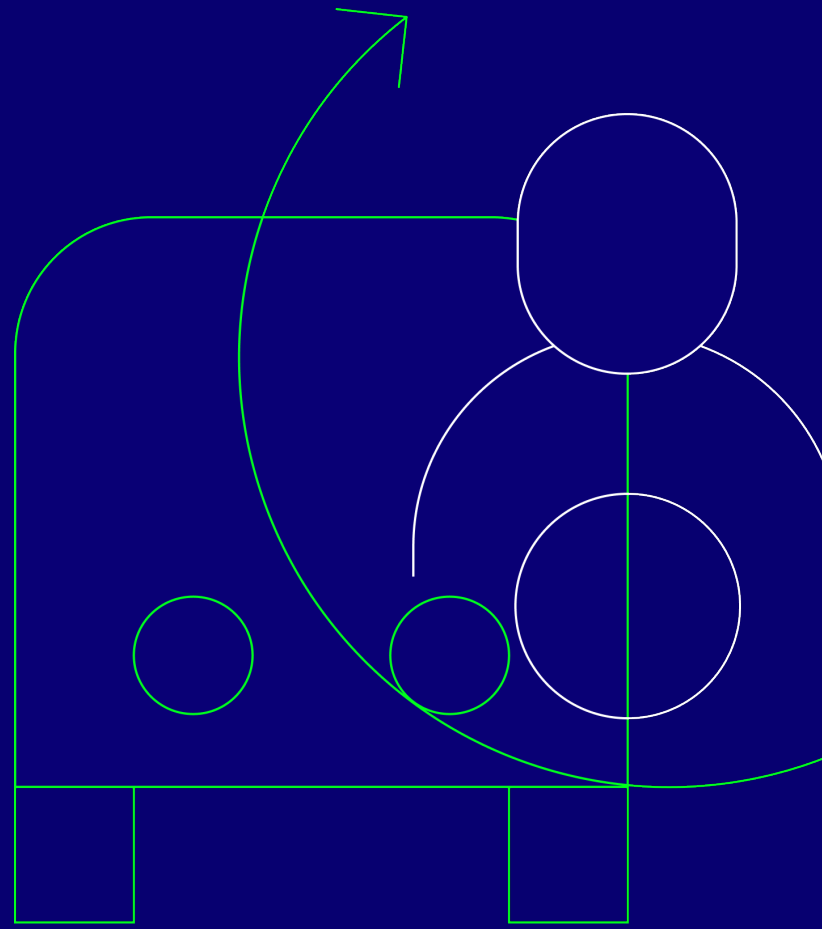
Valtech Mobility Report

Trucks Are Digital. The Driver's Work Is Not.

What we learned by assessing 11 trucks at IAA Transportation 2026 from an experience point of view. How the cabin supports the driver's work, and what it means for truck makers.



Why This Report

The problem

Truck makers build excellent software, but only little of it helps the driver with the actual work, such as the job, the truck manual or a place to park.

Our approach

We are automotive UX specialists, not truck drivers. We sat in 11 trucks at IAA Transportation 2026, talked to drivers and manufacturer staff, and assessed each cabin by what it does for the driver’s work.

