




# How to Build A Driver Safety Rewards Program

INCENTIVES THAT WORK



samsara

A blue semi-truck is driving on a winding road that curves to the right. The road is paved and has a white line on the edge. In the background, there is a dense forest of trees with green and yellow foliage, suggesting an autumn setting. The sky is not visible.

An active and effective safety program  
is essential for any fleet looking to protect  
their drivers, reputation, and bottom line.

When combined with other measures like onboard safety monitoring systems or dash cams, driver safety programs have been shown to reduce severe safety-critical events by 59%.<sup>1</sup> A driver safety rewards program can be a powerful way to generate driver buy-in for safety programs, encouraging drivers to not only understand safety procedures, but also fully commit to them. FMCSA studies show that 87% of all commercial motor vehicle crashes were the result of driver behavior or driver error, highlighting the importance of proactive driver training and coaching.<sup>2</sup>

In this guide, we'll show you how to build a successful driver safety rewards program focused on empowering drivers through open communication, transparent and clearly defined goals, and meaningful incentives.

## SUMMARY

- 01 Decide on the Right Metrics
- 02 Establish Clear Expectations
- 03 Choose Great Rewards
- 04 Help All Drivers Succeed
- 05 Celebrate Ongoing Success and Improvements

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<sup>1</sup> National Surface Transportation Safety Center for Excellence

<sup>2</sup> FMCSA Large Truck Crash Causation Study

<sup>3</sup> Gallup's Q12 Meta-Analysis (2013)

# 59%

## REDUCTION IN INJURY

by implementing behavior-based safety programs<sup>1</sup>

# 52%

## REDUCTION IN SAFETY-RELATED EVENTS

by installing onboard safety monitoring systems<sup>1</sup>

# 48%

## FEWER SAFETY INCIDENTS

in companies with more engaged employees<sup>3</sup>

# 01

## Decide on the Right Metrics

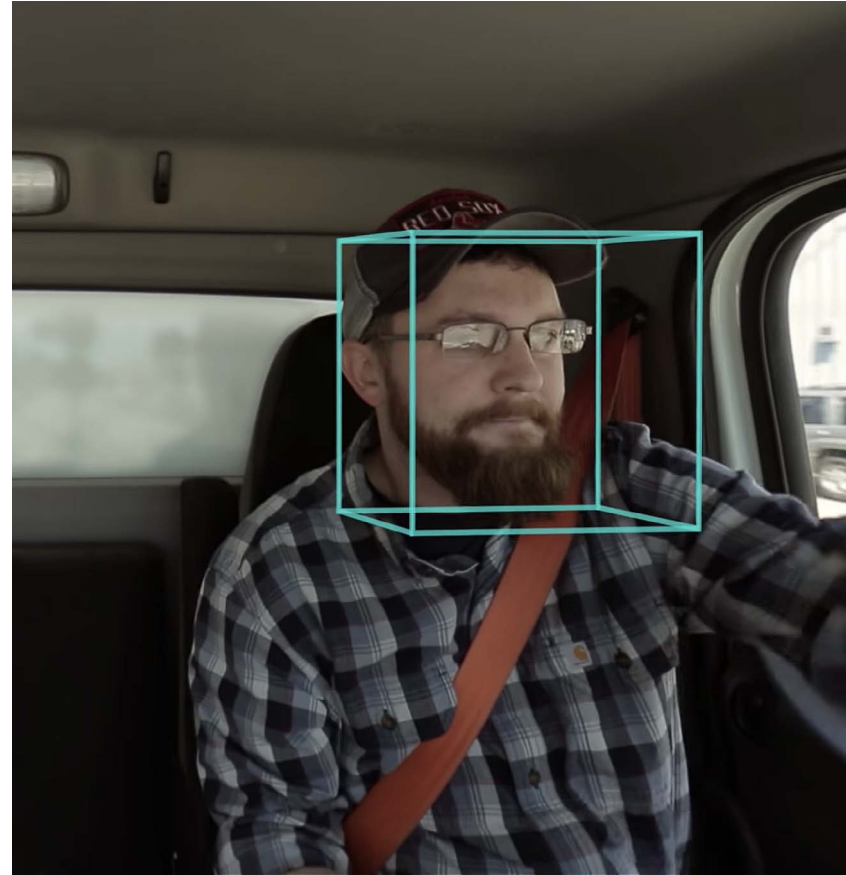
The goal of a driver safety rewards program is to meaningfully improve fleet safety through behavior modification. For that reason, aligning on the right behavior metrics to track is an important first step. Identify the specific driver behaviors that are impacting the safety of your organization, like cell phone use, harsh-braking, or speeding.

