, to see.

L7:

Oh, that's interesting.

Yeah, right.

Yeah.

KA:

I mean, we already.

We already follow them with cameras and stuff in the trucks, so they're used to being, you know, being seen.

So, but yeah, I mean, who knows?

It could be if we are able to tie, you know, use of a meditation app with safe behaviors and more focus and I think even contributes to better sleep and things like that.

And you know, so who knows?

We could, we could be at the forefront of research here.

L7:

You might be starting something here, yeah.

KA:

I need, I need the help of you, you, the people who are, you know, well versed in running research things because this is really my first big foray into it.

L7:

So well, it looks like you did a really nice, nice job.

I yeah, I was the numbers were great in terms of drivers or 74 participants or that's good.

KA:

I know.

And that was just going to two different locations.

So I imagine if we actually were able to have participation.

I mean, part of part of the struggle is, is connecting with them because, you know, they're not on e-mail.

We don't have their phone numbers, things like that.

So it is going physically out there and sitting there all day and connecting with them.

But, you know, is it worth it?

Maybe.

You know, I may not be the right person to do the whole thing, but, you know, if we decide that it is something that is going to add value to their lives and to their ability to do their jobs well, then.

You know, maybe it is worth sending somebody to different locations.

And you know, the [CUSTOMER2] and [CUSOTMER1] are fairly local, so it's easy.

L7:

Were you handing out free food by chance?

I was.

I'm in marketing.

I know.

L7:

OK.

I just.

I'm in marketing too.

I thought I'd ask because that's always a surefire way to boost the numbers.

KA:

Yeah.

Yeah, exactly.

All right. Well, thank you.

I really appreciate your time and I don't want to bring up any more of it.

But yeah, if you have any further thoughts, 'cause I do value the participation from the people in research to help me, you know, kinda think about it.

But yeah, if you have any other thoughts, please feel free to reach back out and I will let you know how all this turns out.

L7:

Yeah, please do.

I'm kind of, I'm curious and I'll, yeah, I'll definitely, if I've got any more questions or thoughts, I will.

KA:

I'll reach out to you.

L7:

But yeah, Congrats.

It sounds like a very worthwhile effort.

KA:

So, yeah.

Thank you.

Leader 8 Interview

L8 - Vice President

Interview:

KA:

Well, thank you so much.

I really appreciate you taking the time to not only fill out the questionnaire, but then also participate in my interview.

RS:

Yeah, no worries.

I know I got a document.

I got to get you back at some point.

KA:

Yeah.

Yeah, at some point.

It's fine.

It's just I need to just keep it on file for the IRB.

Yeah, the purpose, I think you filled out my questionnaire, so you know the purposes of my study is to examine the attitudes of truck drivers towards meditation.

And I collected data at [CUSTOMER1] and [CUSTOMER2].

So I sat there for each place for two days and handed out paper surveys to truck drivers and then recorded all their responses.

And so I wanted to, I put together a little deck to share with you and just kind of get your feedback as we go through because I'm interested on your take, any ideas that it kind of brings to the forefront and just, you know, your reactions to things.

RS:

Sure.

KA:

So I want to start with my first slide.

This is really just demographic information I collected from them.

I compared it to demographic I found for sort of industry wide and we're pretty close, slightly lower in female response, about the same age range.

So yeah, I had only, I think I only had two women respond.

So I had 3% female to 97% male.

Age range was, you know, primarily sort of leaning older, but there were some new drivers and some younger drivers.

And then I also asked them.

On a daily basis, like what was their average level of stress between 1:00 and 5:00, five being the highest, one being the lowest.

And I was actually pleasantly surprised that it came back as a three.

And L8: you know, the lowest number was 5, the second lowest number was 4.

So that's I think probably a good thing.

But yeah, I'm just curious, you know, what you think about if, if You feel like the demographics are consistent with the rest of our company and if your thoughts on you know if you're surprised or not by the stress level.

RS:

So first reaction, I don't we're very tight lipped on the demographics of the company, but I feel like we're probably in the four or 5% range.

My guess just based on hiring and what I see, I think you have it in your bigger section, right?

It's it's like 989% of of US truck drivers.

And the hard part is the truck driver demographics that you get out of Bureau of Labor Statistics and everything is different types of truck drivers, right?

Because if you get CDLB box trucks, CDLC delivery, they all get kind of lumped into one with a lot of the government demographic data.

It's hard.

It's hard to break that out.

As far as stress, I think, well, the age makeup makes sense to me.

Yeah, we see more and more of that out there.

You know, most, most companies, I think they're facing a lot of, if you look at the mix, it probably looks more like our mix.

That's just the, it's the aging population of truck drivers with where my concerns in life are the limited number of entrants coming into that.

Now the wages for truck drivers going up after the pandemic is certainly helping with that.

Getting new entrants into the market, but you're not really seeing a lot of that in the data sets yet.

The stress thing is, is interesting to me.

I, you know, probably would have thought it hovered more around 4 on average.

So, to see a three, that's kind of a that's interesting.

I find it interesting.

KA:

Yeah.

And actually the feedback I've gotten from people who are closer.

The feedback I've gotten from people who are closer to those two locations, they all said like those are high stress locations.

It's a lot of physical, it's a lot, it's, you know, low, it's [LOCATION].

So it's lots of traffic.

It's a lot more hands on work.

So they were all, everybody was actually happy to see that it was only a three.

RS:

So yeah, interesting.

KA:

I handed the 74 people who replied.

I asked.

I gave them a survey that was based on getting feedback on barriers to meditation.

And L8: my final question to them was if they would be interested in learning more about meditation.

So, I gave them yes and no and not sure.

So, my not sure responses were the highest at 44%, but my yes was over a third, which I thought was wonderful cause that's my goal is to find a way to bring meditation to people who possibly need a little help with their stress and their focus.

And so I'm wondering, does that surprise you at all or do you have any thoughts around it?

RS:

And I just, yeah, it's interesting.

I think my thoughts are gonna come in in part.

I'm gonna kind of give you like my personal perspective.

And L8: I'll kind of tie it to what I think, you know, is somewhat happening out there.

Personal perspective, you know, up until about four or five years ago, I'm the type of person that if you asked me about meditation, Wellness, things like that, it's not on my radar, right?

I'm a I'm a hard charger.

I do a lot of physical activities.

I get my stress out in other ways.

That's not my cup of tea.

So mentally, I'm, I'm naturally coming from that space.

But obviously working with the teams that I do in HR here at [COMPANY], right, mindfulness comes up with it.

I've had some really cool mindfulness coaches, meditation coaches and stuff over time.

I've learned to adapt some of it, learned I can control my own stress test with it, but that's a different, that's a different animal.

So for me, I think it kind of goes hand in hand with the concept of mental Wellness, mental well-being, mindfulness, meditation, being more out there and in the new.

And in the media, it's out there more, right.

So I think anybody who's in any career, any job, any passion, you know, I think they're coming across it more.

So it kind of it either piques interest and you want to kind of get into it.

You got people who are already, you know, kind of living and breathing it, so to say, I think that happens, right.

So when you start thinking about, you know, a role like this, the concept of mindfulness coming into.

Workplace environments really has ramped up, right?

So there's chatter.

Look at the mailers that we've gotten, you know, just, you know, here at [COMPANY] that and the and the stories on the [INTRANET], right, that come up that tell us about some of this stuff.

I think as people see it, there'll be individuals that have natural curiosity and there'll be a group of individuals like, OK, whatever, don't care.

So I think when you put a question out there with a group of individuals, I think you're going to get a a a mixed bag.

I I it doesn't surprise me your percentages, right.

That's a if I had to break it up, I'd probably say it's a little bit more than 1/3 of a I don't know where I stand on it.

There's going to be the hoopla, you know, people that, hey, I just think this is a passing fad.

I'm not interested.

And L8: there's the people that are kind of get in there.

So cool.