Goal of the report

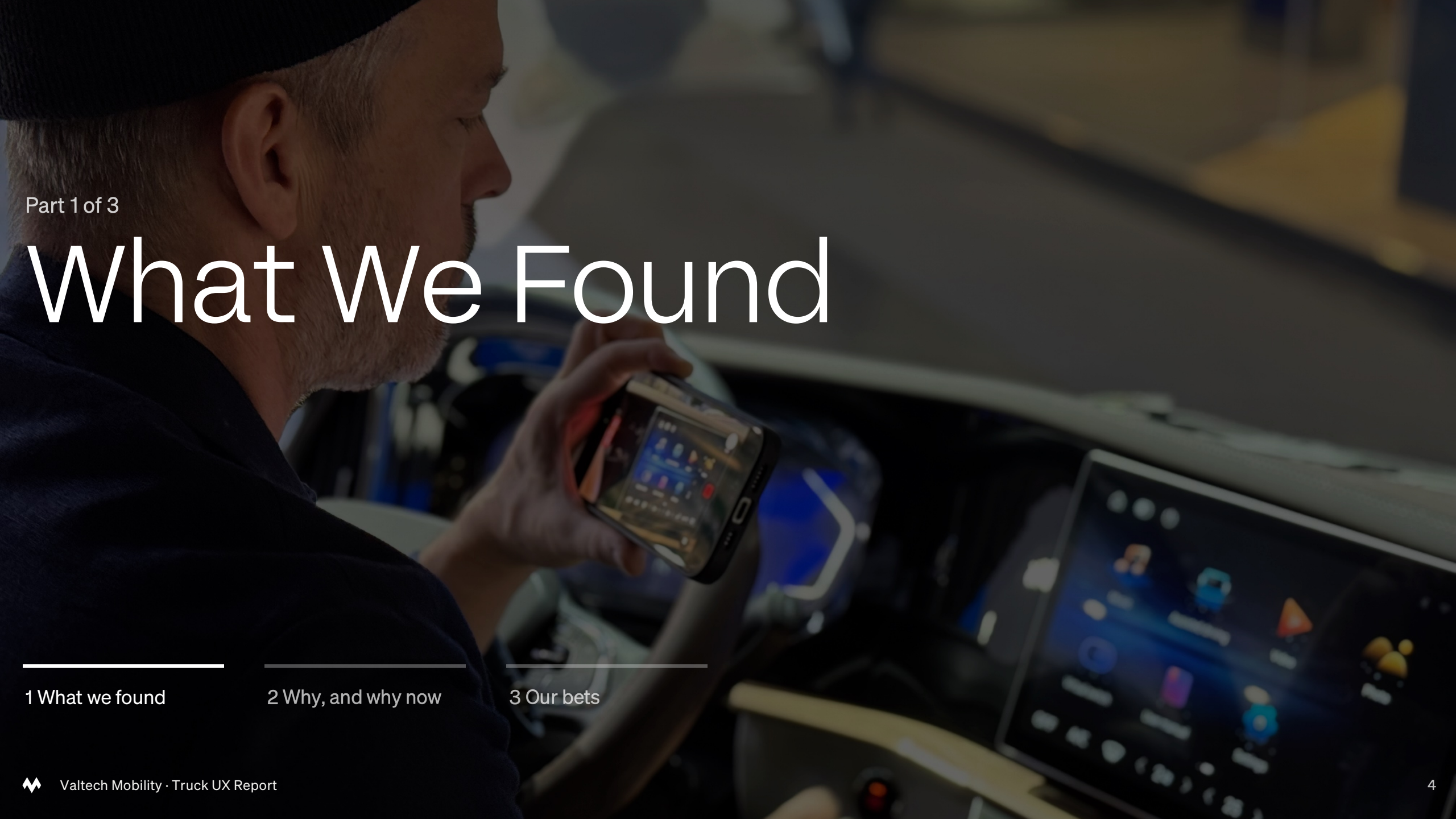
Show what the market offers to make the driver's work easier, and where the driver's pain points are. The cabin is also where drivers spend much of their lives, so we also look at how far they can make it their own.

The 11 Trucks We Looked At

- Scania: Super 430 R
- Volvo Trucks: FH Electric
- DAF: XD / XF Electric
- MAN: eTGX
- Mercedes-Benz: eActros 600
- Renault Trucks: T780
- Ford Trucks: F-LINE E and F-MAX
- Tesla: Semi
- FAW: Cortron / TL.X concept
- Dongfeng: FCV
- DeepWay: Star 513

