



THE POWER TO PREDICT

White Paper

Fuel Control Without Guesswork

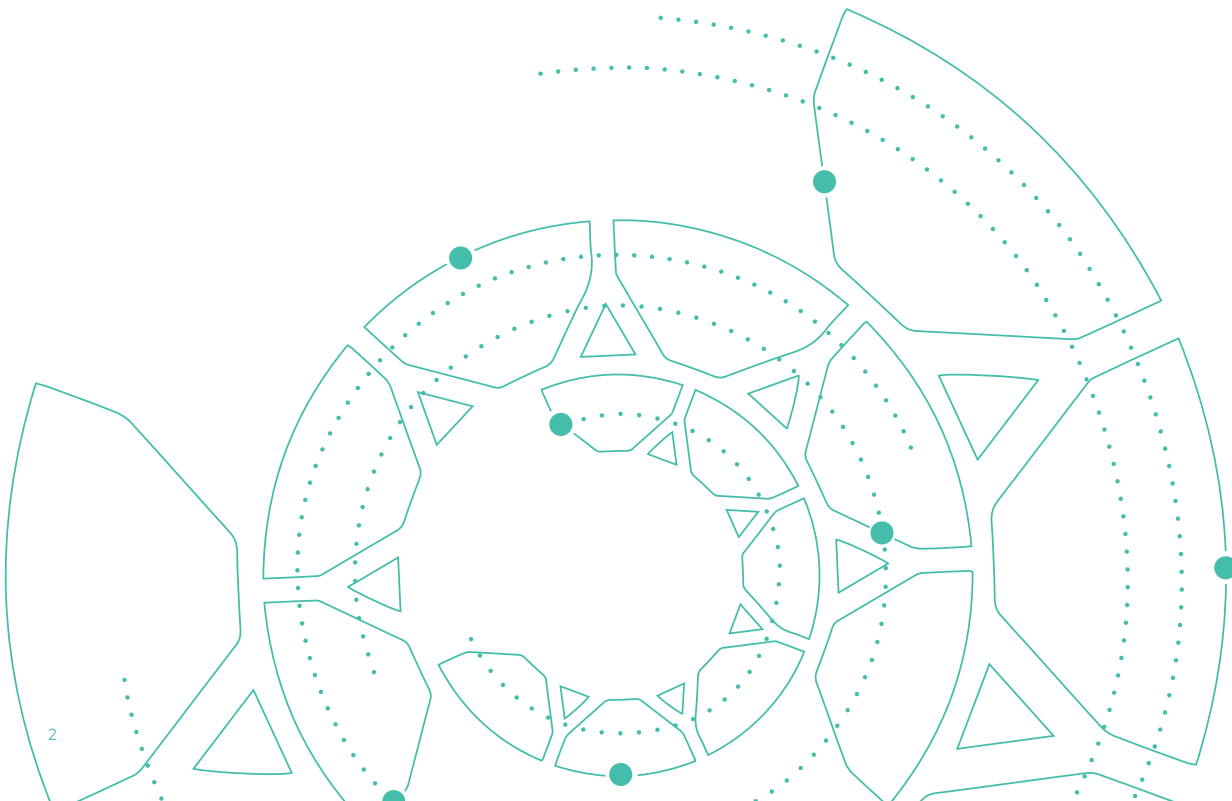
Why targeted fuel performance management
beats blanket driver training

