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Uber ATG: A New Age for Trucking

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- **Uber enters the trucking scene, buys startup Otto**
- **Goal: line of autonomous trucks called Uber ATG**

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It's 2017 and we are living in what is called a "sharing economy." Though considered an umbrella term with various different meanings, "sharing economy" is widely used to describe today's market landscape.

Everything has gone digital – online transactions and interactions are all the rage, and the market has taken notice of that and jumped on the bandwagon. In general terms, the "sharing economy" is sort of a

grassroots effort, a peer-to-peer business landscape rather than a corporate one. This is shown through organizations like Uber, AirBnB, Takl, Turo, Upwork, and Lyft.



"Our goal is to make trucks drive as humanly as possible, but with the reliability of machines."

UBER

In other words, the sharing economy is "an economic model in which individuals are able to borrow or rent assets owned by someone else." It has a more democratic marketplace feel, like freelancing. Uber has been so heavily in the forefront of this trend that the term is often referred to as "Uberization." People are utilizing their local community to both sell and obtain products and services, instead of going through a corporate funnel. Uber has recently added to their arsenal with startup Otto.

Uber Acquires Otto: The Back Story

- **Otto was created by Lior Ron and Anthony Levandowski**
- **Purchased by Uber in 2016**



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- **Focus on autonomous vehicle research**
- **AI acts as “copilot” to make truck drivers’ jobs easier and safer**

Uber recently purchased a small company called **Otto**, a startup that has been working on developing self-driving trucks. Otto was cofounded by Lior Ron and former Google employee Anthony Levandowski, who have been researching autonomous vehicles for many years now. Levandowski has stated, “Our goal is to make trucks drive as humanly as possible, but with the reliability of machines.”

“We want to get technology to the point where it’s safe to let the driver rest and sleep in his cabin and we can drive for him, exit to exit.”



This mission is also driven by the desire to make the roads safer for drivers and trucking easier and safer for truck drivers. One of the leading causes of highway fatalities and injuries is drowsy driving.

Drivers are often required to drive up to 11 hours in one day in order to make ends meet. Long hours spent on the road to make long trips can lead to truck drivers falling asleep at the wheel.

Unfortunately, this causes injuries and deaths at an alarming rate. More than 30,000 people die on highways annually in the US, and **1 in 7 of those deaths are involved in crashes with large trucks**. This is a problem that needs to be fixed, and that’s exactly what Otto wants to solve.

“We want to get technology to the point where it’s safe to let the driver rest and sleep in his cabin and we can drive for him, exit to exit,” **said Ron**.

What Does This Mean for Human Truck Drivers?

- **Truckers drive up to 11 hours a day**
- **AI meant to allow truckers to rest on the road**
- **AI is a copilot, not a replacement**

“Being a truck driver is not an easy job,” said Ron. With the long hours and amount of driving, many would agree. The advancements made in autonomous vehicles is meant to help make things easier for truck drivers.

For those worried about job loss, Ron explains that AI is **not meant to replace human workers**, but rather supplement them. The AI is meant to act as a “copilot” for truck drivers in order to make the job safer and still get done efficiently.

In other words, truck drivers are not in danger of losing their jobs. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is instead meant to be an aide for truck drivers, solving the dangerous prevalence of drowsy driving and other issues. AI is meant to make the job safer, easier, and more efficient.



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“Truck drivers are not in danger of losing their jobs.”

Uber CEO Travis Kalanick commented on the company's purchase of Otto, saying that the partnership is meant to build up a freight business for Uber. And Uber ATG is about more than autonomous trucking.

"Uber has already started pitching services to shippers, truck fleets and independent drivers, and the services go well beyond Otto's initially stated goal of outfitting trucks with self-driving technology," [Reuters reports](#). "It also plans to compete with the brokers who connect truck fleets and shippers."

Right now, their focus is on Texas, but Uber ATG has plans to expand through the west coast, and places like Arizona, Chicago, Georgia, and more over 2017. Their app has been updated to include ["new load packs for drivers who prefer local or short haul routes, along with a new 'For You' package with smarter personalized recommendations."](#)

"The enthusiasm we've seen from drivers and shippers alike keeps us focused on innovating in ways that put drivers first. We've still got a lot of work to do, but are more excited than ever to deliver on the promise of leveling the playing field for America's truck drivers."



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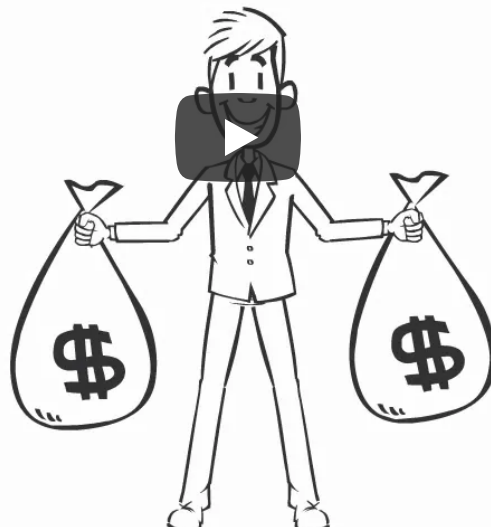
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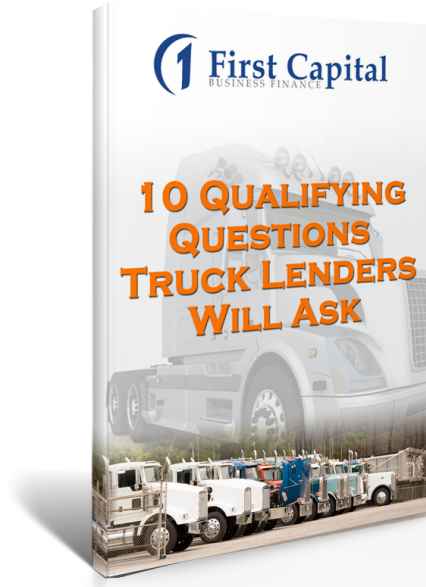
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