How to read the list

Models as shown on the stands
Show vehicles, not series vehicles in every detail



Part 1 of 3

What We Found

1 What we found

2 Why, and why now

3 Our bets

A Driver's Day: What Works, What Is Normal, What Is Missing

	What works	What is normal	What is missing
Before the trip	Volvo: set a departure time and the truck gets ready by itself. DAF: plans charging stops on the route.	Planning is done in the office or an app.	The truck does not know the job.
On the road	Drivers we spoke to preferred real buttons and knobs (4 sources, 5 drivers). An indication, not proof.	A touchscreen plus a row of buttons. Safety warnings get switched off, one maker told us. We hardly saw voice or AI in use, at most to lower a window.	Spoken information about the work. Voice handles only car functions, so the driver must look at a screen.
While waiting	FAW has a rest mode and a ventilation mode.	Music and video from a USB stick or phone.	European trucks have no waiting mode.
Resting in the cabin	Renault: windows, radio and night-vision cameras controlled from the bed. Mercedes: five light zones.	Lights and bed controls differ by model. Drivers want to set light and music themselves (24 drivers).	Safety depends on the model. One truck has no bed.
Learning	Scania coaches drivers in the truck: 3.1 % less fuel (Scania's own study, 900 drivers). Deepway explains each setting.	Language is set on the dashboard. Coaching differs.	Wrong time formats. One warning appeared in Turkish.

Evidence: observed in our review of 11 trucks unless marked. Statements by makers and drivers are few and anonymous. Scania figure: Scania's own data. Personal settings: Pfau et al., AHFE 2025, 24 German drivers (own light 7.2 of 10; automatic mood lighting 5.0). Small sample.

Four Things No Truck We Saw Could Do

The truck knows how full its battery is, but not what it is driving for.



Know the driver's job



Connect the job to the cargo



Understand spoken requests about the work, and answer questions about the vehicle



Suggest the next step by itself, like a break

None of the 11 trucks did any of these. Show vehicles had no fleet back end connected: this shows what the cabin offers, not what a connected fleet could add. Volvo shows company messages and routes, but not the job itself. Volvo and FA understood voice commands for vehicle functions, but none handled requests about the work or questions about the vehicle. Other features also scored zero; these four matter most for the driver's work.

The Big Three Gaps, in Numbers

1 · The job

0 of 11

trucks showed the driver's current job in the cabin. Planning stays in the office or an app.

The truck knows its battery level, but not what it is driving for. Of the 11, only Volvo showed company messages with a location.

Business benefit if solved

Fewer detours and calls between driver and dispatcher: one plan for charging, breaks and delivery. Our hypothesis, not measured.

→ Bet 1 · Show the job (page 19)

2 · The manual

811

pages. One truck gives the driver a long PDF. Another has a clickable 3D guide with search.

About 3 in 10 German truck drivers (30.4 %) are foreign nationals. Career changers start after about 140 lessons, so they need a quick, clear introduction to the truck and its systems.

Business benefit if solved

New drivers work safely sooner and need less coaching. In-truck coaching has measurable effects (Scania: 3.1 % less fuel).

→ Bet 2 · A manual you can ask (page 19)

3 · Parking

0 of 11

trucks show free parking spaces. Germany offers estimated occupancy for about 1,850 motorway rest areas, free with registration.

19,600 spaces are missing in Germany. 43 % of drivers surveyed search 30 to 60 minutes (small sample). With more deliveries and more vehicles on the road, parking keeps getting harder.

Business benefit if solved

Less paid time lost on searching, and calmer breaks within the legal rest times. Our hypothesis, not measured.

→ Bet 3 · Find a place to park (page 19)

Evidence: observed in our review (0 of 11, 811). Published data: Destatis; BAG/BALM; Toll Collect SID via Mobilithek; BASt 2023; Dekra survey (small sample). The benefits are our hypotheses.

What We Heard: Three Voices, Three of the Big Gaps

1 · The job

"The data goes from the trucks to fleet management, and fleet management decides what the drivers see or do not see."

A connected-services lead at a large truck maker, about the US market

2 · The manual

"The manual is out of date. And today's voice assistants are too dumb: you don't use them."

A professional driver and driver trainer

3 · Parking

"Finding a truck parking space is clearly the biggest pain. There are fewer spaces every year."

The same driver and trainer

Sentences from our own voice notes after two conversations at the stands, translated from German and shortened: not word-for-word. Names and employers left out. The US statement concerns the US market only.

What Else We Heard: Touch, Rest Stops and Apps

Touch

"With touch, you always have to look where you touch. You take your eyes off the road."

A sales representative at a truck maker

Rest stops

"The washrooms at rest stops are a huge pain. They are often dirty. A rating for rest stops would help."

A professional driver and driver trainer

Apps

"I am happy with the card I put in. I do not want an app for this."

A young truck driver, about the driver card in the tachograph

Sentences from our own voice notes and a recorded conversation at the stands, translated from German and shortened: not word-for-word. Names and employers left out. Few conversations: they show what we heard, not what all drivers think.

