

# Why Telematics Customization is a Key To Fleet Success

No two fleets are the same, and that's reflected in the offerings of telematics providers. Fleets that want to maximize their profitability should work with telematics solutions that offer customizable and scalable solutions.



# WHY TELEMATICS CUSTOMIZATION IS A KEY TO FLEET SUCCESS

Over the past decade, telematics systems have become essential and crucial tools for fleets. Telematics and GPS technology have evolved from a solution that allowed fleets to keep tabs on their assets, to one that can be used to monitor behavior, improve safety, and, most importantly, increase the bottom line.

Today's modern telematics features include the ability to capture vehicle and behavior data. They also provide the convenience of built-in systems, the ability to use video to capture and analyze data, and other features such as route optimization, driver behavior, and vehicle health monitoring. However, as every fleet is different, telematics providers can no longer offer an off-the-shelf solution. A regional tow truck fleet is not going to have the same needs, problems, or priorities as a national last-mile delivery fleet.

Telematics solutions should look different for fleets, depending upon their location, purpose, and size. This is why fleets should work with providers that offer the ability to create a customized telematics system, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.





## WHY CUSTOMIZATION IS NECESSARY

Today's state-of-the-art telematics technology has evolved into a powerful tool to aid fleet managers in overseeing their fleets and keeping operations running smoothly and safely. The telematics and GPS systems of the 1990s that consisted of dots on a map — which told fleet managers where a vehicle was and whether or not it was moving — have been replaced by intelligent solutions that provide a treasure trove of data.

While many OEMs are equipping vehicles with telematics in the factory, only about 45% of U.S. fleets currently use a telematics system, according to research by Deloitte.

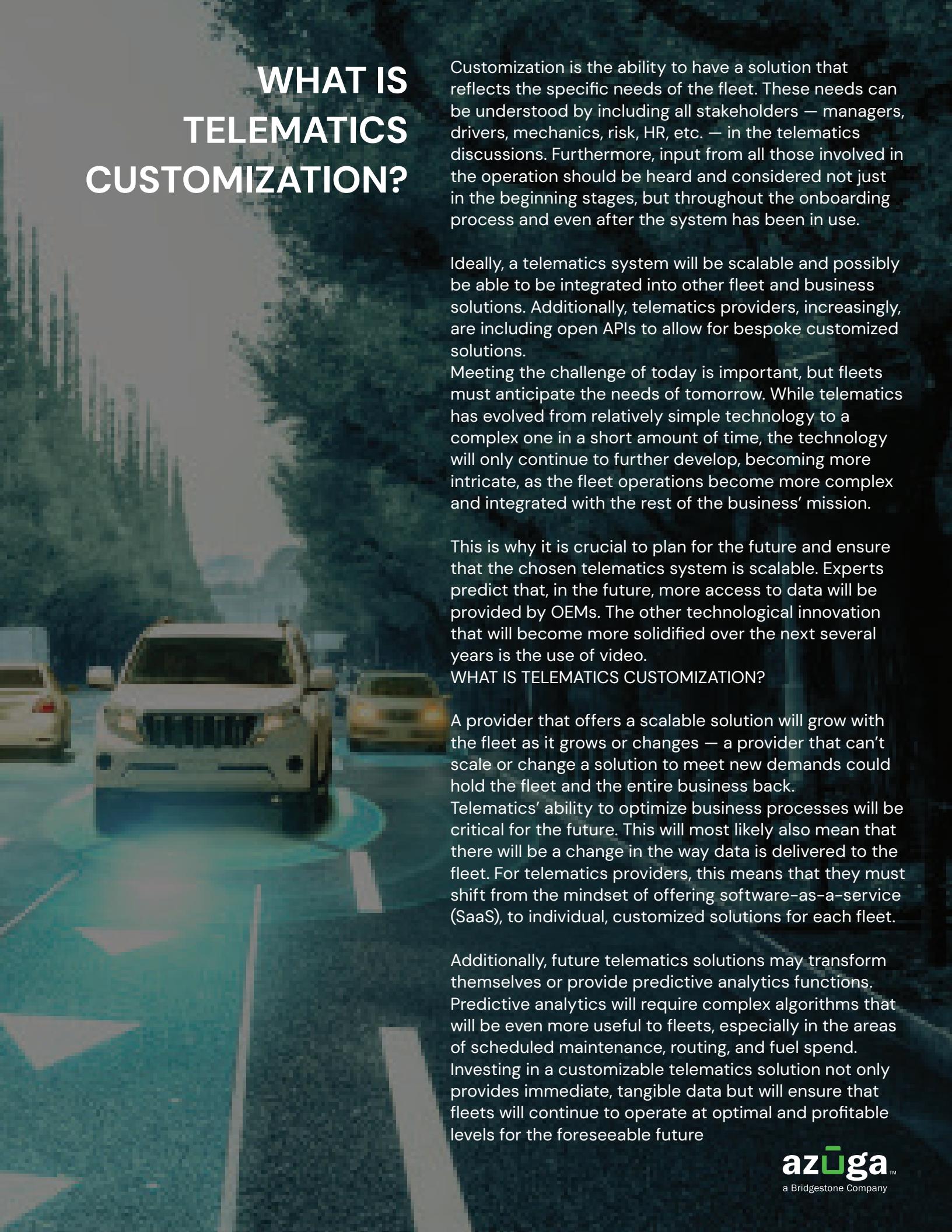
However, even within the same industry, every fleet is different, which means telematics systems are not a one-size-fits-all solution. The decision to adopt a telematics solution shouldn't be taken lightly, nor rushed. And, when deciding which telematics solution to choose, input from all stakeholders should be considered — drivers, managers, mechanics, risk, HR, and legal.