KA:

Well, and that takes us to my next slide is these were the questions I asked them all the drivers to rate between 1:00 and 5:00.

You know, agree strongly was 5, disagree strongly was one.

And so it was kind of the barriers it was, it was pulled from another study with a different demographic of people.

But I just kind of wanted to see where we stacked up compared to them the two types of.

Barriers that were the highest were along the lines of you know what prefer to be accomplishing something, it's a waste of time to sit and do nothing which would be kind of perceived low, low perceived benefit.

And L8: I don't know much about it or I don't know if I'm doing it right, which is you know perceived inadequate knowledge.

And so you know and I also thinking about it, I think that the, you know prefer to be accomplishing something could also be a symptom of low knowledge, just because you don't realize that you are accomplishing something.

You know, it feels like you're sitting doing nothing, but it's not necessarily if you, if you read the data, you would realize you are doing something, you're, you know, you're working toward better well-being or you're working toward better focus.

So I'm just curious about your thoughts on that. Any other thoughts on the perceived barriers and.

RS:

Yeah, the classification of the barriers, I kind of get that the socio-cultural conflict stuff, that's a little bit off for me.

I think it's to me it goes back to they **probably don't know much about it**, right.

I take that whole bucket and say if you put it with that it's probably more of a piece there.

Yeah, the **quiet place and meditate** and **I don't have time**.

Like those are the big things for me, right?

Like I just think about the busyness of drivers, right?

They're always on the go.

They've got aggressive schedules.

You know, they have no control of the traffic around them, but yet they're supposed to be somewhere.

I think you **dovetail that into the whole driver health**, overall health stigma physically, you know, not just mentally.

I think all of those factors kind of come in and my questions always kind of lie and it's probably comes out like in how I responded to your first survey is like.

Where do they have time for it?

Where do they have the space for it?

As I thought about it more just kind of coming in today, you know, the mindfulness for driving and even driving habits is a first step more so than mindfulness for me, right, as an individual.

You know, you're **tying in the safety piece** of it there.

And L8:, you know, I don't know, in my head, I'm a big one.

Like you, **you marketers tend to get in my head**, right?

Mindfulness.

I'm thinking about , right?

That's that's how do you do that when you're a driver?

Yep, Yep Which makes total sense.

KA:

So, and that's kind of what I'm trying to solve for is like, if these are the barriers, how do we solve for them and how do we help, you know, get there?

So this, my next slide, and this goes further into my um kind of thinking about the education part of it.

This was the survey that I gave to the leadership.

And so I asked questions about level of support.

L8: I had a page where I gave, you know, peer-reviewed, evidence-based data about the positive benefits of it, of meditation.

L8: I asked the same questions again.

And as you can see, support was already quite strong, but after reading the scientific evidence and literature, support strengthened even more.

And so I think that it, you know, in my mind that is a, you know, I'm wondering if having that same type of education sent to the drivers would help push them further into an interest in learning more.

And so I'm kind of curious just to hear your thoughts and if you have any ideas about that.

RS:

It goes back to what we said before, right?

The concept is out there.

Any awareness is good awareness if somebody's going to make a decision if it's for them or not, right?

I think if you're asking if these were the questions that you asked of the leaders, you know, the big one for me is how would it fit into a safe?

And this is for any trucking town, not just [COMPANY], right?

How would it fit into a safe driver program, a we care about you Wellness program for the drivers?

How does it fit in there and how does it become part of a daily routine?

And it's funny cause the lower box on the left, somebody who read the research made the decision where they they're not, they're not supporting giving time.

It's shifted, right?

I think it shifted toward the five.

RS:

So if it if it went down in a three, it went up in a four, if that makes sense.

So five would strongly support.

So I think it went from.

You know, they stopped being a three and maybe became a four and the fours became fives because it did shift.

But somebody was a one, somebody, there's somebody else has stepped in there on a one, right?

And and and here's the thing, if you're not gonna build it into a program as an organization, I don't know how you get behind that and support it.

You provide all the tools, all the the tools I've got.

I mean, listen, I know I've got my hands on a couple.

There's apps, you know, out there.

Right.

So how do you, you know, how do you put that into an app?

But when, when is the right time for the driver?

Is it when they start their day, middle of the day, end of the day, clear your mind?

I don't.

I don't know how that fits for an organization to help support it.

So I think you just, you are back on, let me give you the benefits of meditating.

And L8: if you want the how to, here's where you go.

KA:

Yeah.

YeahAnd I think, you know, when I was.

Even just trying to figure out how do I have, how do I find the time to talk to people?

You know, some of the some of their time when they're on the clock, their time gets charged to the customer.

And can we rationalize and justify, you know, spend their time doing anything that's not working for the customer.

So, you know, I get that.

And that's again one of the one of the barriers that maybe that's not a barrier we can solve for.

You know, that might be just you have to make it enticing enough that they want to dedicate their own time to it.

So and L8: my final question, cause again, my slides advanced without me.

Yeah, do you, I I feel like we talked about it and you know, but do you believe bringing meditation to the drivers would be a benefit?

RS:

So again, trying to find that line between my personal overall perspective kind of being open-minded at this, the benefit that I see is sharing knowledge, sharing tools.

Giving people the option, the opportunity to consider it for themselves is a good thing.

I think from an organizational standpoint, you can never dispute driver Wellness, driver mindfulness because that that awareness of what you're doing tying into their daily safety on the roads with all of us, all of our families, all of our customer products, right.

I think there's certainly a case to be made, right?

I I struggle.

I come across a lot of drivers.

They have pretty strong convictions on things, pretty strong mindsets in certain areas, right?

And it's interesting to see how that might play out with a topic like this.

One other thing I'll kind of throw at you that I see happening as I look at the labor market in general and I look at the lack of new entrants into the driver roles.

I look at how our population in the US is aging, but the need for drivers is not subsiding.

There continues to be an increased reliance on foreign-born workers and I.

I don't know if the perspectives of US-born nationals versus foreign-born workers, you know, on meditation might be an interesting angle, right?

Only because I think it is an adopted concept in a lot of other countries at an accelerated rate over the US Yeah, that's interesting.

KA:

And I'm, I did ask people where they were born, so I can probably go back and kind of do a comparison on that cause that would be an interesting thing to look at.

Because yeah, I had the same thought as far as you know, that would be that's the part of the barriers was the socio, you know, cultural pushback or or not.

So just to see if you know, drivers from certain places and certain backgrounds are more open, so.

Yeah, that's a good point.

And so, yeah, my last question is really just if you have any other thoughts that you'd like to share or any other ideas of, you know, wouldn't it be cool if ...

RS:

I will just say this and just your project alone and inquiry of questions kind of got me thinking right for someone who isn't a big participant of meditation, mindfulness habits on a regular basis.

I'm an as needed kind of guy.

Just thinking about how that would apply to different workforces kind of sparked some thoughts for me, right?

And it's just thinking about how they would react to it, right?

Which is all subjective and biased and kind of what I would think.

So when I look at your just kind of your overall research, it seems to me like there's less people that take the I don't care about this, I'm not interested than maybe I thought coming in.

So that's my big kind of take away from what you shared here today.

KA:

Cool.

Yeah, I was, I was, well, pleasantly surprised in two ways because when I originally spoke with HR to get approval to do this.

They said, oh, you'll maybe get five people who will be willing to participate.

And so walking out of there with close to 75 responses, I thought was amazing.

And L8: the number of people who did respond with an absolute positive, you know, was over a third.

And just sitting there and talking with people and chatting, you know, I think when I left [CUSTOMER1], they said, oh, you're going to come back and teach us how to do this, right?

So, you know, I think I felt like.

Even just chatting about it casually got people's interest and you know, some people were very enthusiastic about it.

So sure, yeah, I was very positive.

I was, I was positively surprised.

RS:

So well, now you could just be an advocate to sharing back the flyer on on Wellness tips that that went that went out, you know, from the benefits team to all associates.