More Voices: Information, a Second Screen and Setup

Information

"I want my driving times, my current route, my day routes and my battery level on the display."

A professional driver and driver trainer

Second screen

"Many companies use the truck screen only for axle load, radio, climate and cameras. Their own system is hard to integrate, so a tablet or laptop sits on the dashboard."

A sales representative at a truck maker

Personal setup

"When I put the driver card into the tachograph, the system language could set itself."

The same driver and trainer

Sentences from our own voice notes and recorded conversations at the stands, translated from German and shortened: not word-for-word. Names and employers left out. Few conversations: they show what we heard, not what all drivers think.

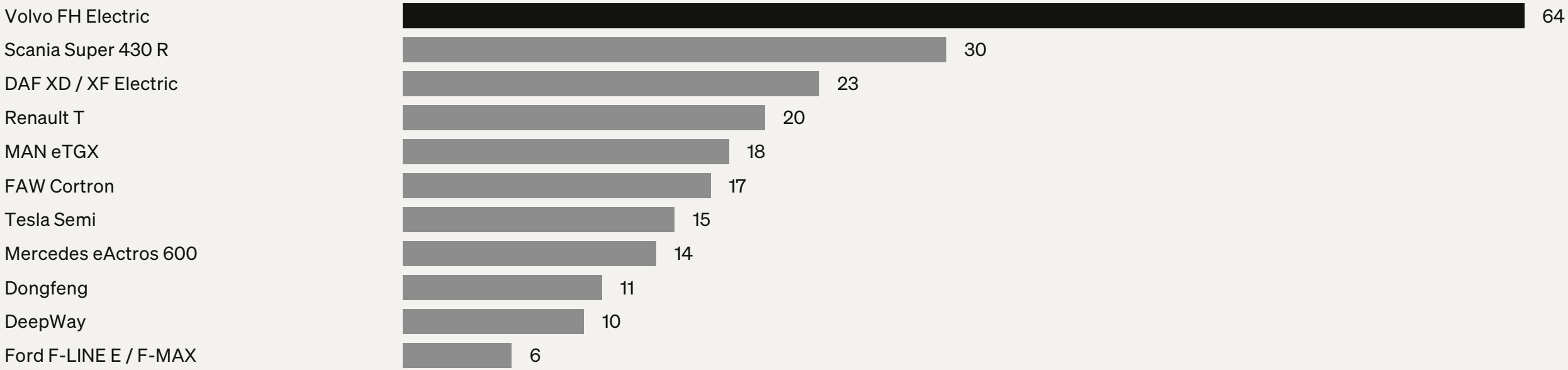
Each Maker Is Good at Something. None Is Good at Everything.

Topic	Strongest example we saw	What they do
Learning about the truck	Volvo	Visual guide entry, search, videos, QR code to your phone
Electric charging	DAF	Plans stops with enough free plugs, and drive-through chargers
Driver coaching	Scania	Scores your driving, gives lessons, saves 3.1 % fuel
Cabin lighting	Scania, Mercedes	Screen style matches the lights; five separate light zones
Resting in the cabin	Renault	Bed controls and night-vision cameras
Personal settings	Volvo	Drivers build their own screens
Messages from the company	Volvo	The company sends a message with a location
Voice	FAW, Volvo	Voice control of vehicle functions