Crystal Fuel Management Plug-In

For South African fleets



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Executive Summary

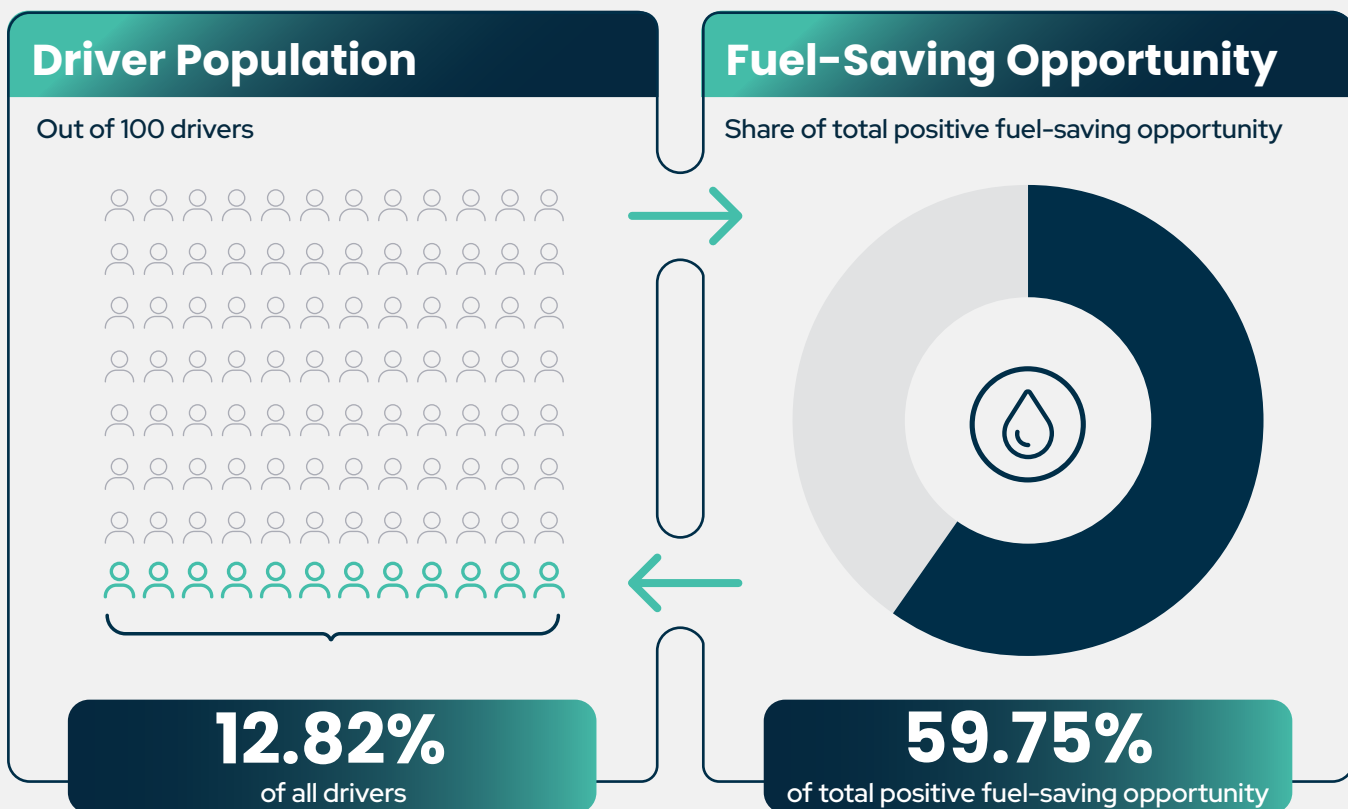
Fuel remains one of the largest controllable costs in fleet operations. Yet for many South African businesses, it is still managed after the fact. Invoices arrive, spend is reviewed, exceptions are questioned, drivers are reminded and the cycle repeats.

The issue is not always a lack of information. Most fleets already have fuel data, trip data and driver behaviour data in some form. The challenge is that these data points are often managed separately. A fuel transaction shows what was bought. Telematics shows what happened on the road. Driver behaviour reporting shows patterns of risk or inefficiency. Unless these views are connected, managers are left trying to explain fuel cost after it has already been incurred.

Central Insight

A small group holds most of the fuel-saving opportunity

Driver-related saving opportunity by behaviour category



Drivers with 10%+ saving potential represent only 12.82% of all drivers, but account for 59.75% of the total positive fuel-saving opportunity.



What this means

focus coaching on the smaller group with the highest saving potential, rather than using broad, generic driver training.

This white paper sets out a practical fuel-control model for South African fleets. It explains why fuel-saving opportunity is concentrated, why averages can hide the real cause of overconsumption, and how the Crystal Fuel Management Plug-In helps fleets move from fuel reporting to fuel performance management.

The shift in one line

Fuel is Not Evenly Wasted, So It Should Not Be Evenly Managed.

1. The Hidden Problem with Broad Fuel-Saving Programmes

When fuel costs rise, it is natural for fleets to look for broad, fleet-wide action. More training, tighter policy controls, route reviews and general pressure to reduce consumption can all seem like sensible starting points.

The problem is that this approach treats the saving opportunity as if it is spread evenly across the driver base. In reality, some drivers may already be operating close to expected performance, while others may have limited saving potential once route, vehicle and operating conditions are taken into account. A smaller group, however, may represent a much larger share of the recoverable fuel-saving opportunity.

That is why blanket training is rarely the most effective first step. It spreads effort evenly, even when the opportunity is uneven. A more practical approach is to identify the drivers with the greatest realistic improvement potential, then focus coaching on the behaviours most likely to reduce fuel use.



The highest value is not in coaching everyone the same way. It is in identifying the drivers with the greatest realistic improvement potential, then focusing on the behaviours most likely to reduce fuel usage.

