



There is little doubt that no one visiting the CV Show, the first for three years, would have gone home disappointed. Returning truck manufacturers, a host of product launches to help vehicle operators and returning confidence in the transport industry meant there was something for everyone.

There was a positive mood in the aisles of Halls 4 and 5 at the NEC, with many exhibitors doing business with existing and new clients, and plenty of talk of better times ahead for an industry that has suffered greatly over the past three years. For those that may not have made it to England's second city for the three-day event, a selection of highlights is outlined below.

MAN looks at the bigger picture

MAN reiterated its commitment to the 'total cost of ownership' approach in announcing a number of initiatives designed to help operators work more efficiently and cut costs. Des Evans, chief executive of the company's UK operations, stated: "We have to help operators see the benefit of changing the way they have been doing certain things. For years, far too many have seen truck prices as the way to manage costs. But, even in the good times, they have not made the sort of bottom line margins that similar industries have achieved."

Alternative power mastery from Mercedes

The first truck and van manufacturer to commit to its return to the CV Show was Mercedes-Benz, and promptly gave many visitors their first opportunity to see a raft of recently launched and prototype products. Among the highlights were the Vito E-Cell – the world's first battery-powered van to be built on a mainstream production line – and the Sprinter NGT, proving that alternative fuel technology still has a place in a market full of hybrid and electric vehicle hype.

The manufacturer's driver training team and one of its specialist six-seater trucks was also on hand to talk about the various courses on offer to help drivers meet their Driver CPC requirements.

Innovation added into the MiX

Vehicle tracking and fleet management outfit MiX Telematics arrived at the CV Show with news of four innovations, including a collaborative project with Garmin that sees one of the company's products integrated with MiX's Fleet Manager. Other developments included an agreement with Imperial Commercial to develop Fleet Effective, a programme that provides transport operators with a range of cost-reducing benefits.

MiX Telematics also debuted MiX Track, following pre-launch tests, which have already seen 2,000 vehicles connected to the new system. Tony English, managing director at MiX Telematics, was

Best in show

The CV Show 2011, at Birmingham's NEC in April, witnessed an array of new technology. Transport Engineer was there to witness the show's triumphant return



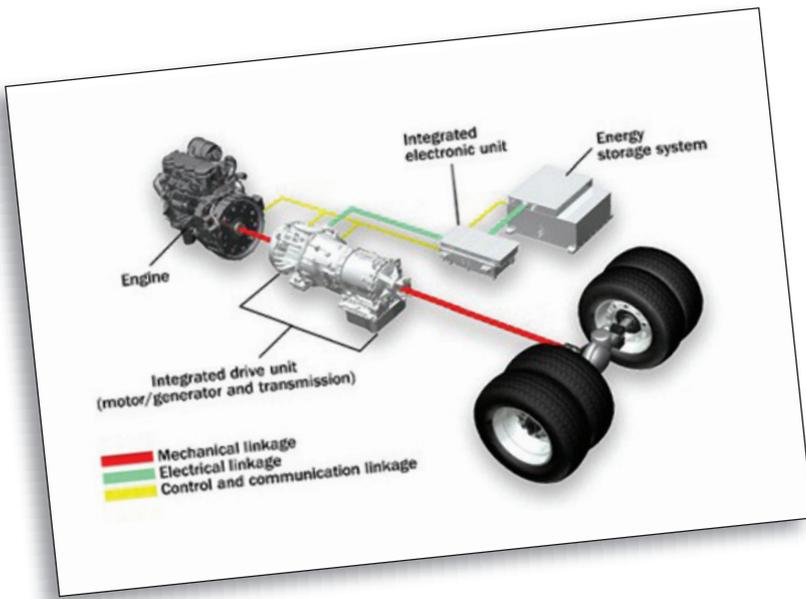
"We have to help operators see the benefit of changing the way they have been doing certain things."
Des Evans

upbeat about the future. "We have recorded better fuel economy savings in the haulage market, compared with the bus and truck industry, by around 10%. So we are confident about future successes," he stated.