KA:

Well, I mean part of this is trying to come up with solutions and you know, avenues of communication and education and just, you know, how do we get information out and make people want to want to try it. And you know, I mean my personal focus is for [COMPANY], but you know, my focus for my thesis is just drivers in general.
How do you get them to care more about it and want to improve their health and well-being?

RS:

Well, that's one of the bigger challenges overall.

It's just kind of take the take the mental health portion around this.

I mean as an industry, as a nation, we've been struggling with driver health for over 20 years, right, physical health and it's it is I mean and again we go back to the environment, the trucks, the who wants to do the work. I think it, I think I personally have seen a shift in when we started to see.

You know, [COMPANY]'s always been involved with a lot of touch driving, right?

We pick up freight, we move freight, we all we, we, we, we touch it.

Whereas a lot of drivers are never leave the seat, right?

They bump a dock, somebody else empties the truck.

But I think as especially just right around the pandemic too, you saw this accelerated rate of more people doing touch freight type work, right.

And whether it's UPS, Amazon, FedEx, you know, you look at that to the grocery deliveries to now truck deliveries.

You we have now found, I've found interviewing people who are all about health and the driving is secondary.

This is a job that's physical.

I will enjoy it.

I also enjoy driving.

This helps me stay in shape while I'm working, right?

There's a lot more of that now and L8: that maybe I've seen 10 years back, right?

KA:

Well, that's cool.

Yeah, that's really interesting too.

Cause, yeah, I mean part of my research revealed, you know, driving is a job where, you know, there is a, I don't know how to phrase it right, but the age of mortality is quite low for drivers and that's, you know, that's really sad and so something we need to focus on.

RS:

So and I think and I think as you kind of look at that with.

The truck driver wages that have changed drastically in the last five years, right?

It is now a job that is desired because of that wage, right?

And that is bringing new entrants in and it is a different, for lack of better terms, profile of a candidate in terms of what they've done.

I've again, I've seen people that have been, you know, physical construction workers and linemen and and people that have sat in offices as finance people, right, all making the shift to to driving just because the road is appealing, the driving is appealing.

And I said bless y'all cause the way people drive out there today, I I don't trust myself.

I don't trust others.

So.

KA:

Quite a few of them just said to me like, you know, man, I just love to drive, you know, so, but I'm with you.

I would, I would, I would not be a good candidate for this job.

I think I would be like at my peak stress level all day, every day.

RS:

I'll drive a small truck or a van across the country.
Not a big truck though.
So, but no, great, great project.
I hope everything continues to go well for you.
What's your end date?

Like what's your timeline of all of this research?

KA:

Well, I have technically graduated, so I finished all my classes.
I'm just, I'm in all but dissertation mode at this point.
So my goal is to have it finished in the fall.
So you are my second to last interview and L8: I'm going to be kind of synthesizing all of the information from the interviews, pulling together some workshops because my degree is in design thinking.
So part of that is facilitating workshops to, you know, work through solutions and after that I will be writing.
And I'm hoping my plan is to put together some sort of, you know, flyer to put back in [CUSTOMER1] and [CUSTOMER2] for the drivers to pick up.
And maybe it just has a QR code where, you know, I can ask them two questions about, you know, did you try the, you know, a little educational material, maybe like, you know, written description of how to do a meditation, a link to a free app.
And maybe a written description of how to do like a very short breathing exercise.
Ask them if they tried it, ask them what they thought, and L8: finish writing and L8:
But also, you know, I mean, I would love to stay involved if it's something that the company wants to pursue because I I mean, I've, I took up a practice many years ago and I feel like it has benefited my ability to focus, my ability to be healthy, my ability to reduce stress, you know, So I think it would be beneficial for drivers.
Or even, you know, the staff above them in the location cause their stress level has got to be high too.
I watched, you know, a day of the one day I was at [CUSTOMER1], I think was a day that there was a shootout on the Commodore Berry Bridge and one of our drivers was stuck there for four hours.
You know, I mean that's got to be highly stressful.
The weather has got to be stressful to other drivers on the road.
So you know, I'm a big supporter of our drivers and anything I can do that can help them, I'd love to stay involved, so.

RS:

Right.

Just from the resources and people working on it with [COMPANY], are you working with anybody from the Total Rewards team?

KA:

I'm not.
I mean, I'm really just doing research at this point.

RS:

Yeah.

But as you go think about getting back to the people at [CUSTOMER1], I'm hang on, hang on a moment.

I I know it's Rhonda.

I'm forgetting her last name.

Hang on.

I'm sorry, Carol Renninger.

Carol Renninger.

She puts together all of our benefits, documentation, communication, Flyers with vendors, things like that.

She works for Mario Matizak.

He's our director of benefits.

But Carol, Carol probably has access to some of the things that [COMPANY]'s already has in place for our associates.

She would also be the one to talk about.

So, so now.

You get into this little messy world of what does [COMPANY] have versus what what's out there.

L8: you got to worry about union versus non-union.

So just but just so you have some resources, those are some names that, you know, might be worth, you know, keeping a lot in a folder on your journey there.

KA:

OK, cool.

Thank you.

I appreciate it.

So once again, thank you for your time.

I really appreciate it.

Appendix N: Leader Workshop Informed Consent



Informed Consent: Leader Workshop

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the initial survey and agreeing to participate in additional research.

Title of Research:

Investigating the Mindset of Truck Drivers and their Employers Toward Meditation
Amidst a Truck Industry Driver Shortage

Researcher(s): Joan Dickinson (principal investigator) and Kathryn Armstrong (student investigator)

You are asked to be a volunteer in a research study designed to: research truck driver and transportation industry executives' attitudes toward meditation. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a leader in the transportation industry. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Participation is completely voluntary.

Procedures: If you decide to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in a virtual workshop via your computer. You will be interacting with approximately 2-3 people who are leaders.

Major Requirements of Study: This portion of the study will consist of a virtual workshop with the student researcher.

Significant Risks: The research team will work to protect your data to the extent permitted by technology. It is possible, although unlikely, that an unauthorized individual could gain access to your responses because you are responding online. This risk is similar to your everyday use of the internet. Identification numbers associated with email addresses will be kept during the data collection phase for tracking purposes only. A limited number of research team members will have access to the data during data collection. Identifying information will be stripped from the final dataset.

Potential Benefits: If you participate in this research, you may learn meditation techniques that may benefit you. The results of this research may benefit truck drivers and the companies they work for by introducing them to meditation techniques that may help increase focus, improve health and/or reduce stress.

Duration of Participation: We estimate that it will take about 60 minutes of your time to complete the online workshop.

Leader workshop: The workshop will begin with the student researcher sharing their computer screen and showing the participants the digital Statement Starters, Creative Matrix and Importance/Difficulty Matrix templates via Mural. The student researcher will guide participants through each of these templates. Participants will work together to use the templates to creatively solve problems.

Risks or Discomforts: This study has no more risk than you may find in daily life.

Compensation to You: There is no compensation from being in this study.

You can choose not to be in this study. If you decide to be in this study, you may choose not to answer certain questions or not to be in certain parts of this study.

There are no costs to you for being in this study. There is no compensation for you to be in this research.

If you decide to be in this study, what you tell us will be kept private unless required by law to tell. If we present or publish the results of this study, your name will not be linked in any way to what we present.

Confidentiality: The data collected in this research study will be kept confidential. Participation in research may involve some loss of privacy. We will do our best to make sure that the information about you is kept confidential, but we cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your personal information may be viewed by individuals involved in the research and may be seen by people including those collaborating, funding, and regulating the study. We will share only the minimum necessary information in order to conduct the research. Your personal information may also be given out if required by law, such as pursuant to a court order. While the information and data resulting from this study may be presented at scientific meetings or published in a scientific journal, your name or other personal information will not be revealed.

