

# Take it From These Winners: Being a Successful Owner-Operator Starts with Making Good Decisions

## *Catching Up with Mike Curle and Chuck McQuerry OverDrive's 2004 and 2003 'Truckers of the Year'*

Combined, Mike Curle and Chuck McQuerry, winners of *OverDrive* magazine's 2004 and 2003 'Trucker of the Year' honors, have nearly 50-years of experience working as owner-operators and as company drivers during their careers.

Today, 48-year-old Curle and 45-year-old McQuerry are extremely successful owner-operators who are more financially secure than ever. However, getting to where they are now has not been easy. Over the years, they have endured significant and, at times, almost overwhelming struggles.

When Curle and McQuerry are asked how they have managed to make it in such a tough business, they each echo a similar sentiment.

"Being successful comes from working hard and making good decisions."

### **Q: What did being named *OverDrive's* Trucker of the Year mean to you?**

- *Curle*: It felt great and has given me a lot of recognition among my peers and potential customers to be named *OverDrive's* 2004 Trucker of the Year. It was also confirmation that if you work hard and do things right, good things can happen.
- *McQuerry*: I was called at home in Atlanta on Thanksgiving and I really couldn't believe it. I told my family (wife, Theresa and two children, Chuck Jr. 18, and Desmond, 12) and I didn't think it was real. I had some awful times financially a few years before that and to earn the 2003 award after everything I went through was one of the best things to ever happen to me.

### **Q: What are the biggest differences in you as a professional driver now compared to when you started?**

- *C*: I have always been a stickler for three things — maintenance, safety and being smart with my money. Now, I am even more conscious of those things.

- *M*: I am a better businessman now. I have really learned, with the help of other people, how to maximize my revenue, take great care of my rig and watch my pennies, because every bit counts.

### **Q: Can you share with us some of your maintenance tips?**

- *C*: I drive a yellow 2000 Freightliner Classic FLD and I do as much maintenance as I can myself. Also, I always use Mobil Delvac heavy-duty engine oils. They have always worked well for me, keeping my engines clean and me on the road. I guess that also tells a lot about my maintenance and me as a person. I always try and find the things that work best and I stick with them.
- *M*: Because I drive very long distances, I rely on the extended drain benefits of Mobil Delvac oils. They've always done the job for me and, when you are 2,000 miles from home, like I am a lot, you don't want to take any chances. You have to use the best.

### **Q: What advice would you give to young drivers who want to become successful owner-operators?**

- *C*: Always look and act professionally. Drive where the pay is the best. And, number one above all, maintain your equipment. Too many drivers do barely enough maintenance to keep their trucks on the road. They save money in the short term but it always catches up with them.
- *M*: Learn everything you can from successful people. That's what I have done. A perfect example of that is my choice of oil. The most successful people I've met in this business have used Mobil Delvac oils. So, naturally, I have tried to copy them and it's been one of the best decisions I have made.



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