Every fleet has a different need when it comes to measuring and tracking areas of performance and optimization, primarily routing, fuel use, idling, and driver/vehicle safety.

To begin, fleet managers need to identify and prioritize problems that they want to fix or the areas that they want to improve. Additionally, geography, weather conditions, and traffic density all factor into the need for a customized solution.

One fleet with high rates of accidents and traffic infractions might want to prioritize driver safety through driver scorecards and gamification. Another fleet with low rates of accidents but high fuel spend might want to focus on integrating their fuel card monitoring and tracking idling and hard braking.

An off-the-shelf solution will answer some of the fleet's needs, but will not provide a means to fully optimize the operation. Having a provider that can help you customize your solution to your operational priorities will allow you to maximize productivity with optimized routing, preventive maintenance, driver monitoring, and even workforce management.



# WHAT IS TELEMATICS CUSTOMIZATION?

Customization is the ability to have a solution that reflects the specific needs of the fleet. These needs can be understood by including all stakeholders — managers, drivers, mechanics, risk, HR, etc. — in the telematics discussions. Furthermore, input from all those involved in the operation should be heard and considered not just in the beginning stages, but throughout the onboarding process and even after the system has been in use.

Ideally, a telematics system will be scalable and possibly be able to be integrated into other fleet and business solutions. Additionally, telematics providers, increasingly, are including open APIs to allow for bespoke customized solutions.

Meeting the challenge of today is important, but fleets must anticipate the needs of tomorrow. While telematics has evolved from relatively simple technology to a complex one in a short amount of time, the technology will only continue to further develop, becoming more intricate, as the fleet operations become more complex and integrated with the rest of the business' mission.

This is why it is crucial to plan for the future and ensure that the chosen telematics system is scalable. Experts predict that, in the future, more access to data will be provided by OEMs. The other technological innovation that will become more solidified over the next several years is the use of video.

## WHAT IS TELEMATICS CUSTOMIZATION?

A provider that offers a scalable solution will grow with the fleet as it grows or changes — a provider that can't scale or change a solution to meet new demands could hold the fleet and the entire business back.

Telematics' ability to optimize business processes will be critical for the future. This will most likely also mean that there will be a change in the way data is delivered to the fleet. For telematics providers, this means that they must shift from the mindset of offering software-as-a-service (SaaS), to individual, customized solutions for each fleet.

