MAXPower Weekly

Maxwell's blog on power, energy, and the future of ultracapacitor technology

A Fleet Manager Eliminates Jump-Starts Using Maxwell Engine Start Modules

September 21, 2015 | Jessica Baris, Communications Specialist and Copywriter

Bill Turner is a busy man, rising at 4 a.m. to manage a fleet of 65 trucks and a team of drivers for Holroyd Company, based in Washington State. Every day, Bill's drivers report to job sites to haul and deliver concrete, gravel and sand.

Sometimes, if he gets lucky with a "quiet" day, Bill catches up on writing labor reports. But most days he fields dispatch calls and resolves flat tires, jump-starts, hydraulic leaks, lost air pressure or engine shut-offs.

"That just goes on back-to-back-to-back," laughs Bill. "I'll dispatch technicians to different jobs, keep in constant contact with my shop clerk, order parts, and make sure the right pieces are at the right job. I visit the different plants, make sure that forklifts are being serviced, and that our wheel loaders are operational and repairs are moving ahead."

With multiple projects, locations and heavy-duty equipment to manage, the last thing Bill needs is a truck that won't start, causing lost productivity and risking delays with the project schedule. Dealing with jump-starts is one of many setbacks any fleet manager must handle. It became one less worry for Bill when he came across Maxwell Technologies' Engine Start Module (ESM) while browsing the Internet.

"I saw the Engine Start Module on an online advertisement for Heavy Duty Trucking," says Bill. "I thought, 'What in the world is this?' The more I thought about it, the more I liked it and I decided to try it."

Bill installed six Maxwell Technologies ULTRA 31/1800 Engine Start Modules in Kenworth T800s and W900s. Before installing the ESMs, the T800 dump trucks were equipped with three or four Group 31 batteries.

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"I removed two or three batteries," says Bill. "The trucks now have one ESM and one battery. That's all we need!"

Bill noticed a difference in truck performance immediately. "I discovered that the ESM starts the truck without failure. You have to have these trucks ready to roll."

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Before installing the ESMs, one of Bill's main concerns was getting a call that a mixer truck wouldn't start.

"The first thing that goes through my mind is, if it's a mixer truck—is it loaded? If it does have a load of mix in the drum, that changes everything. I want to know what's our *fastest* way to get this thing to run?"

Now with the ESMs installed, the mixer trucks fire up hassle-free.

Bill was also concerned about his transfer trucks. Subzero temperatures and long days of repetitive loads and offloads, which require the driver to make several starts and stops, would wear down the batteries and starters. After a few cycles of transfer work, Bill would get calls from drivers left stranded with non-operational trucks. Now, nearly a year after installing the ESMs in his trucks, Bill has come to rely on their dependability for starting despite repetitive starts and stops or cold climate.

"If we have a situation where a truck is away from the plant and they crank it down and the fuel doesn't prime or it doesn't start, wait 10 minutes and the ESM will crank up again. It's just that simple."

Bill feels confident he's getting his money's worth when he considers all the factors that play into dealing with trucks that won't crank due to a battery failure.

"By the time you send a mechanic out there to do a jump-start and get back, it's a half-hour or more worth of labor plus the hidden costs related to a job," he says. "With the ESM, everything will last longer—the alternators, the starters and the batteries. If the batteries only have to carry house loads and fire up the lights and get charged by the alternator, and run air conditioning system and the truck ECM [engine control module], they will last a lot longer. That's all part of that ROI. You're saving on not having service calls, not having jump-starts, and you're not replacing components as often and you're saving on that labor."

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Over his 42-year career, Bill has worked with a variety of crews, customers, and seen all different kinds of job sites and complex equipment. Bill's discovery of the Maxwell ESM solution for truck starting has lessened the stress of being a fleet manager.

"The batteries age," Bill says, "so I decided to try the ESM. As long as we get our people to do the installation correctly and keep our cables tight, we don't have problems. I would tell fleet managers that they should consider the ESM. I would strongly recommend it."

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