2. What the Saving-Potential Data Shows

The driver opportunity analysis groups drivers by estimated saving potential after non-driver factors have been accounted for. This is important because it helps separate driver-related opportunity from factors such as route, vehicle allocation and operating conditions.

The saving-potential buckets are:

- 0 to 5%
- 5 to 10%
- 10 to 15%
- 15%+

The important finding is not simply that some drivers have higher saving potential. It is that the higher-opportunity buckets contain a smaller portion of the driver base while representing the majority of the positive fuel-saving opportunity.

Insight area	Practical meaning
Saving distribution	Shows where drivers sit by estimated saving-potential bucket after non-driver factors have been accounted for.
Saving opportunity by bucket	Compares the percentage of drivers in each bucket with the percentage of total potential saving represented by those drivers.
10%+ saving-potential group	Represents 12.82% of drivers and 59.75% of the total positive fuel-saving opportunity.
Operational takeaway	Prioritise high-opportunity drivers and coach the behaviours most likely to change fuel usage.

This supports a targeted coaching approach. It also gives managers a clearer way to prioritise effort without turning fuel improvement into a generic training exercise.

3. From Average Consumption to Operational Context

Traditional fuel reports often reduce fleet performance to a set of headline measures: litres used, total spend, consumption and cost per kilometre. These figures are useful for tracking trends, but they rarely explain what is driving the result.

Fuel use depends on context. Route, vehicle profile, terrain and operating conditions can all affect consumption, which means a driver may look inefficient until those factors are accounted for. The reverse can also be true: a driver may appear acceptable in a broad report, while still carrying a clear saving opportunity when performance is measured against the right benchmark.

The three questions fuel control must answer

What was bought? How was it used? What should have happened?

The **Crystal Fuel Management Plug-In** is designed around that principle. It consolidates fuel transactions, enriches them with telematics context, and compares actual consumption against expected consumption. Instead of only showing that fuel was high, it helps identify where the gap sits and what is likely driving it.

This changes the management conversation. Teams can move away from general statements such as “fuel is too high” and towards clearer operational questions:

- Which drivers carry the highest saving potential?
- Which behaviours are contributing most to overconsumption?
- Which interventions are likely to have the greatest effect?

4. Why Targeted Coaching is the Stronger Approach

A targeted coaching model changes the focus from activity to impact.

Instead of coaching every driver in the same way, the fleet can prioritise the smaller group where the improvement opportunity is highest. This supports better use of management time, fairer driver engagement and clearer measurement of progress.

The 10 to 15% and 15%+ saving-potential groups may contain fewer drivers, but together they account for the majority of the recoverable savings. That does not mean other drivers should be ignored. It means the most intensive coaching effort should be aimed where it is most likely to change the fuel outcome.

In practical terms, this allows managers to separate three groups:

- Drivers already operating close to expected performance.
- Drivers with moderate improvement potential.
- Drivers with high saving potential who should be prioritised for coaching

This is more precise than broad training, and more useful than simply ranking drivers by fuel spend.

5. The Behaviours That Matter Most

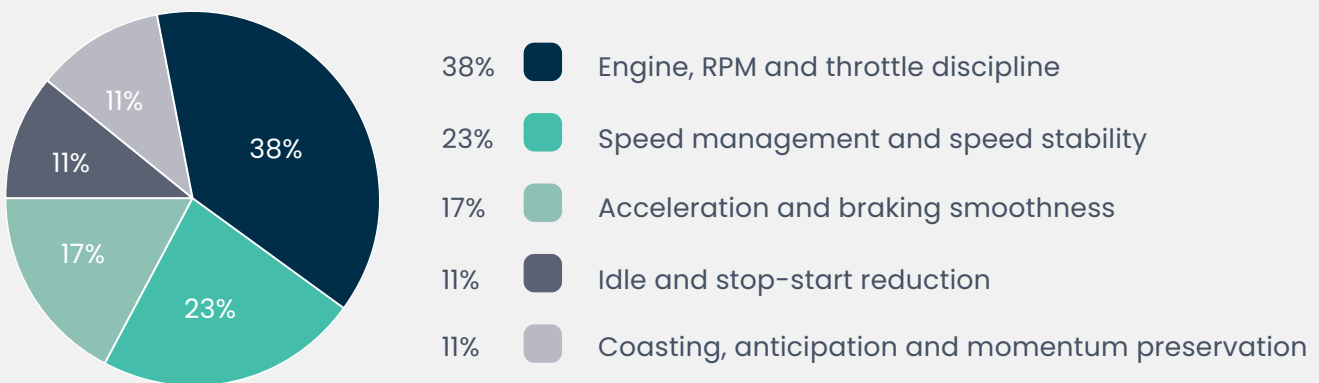
Once the right drivers have been identified, the next question is what to coach. Fuel-saving advice can quickly become too general.