ATS Euromaster puts fleets in control

The UK's largest supplier of truck tyres came to Birmingham with promises to help fleet managers gain greater control. ATS Euromaster is using in-house developed software, as well as its electronic tyre inspection tool, to analyse tyre condition in such detail that managers can use the resulting report to cut operating costs and improve tyre life.

The company also revealed that it is offering an initial fleet-wide analysis free, using its FleetMax analysis tool, to prospective new customers with more than 50 vehicles.



Above: BAE Systems' hybrid platform benefits the RCV market
Right: Axtec announced a new package for fleets

"Good strategy springs from good data and is the foundation of the consultative approach we take," says Kevin Steward, ATS Euromaster's head of business development. "It's imperative to fully understand a fleet's existing tyre condition before making any recommendations."

BAE Systems doesn't stop at buses

Having played a pivotal role in the hybrid bus market by supplying propulsion systems to Alexander Dennis, BAE Systems has turned its attention to the RCV (refuse collection vehicle) market. The result? An alliance with Dennis Eagle for an electric propulsion system, used in a low-entry cab.

That alliance will perform a number of field tests throughout this year, with a view to Dennis Eagle offering vehicles powered by BAE Systems' HybriDrive from late in 2012.

Weighting for new technology

Axtec launched an initiative at the CV Show that will see operators retain a little more money when requiring axle weighing systems. The novel package, called AIM (Axtec install and maintain), includes the purchase and installation of Axtec's axle weighing systems at low cost.

Onboard load indicators, fixed weighbridge systems and portable weighpads can all be bought using the scheme, with the customer paying a monthly hire charge and a small final payment. The service covers installation and maintenance.

"Installing a weighbridge can involve big capital expenditure," explained Keith Gresham, Axtec's managing director. "With AIM, we will work with the customer to agree the technical requirement and location, carry out a survey to determine what civil engineering works are necessary, and work out a total cost."



DAF's irtec investment

DAF used the CV Show to announce that it is now officially the first truck manufacturer to adopt the irtec accreditation scheme throughout its dealer network, with 650 technicians already registered. DAF managing director Ray Ashworth said:

"Over the next couple of years, all DAF dealer technicians will be independently assessed and licensed through the irtec scheme, ensuring a consistent standard for vehicle inspections."

For operators, when trucks are repaired or serviced through DAFCheck, they will have additional peace of mind. DAFcheck is DAF's free web-based system that allows recording and retrieval of maintenance records for a truck fleet, ensuring full VOSA compliance.

Ashworth also confirmed that transport operators will be able to report defects electronically, via DAFCheck, in readiness for future inspections, while also being linked to DAFaid roadside assistance – all part of maintaining a good OCRS (operator compliance risk score) position.

Apple tie-up bears fruit for VDO

Visitors to Birmingham interested in making improvements to their fleet management systems would have liked the VDO stand, where the company's TIS track and trace module made its first public appearance. VDO says that existing TIS web customers can use it to locate their fleet, and evaluate driver and trip data in real time. The technology is available on all Apple mobile devices.

TIR's simulation-based training goes mobile

Building on its educational resources, TIR Training Services launched its latest product: the mobile training simulator. After demonstrating simulator-based training at the CV Operator Show last year, the company has worked with Wincanton, Morrisons and others to ensure that the product makes the grade.

"The development of our simulator-based training comes from our desire to be market leader in driver training," explains Tim Watson, TIR's commercial manager. While Watson explains that clients want to train for all conditions in the comfort of their own surroundings, the biggest plus is minimising downtime.

"Now we can bring this training to your door," he continues. "Couple fuel savings of between 4-6% with a reduction in accidents and onsite training, and you can see why we are confident this is a great opportunity for operators to increase profitability in 2011."