



# Logistics

## Tech Outlook

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### IN MY OPINION

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### CIO INSIGHTS

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**Trak Engineering:**  
Shaping the Future of  
Fuel Management



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John Blyth,  
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# Trak Engineering:

## Shaping the Future of Fuel Management

By Jasmin Alic

**E**ffective fuel management can make or break a business. Before computerization became a global trend, fuel management was regarded as a manual process which required the attendance of knowledgeable support staff at the fuel island to keep track of the fuel. Over time, the focus shifted to streamlining the entire process of securing liquid assets, keeping data intact, and ensuring fleets stay on schedule. Automation brought all the difference, supporting a continuous, real-time fuel management system, reducing risks and input errors. Pioneering the evolution of automated fuel management systems since 1981, Trak Engineering has been digitizing fuel management and fleet control nationwide by harnessing the latest technological trends. With a range of innovative solutions that can take on a fleet of any size, Trak laid the cornerstone to what is truly the next generation of fuel management solutions.

“Technology has finally reached a point where we can make it easy and cost-effective for any customer to have fuel management, and better anticipate the needs of tomorrow to stay ahead of competition,” says John Blyth, President and CEO, Trak Engineering. By always having a fresh perspective on the current market trends, Trak offers solutions that help customers meet the growing demands of the business and maintain a positive ROI. Today, Trak is effectively managing more than a staggering one million vehicles of both private and government fleets across the U.S.



### Pushing the Industry Forward

The Tallahassee, FL based fuel management catalyst always relies on customer feedback to determine which of the needs have previously not been addressed by their products. Since inception, one of the biggest customer challenges they found was to achieve accurate odometer readings. Fast forward to today, more and more fleets are concerned with the security of their fuel data. By following standard business practices, Trak keeps their hardware and software up-to-date and data transmissions encrypted, ensuring high level of security and compliance.

Meanwhile, “Your fueling is the key to your operation. You can have a ton of vehicles, but where can you capture odometer without going out on the lot? At the fuel island—so that’s where you should collect the data, through an automated system, so you can streamline the management of your fleet,” explains Katherine Blyth, Trak’s Director of Sales. By setting up a system at the fuel islands, Trak ensures customers can have all the mechanisms in place for fueling to take place 24/7, eliminating the need for manual intervention all-around.

Years ago, it was people managing the fuel exchange at the fuel islands. Today, “Trak gives customers the ability to leave their fuel islands completely unattended while effortlessly managing their fleets,” notes Katherine. From the pioneering Sentry VI to the fully-automated SentryGOLD Fuel Management System, Trak has set the industry standard for fuel management time and time again. “What started out with just two key components—security of the fuel island and accountability of all fuel and vehicle data—has turned into a whole computer system that does so much more than just control when you turn the pump on and off.”

Trak’s Windows-based SentryGOLD Fuel Management System automates the fuel management process end-to-end, saving the time spent tracking fuel usage manually while producing an accurate record of consumable resources. It allows the users to easily customize screens as well as the information being presented, making it much easier to use the system. After connecting a small on-board computer on the vehicle, the system wirelessly transfers transaction, mileage, odometer, and telemetry data

for analytics as soon as the vehicle gets in range. Once on the server, all of that data can be used to “fine-tune” fleets and make informed decisions.

### Keeping their Eye on the Ball

To showcase SentryGOLD’s effectiveness in a real case scenario, Katherine brings up the issues of fuel theft and fuel loss. One such case involves a client that had been seeing a continual lack of fuel across their fleets and could not determine where it was going. After setting up the SentryGOLD system on their fuel islands, they were able to pinpoint the source of the problem in no time. What reports have shown is the discrepancies between amount of fuel they were receiving from one of their suppliers and how much they were actually being charged for.

By solving risks associated with crucial business elements like this, Trak’s value proposition increases with every new client reaping the full benefits of their solutions. By understanding the customer and their business needs, each one of their systems can maintain an optimal level of maintenance, regardless of the fleet size. According to John,



Trak gives customers the ability to leave their fuel islands completely unattended while effortlessly managing their fleets



"There are a lot of unique challenges often presented by our customers, and we always look at them as new business opportunities. By figuring out how to alleviate some of their greatest headaches, we not only create a solution that is applicable to them but to any of our customers."