Audio recordings will be collected during this study and used to allow the researcher to review interviews at a later time. The recordings will be destroyed after 3 years. The recordings **will not** be shared with the general public. You do have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in this part of this study.

If you give the research team permission to quote you directly, the researchers will give you a pseudonym and will generalize your quote to remove any information that could be personally identifying.

Your information will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

Costs to You: There is no cost to you to participate in this study.

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant:

If at any time you want to stop being in this study, you may stop being in the study without penalty or loss of benefits by contacting: [Kathryn Armstrong, karmstrong1@radford.edu or Kathryn.armstrong@\[comapny\].com](mailto:Kathryn.Armstrong@radford.edu). If you choose not to participate or decide to withdraw, there will be no impact.

If you have questions now about this study, ask before you sign this form.

If you have any questions later, you may talk with [Kathryn Armstrong, karmstrong1@radford.edu or Kathryn.armstrong@\[comapny\].com](mailto:Kathryn.Armstrong@radford.edu).

Appendix O: Leader Workshop Introductory Slides

Slide 1

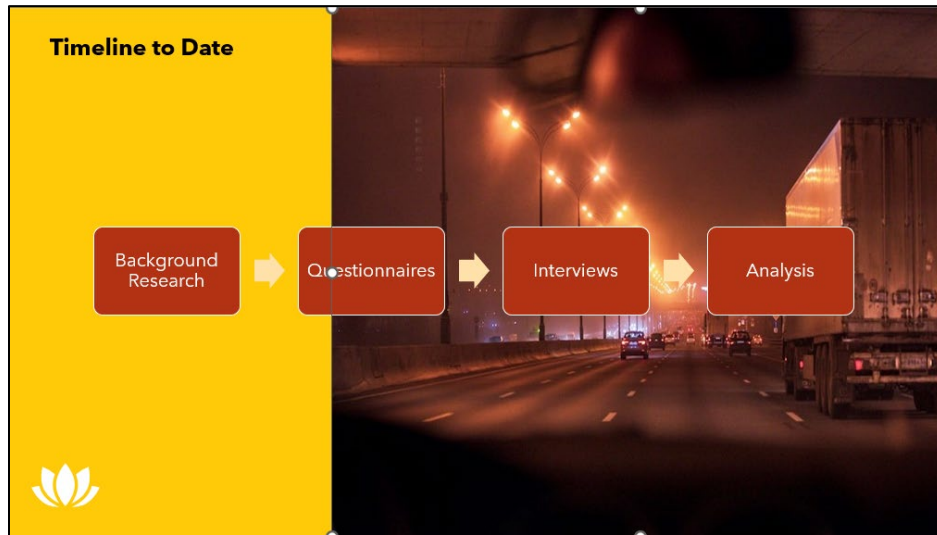


Welcome! Thank you for taking the time to complete my questionnaire and agreeing to speak with me! I want to confirm that you have consented to be recorded. I'm going to start/have started the recording.

As you know, the purpose of this study is to examine attitudes toward meditation in the trucking industry. Your participation in the interviews will contribute to a better understanding of how truck drivers and leaders in the trucking industry view meditation and its possible benefits.

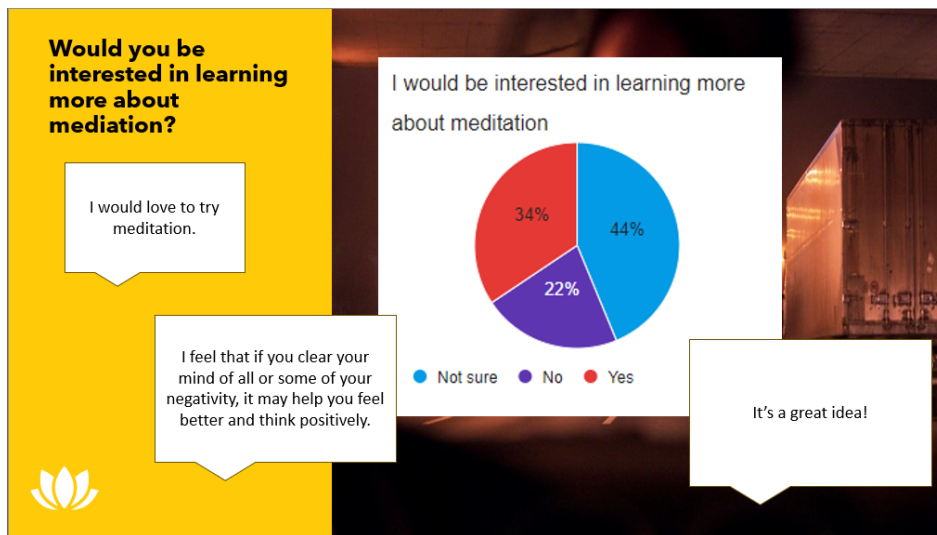
The data collected in this research study will be kept confidential. Participation in research may involve some loss of privacy. We will do our best to ensure the information about you is kept confidential, but we cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your personal information may be viewed by individuals involved in the research and may be seen by people including those collaborating, funding, and regulating the study. We will share only the minimum necessary information to conduct the research. While the information and data resulting from this study may be presented at scientific meetings or published in a scientific journal, your name or other personal information will not be revealed.

Slide 2



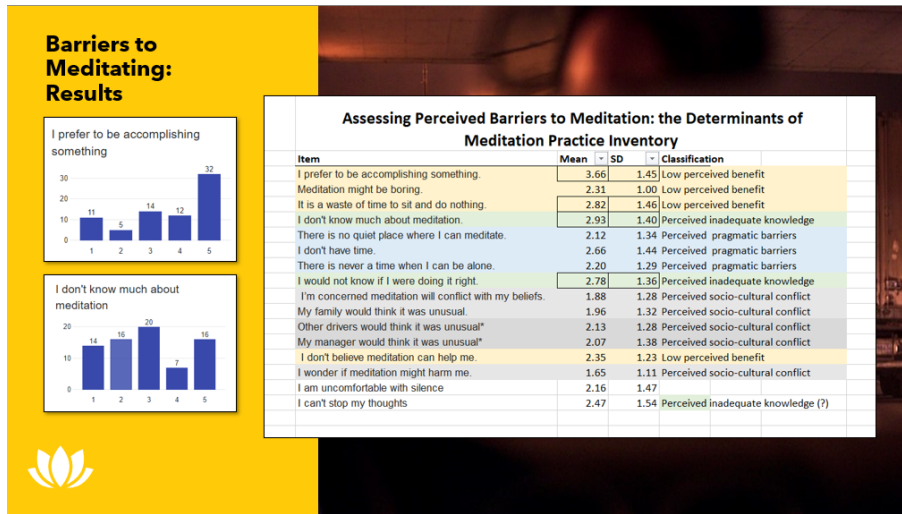
Here’s what I’ve done so far – background research, questionnaires to both drivers and leaders, interviews with 8 leaders and an analysis of all of the data I collected.

Slide 3



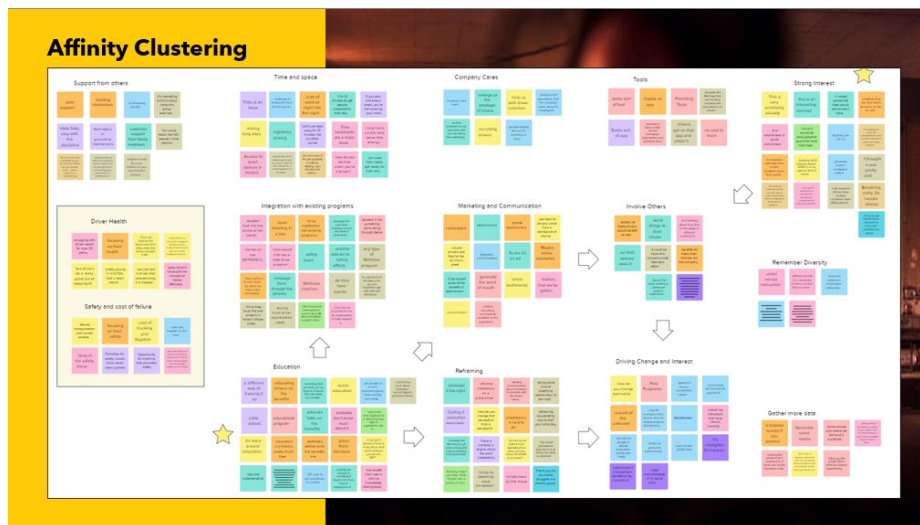
Here is some of what I found. I surveyed 74 drivers from two locations. At the end of their questionnaire, I asked them if they would be interested in learning more about meditation. As you can see, 34% of those you answered, answered yes – with the largest number answering not sure.