These behaviors should be uniformly measurable and consistent—random safety checks or surprise inspections are harder to systematize and less likely to drive real change. Sensors, cameras, and onboard monitoring systems are excellent ways to automatically collect driver behavior data for analysis and monitoring.



## DRIVER BEHAVIORS TO MONITOR

- Traveling too fast for road conditions
- Harsh braking
- Harsh acceleration
- Harsh turning
- Cell phone use
- Fatigue
- Seatbelt use
- Tailgating
- Stop sign violations



## 02

# Establish Clear Expectations

To successfully gain driver buy-in for any rewards program, transparency and clear communication are crucial.

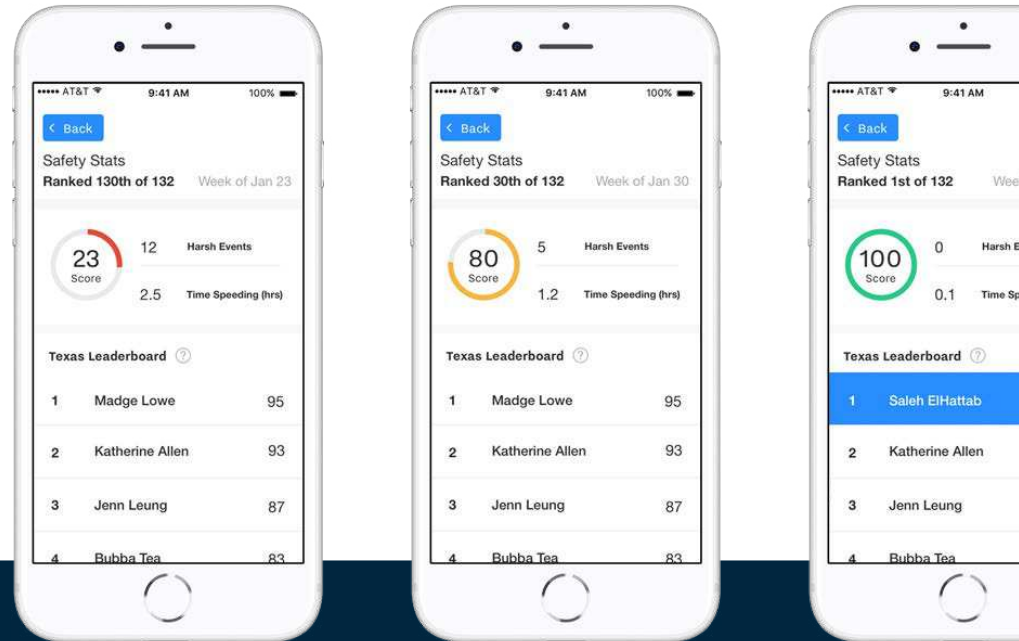
To eliminate any concerns about fairness, drivers should know exactly what the expectations are, how they're being evaluated, and where they stand compared to their peers.

To maximize transparency, assign each driver an individual score based on a combination of safety behavior metrics. For example, Samsara's safety score is calculated by subtracting harsh events and time over the speed limit, weighted by miles driven, from 100%.



# Establish Clear Expectations (cont'd)

Ensure drivers know exactly how scores are calculated so they understand their performance and how to improve, giving them ownership over their scores. Consider leveraging a leaderboard to rank drivers by safety score. This makes it easy to see top performers, encourages friendly competition, and motivates drivers to improve their ranking.



**The Samsara Driver App gives all drivers insight into their personal score and how they rank compared to peers, encouraging personal improvement and friendly competition.**

## 03

# Choose Great Rewards

To maximize program success, rewards should be attractive and relevant. Make sure you customize the incentive to fit your company culture and your fleet. Remember, each prevented accident represents thousands of dollars in saved costs, so allow drivers to share in some of those savings by rewarding top performers with monetary gifts, special privileges, or other prizes.

Gift cards, exclusive lunches, or public recognition of excellence are all wonderful incentives. Depending on your team, consider announcing the winner during team meetings, creating a safe driver “wall of honor” in the break room, or even sending a congratulations email company-wide.

Rewards should also be inclusive and frequent: only celebrating the best performer in a year neglects drivers who have made significant improvement. Every driver knows that getting home safe is far more valuable than any prize; however, small but consistent incentives can go a long way toward making sure drivers know that safety is highly valued by their peers, bosses, and the company as a whole.