### Creating the New Rules

Solidifying Trak's "customer-centric" approach is their revolutionary new product offering FluidSECURE, set to be released in Q2 of 2017. The world's first smartphone-based fuel management system "was developed specifically keeping the customers' needs in mind," says Katherine. The new mobile approach is believed to reshape the fuel management lifecycle. "With FluidSECURE, customers can walk up to a tank, stationary or mobile tank, with their smartphone/tablet and authorize fuel exchange. Everything is taken care of in the cloud-based software." This brings fewer expenses all-around, no maintenance, and very secure access through modern smartphone capabilities.

By creating a system that requires minimum effort, both on the configuration and maintenance side, customers have absolute ease of use. Moreover, being cloud-based, Trak has eliminated the process of on-premise installation. The hardware is actually a small conduit shape device which is mated into the existing dispenser's conduit system. It then takes around 15 minutes to get the system up and running without needing an electrician to oversee the entire process. Essentially, it boils down to downloading the app to the smartphones of all employees who would be using the system. "The system never becomes obsolete, as technology evolves with smartphones, the fuel management system evolves with it," notes Katherine. "This is what makes FluidSECURE so exciting."

The customer is not hooked into a stationary point in order for them



With FluidSECURE,  
customers can  
walk up to a fuel  
island with their  
smartphone and  
authorize the fuel  
exchange



Katherine Blyth,  
Director of Sales

to plug into the network. Instead, they can maintain the highest level of communication, as well as quicker access to data analytics. Gathering data points might be crucial to the operation and proper maintenance of their vehicles. The larger the fleet, the more vivid this becomes. By providing managers with information at their fingertips at any given time and in any format they need, the range of applicability for such a system could exceed expectations.

### Touching New Grounds

"FluidSECURE is going to dramatically change the whole idea of fuel management and turn the industry on its head," says the CEO. With its release, Trak is significantly driving down the price point for a full fuel management system. As they forge into the future, this opens up the opportunity to cater to a whole new market. What it actually means is that smaller companies that could previously never justify the budget for a fuel management system now have the ability to manage a fleet of 20 vehicles in the same way as a larger company might do with over 20,000—at a fraction of the price. Building on that, Trak is expected to grow their sales on a global scale.

Further down the road, John admits that knowing this process is not going to be a walk in the park. "What we're doing here, no one has ever heard of," he says. "It is surely going to be a challenge making people believe they can have an entire fuel management system up and running in a matter of minutes and have complete control of it in their smartphones." Nonetheless, with each product Trak comes out with, "the goal is to encapsulate the needs of as many customers as possible and ensure a return on their investment," concludes John. With the new FluidSECURE product line, Trak is pushing the landscape to new grounds and reaching stellar heights in the future. **LT**



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## TOP 10 Fleet Management Solution Providers 2017

A bevy of technological changes in the fleet management landscape is creating a whole new stage for fleet managers to hone their performance and enhance the overall fleet productivity with smart and intuitive systems. The utilization of fleet management software systems empowers companies to improve driver behavior and prevent accidents by monitoring events like sudden acceleration, abrupt braking, or speeding. Digital tracking makes certain that the fleet manager is aware of the driver's identity and the vehicle's location at all times.

With the right mix of business savvy and inventive technology, companies are utilizing telematics systems and GPS tracking to better control their fleet. In the future, vehicles might even drive themselves, interact with mechanics to schedule service appointments when a maintenance alert is issued, or even automatically drive to the closest fuel station when running low

on fuel. With several such advancements on the horizon, fleet managers have the opportunity to go a step above the competition by leveraging the latest innovations.

To help CIOs, CTOs, and CEOs find the right fleet management solutions, Logistics Tech Outlook's selection panel evaluated hundreds of fleet management solution providers that deliver innovative technologies and methodologies along with outstanding customer service. The listing provides a look on how these organizations are tackling the market challenges and gives a comprehensive understanding of the available technologies and how they add value to the organization.

In our selection, we looked at the vendor's capability to fulfill the need for cost-effective and flexible solutions and add value to the complex fleet management landscape. We present to you Logistics Tech Outlook's Top 10 Fleet Management Solution Providers 2017.



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**Company:**  
Trak Engineering

**Description:**  
Helping customers meet the increasing demand for integrated, computerized fuel management and fleet control.

**Key Person:**  
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