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**Hwy Haul on a mission to eliminate food waste**

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By

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As the global population steadily marches toward a predicted 9 billion by 2050, there is genuine concern about the ability to feed everyone, especially with resources already being stretched thin and available farmland giving way to development.

While producing more food could prove to be a challenge, drastically reducing food waste may indeed be the more viable solution, and the founder of a nascent digital transportation platform believes his system can lead the way.



Syed Aman, co-

founder and CEO of Hwy Haul, with Mitch Kowalewski, the company's vice president of sales and marketing, at the recent Viva Fresh Expo in Grapevine, TX.

Syed Aman, CEO and co-founder of [Hwy Haul](#), developed a revolutionary way to connect fruit and vegetable shippers with transportation providers that eliminates many of the inefficiencies that currently plague the process.

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Aman is well versed in the fields of transportation and logistics, owing to his background as one of the founding engineers of Walmart Labs and director of supply chain at Walmart, where he was tasked with laying the foundation of the online grocery platform for the world's largest retailer.

“My co-founder and I helped build the tech for scaling Walmart’s online grocery business from a few million to a multi-billion dollar business,” he said. “As we were scaling and building the online technology, we realized there were a lot of inefficiencies in the value chain with the way you build and move a load.”

Aman said he did some market research and learned that \$15 billion of fresh produce is wasted during transportation.

“That is a mind-boggling number,” he said, “but another enlightening discovery we made is that 50 percent of the life of produce is spent on trucks.”

He added that there is virtually no transparency or visibility about what is happening with produce during transit. “It’s a very sensitive commodity, and it needs the proper temperature and humidity in order to preserve the quality and minimize load rejections.”

Aman was convinced that he could apply what he had learned during his Walmart tenure and create a digital platform that would add efficiencies to fruit and vegetable shipments to achieve his ultimate goal of eliminating food waste.

### **Hwy Haul is born**

In 2018, Aman and two of the company's other co-founders, Sharan and Zahed, began their journey with Hwy Haul by developing an app to be used for booking transportation for produce loads.

“Our first version was just for Android, not even iOS,” he said. “We used to chase the drivers around and actually bought them new phones and loaded the app on them, and just asked that they keep the location services turned on. They were able to book freight by simply clicking a button, and automatically a rate quote was sent. The drivers loved it, and they began spreading the word about our platform.”

But Aman did not stop there in his quest to better understand the challenges drivers faced.

“We spent a lot of time with the drivers — on the road, in truck stops, we even got to know their families,” he said. “Some of their stories are really sad — the wife wakes up at 5 a.m. and starts making calls to the brokers, and after much haggling back-and-forth, finally a load is booked. And guess what? That load is sitting 200 or 300 miles away, and that’s a lot of empty miles.”

Aman was convinced the solution was digitization, AI machine learning and block chain — the key elements of the Hwy Haul system.

“We are bringing all of this technology together to power the next generation of moving freight in this industry,” he said.

For drivers, it is an easy process to get signed up with Hwy Haul, said Mitch Kowalewski, vice president of sales and marketing.

“The only thing they need is a phone,” he said. “We provide a seamless set-up in a manner of

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minutes. We work directly with the growers on specific temperatures they need for the loads, and then we connect them to a driver. If it's a berry shipper, we connect them with a driver that knows berries. All the driver needs to do is bring his truck. Drivers rely on a partner to give them all their miles for the week. We provide a seamless, easy-to-do business experience for any driver out there."

Aman added that Hwy Haul has a backhaul strategy for its drivers that drastically minimizes empty miles, adding even more efficiency and sustainability to the system.

Kowalewski said Hwy Haul's value is the expertise to reduce the risk. "The general freight provider hauls paint or ladders, and maybe dabbles in produce," he said. "Many actually shy away from produce because of the risk. But Hwy Haul's passion is produce, which gives us a level of expertise to reduce the risk. It gives a high level of confidence to the grower-shipper."

Kowalewski added that a lack of proactivity is a major reason there is such a high degree of waste in hauling produce.

"When there is an issue during transit, in a traditional model it is a manual response, such as a voice mail and waiting for a return call," he said. "With Hwy Haul, we provide real-time notifications of any issue so they can be dealt with before the quality of the load is affected."

Aman agreed, adding that not only does Hwy Haul save a shipper money, it also helps save time and anxiety spent dealing with shipments.

As evidence, he said the industry average with loads rejected is in the range of 8-14 percent, equaling the aforementioned \$15 billion in food waste. "Hwy Haul has already reduced that by at least 80 percent," said Aman. "We strive for fresh in, fresh out and our rejections are in the 1 percent range. And we are really just getting started."

Aman said Hwy Haul is very data-centric in every decision it makes, whether it is for its customers, carriers and even our its business.

"We have the market intelligence of the industry in our systems," he said. "We can offer real-time pricing on the spot market that will be competitive with what is happening that day, but we can also lock in a price for three months, six months or even a full year."

Kowalewski added that while there are other big players in the field, not many are as focused on produce as Hwy Haul. "We eat, breathe and sleep fresh produce," he said. "It is in our DNA and that's our core foundation."

Aman agreed, citing its success in a relatively short period of time.

"We started in 2018, and have grown hundreds of percentage points year over year, and I expect that will be the trend line going forward in years to come," he said. "Right now, we have hundreds of commodity shippers on our platform, and we believe we have access to nearly 10 percent of the entire reefer driver capacity in the country. There are around 17,000 freight brokers in the country, and we must be in the top 100 already."

Kowalewski noted that the majority of the industry today is traditional logistics. "A lot of people view digitalization as the future, but in actuality it is the present and the biggest shippers understand that," he said. "The biggest companies are adopting digital across their operations, and they are looking for

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like-minded partners to integrate into their systems. So we are gaining market share based on that model.”

Aman said, “Our tag line is, ‘We Move Produce Smarter’ and our mission is to eliminate food wastage during transportation. We want to be the No. 1 digital freight platform for fresh produce, and we will not settle for less.”

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