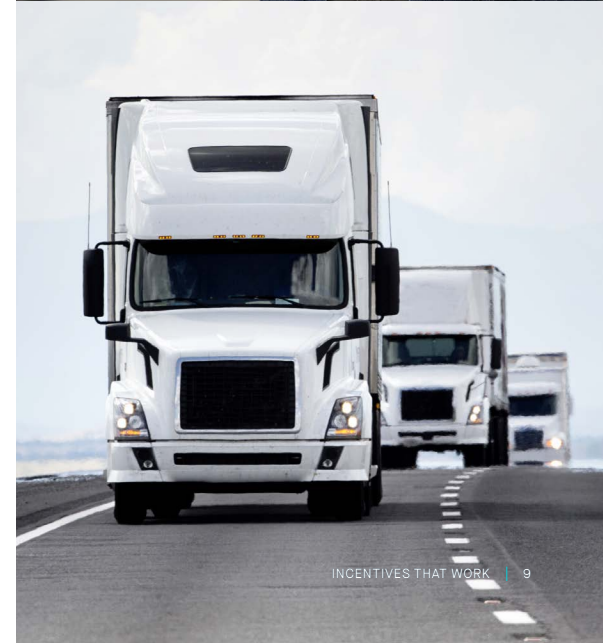
### EFFECTIVE REWARDS

- \$100 gift card
- Invite-only breakfast with leadership
- Company-branded gear
- Wall of Honor in break room
- Recognition in company-wide announcement

## 04

# Help All Drivers Succeed

Launching a safety rewards program is an excellent time to encourage all drivers to revisit best practices through training and recommit to safer driving. Take this opportunity to host training sessions, offer additional coaching and guidance, and showcase great examples of defensive driving. When celebrating strong performers, have them share their individual best practices, success stories, or even cautionary tales. If dash cam video is available, share footage of close calls prevented by excellent defensive driving or other examples of strong performance.



# Help All Drivers Succeed (cont'd)

Under-performing drivers, in particular, should be made aware that this new program is their chance to make a change and should be given the resources, guidance, and training to get them there. Make sure that all participants know that they have an equal opportunity to succeed. Every driver's score should start off on an even playing field, giving them a reason to increase their focus on safe driving, even if they didn't demonstrate it in the past. Samsara's safety score refreshes weekly, making each week a fresh chance to improve performance.



Having our drivers be able to take part in their own safety awareness is amazing. Video footage of these real-life situations that our own fleet has encountered is more effective than any scenario recreated for a traditional driver training video.”

—Stephanie Peterson  
Safety Director, R-K-Campf Transport

## 05

# Celebrate Ongoing Success and Improvements

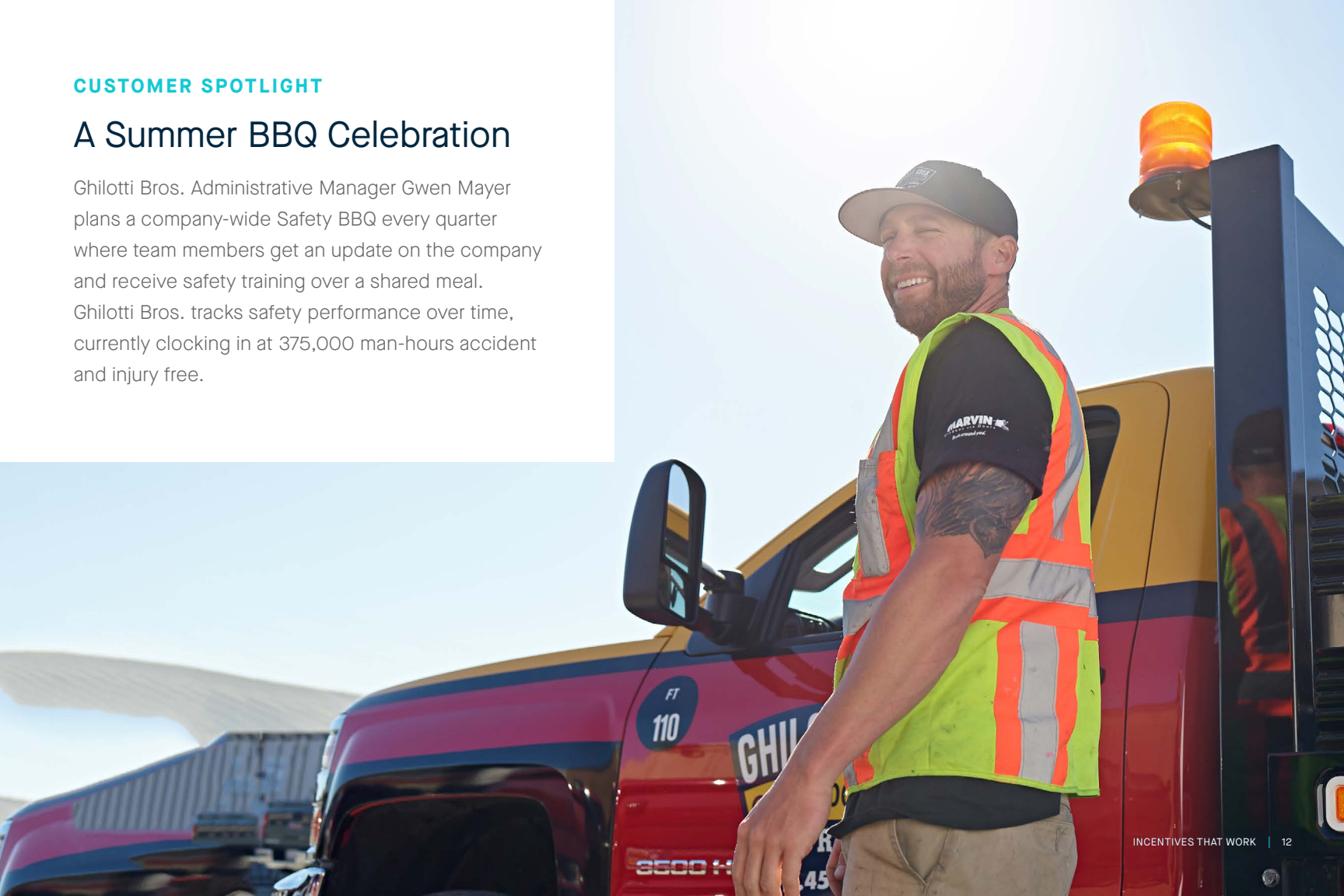
Once the safety rewards program is live, continue to incorporate routine training and coaching. Establish a regular cadence of safety meetings, show public leaderboards to monitor performance, and offer personalized training plans for individual drivers. Continually remind your team that although drivers with the best metrics will earn incentives, safety is not a competition—it's a core part of the culture.

