

# Developing a Fleet Strategy:

## NINE MISTAKES TO AVOID

BY KEVIN ROSA

Private colleges and universities are being challenged to control costs across the board. But what about your fleet of campus vehicles?



## FiDO Fire Damper Opener

- NFPA requires all fire dampers to be tested 1 year after installation and every 4 - 6 years thereafter (depending on the building type).
- Resetting fire dampers by hand after a test has been performed can be an unsafe, difficult, and time-consuming process.
- **FiDO Fire Damper Openers** help make this process **safer** and **easier**, while also saving significant time and money.



Available@[hvacjack.com](http://hvacjack.com)

## WP<sup>®</sup> Wooster Products Inc. Making every step a safe one!

### Stairmaster<sup>®</sup> Safety Treads



#### Stairmaster Safety Renovation Treads:

- Designed for the modernization and restoration of all stair types
- High quality to assure long tread life under heavy pedestrian traffic
- Durable and long lasting treads for both indoor and outdoor use



**Wooster Products Inc.**  
Anti-slip safety stair and walkway products  
For more information contact us today!  
[woosterproducts.com](http://woosterproducts.com) | 800-321-4936



One way facilities maintenance departments are saving money is by replacing ineffective departmental or piecemeal purchasing with comprehensive fleet planning. Yet many colleges struggle with this issue, with various departments wondering who should take ownership of the process.

**1. Avoid Costly Mistakes.** The following tips enable you to plan an effective fleet, help preempt many fleet management problems and prevent the costly mistake of purchasing vehicles based on cost alone.

Don't fly solo. Many facilities' maintenance teams lack the expertise needed to develop a comprehensive fleet strategy. Partnering with a vehicle manufacturer with trained transportation experts solves that problem. Look for professionals who have worked on many campuses and will coordinate fleet planning among your motor pool, department heads and management. Don't assume that all sales professionals have this knowledge and

experience. Some manufacturers invest much more in training their sales force and maintain a more experienced staff than others.

To start the ball rolling, form a team composed of your transportation expert and internal personnel, then go through the following steps: (1) Discuss any problems regarding safety, sustainability, liability or other issues; (2) Decide whether you'll need on-road or off-road vehicles or a mix of both; (3) Ask your transportation expert to identify "target opportunities" to reduce fleet costs and replace full-size vehicles with utility vehicles (UTVs); (4) Ask about any applicable tax credits in your area; (5) Establish minimum safety requirements for every vehicle in your fleet. Then ask your transportation partner to audit your existing fleet—department by department and vehicle by vehicle.

A knowledgeable professional digs deep during the audit process, working through each department to identify the work it does, the number of crew members and vehicles, the type

and age of current vehicles, where the vehicles are driven and average daily mileage, and the maximum payload needed.

They also will determine any additional safety features needed for the task, who will maintain the vehicle, accessories that can boost productivity, and any specific problems they are facing. Using the information gathered during the audit, he or she will help you create a comprehensive fleet strategy.

**2. Don't create chaos.** Using vehicles made by multiple manufacturers complicates parts, maintenance schedules, charging and more. Working with a single vendor is a smarter way to go for many reasons. It reduces parts inventory and improves safety and compliance, while decreasing training time. It standardizes warranty issues and regulates preventive maintenance, giving you a single point of contact. Finally, it unifies charging and helps stabilize your monthly fleet budget.

*continued...*

# Building or renovating a gymnasium?

IPI  
by Bison

Call the design experts at IPI by Bison at 800-637-7968 for premium custom ceiling and wall mounted basketball backstops, divider curtains, wall padding and gym accessories.

IPI by Bison projects include quality Bison sports equipment!

NFHS  
PARTNER

4specs.com

ARCAT

Divider Curtains & Batting Cages

Ceiling & Wall Mounted Backstops

Ceiling & Floor Mounted Volleyball Systems

Wall Padding

PUPN  
2022 DEAN'S LIST AWARD

FIBA  
APPROVED EQUIPMENT

REQUEST A QUOTE

Competition Basketball Portables

MADE IN AMERICA

THE EXCLUSIVE NFHS PARTNER FOR THE SPORT OF BASKETBALL

**3. Don't play around.** Many manufacturers sell vehicles designed for recreational use as work vehicles. They can't take the abuse of demanding users. Look for utility vehicles designed and built to do the work of pickup trucks. True work utility vehicles generally have aluminum frames that withstand

water, chemicals and salt without rusting. Additionally, their suspension systems are engineered to carry heavy loads. Recreational vehicles, on the other hand, generally have steel frames that rust and suspension systems designed for speed, not carrying loads. They're fun on the weekends, but not right for work.

**4. Don't undervalue accessories and job-specific vehicles.** Find a manufacturer with a large portfolio of commercial-grade accessories. Tool boxes, van boxes with replaceable panels, dual ladder racks, dump kits, stake sides, integrated cabs that help prevent heat-related accidents and other accessories can solve problems, reduce your liability and cut labor costs. Many vendors offer multiple recreational accessories, but few commercial ones. Further, your crews can waste time and money with standard utility vehicles that have no task-speeding options. And makeshift accessories can be ineffective and increase your liability. Fortunately, some manufacturers offer job-specific vehicles equipped with packages of accessories that speed certain applications such as facilities maintenance, grounds maintenance, security, trash removal and other tasks. Ask your vendor about this.

