



Kenworth T680 Premium Features Draw Rave Review from Fleet Owner and Drivers

Dedicated Carrier also Sees Half MPG Improvement in Fuel Economy

PHILLIPSBURG, N.J. – Howard Sodano abides by the “Golden Rule.” Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

It’s been his mantra since starting his trucking company – HRS Transport – more than 30 years ago. “I started with one truck at the age of 25, hauling cheese from New Jersey to the Midwest,” Sodano recalled. “I had learned the intricacies of the trucking industry as the operations manager for a small fleet, and I used to drive local loads for my grandfather. So, I decided that when I hired drivers, I’d treat them the way I’d want to be treated. And that includes driving the best trucks.”



Howard Sodano, owner of HRS Transport, is shown with one of his fleet’s Kenworth T680s equipped with a 76-inch sleeper and PACCAR MX-13 engine.

Sodano has grown his fleet to 36 trucks as a dedicated carrier to a health and beauty aids company. He landed the business after a chance meeting with the traffic manager of the company, who asked Sodano if he could run a few loads each week with his truck.

“That was in 1985,” said Sodano. “I gave up the cheese run and decided to put my eggs in this basket. And, it’s paid off as I’ve grown with that company, becoming a supply chain partner, not just another trucking company.”



In 2013, Sodano began the transition to the Kenworth T680. He personally test drove and spec’d the T680 to his liking. “We were running the Kenworth T660, but we saw the T680 with the PACCAR MX as a clear improvement in terms of comfort and performance,” he said. “After the initial two trucks were in our fleet and doing great, we decided to move all the way forward with the T680 and when the T660s aged out (HRS has a trade cycle of less than three years) we replaced them with T680s.”

Sodano spec’s the T680 with 76-inch sleepers to the nines. And, just as importantly, the company’s annual fuel costs have come down by nearly \$3,000 per truck, thanks to the aerodynamics of the T680, coupled with the PACCAR MX-13 engine’s fuel-sipping performance. The engine is rated at 500 horsepower and is driven through a 13-speed Fuller transmission. The T680/MX combo is getting a half mile per gallon improvement* in fuel economy over the performance of his previous combination.



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HRS Transport has a driver turnover rate of less than 20 percent, thanks to Sodano’s “driver-first” mentality. “I would never put a driver in a truck that I didn’t want to drive myself,” he said. “Plus, I still drive on occasion – I never want to give that up. I know for a fact there is less fatigue in driving the T680. The truck is so quiet; it pulls better and drives nicer. At the end of the day, you’re not as fatigued.”

Sodano, who drives a BMW with seats that heat and cool, was quick to bring that option to his T680. “I love that in my car, so I knew I wanted it in our trucks too,” he said. “The premium leather seats (GT703) are just great and to be able to have the heat warm you up in the winter, or cool you down in the summer, just adds in making for a comfortable ride.”



The T680s feature a 180-degree swivel passenger seat and swivel table, which maximizes the driver’s living space by combining the cab and sleeper into a large studio. The Driver’s Studio also features ample storage space, including a full-size closet for hanging clothes, multiple storage drawers, and a large storage space under the lower bunk.

Sodano specs a refrigerator, Sirius radio and the Kenworth Idle Management System (KIMS) for

engine-off heating and cooling, in each of his T680s.

“I just love the KIMS option,” he said. “We wanted a low-maintenance APU and this is it. In the winter our idle rate is about 7 percent. In the summer it’s under 10 – and we run into Florida, so that says something.”



Sodano said drivers can expect six to 10 hours of continuous cooling in the T680 – even in the hot Florida sun. “Once we shut down the truck, at say 70 degrees, the Kenworth system will maintain that temperature. We’re about to hit our third summer with the system and the system has required minimal maintenance. Our drivers love it.”

Even though HRS is a dedicated carrier, it doesn’t mean it can skimp on performance. “We’re tested every day and graded every week on performance,” said Sodano. “We have to continually justify our existence and that’s the way it should be. Over the last two weeks we had a 100 percent on-time delivery rate. And overall, we’re in the high 90s.”

Helping HRS even further is Kenworth TruckTech+, which came with a complimentary two-year subscription with the T680s. TruckTech+ is a remote diagnostic tool imbedded in the T680. It provides instant notifications to the fleet manager, via email, about an issue with a truck – interpreting the fault code into an actionable item, allowing real-time decision making.



KENWORTH
TRUCKTECH+
Remote Diagnostics

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“I plan to renew the subscription when the time comes. It’s that valuable to me,” Sodano said. “We haven’t gotten many alerts, but when they come in, we’ll call the driver and go over the situation. In most cases, the alert hasn’t even come up in the truck yet, so we’re telling the driver he has an issue – such as low DEF – even before he knows it. It’s amazing. The bottom line benefit is we now know the condition of the truck, and the severity of the problem, and can make good decisions based on that information. It’s powerful stuff and only helps us in keeping our trucks on the road.”



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