Slide 4



I also asked them to evaluate some possible barriers to meditation they may be facing. Here are the results. As you can see, the greatest barriers they identified revolved around lack of knowledge and a feeling that they would rather be accomplishing something.

Slide 5



I also interviewed 8 leaders and 4 drivers from the company. I pulled keywords and phrases from the interview and used Affinity Clustering to find themes. Here is what I found. I was impressed with the high level of support that came out for the idea of introducing meditation to the driver population. I also found a great deal of agreement for helping to further educate drivers on the benefits and different approaches to meditation. Other themes that show promise are marketing and communication, driving change and interest, integration with existing programs, and maybe tools and

apps? Our first exercise will be choosing which of these themes and possibly other ideas we would like to look at as Statement Starters.

Slide 6

Design Thinking

Design thinking is an innovative collaborative process for solving complex problems. Designers have been working within this framework for years – only recently have others found it to be successful across a multitude of non-design disciplines. The process requires empathetic problem identification through research and multi-disciplinary teamwork, brainstorming and ideation, prototyping and testing, revising, and finally implementation of the idea.

(What Is Design Thinking | MFA in Design Thinking | Radford University, n.d.)

Our job today is to use design thinking methods to help dig deeper into possible solutions to help drivers overcome the barriers they may face to possibly taking up a meditation practice.

Slide 7

Today's Methods

Design Thinking Strategy	Who?	Description	Purpose
Statement Starters (Understanding)	Leaders	An approach to phrasing problem statements that invites broad exploration	Reframe the problem to ask better questions and expose more potential solutions
Creative Matrix (Making)	Leaders	A format for sparking new ideas at the intersections of distinct categories.	Generate many far-ranging ideas in a short amount of time using a structured approach to guide the process
Importance/Difficulty Matrix (Understanding)	Leaders	A quad chart for plotting items by relative importance and difficulty.	The purpose of this exercise is to help us focus on what is most important to drivers and what might have the greatest impact, as well as what is within reason for the company to provide to meet those needs.

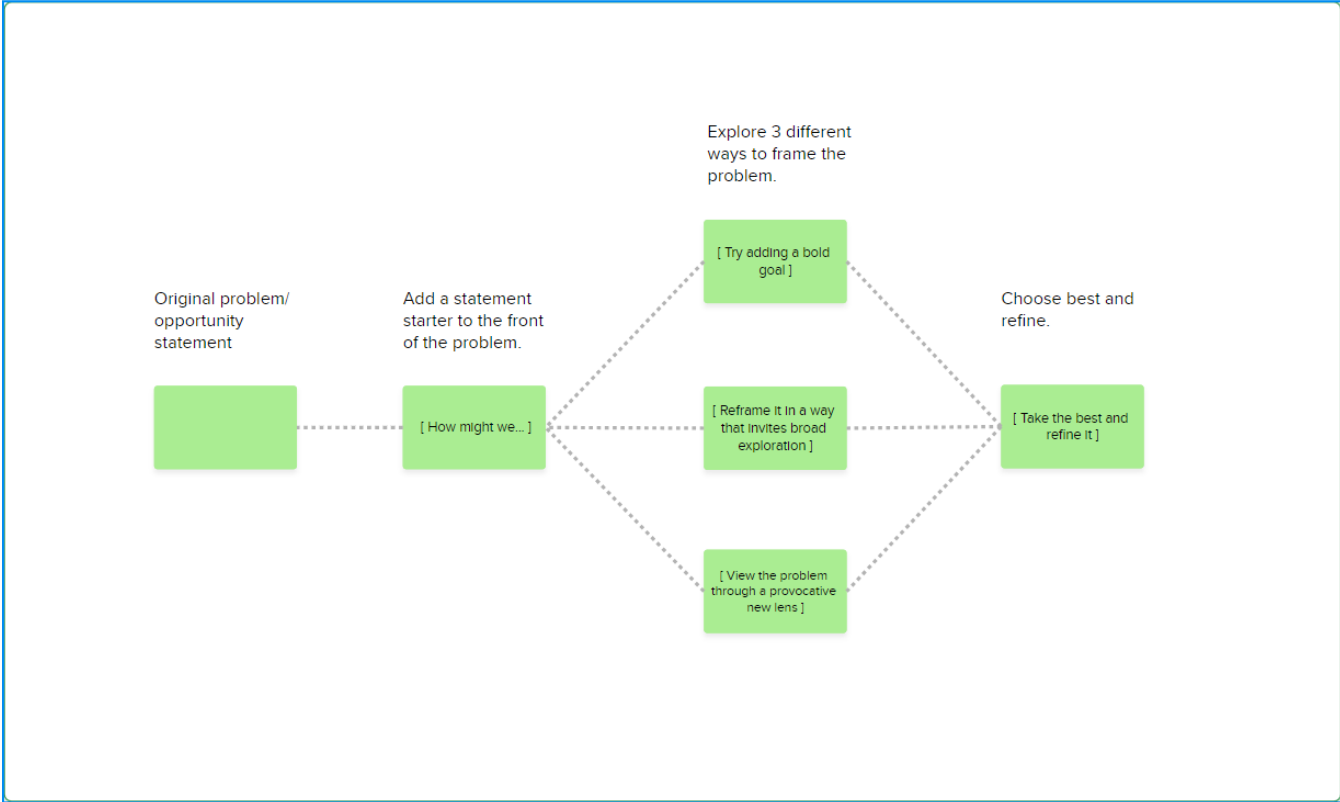
Here's what we are going to do today:

Statement Starters... Creative Matrix... Important Difficulty Matrix...






You are the experts here. My job is to be your guide and facilitator. Let's dive in

Appendix P: Statement Starters

Blank Statement Starter template



Appendix Q: Creative Matrix

<h2>Creative Matrix</h2> 				
[Topic of Ideation]	Pilot programs	Onboarding programs	Education	Reframing
 <p>Events & programs Meet-up events, conferences, workshops, courses, peer-to-peer forums...</p>	<p>launch party?</p> <p>Add to wellness programs/coaches</p>		<p>Ongoing content and marketing</p>	<p>Wellness coach talk about the benefits</p> <p>Monthly driver meetings - pilot results</p> <p>Open the floor</p>
<p>Technology</p>	<p>App that tracks "How are you feeling?"</p>		<p>Different levels of tech knowledge</p> <p>Pop up messages</p>	
 <p>Gamification Motivators, rewards, badges, points, prizes, teamwork, scoring, leaderboards...</p>	<p>Can we add points/prizes?</p> <p>Safety awards</p>			<p>Close you meditation rings</p> <p>Put your wellness first</p>
 <p>Personalization Tailored recommendations, adjusting to situations and behavior, user profiles...</p>	<p>How can drivers know their progress?</p> <p>Does family notice</p> <p>How does a driver know they are feeling less stress?</p> <p>Better sleep</p>	<p>Safety training</p>	<p>What's in it for me?</p> <p>Provide different ways of teaching</p>	
 <p>Communications [Write your own] (Category description)</p>		<p>Introduce them to it as part of the wellness program</p> <p>Tie to safe performance</p> <p>HR and safety profiles</p>	<p>Home makers</p> <p>Phone reminders</p> <p>Cell com messaging</p> <p>Drive association event</p> <p>Monthly team meetings</p>	<p>Wellness focus</p> <p>How do we talk to different audiences</p> <p>Lots of age range - target message for them</p> <p>Everbridge messaging</p>