**5. Don't sacrifice power to reduce your carbon footprint.** Sustainability is an important issue on campuses. But the power, ease of use, and reliability of electric vehicles vary considerably by manufacturer. The most important considerations are the battery pack, controller and charger.

First, look for vehicles with 48-volt battery packs and 500-amp controllers, the most powerful among the standard offerings. Many electric utility vehicles have 350- or 400-amp controllers. They don't carry or tow as much weight as those with more powerful controllers. For example, a mid-sized vehicle manufactured by a major brand with a 400-amp controller and a 48-volt battery pack has a bed load and towing capacity of just 600 lbs. (272 kg) each. A comparable vehicle with a 48-volt battery pack but a 500-amp controller delivers a bed load capacity of 800 lbs. (362.8 kg), 200 pounds more than the vehicle above. Its towing capacity is 1,500 lbs. (680.3 kg), two and a half times as much as the other vehicle. Secondly, look for electric vehicles with smart on-board chargers with reel retractors. The chargers issue alerts to prevent common user errors, and the reel retractors let your crews charge at any 110-volt outlet.

**6. Don't forget to put safety first.** The well being of your campus family is your primary concern. What's more, one serious accident can cost your organization

**ARE YOU PREPARED?**  
**WANT HELP MANAGING THESE EVERYDAY PROBLEMS?**  
 LEAKY ROOFS | PLUMBING AND GROUND WATER LEAKS | SPRINKLER MISHAPS

**Learning how to take control in-house can help you reduce risk and prevent:**

- Downtime from contractor delays
- Contractor cost overruns
- Budget problems
- Online complaints
- Dissatisfied facility occupants
- Bad outcomes from inadequate systems
- Indoor air quality Issues

Calling a contractor is the right answer when the problem is large or involves contamination, but **mitigating water losses in-house can save up to 20%** in your budget.

**Legend Brands' Ready to Respond™ (R2R) System can help!**

For the past 50 years, Legend Brands has manufactured industry-leading Dri-Eaz solutions plus provided technical consultation and education to advance the water damage restoration industry.

**Call our technical experts at 888-208-5401 for a free initial consult and to see if an R2R Facility Assessment can help your team be truly prepared!**

**R2R**  
 READY 2 RESPOND

CALL 888-208-5401  
 OR EMAIL R2R@LEGENDBRANDS.COM

**LEGEND BRANDS**

thousands—even hundreds of thousands of dollars. Comprehensive fleet planning sharpens the focus on safety. It lets you decide what safety features you want on your entire fleet during the planning stages, then add additional features as needed for the job.

**7. Smart purchasing may also improve safety.** Some utility vehicles have maximum speeds of 50+ miles per hour. That’s an accident waiting to happen. Further, high speeds generally indicate that vehicles were designed for recreational use. Look for vehicles with safer maximum speeds of less than 25 mph.

**8. Examine the braking system.** Some makes of vehicles experience high rates of brake failure, another serious liability. Vehicles with redundancy built into their braking systems help prevent this. Be sure your electric vehicles offer controlled downhill ability plus zero-speed detect to prevent roll away. Without this, vehicles may freewheel in descent.

**9. Don’t buy before you consider leasing.** Many commercial customers now lease their fleets. This lets them get new cars every three to four years, keep their vehicles under warranty much of the time and reduce their maintenance costs and downtime. They also enjoy the latest upgrades, stabilize their monthly fleet budgets and sell their used fleets back to the supplier at high residuals.

Colleges and universities, on the other hand, have been slow to adopt leasing, largely because of their budgetary structures. However, many private universities can take advantage of Tax-exempt Municipal Leases, a special type of lease agreement designed for government agencies and non-profits. This may be an option if you want to acquire new equipment, preserve your capital and take advantage of your tax-exempt status. Discuss this issue with your accounting team and vendor.

**Final Thoughts**

Beware of vague or incomplete warranty language. A long, strong warranty can save you thousands on one vehicle alone, and it demonstrates the confidence a manufacturer has in its vehicles. Don’t just check the battery warranty on electric vehicles. Check the warranty on the controller and charger as well. Some manufacturers cover

these components for twice as long as others. Finally, work with a vendor who partners with a government purchasing cooperative such as U.S. Communities. This fast-tracks purchasing and guarantees best pricing, yet eliminates the tedious request-for-proposal process.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Kevin Rosa is a regional manager with Club Car. With 17 years of experience, Kevin understands the utility vehicle universe, the campus environment and the fine points of fleet planning. To learn more about fleet strategy, you can visit [www.clubcar.com/us/en/commercial.html](http://www.clubcar.com/us/en/commercial.html).

A GREAT LOOK FOR  
**CLEAN  
SAFE  
FLOORS**

PIG Designer Series Grippy Mat

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**“LOVE THIS STUFF!”**  
No more taping down mats ... and a dramatically reduced number of falls.”  
— Kimberly D.

ADHESIVE BACKING!

[newpig.com](http://newpig.com)  
**1-800-HOT-HOGS®**

**New Pig**  
Cleaner, Safer, Better.