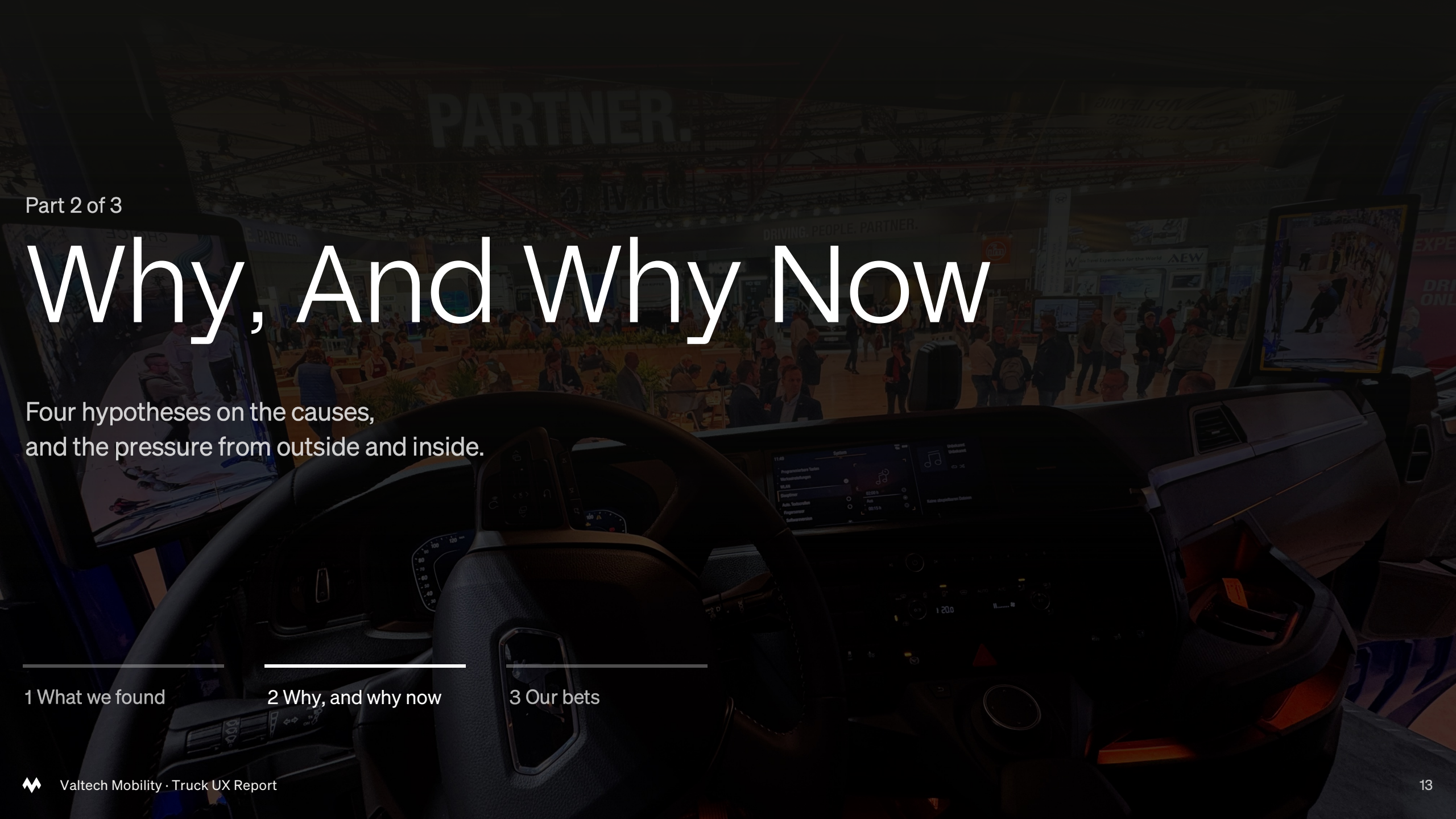
Basis: features we could operate at the stands. No ranking and no overall score. A feature switched off at a stand may still exist. Evidence: observed.

How the Trucks Compare: Our Overall Rating

Four parts of equal weight: services we saw, job and work information, personalisation and cabin, vehicle information and voice.



Our assessment of show vehicles on short visits, not a product test. A feature we could not check is not counted, so trucks with little access can score low. Method on page 26. Legal to check before publication.



Part 2 of 3

Why, And Why Now

Four hypotheses on the causes,
and the pressure from outside and inside.

1 What we found

2 Why, and why now

3 Our bets

Why Is It Like This? Four Hypotheses

The buyer is the company, not the driver

Companies decide which features drivers get. Messages flow from the company to the driver (one maker source, US market).

The job lives on a second screen

Drivers often get jobs on a separate tablet. One tablet works across the mixed truck brands of a fleet. This is our guess.

The dashboard is older than the software

A smaller screen in an old dashboard is cheaper than a new dashboard, one maker said.

Rules shape the cabin

EU length limits keep cabins small. Required warnings that annoy drivers get switched off.

