



Kenworth T680 Gives Dallas Carrier the Edge To Attract and Retain Qualified Drivers

DALLAS, Texas – As the “go-to” carrier for many Fortune 500 companies – hauling a variety of freight including retail items, dry goods and housing materials – Summit Trucking has earned a reputation as one of the nation’s premier trucking and logistics companies.



The Dallas-based carrier runs a fleet of 145 trucks with plans focused on growth. Kenworth plays a major part in the company’s plans with the addition of 70 new Kenworth T680s purchased from MHC Kenworth – Dallas.



“When you put a brand new truck, like a Kenworth T680, on the yard at your terminal, drivers get excited, especially when they know it’s going to be the future of the company,” said Summit President Bart Plaskoff. “It’s definitely a recruiting tool. Our drivers get stopped with questions at truck stops, and potential hires come into our terminal inquiring about driving the new trucks.”



The Kenworth T680s are equipped with 76-inch sleepers, full aerodynamic packages, 450-hp engines, 12-speed automated transmissions, Meritor MT40-14X rear differentials with a 2.79 ratios, and low-profile Bridgestone tires.

“We were looking for fuel efficiency, uptime, and a comfortable ride for the driver, all of which Kenworth provides in the T680. Add an APU into the mix, and being a smaller carrier, we can supply drivers with the same top-rated equipment as some of the large carriers,” Plaskoff said.



“A major portion of our decision was based on the support that we got from Kenworth and from MHC Kenworth – Dallas in particular,” said Tim Roach, Summit executive vice president. “We are fortunate to know a lot of people in the industry, and relied on them for their experience with Kenworth trucks and their powertrains, and the positive results they are achieving.”

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While servicing the 48 contiguous United States and Canada, Summit's trucks average 140,000 miles a year. The new Kenworth T680s were purchased with 500,000-mile warranties. The plan is to run them about 400,000 miles before trading them in. That way, they are still under warranty and will command premium resale value.

The decision to go with the automated transmission was admittedly a big move for Summit, but one that made sense. "It's all about the cost of operations, and with fuel being a major expense, (switching to automated) was more than justified," Roach said. The combination of the T680's efficient powertrain and aerodynamic performance has conservatively gained Summit more than a one-quarter mile per gallon* in fuel efficiency.



According to Plaskoff, it took a little persuading to get Summit's drivers on board with an automated transmission. The majority of them have 30-plus years behind the wheel, and had become accustomed to shifting a manual transmission. But once the drivers understood the benefits – not only to them, but the company as a whole, they were sold.

"I gave them the option that if they didn't like the new T680 and the automated transmissions they could go back into a different truck. None of them have switched back over," Plaskoff said.

"The drivers really like the T680. It's got plenty of power and torque. They're also impressed with the comfort level of the cab and the 76-inch sleeper, and the smooth shifting, quiet ride and increased visibility," Plaskoff added. "With some of the other makes of trucks we've run, we had driver complaints of them not being put together well, with rattles and excessive noise going down road. We've had zero complaints on the T680 with anything of that nature."



"We're very concerned with keeping our trucks rolling so that drivers can get their miles and get back home to have some time off," Plaskoff continued. "We're very confident in the T680. Our drivers don't stay out a long time, so if we ever do have to put a truck in the shop, MHC Kenworth – Dallas is very responsive. They really take care of us."

"Kenworth T680 is a top-of-the-line truck," Roach said, "It's a perfect fit, as we think of ourselves as a 'cut-above' trucking company."



That cut-above mentality is helping fill seats. "Drivers are key to our future," concluded Roach. "Not only do we have to find qualified drivers to feed our growth, but we need to give them the best equipment so we can retain them. The Kenworth T680 gives us that edge."

Kenworth is The Driver's Truck™. See what drivers are saying at www.kenworth.com/drivers.

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**Individual fuel economy improvement will vary depending on use, road conditions and other factors.*