The goal of an incentive program isn't just to reward safe drivers for becoming even safer; it's to uplevel the safety of the entire fleet. An improved fleet average makes little difference if the least safe drivers don't also improve. Use the rewards program as an opportunity to keep safety top of mind by creating an ongoing conversation that helps every driver stay committed to safe practices.

## CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

# A Summer BBQ Celebration

Ghilotti Bros. Administrative Manager Gwen Mayer plans a company-wide Safety BBQ every quarter where team members get an update on the company and receive safety training over a shared meal. Ghilotti Bros. tracks safety performance over time, currently clocking in at 375,000 man-hours accident and injury free.

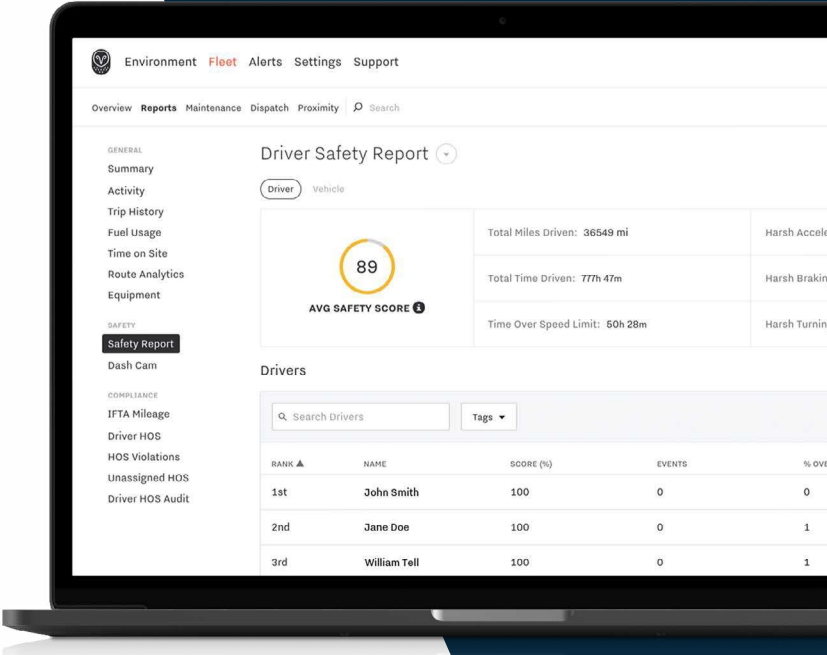


CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

# Friendly, Effective Competition

Arley Garner, Operations Systems Manager at Hardie’s Fresh Foods, manages safety and compliance across the food distributor’s fleet. To celebrate their best drivers and encourage high performance fleet-wide, Hardie’s has a rewards program that ranks drivers based on their safety record and on-time delivery rate, using Samsara data.

The best drivers with no incidents or accidents, who make on-time deliveries, are classified as A drivers and get the best routes. As Garner puts it, “If they get a good status, they’re going to have a cushy month.”





We give our drivers something to  
strive for and make it a competition,  
which makes everyone better in the  
long run.”

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—Arley Garner  
Operations Systems Manager,  
Hardie's Fresh Foods





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