The result: up to three screens in reach

Truck infotainment, job tablet and phone compete for the driver's attention.
That is a safety question we did not test. Four trucks with big screens still did not know the job.

All four are hypotheses built on what we observed and a few conversations at the stands. They are not measured. Makers' statements are anonymous.

Chinese Makers Are Arriving, With Cabins Designed Around the Screen

17 %

of exhibitors at IAA Transportation were Chinese (at least 208 of 1,192)

49 %

of exhibitors in hall 21 were Chinese

Chinese makers start from a different point. The cabin experience is one place where European makers can stand out.

What we saw

FAW showed the largest screen of the show. Dongfeng used larger type and bigger touch areas. Both are observations from short visits at the stands.

Why it matters for usability

Small screens mean small touch areas, which are harder to hit in a moving truck, and perhaps with gloves on. Larger screens give the Chinese makers an edge here. This is our reasoning, not tested.

Sources: IAA exhibitor list (our count); our own observations at the stands. Exhibitor figures are our count, not an official statistic.

Market Differences Show Up Inside the Truck

What is happening in the market	What it means inside the truck	How sure are we?
Electric trucks are rare in Europe	Drivers must plan charging stops. One maker (DAF) helps with this inside the cabin.	We saw it
Swapping a battery takes 5 minutes in China	Charging stops may matter less to drivers there.	Our guess
European trucks usually belong to a company	The company sends the job to the driver, not the other way round.	We saw it
Many Chinese drivers own their truck	They buy the cabin they live in, so comfort may sell the truck directly.	Our guess
EU rules limit truck length and require warnings	Cabins are smaller. One maker told us the required warning is switched off first.	We saw it
Both regions require trucks to record data	Truck data is collected by law. Job data is not.	Public rules

Sources: slides 28 to 31; our review at IAA; EU driving-time rules (Regulation 561/2006). "We saw it" means we saw it in the trucks.

Who Is the Person Climbing Into the Cabin?

502,000

unfilled truck driver jobs in Europe (13 % shortage rate)

39 %

of truck drivers in Germany are 55 or older

30.4 %

of truck drivers in Germany are foreign nationals, up from 10.9 % in 2014

140

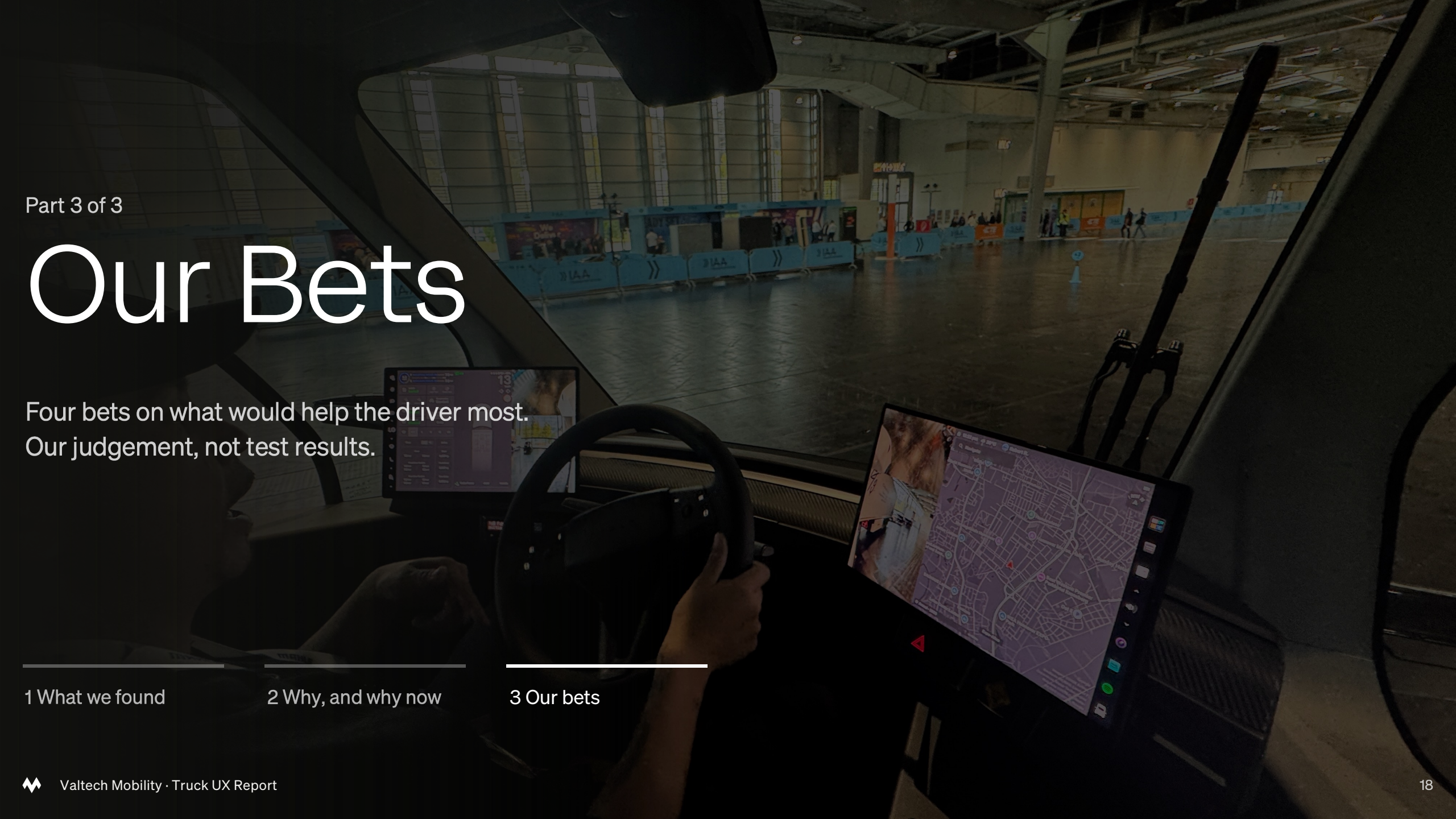
lessons: career changers start after about four weeks of basic qualification