Drive better. Idle less. Slow down. Brake smoothly. Plan ahead.

All of that may be true, but it is not specific enough to guide meaningful change. The driver behaviour contribution analysis points to five practical coaching areas:

Where driver behaviour creates the biggest fuel-saving opportunity

Driver-related saving opportunity by behaviour category



What this means

The biggest coaching gains are likely to come from engine, RPM and throttle discipline, followed by speed management and speed stability.

Recommended behaviour focus	Coaching split	What it means in practice
Engine, RPM and throttle discipline	38%	Coach efficient use of power, smoother throttle control and reduced unnecessary high-RPM behaviour.
Speed management and speed stability	23%	Coach consistent pacing, better speed control and reduced unnecessary speed changes.
Acceleration and braking smoothness	17%	Coach smoother acceleration and braking to reduce wasted energy and vehicle strain.
Idle and stop-start reduction	11%	Coach avoidable idling and unnecessary stop-start behaviour, especially in urban, delivery or site-based operations.
Coasting, anticipation and momentum preservation	11%	Coach forward planning, smoother flow and better use of momentum.

If the average driver-behaviour saving opportunity is assumed to be 6%, the biggest expected saving comes from engine, RPM and throttle discipline, followed by speed management and speed stability.

Practical takeaway

Do not start with everything.

Start with the behaviours that carry the greatest fuel impact.

6. What the Crystal Fuel Management Plug-In adds

The value of the Crystal Fuel Management Plug-In is not just that it creates another report. It supports a more complete fuel-control process.

A single fuel view

Fuel transactions can come from multiple sources, including fuel cards, supplier APIs and manual uploads. The Plug-In brings those transactions into a more consistent view, helping teams reduce the admin burden created by scattered data.

Operational context

Fuel data is enriched with telematics context, including distance and driver allocation. This means fuel is not viewed as a standalone number. It is linked back to how the vehicle was used.

Expected versus actual consumption

Actual consumption can be compared against expected consumption for the relevant vehicle and route. This creates a clearer benchmark than a simple fleet average and helps managers see where fuel use sits outside expectation.

A closed feedback loop

When performance falls outside the expected benchmark, a structured debrief can be triggered. Drivers can review the issue, supervisors can comment, and the feedback loop can be closed in a consistent way.

Behaviour-level focus

The Plug-In supports a more precise view of the behaviours contributing to overconsumption. That allows coaching to be focused on the actions most likely to reduce fuel usage, rather than relying on broad reminders.

Insight without action does not reduce fuel cost. The strongest fuel-control approach connects data, prediction and intervention. It does not only identify overconsumption. It explains it, prioritises it and helps managers act on it.

7. Why This Matters in South Africa

For South African fleets, fuel control is not a theoretical efficiency project. It affects margin, planning, customer service and operating resilience.

When fuel usage is unclear, managers are left reacting to cost. When fuel usage is explained, they can begin managing performance.

The difference is important. A fleet that only reviews fuel at month end is always behind the problem. A fleet that understands expected versus actual consumption can intervene sooner. A fleet that knows which drivers carry the highest saving potential can focus coaching where it matters most. A fleet that can link behaviour to operational impact can make fuel performance part of daily management.

The opportunity is not just lower spend. It is better control.

8. The Practical Fuel-Control Model

A stronger fuel management strategy should follow five steps:

1

Consolidate fuel data into one reliable view.

2

Add operational context through telematics, distance and driver allocation.

3

Compare actual consumption with expected consumption.

4

Prioritise high-opportunity drivers, rather than training everyone the same way.

5

Coach the behaviours most likely to reduce fuel use, then measure the improvement.

This is the difference between reporting fuel cost and managing fuel performance

Reporting tells a fleet what happened. Performance management helps the fleet decide what to do next.

Conclusion:

Fuel is not evenly wasted, so it should not be evenly managed

The main lesson from the data is simple. Fuel-saving opportunity is concentrated.

Drivers with 10%+ saving potential make up only 12.82% of the driver base, but account for 59.75% of the total positive fuel-saving opportunity.

That should change how fleets approach fuel improvement. The answer is not more generic training. It is sharper prioritisation. Identify the drivers with the highest realistic saving potential. Understand the behaviours driving overconsumption. Coach with evidence. Track improvement. Repeat the process. With the Crystal Fuel Management Plug-In, fuel control becomes less about chasing cost after the fact and more about building a repeatable system for operational improvement.

Final thought

Fuel will always be a major cost in fleet operations. The question is whether it remains a recurring surprise, or becomes something fleets can predict, explain and control.

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