

# What Trucking Leaders Are Really Saying About AI and the Workforce



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ **Early inclusion turns skeptics into contributors.** Hill argues that the people already doing the job carry the knowledge that powers better AI training. Bring them in early and they become part of the solution, not resistant to it.
- ▶ **Give teams a few extra laps.** Because trucking hasn't historically been a tech-forward industry, Hill recommends giving teams a bit more time to internalize new tools before expecting full utilization.
- ▶ **Growth, not reduction, is the near-term story.** Transportation leadership is entrepreneurial by nature. Hill's prediction is that AI-driven efficiency gets reinvested into growth, not headcount reduction.
- ▶ **The dispatcher becomes a higher order operator.** As routine tasks get automated, dispatchers in smaller fleets gain bandwidth for culture-building work. In larger fleets, they scale from managing 50 to 60 trucks to 100 to 120.
- ▶ **Digital twins open a new on-ramp for new hires.** When AI removes rote tasks from junior roles, simulation technology steps in, giving new hires real-world scenarios without real-world consequences.



## The conversation about agentic AI in trucking is moving fast, and two questions are rising to the top at once. How do organizations deploy the technology effectively? And what does it mean for the people doing the work?



**Mark Hill**  
Chief Executive Officer  
PCS Software



Both are proving harder to answer than most leaders expected, and both were front and center in a recent [RoadSigns Extended Cut episode from Transport Topics](#).

Mark Hill, chief executive officer at [PCS Software](#), sat down with Transport Topics Managing Editor [Seth Clevenger](#) to share what he's hearing from fleet customers and operations leaders navigating the shift. Hill didn't come with talking points about disruption. He came with a framework for how trucking companies can bring their people along, build adoption that sticks and emerge from this technology wave with more jobs, better roles and stronger organizations than they went in with.

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## When AI Meets the Trucking Workforce

The conversation about artificial intelligence in transportation has shifted from “if” to “how fast” and now, increasingly, to “what happens to the people.” In a recent [RoadSigns episode](#), Seth Clevenger sat down with Mark Hill of PCS Software to work through exactly that question: How do trucking and logistics organizations prepare their employees to work effectively alongside agentic AI as it moves from emerging concept to operational reality?

The conversation cuts through the noise of mainstream AI anxiety and lands on something more practical and more optimistic than most industry watchers expect.

### Include Teams Early

Hill’s first principle is straightforward: Don’t spring AI on the workforce after the fact.

“Including them early in the process and in the understanding is very important,” said Hill. “Really helping people understand that in many cases, or most of the cases, the people that are currently doing the job have the knowledge and have the insight that really we’re trying to use to better train and better understand from a technology perspective.”

The framing matters. When employees understand that their expertise is the raw material that makes AI better, they stop seeing the technology as a threat and start seeing themselves as contributors to it. Hill’s recommendation: Make sure every team member knows they’re bringing value to the process, not being replaced by it.



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## A Few Extra Laps

Hill describes it as “a few extra laps,” and in trucking, that kind of patience with technology adoption is earned, not optional. Implementation timelines need to account for the industry’s relationship with technology. Historically, it hasn’t been first in line.

“What I see in the transportation space, because it has not been a heavily tech-forward industry, is it takes people just a couple of extra laps on each one of these technologies to fully understand them,” Hill said, “and then internalize how best to use them and then lean fully into the utilization of the tool.”

That’s not a criticism. It’s a planning note. Operations leaders who build in room for that learning curve see fuller adoption. Those who don’t tend to wonder why utilization stalls.

## Jobs Will Change, but Not Shrink

The angst is real. AI automation, the argument goes, means fewer jobs and trucking isn’t immune. Hill doesn’t dismiss the concern, but he pushes back on the timeline and the magnitude.

“It is going to take jobs, and it’s going to change jobs,” said Hill. “But what I know about our industry is that leadership is entrepreneurial, and there’s not one of them that’s going to look at that opportunity and go, oh good, we can get smaller. Every single one of them is going to take the opportunity that technology presents to them to run a more efficient, effective organization, and they’re going to look for ways to get bigger.”



“I think as we look at [2027], ‘28, maybe even into ‘29, we’ll actually see an uptick in the number of jobs available to folks that are willing to learn, willing to lean into these technologies.”



His near-term forecast is more jobs, not fewer, driven by business growth and economic expansion enabled by AI. “I think as we look at [2027], ‘28, maybe even into ‘29, we’ll actually see an uptick in the number of jobs available to folks that are willing to learn, willing to lean into these technologies,” said Hill. “Not a downcycle in hiring.”

The jobs that disappear, he argues, are already disappearing. The purely rote, repetitive tasks that began automating a decade ago. What replaces them is higher-order work.

## The Dispatcher’s Evolving Role

If one role in trucking captures the workforce shift most clearly, Hill points to the dispatcher.

“A dispatcher does so much more than just dispatching,” said Hill.

In fleets up to the 300- to 400-truck range, dispatchers routinely carry compliance work, driver check-ins and other organizational duties alongside their core planning responsibilities.

As AI handles more of those routine tasks, that capacity gets redirected.

“Those people are going to be freed up to do some of the higher-order things, making sure they’re checking in with customers, making sure drivers are home and happy, those types of things that really build a better sense of community, a better sense of culture,” said Hill.

In larger fleets, the math looks different but the opportunity is the same. “Instead of handling 50 or 60 trucks, they can handle a hundred or 120 trucks,” said Hill.”

The dispatcher doesn’t disappear. The role expands.

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## Digital Twins Transform Training

There’s a legitimate tension in the AI and workforce conversation that doesn’t get enough attention: If AI automates the entry-level tasks, how does the next generation learn the job?

Traditionally, junior employees earned their way up by doing the repetitive, low-stakes work first. It wasn’t glamorous. Hill acknowledges most people hated it, but it built foundational knowledge. Automate that away, and the on-ramp disappears.

Hill’s answer is [digital twin](#) technology.

“When you have concepts like digital twin, where you can actually put a worker into a real-life scenario that we would’ve never trusted them with before, and they can make every mistake in the book in a digital world before actually affecting that mistake in the real world,” said Hill, that changes everything about early career development.

For mechanics and technicians, it means hands-on experience in a consequence-free environment. For dispatchers and back-office roles, it means simulating complex, high-pressure situations before anyone goes live.

“I can probably do more training and make more competent early-career employees than was possible when constrained by the physical and real world,” said Hill.

### Bottom Line: Trucking’s AI workforce story is a growth story, not a cautionary tale.

The workforce story around agentic AI in trucking is still being written, but Hill’s read on the near term is more growth-oriented than the mainstream narrative suggests. Transportation leaders who bring employees into the AI-development process early allow realistic adoption timelines. Also, those who invest in simulation-based training are likely to outperform those still treating AI as an HR problem to manage. The dispatcher who handles 120 trucks instead of 60, the new hire who learns in a digital-twin environment before touching a live system: These aren’t hypothetical outcomes. They are the operational upside that’s already taking shape.





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