What this means for the cabin

New to the job and the truck. A long PDF manual on a small screen is a poor fit: it must be scrolled, and even a search is awkward. Volvo's visual entry to the manual worked best: little text, just tap on the truck.

An honest limit. Better onboarding does not solve the driver shortage. It makes starting easier and shortens the time until someone works safely and productively.

Sources: IRU Global Driver Shortage Report 2025; Destatis (Jan 2025); BAG/BALM; Berlin chambers of commerce. Published data. Nationality is not language.



Part 3 of 3

Our Bets

Four bets on what would help the driver most.
Our judgement, not test results.

1 What we found

2 Why, and why now

3 Our bets

Four bets, each built on what we saw.

Our Bets: Help the Driver, Not Just the Hardware

They are our judgement, not tested results. The common thread: the truck should help the driver do the job.

Bet 1 · Show the job in the truck

If the truck knows the job, it can plan charging and breaks around it.

Why we think so: No truck showed the job (show vehicles, no fleet back end). DAF plans charging around the break.

- How sure: Medium

Bet 2 · A manual you can ask

A manual you can ask: "What does the yellow light on the left mean?" It answers in the driver's language.

Why we think so: Volvo's 3D guide against DAF's 811-page PDF. No truck we saw let the driver ask. Eases starting only.

- How sure: Medium, not yet measured

Bet 3 · Find a place to park

Before the break is due, the truck finds a free parking space and offers it.

Why we think so: A driver named parking the biggest pain. None of the 11 trucks helped. Germany publishes parking data for trucks.

- How sure: Medium, one driver and public data

Bet 4 · Two modes

On the road, show only what a quick glance can take in. When parked, do the paperwork on a tablet.

Why we think so: 4 sources, 5 drivers (few). Bigger screens did not bring the job.

- How sure: Low to medium, few conversations

Why Caring for the Driver Pays Off

Four reasons, with what we know and what we only think.

Less time lost

Truck parking search takes 30 to 60 minutes for 43 % of surveyed drivers. A truck that finds a space saves paid time and keeps breaks within the legal rest times.

Survey (small sample), our hypothesis

A faster start for new drivers

About one in three German truck drivers is a foreign national, and career changers start after about four weeks. A manual you can ask shortens the time to work safely. In-truck coaching has a measured effect: 3.1 % less fuel (Scania).

