Look beyond the charger when planning a successful EV fleet transition

Effective planning is a vital part of any major business transition, to ensure efficiency. Cameron Galloway, Design Manager for fleet and workplace charging at Mer UK, considers why the key to a successful electric vehicle (EV) fleet transition strategy is taking a circular approach.

Most businesses in the UK require some level of operational and logistical transportation. Though still very much a part of our transport operations, time is running out for the millions of diesel and petrol fleet vehicles; the gradual transition to EVs is inevitable.

As a result, many businesses have already embarked on their transition, or are looking to develop a strategy for doing so in the coming years. But for many, the concept of powering their fleets by electricity is completely new.

A successful EV transition starts with a solid plan, and understanding where you are starting from and where you want to get to. Charge Point Operators (CPOs) have the expertise to support this process, offering upfront consultancy and design expertise to make the transition as straightforward as possible.

Transitioning fleets from fossil-fuelled to electric is not a linear process

An EV fleet transformation case starts with understanding the company's EV fleet ambitions, analysing what they might look like in reality, investigating what is required against and what is available in a feasibility study, and planning according to those resources. Next up is reviewing the plan against the ambitions, analysing any restrictions, before going back to the first step and adjusting the plan. The process follows with a review, drawing up an implementation plan and reviewing that, and so on. So, what might seem like a linear process is actually a continual plan-review-adjust-replan-review process.

Several large companies which rely heavily on logistics are creating their transition plans sometimes years in advance of rolling them out, knowing that they will probably need changes before the actual installation. It is better to be prepared, to factor the likely costs into future CAPEX spending and create an effective project management approach in advance.

There is no standard plan that can be universally applied to taking a fleet from internal combustion engine (ICE) to EV, as every company, fleet and site has unique needs be taken into consideration before EV charging infrastructure can be implemented. Taking a pragmatic approach and allowing for changes and adjustments throughout the process does not have to be as daunting as it sounds.

A design-driven strategy

The first conversation about what a business really wants to achieve from its EV transition goes far beyond the charger, beyond the vehicle, even power. Starting with questions such as "how are the drivers actually going to use this?" and 'how is charging going to fit into their workday?" helps an organisation picture not only what the solution will look like, but also explore what operational changes might be required – which could ultimately improve productivity and efficiency.

These conversations encapsulate everything: "How does the site work currently?" "How would we integrate charging into this site operationally?" "How is it going to affect things in terms of health and safety, do we need more sprinklers?" "Will the chargers have to go in a certain location because of some constraint?"

Ultimately, having a conversation about what you want to achieve from the start helps set the priorities for the design to address and achievable expectations.

Mer's design-driven consultancy services can help you tap into that bigger picture to visualise and achieve an impressive and effective EV fleet transition.

To find out more about Mer's consultancy services for tailored advice and solutions, download our free EV transition checklist.

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