Group 1 Creative Matrix

Creative Matrix

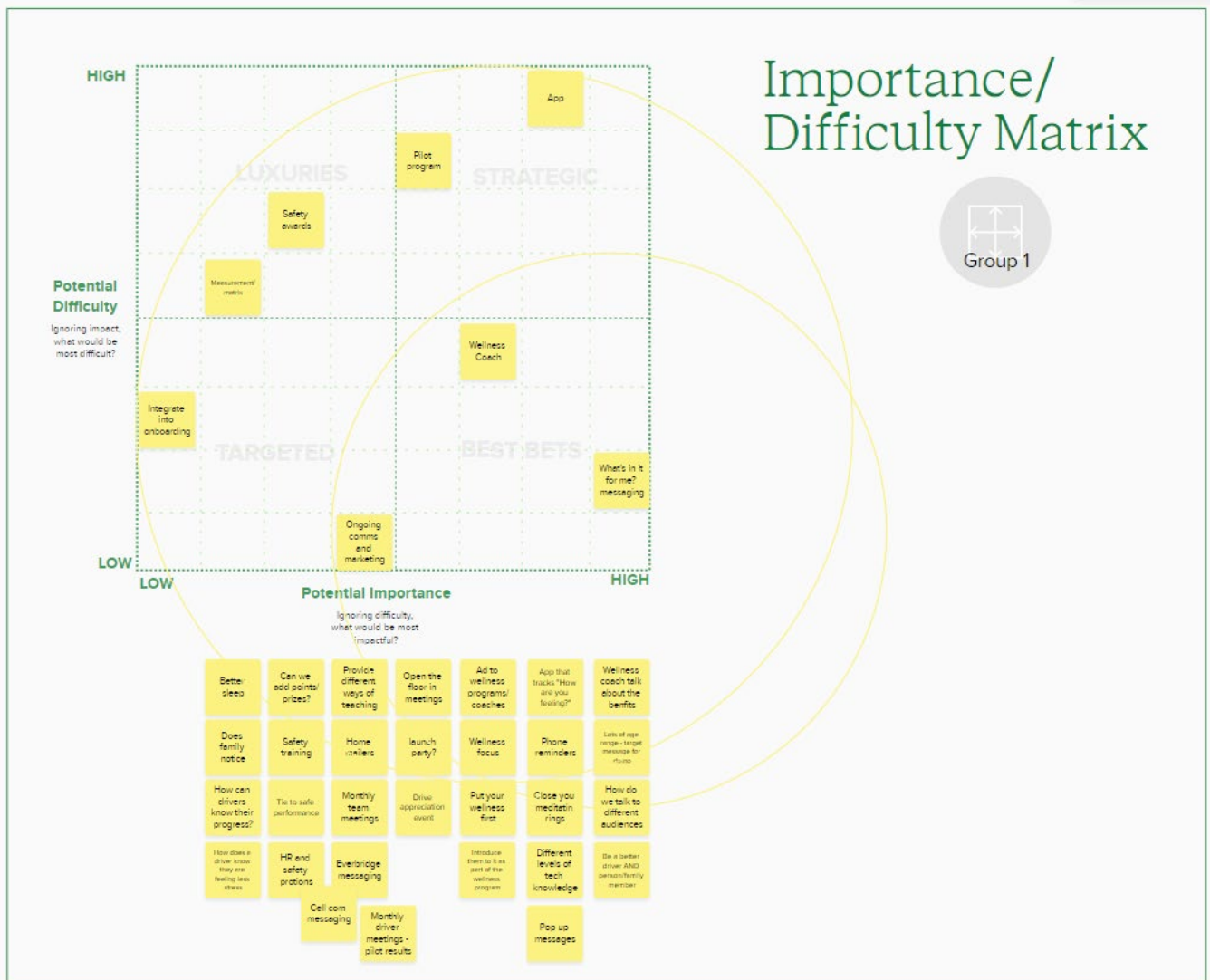


<p>Remove barriers to driver meditation</p>	<p>On or off clock</p>	<p>Motivation</p>	<p>Education</p>	<p>Benefits (part's in it for me)</p>
<p>Technology</p>	<p>Partner with an app company</p>		<p>The Loop</p>	
<p>Facilities & environments <small>Permitted structures, temporary installation, pop-ups...</small></p>	<p>Quiet room? Lidng trucks is bad Designated area or go home Perception issue!</p>		<p>Flyers at location w QR code</p>	
<p>Internal policies & guidance <small>Training, education, guidelines, incentives, awards, recognition, incentives...</small></p>	<p>EAP partner</p>	<p>Phone system or discount Wellness points Like no-smoking discount</p>	<p>The Loop</p>	
<p>Events & programs <small>Meet-up events, conferences, workshops, courses, peer-to-peer, forums...</small></p>	<p>Teach during events so they can do at home Wellness nurses Meeting in a box</p>			<p>Show your experience Testimonials This Program Do they - feel better - and less stressed? Increase retention and engagement</p>
<p>Communications [Write your own] <small>[Category description]</small></p>	<p>Send to househ?</p>	<p>Sad to household Can be shared with family Family management</p>	<p>Educate household</p>	<p>Benefits Reduce stress Health</p>
<p>When and where [Write your own] <small>[Category description]</small></p>	<p>Existing meetings Quiet room? Do drivers have access? Sit in passenger seat Can you book a room Parking spots? Meditation trucks</p>		<p>Photos or video to show how in a truck ODT drinks</p>	

Group 2 Creative Matrix

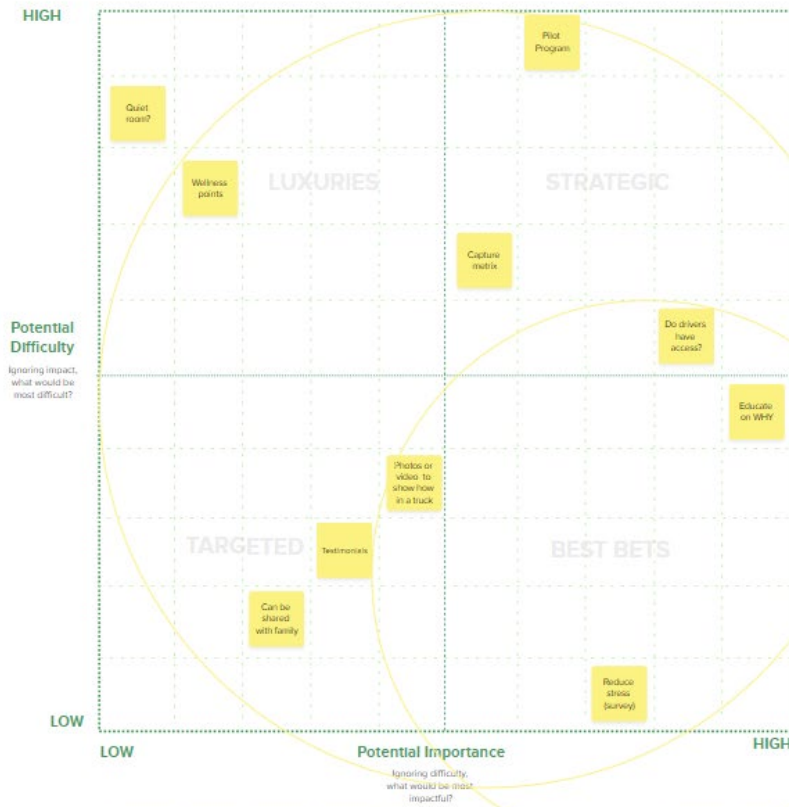
Appendix R: Importance/Difficulty Matrix

Completed Importance/Difficulty Matrix templates from Groups 1 and 2.



