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▲ Lyall Cresswell

## Backloading is a key to running your operation at a profit

WE AT THE FREIGHT Best Practice programme team were very pleased to see your interview last week with Lyall Cresswell (*CM* 31 August 2006), and commend the opportunities that online freight exchanges can offer to help freight operators make the most of each others' capacity.

As readers may know, we are long-time supporters of the practice of backloading, and indeed we have published a guide – *Make Backloading Work for You* – which is aimed at helping operators integrate and increase backloading within their business in order to improve profitability and operational efficiency,

and reduce empty or light running.

If readers are interested in the exchange of free advice on saving money in operations they should log onto our own website at [www.freightbestpractice.org.uk](http://www.freightbestpractice.org.uk) to download any of our guides, which cover a range of ways to make savings and improve operational efficiency.

The programme is a two-way process – our guides are produced in partnership with industry to ensure they are informed and accurate.

**John Hix**  
**Spokesman, Freight Best Practice**

● For more on Freight Best Practice see page 16

## Mr X is on the button about market forces...

I TOTALLY AGREE with Mr X's comments last week (*CM* 31 August 2006).

There are far too many hauliers chasing too little work and hauliers are under-cutting each other just to get the work.

I previously worked for a distribution company near Bristol. A potential customer asked us to quote for full-load 44-tonne artic work from Bristol to Northampton; I submitted a rate but was told it was too high. A well-established East Anglian haulier had quoted £110 because it had trucks in the Bristol area every day and it would "pay the diesel home". Where the hell is the sense in that? I was offered the work at those rates but refused.

Too many UK hauliers are

using Eastern European operators as the scapegoat for cut-throat haulage rates when the real problem is over-capacity in the marketplace. The increased number of foreign trucks on our roads is apparent, but do they really have the effect that everyone states they do?

We're seeing more and more operators leaving the industry because they can no longer compete – and surely this can only be a good thing for the remaining operators.

**Name and address withheld**

## ...but he's all wrong about cabbotage

MR X'S COMMENTS last week are less than helpful. No one complains about market forces, for indeed as Mr X says, that is futile. But unfair competition –



well, our members would expect us to stand up against that.

And cabotage is one example. We reckon the penetration of the relevant market is not 3% or 5%, but nearer 20-25%. Even the government now accepts that it is at least 11%. By narrowing down to like for like we arrive at the higher figure.

If Mr X feels none of this matters, good for him. He's lucky; too many of our members are not.

The RHA and FTA have painstakingly developed a well researched argument that has galvanised the government into

some positive action. It's a pity we cannot argue our case without someone saying the opposite.

But then, it is a free country. Still.

**Roger King**  
**Chief executive**  
**Road Haulage Association**

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