Published data, our hypothesis

A cabin drivers want to work in

502,000 driver jobs are unfilled in Europe. Fleets that keep their drivers need cabins the drivers accept. A good cabin helps; it does not solve the shortage.

Published data, our reading

Standing out

No truck we saw knew the job, helped with parking or answered questions about the vehicle. Chinese makers are arriving with larger screens. The first maker to close these gaps has something the others do not.

Observed, our hypothesis

Our reading. The numbers are published data or from small surveys; the business effect itself is not measured.

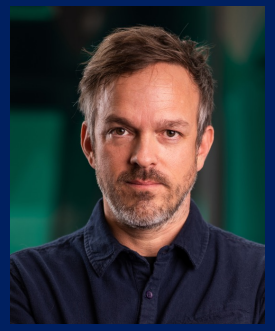


In a nutshell

Trucks Are Digital. The Work Can Be, Too.

The truck of the future connects the job, vehicle data and useful connected services, and tells the drivers what they need, right when they need it.

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Appendix

Method, sources and rating logic behind the report

What This Report Is, and What It Is Not

What we did

- Visited IAA Transportation 2026 (14 to 20 September), where we also exhibited
- Sat in the cabins of 11 heavy trucks and operated every system we could reach
- Listed 58 digital features across the trucks
- Spoke with a small number of drivers, driver trainers and booth staff
- Went on guided drives and interviewed drivers, where possible
- Added published market and driver data

What we did not do

- Drive on the road or test over time
- Run a driver study: our conversations are few and not fully representative
- Connect to a fleet back end: series vehicles can differ from show vehicles

How to read it

Observed: we saw or operated it ourselves

Reported: a source told us, or a published figure

Hypothesis: our interpretation, not tested

"Not seen" does not mean "not available"

Most show trucks were electric: charging findings apply to electric trucks only

Statements by makers are anonymous

Where Our Numbers Come From, and What We Could Not Cover

Sources

- IAA exhibitor list (our count)
- Pfau et al., AHFE 2025 (24 German drivers; Fraunhofer)
- IRU Global Driver Shortage Report 2025
- Destatis; BAG/BALM; BGL
- Toll Collect SID via Mobilithek (June 2026); BASt 2023; Dekra survey
- Scania press release, 15 Sept 2026 (Scania's own data)
- Our review of 11 trucks

Image credits

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- Slides 4, 13, 18, 21: own photos (Valtech Mobility, IAA Transportation 2026), cropped
- Slide 22: author portrait, Valtech Mobility
- All other graphics are our own drawings

Limits

- One trade show, one moment in time
- Exhibition vehicles; some screens off or locked
- No driver study, no further interviews planned
- Makers' statements are few and anonymous
- Some market figures from secondary sources
- Trucks only, no vans

Scope and method: see page 24

How We Calculated the Overall Rating

Truck	Services seen	Job and work (of 5)	Personal and cabin (of 8)	Vehicle info and voice (of 6.5)	Overall
Volvo FH Electric	17	3	2	4.5	64
Scania Super 430 R	11	0	2.5	1.5	30
DAF XD / XF Electric	14	0	0	0.5	23
Renault T	7	1	1	0.5	20
MAN eTGX	9	0	1.5	0	18
FAW Cortron	7	0	1	1	17
Tesla Semi	8	0	1	0	15
Mercedes eActros 600	4	1	1	0	14
Dongfeng	4	0	1	0.5	11
DeepWay	4	0	0	1	10
Ford F-LINE E / F-MAX	4	0	0	0	6

Services seen: observed services of the 58 in our matrix, best truck = 100. Job and work: fleet messaging, route from the fleet, job in the cabin, load information, tachograph or driving-time display (1 point each). Personal and cabin: driver profile, own home screen, light theme, light linked to the screen theme, zoned light, controls from the bed, rest or ventilation mode (1 each), purely decorative personalisation (0.5). Vehicle information and voice: manual as PDF 0.5, visual manual with search 1.5, media library 1, explanations in settings 1, driver coaching 1, gamification 0.5, voice control for vehicle functions 1. Each part is scaled to 100, the overall rating is the average of the four. The points are our own judgement. Volvo load information corrected from the earlier matrix.