Group 1 matrix

Importance/Difficulty Matrix



Group 2 matrix



Want to Reduce Stress and Increase Focus? *Learn to Meditate!*

Meditation is a powerful tool for both mind and body, offering various benefits when practiced daily. Scientific studies have shown that meditation helps:

- Calm the mind
- Lower stress levels
- Improve heart health
 - Sharpen focus
- Enhance memory
- Boost brain function

On _____, student researcher and fellow
████████ Associate, Kathryn Armstrong, will be
visiting to hand out meditation instruction flyers
and answer any questions you may have.



Intro to Meditation

Meditation is a powerful tool for both mind and body, offering various benefits when practiced daily. Scientific studies have shown that **meditation helps calm the mind, lower stress levels improve heart health**. Regular meditation may sharpen focus, enhance memory, and boost brain function, leading to better mental clarity and decision making. Try these simple options to get started.

Simple Meditation

1. **Find a Quiet Spot:** Choose a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Sit or lie down comfortably.
2. **Set a Timer:** Start with 5–10 minutes. You can increase the time as you get used to it.
3. **Close Your Eyes:** Gently close your eyes to help focus inward.
4. **Focus on Breathing:** Breathe naturally. Pay attention to each breath in and out.
5. **Watch Your Thoughts:** If your mind wanders, gently bring your focus back to your breath.
6. **Be Patient:** Meditation takes practice. It's okay if it's hard at first.
7. **End Slowly:** When the timer goes off, open your eyes slowly. Take a moment to notice how you feel.
8. **Practice Daily:** Try to meditate every day, even if only for a few minutes. This helps build the habit.

Remember, if your mind wanders, that's normal. The key is bringing your focus back.

Your Feedback Is Important

Please try to practice for 2 weeks. During that time, take notes about how long you meditated, what time of day, how you felt, etc. After 2 weeks, please scan the code below and take our survey,

Please scan the QR code to take a brief survey.



Box Breathing Exercise

If you're new to meditation, try box breathing. It's a simple way to reduce stress and calm your mind.

1. **Get Comfortable:** Sit or lie down with your back straight.
2. **Inhale Slowly:** Breathe in deeply through your nose for a count of 4.
3. **Hold Your Breath:** Hold for a count of 4, staying relaxed.
4. **Exhale Slowly:** Breathe out fully through your mouth for a count of 4.
5. **Hold Again:** Hold your breath for another count of 4 before starting the next round.
6. **Repeat:** Continue for 4–5 minutes, focusing on the counts.

NOTES: Keep your shoulders and body relaxed. **Count in Your Head.** This helps keep the rhythm.

Meditation App

The Healthy Minds app from the University of Wisconsin is a ****FREE**** tool to help with mental well-being. It offers:



- **Stress and Anxiety Relief:** Helps you handle stress and stay calm.
- **Proven Techniques:** Guided meditations and exercises based on research.
- **Personalized Advice:** Tips tailored to your progress.
- **Mindfulness and Connection:** Helps you improve relationships and empathy.
- **Easy to Use:** Suitable for beginners and experienced meditators.

Download it [here](https://hminnovations.org/meditation-app) or find it in your app store: (<https://hminnovations.org/meditation-app>).

Appendix U: Driver Testing Informed Consent (Electronic)



Informed Consent

Informed Consent - to continue, scroll to the bottom and click the arrow

Title of Research: Investigating the Mindset of Truck Drivers and their Employers Toward Meditation Amidst a Truck Industry Driver Shortage

Researcher(s): Joan Dickinson (principal investigator) and Kathryn Armstrong (student investigator)
kathryn.armstrong@[COMPANY].com or karmstrong1@radford.edu

You are asked to be a volunteer in a research study designed to research truck driver and transportation industry executive's attitudes toward meditation. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a transportation industry driver.

Your participation in the questionnaire will contribute to a better understanding of attitudes toward meditation. We estimate that it will take about 3 minutes of your time to complete the questionnaire. You are free to contact the investigator at the above email address to discuss the survey. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Participation is completely voluntary.

This study has no more risk than you may find in daily life.

The research team will work to protect your data to the extent permitted by technology. It is possible, although unlikely, that an unauthorized individual could gain access to your responses because you are responding online. This risk is similar to your everyday use of the internet. Identification numbers associated with email addresses will be kept during the data collection phase for tracking purposes only. The student researcher will have access to the data during data collection. Identifying information will be stripped from the final dataset.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may decline to answer any question, and you have the right to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. If you wish to withdraw from the study or have any questions, contact the investigator listed below. If you choose not to participate or decide to withdraw, there will be no impact on your employment.

If you have any questions or wish to update your email address, please contact Kathryn Armstrong at kathryn.armstrong@[COMPANY].com or karmstrong1@radford.edu You may also request a hard copy of the survey from the contact information above.

To complete the survey, **click the arrow at the bottom of this page**. Otherwise use the X at the upper right corner to close this window and disconnect.

This study was approved by the Radford University Committee for the Review of Human Subjects Research. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject or have complaints about this study, you should contact Dr. Jeanne Mekolichick, Institutional Official and Associate Provost for Research, Faculty Success, and Strategic Initiatives, jmekolic@radford.edu, 540-831-6504.

Thank you,
Kathryn Armstrong

Appendix V: Driver Testing Questionnaire (Visualize the Vote)

Which meditation techniques did you try?

- Simple meditation
- Box breathing exercise
- Meditation app

Which did you enjoy most?

- Simple meditation
- Box breathing exercise
- Meditation app

Did you practice every day?

- Yes
- No

If yes, for how long?

- 1-5 minutes
- 6-10 minutes
- 11-15 minutes
- More than 15 minutes
- It varied

Did you practice for 2 weeks?

- Yes
- No

If no, how days you practice?

How did you feel after 2 weeks of meditating?

- Better
- Worse
- No different
- I didn't complete 2 weeks

Will you continue to meditate? Or try meditating again?

- No
- Maybe
- Yes

Which of the following appeal to you (choose as many as you like)

- A meditation app design specially for a driver
- A standard meditation app
- A wellness coach to teach a meditation class
- Earning points for using a meditation app
- Other

If you said other, please explain

Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Appendix W: IRB Approval Letter



Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee / Institutional Review Board

December 18, 2023

TO: Joan Dickinson, Ph.D.
RE: Initial Expedited Approval
STUDY TITLE: Investigating the Mindset of Truck Drivers and their Employers Toward Meditation Amidst a Truck Industry Driver Shortage
IRB REFERENCE #: 2023-120
SUBMISSION TYPE: IRB Initial Submission
ACTION: Approved
APPROVAL PERIOD: December 18, 2023 – December 17, 2026

The above-referenced study has been approved by Radford University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Your study has been approved under Expedited Category 7: Research is on individual or group characteristics of behavior (including, but not limited to research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or the research employs survey, interviews, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies).

Please note that if your research includes stamped materials, they will be provided with this letter and must be used when conducting your research. A copy of your approved IRB protocol is available for your records in IRBManager under your dashboard of active protocols.

You are approved for the enrollment or review of 110 participants.

Note: The number approved is the number of study participants is defined as the number who enroll in the project and NOT the number of subjects with usable data for analysis. If this should change, you must submit an amendment to increase the number of study subjects.

Your IRB approval period ends on December 17, 2026. If the study remains ongoing after the project end date, you must submit a three-year check-in application no later than ten (10) days prior to the expiration of this approval. If the project is no longer being pursued, a closure report must be submitted.

Should you need to make changes in your protocol, you must submit a request for amendment for review and approval before implementing the changes. Amendments must be submitted via the IRBManager system.

