



Contractor thinks Eaton's transmissions are the smart choice

Location:

Cleveland, Tennessee

Segment:

Highway construction and maintenance; site preparation

Problem:

Fuel costs, equipment costs, driver retention

Solution:

Eaton's UltraShift *PLUS* automated transmissions

Results:

Fuel efficiency, driver acceptance, safety and durability

Contact Information:

Eaton
Vehicle Group
P.O. Box 4013
Kalamazoo, MI 49003
1-800-826-HELP (4357)
www.eaton.com/roadranger

"We do not have any intentions of ever buying anything else. We are picking up anywhere from 1.5 to 2 miles per gallon better fuel consumption. And we are not operating in an environment where our guys are setting the cruise at 60 and taking off for California. We're doing start-and-stop driving and it has meant a big, big difference to us financially."

Duane Gilbert, chief operating officer

Background

Gibco Trucking, Cleveland, Tenn., specializes in site preparation for various construction projects, excavating work, and building and maintaining highways primarily in a quad-state area consisting of Tennessee, North Carolina, Georgia and Alabama.

The company services customers near and far, large and small, as well as public and private.

Volkswagen recently broke ground for a new plant in Chattanooga, Tenn., and Gibco was tabbed to play a role in the site preparation. Another large German company, Wacker Chemie AG, broke ground on a new manufacturing facility for the solar panel industry and Gibco again was picked to play a major role in the site work. The two projects represent investments of roughly \$3.5 billion.

Meanwhile, smaller road projects on Interstates near Birmingham, Ala., and Chattanooga are also contributing to keeping Gibco profitable.

Duane Gilbert, Chief Operating Officer of Gibco, says, "Our number one goal is to keep our customers happy by giving them exactly what they are paying us to do. That way they keep coming back to us job after job after job."

"Right now, I would have to say we're in good shape, as our customers know what to expect from us and we know what to expect from them. We currently have about a three-year backlog."

Challenge

To best meet those expectations, Gilbert says, "We never shortchange ourselves when investing in new trucks and new equipment. We don't shop by price because I have found over the years that the most expensive thing you can buy is usually the cheapest thing you can run."

A big part of that investment philosophy is the company's 100-vehicle fleet of newer model Kenworth T800 tri-axle heavy-duty trucks. Each has been spec'd with top-of-the line components.



Powering Business Worldwide

BACKED BY
Roadranger
SUPPORT



Duane Gilbert, Chief Operating Officer, and Sharon Gilbert, President, Gibco Trucking

Addressing rising fuel costs and equipment costs are additional priorities, and so is retaining its crew of drivers.

"We will never loosen the reins on who we hire, always looking to take on the best possible drivers," says Gilbert. "Therefore once we have them here, we like to keep them here."

Solution

While many factors go into meeting those challenges, Gilbert cites his choice of transmissions – Eaton's fully automated UltraShift PLUS line – as a key contributor. Gibco was among the first North American fleets to experience the features and benefits of UltraShift PLUS, serving as a test fleet prior to the transmission's introduction in 2009.

That initial encounter was a positive one as Gilbert has now ordered 22 Eaton 8-speed UltraShift PLUS Vocational Construction Series (VCS) transmissions, which are now a standard specification on all new truck orders at Gibco.

UltraShift PLUS automated transmissions are available for linehaul and vocational use and offer tailored performance and efficiency for virtually any given application. All UltraShift PLUS launches and shifts are automated with the use of a new self-adjusting electronic clutch actuator for fast, smooth engagements.

The VCS Series at Gibco is a part of the Vocational UltraShift PLUS platform, all of which have built-in application-specific performance features and represent a wide range of new customized transmission designs. The VCS has an overall ratio of 20:1, has been designed with deep reduction gearing and multiple high-speed reverse to best meet the specific needs required for high-way construction work – like that at Gibco – and general dump operations requiring extended reverse operation.

Result

"We do not have any intentions of ever buying anything else," says Gilbert.

Why? He cites four compelling reasons that would surely be welcomed inside the workings of any commercial truck fleet – fuel efficiency, driver friendliness, safety and durability.

"We are picking up anywhere from 1.5 to 2 miles per gallon better fuel consumption," adds Gilbert. "And we are not operating in an environment where our guys are setting the cruise at 60 and taking off for California. We're doing start-and-stop driving and it has meant a big, big difference to us financially."

Meanwhile, his start-and-stop drivers with the UltraShift PLUS trucks are starting and stopping a lot more comfortably and safely than they were in the past.

"Our drivers love the transmissions because it takes a whole lot of the work out of driving," says Gilbert. "They are less fatigued at the end of day. I believe the two-pedal design makes for safer driving, too. I also believe that combination of less fatigue and safer driving is helping us in retaining our drivers."

Even the occasional skeptics are quickly being reversed.

"Some of our old timers were initially reluctant because they are so accustomed to shifting gears," notes Gilbert. "We say hey just try it. If you do not like it, we'll give you your old truck back. Once they spend one day with the transmissions, they end up saying 'oh man, what was I thinking!'"

Luckily, Gilbert is thoughtful enough and more than happy to help both young and old with their thinking. But it is the transmission's thinking that has him especially impressed.

"It takes all of the guess work out of shifting," he adds. "The computer makes a perfect shift every time. It doesn't get tired and it never has a bad day."

Nor, apparently, have any one of the transmissions had a bad week, bad month, bad year or bad multiple years at Gibco.

"We've had zero complaints and zero issues with the durability of these transmissions," he says. "We've had absolutely no problems. Even the original test UltraShift PLUS has been performing well since the day we got it."

He adds that the service that he's been getting from Eaton's Roadranger field representatives has been outstanding, noting, "They've been very supportive and play a big role in why we will continue to support Eaton in the future."

BACKED BY
Roadranger
SUPPORT

For spec'ing or service assistance,
call 1-800-826-HELP (4357) or visit
www.eaton.com/roadranger.
In Mexico, call 001-800-826-4357.

Roadranger: Eaton and trusted partners providing the best products and services in the industry, ensuring more time on the road.

Eaton
Vehicle Group
P.O. Box 4013
Kalamazoo, MI 49003 USA
800-826-HELP (4357)
www.eaton.com/roadranger

© 2014 Eaton
All Rights Reserved. Printed in USA.
TRSL2528 0214

Note: Features and specifications listed in this document are subject to change without notice and represent the maximum capabilities of the software and products with all options installed. Although every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of information contained within, Eaton makes no representation about the completeness, correctness or accuracy and assumes no responsibility for any errors or omissions. Features and functionality may vary depending on selected options.

Eaton, Fuller, Roadranger, Solo and UltraShift are registered trademarks of Eaton. All trademarks, logos and copyrights are those of their respective owners.