

Opinion: The Big Lie? Why Driverless Trucks Won't Happen in Your Lifetime

Tim Higham | ASCENDTMS

THE LIKELIHOOD OF driverless trucks making a meaningful trucking impact in our lifetime is close to zero. That's just this writer's opinion. One could theorize that investor losses will be widespread and there will be few winners to speak of in the fallout of the driverless truck craze.

Quality Drivers Will Resign

The moment large carriers announce that driverless trucks are being introduced all self-respecting drivers will walk away.

Unions Will Protect Drivers

Love them or hate them, the driver unions will be the first to organize mass protests and strikes.

Government Regulations

A driverless truck still needs to meet all the requirements for weight, inspections, paperwork, and cargo handling that today's trucks must abide by.

Issues on the Route

What happens when there is an issue on route? Who handles breakdowns? Changes a tire?

Driving Conditions Change Rapidly

Just think of the things that change on the road: rain storms, flooding, standing water, high winds, snow, ice, road debris, accidents, road work, detours, emergency



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vehicles, wild animals, children running into the street.

Any driver that's ever navigated a loading or unloading facility can testify that they can be messy, cluttered, tight, difficult, unpredictable, and require a lot of human communication – by drivers. Who's responsible for accident claims and how are they handled? The first time a driverless truck ends up in a devastating accident with fatalities, everybody from the government to the public masses will demand they are shut down until "all issues are resolved."

Who will secure freight if it shifts during transport? Who will help load incompatibly sized or overweight freight? Who monitors and verifies reefer fuel, load temperatures, trailer brakes and lighting? Who verifies the reefer is running

properly and knows what to do to save a load of produce if there's an issue?

In-transit changes are common and must be expected. The pickup or delivery order may change, weather issues are common, and shipper or receiver changes of various kinds are common. Anyone who has been in this business for a New York minute knows that issues occur frequently, and often it's an experienced driver that helps solve the issue or executes the orders handed out by dispatch, the shipper or the receiver.

Driverless trucks? Not in our lifetime.

Tim Higham is the President and CEO of AscendTMS, headquartered in Brandon, FL. He may be reached at thigham@inmotionglobal.com.