As the principal investigator for this project, you are ultimately responsible for ensuring that your study is conducted in an ethical manner. You are also responsible for filing all reports related to this project.

If you have any questions, please contact the Research Compliance Office at 540.831.5290 or irb-iacuc@radford.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

Good luck with this project!

Radford University Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Research Compliance Office
540.831.5290

Radford University IRB
Approval Date: December 18, 2023



Would you be interested in learning more about meditation?

Oh, for sure. Yeah.

Investigating the Mindset of Truck Drivers and their employers

Toward Meditation

amidst a trucking industry driver shortage

Consider the stress you experience driving in traffic. Now imagine you're driving a vehicle that weighs about 80,000 pounds. That's 20 times the weight of your car. It will take you the length of almost two football fields to bring it to a stop. In the blink of an eye, you have the potential to cause unimaginable damage to the vehicles and lives with whom you share the road. Plus, you have a schedule to keep. You have angry drivers, tired of following you up hills. Your back hurts. You haven't eaten a healthy meal in days. You are stressed!

Those are some of the reasons why professional truck drivers are leaving the industry. And new drivers are not filling the gap (Costello, 2019). Truck driving is a high-stress profes-

sion, contributing to decreased health and a shortened lifespan. Because professional truck drivers are vital to keeping the U.S. economy growing (Costello, 2013), not to mention food on our tables, it is crucial to find ways to improve driver health and make

The worst is the people. They don't know how to drive around a truck. So, they're cutting us off. They speed in front of you and then slam on the brakes.

driving a desirable career choice for young people.

While taking up a practice of meditation could help drivers manage stress and improve health (Basso, 2019), studies have shown that blue-collar workers are among the least likely to participate (Kachan et

al, 2017). Furthermore, there is no literature on truck driver-specific attitudes toward meditation, nor is there information on the willingness of executives within the industry to support drivers if they choose to a practice.

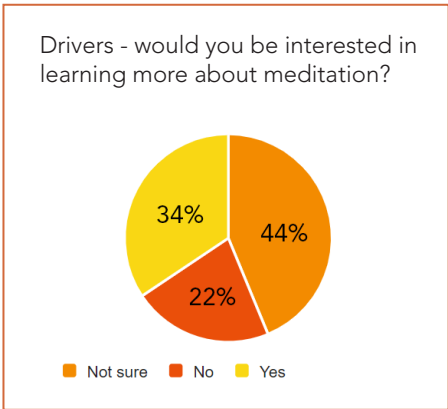
That's why Kathryn Armstrong, MFA, a graduate student at Radford University, decided to use Design Thinking methods to dig deeper and find out what drivers and their employers really thought.

To get an idea of the attitudes of real drivers in the industry, Armstrong turned to her employer, a large logistics company with thousands of drivers. She asked 74 drivers from two locations to complete questionnaires to gauge their interest in learning more about meditation as a tool for managing stress. Contrary to expectation, a third of drivers said "Yes," they were interested in learning more about meditation, with an additional 44% saying they were not sure. The same questionnaire uncovered

By Kathryn Armstrong,
Dr. Joan Dickinson, Dr. Holly Cline,
Kathleen Sullivan

barriers that drivers saw to taking up a practice. The two greatest barriers were revealed to be “I prefer to be accomplishing something” and “I would not know if I were doing it right.”

Armstrong also surveyed company leadership to determine if there would be support for a program that helped drivers overcome the barriers and take up a meditation practice. The response was a resounding YES! Additionally, upon conducting interviews with several top leaders, Armstrong learned that they were willing to support any initiative that could help drivers improve their physical and mental health.



Introducing Design Thinking

Armstrong used Design Thinking (DT) methods she learned during her graduate studies at Radford University to help company executives look for innovative ways to introduce meditation to drivers within the company. Design thinking is an innovative, collaborative process for solving complex problems. The process requires empathetic problem identification through research and multi-disciplinary teamwork, brainstorming, and ideation.

To prepare for the leadership DT workshops, Armstrong used methods such as experience mapping, affinity clustering, and problem tree analysis to analyze the data from her preliminary research to help leaders understand and empathize with drivers’ needs. She then facilitated workshops where leaders used statement starters, creative matrix and important/difficulty matrix DT methods to brainstorm possible solutions.

Statement starters were used to focus and reframe problems in order to look at them from different direc-

tions and ensure they were clearly stated. After completing the statement starter exercise, the leadership groups determined they wanted to explore the following areas: the need for education, the need to shift mindset, engaging the family, offering an app, developing a pilot program, and leveraging peer support.

These ideas were moved into the X axis of the “Creative Matrix” method where they were combined with enabling solutions across the Y axis to generate many far-ranging ideas in a short amount of time. When looking at the output of the two groups, similarities included the importance of engaging families, using technology, communicating the “what’s in it for me,” and integrating with existing events and programs.

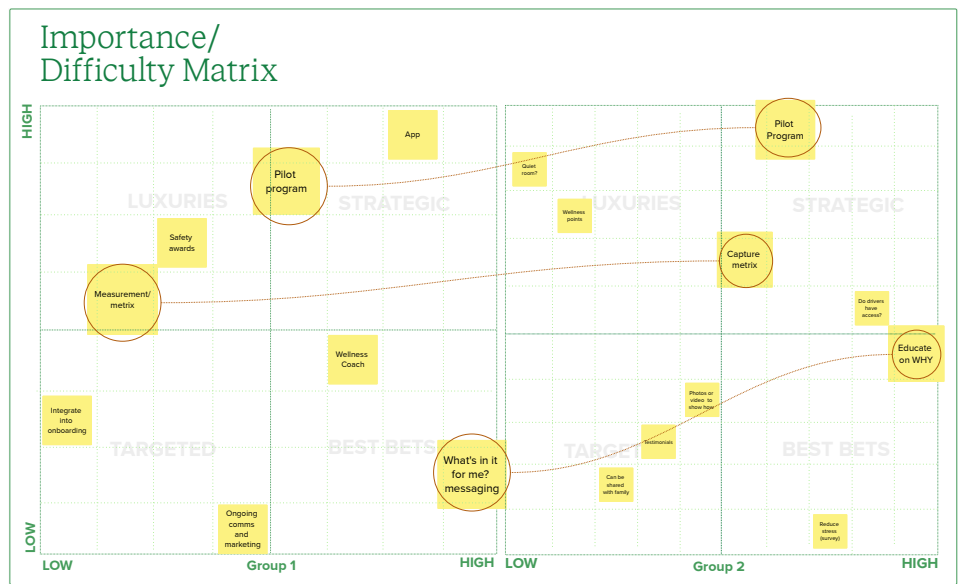
From there, the leaders ranked the feasibility of their favorite ideas using an importance/difficulty matrix. In the end, within the “Best Bets” -- or highest importance/lowest difficulty -- quadrant, both groups identified the importance of using messaging that explained “What’s in it for me?” In the Strategic quadrant, both groups identified creating a pilot program as a priority. Additionally, both groups identified the importance of tracking and capturing metrics for further analysis. Group 2 placed it in the Strategic

quadrant, while group 1 placed it in Luxuries. Ultimately, this is what the researchers used to guide the creation of a minimal viable product (MVP) for test — a “Concept Poster” and a “Quick Reference Guide” flyer that could be distributed to drivers.

Implications for the Industry

Ultimately, we hope this research can help improve the health, safety and lives of the professional truck drivers who keep our world moving. The interest expressed by both drivers and leadership is exciting and encourages further research.

As the trucking industry works to attract new drivers and retain current ones (de Croon et al., 2004), it is promising to see that both drivers and company leadership are open to exploring meditation as a potential solution. If meditation proves effective in helping drivers manage stress, improve concentration, and enhance overall health, it could make the profession more attractive. Additionally, tackling the health issues drivers often face, such as chronic conditions tied to their work (Levy, 2022), is vital for their well-being. Advancing this research could play a key role in making truck driving a more appealing career option.



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