Additionally, future telematics solutions may transform themselves or provide predictive analytics functions. Predictive analytics will require complex algorithms that will be even more useful to fleets, especially in the areas of scheduled maintenance, routing, and fuel spend. Investing in a customizable telematics solution not only provides immediate, tangible data but will ensure that fleets will continue to operate at optimal and profitable levels for the foreseeable future.

# THE RIGHT PARTNER IS KEY

Having a strong telematics partner that can supply a customizable solution is an important first step.

Vendor partners can help fleets identify their main problem areas, and work with them to create a solution that prioritizes those issues. Knowing what challenges the fleet needs to address will help narrow down the field of providers to those that are the best fit for the organization.

The provider should itself be a resource to help the fleet to analyze and interpret data and spot emerging trends in the fleet. Many vendors, from telematics to fleet management and fuel card providers, have

the advantage of processing millions of transactions every week across a wide variety of industries. As fleet operators are now tasked with managing an ever-increasing stream of data from sources such as telematics, fuel cards, EV chargers, navigation apps, and connected vehicles, the vendor partner needs to provide a way to analyze the data sets to increase efficiency and transparency.

This level of service will help fleets stay ahead of emerging trends and continually customize the solution as technology develops and the needs and goals of the fleet's operation change.

## CHARTING THE NEXT HORIZON

Telematics solutions have come a long way from the simple GPS tracking of the 1990s. While data integration and safety systems are essential in keeping telematics state of the art, even more important for fleets is that telematics continues to help them serve the bottom line by decreasing costs and increasing business efficiency.

As no two fleets are exactly the same, off-the-shelf telematics solutions will not provide fleets with all the answers, solutions, and data they need to remain competitive. It is crucial that fleets find a telematics partner that will work with them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and create a solution that addresses those needs for the long term. Furthermore, as telematics and technology are evolving more rapidly than ever, fleets need a partner that will continue to work with

them to optimize their telematics solution, data, and procedures.

Fleets should partner with vendors that understand where the industry is headed and how it will best serve the fleet, by growing with them as a key partner and consultant. Most important is finding a partner that is looking ahead and evolving their technology on pace or ahead of the curve.

As the past decade has demonstrated, telematics technology has become a key tool for successful fleet operations. Having the ability to customize and scale this technology is increasingly becoming the next necessary element in the evolution of telematics. Having a provider looking to the next horizon is the differentiator for a fleet and its business to remain competitive.

# About Bridgestone

Nashville, Tennessee based Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations is the U.S. subsidiary of Bridgestone Corporation, the world's largest tire and rubber company offering a wide range of Bridgestone, Firestone and associate brand tires, BATO maintains wholesale and original equipment sales operations across a broad line of products, including passenger, light truck, commercial truck and bus, agricultural, motorcycle, kart and off-the-road tires.

Additional US subsidiaries include Bridgestone Retail Operations which operates the largest network of company-owned automotive service providers in the world – nearly 2,200 tire and vehicle service centers across the United States – including Firestone Complete Auto Care, Tires Plus, Wheelworks and Hibdon store locations. Bridgestone authorized dealers consist of independent tire retailers that are authorized to sell and service Bridgestone or Firestone products. BATO's Commercial Solutions Group also has an extensive dealer network that also includes Truck, Bus, Radial Division. In summary the Bridgestone network consists of approximately 5,400 service locations for tire, automotive and fleet solutions.

Below is a complete list of links to our products for Commercial, Retreads and Consumer tires.

## **Bridgestone Brand**

Alenza, Blizzak, DriveGuard, Dueler, Ecopia, Potenza, Turanza  
Bridgestone Consumer product  
website: <https://www.bridgestonetire.com/>  
Bridgestone Commercial product  
website: <https://commercial.bridgestone.com/en-us/index>

## **Firestone Brand**

All season, Champion, Destination, Firehawk, Transforce, WeatherGrip, Winterforce  
Firestone Consumer product  
website: <https://www.firestonetire.com/>  
Firestone Commercial product  
website: <https://commercial.firestone.com/en-us/index>

## **Bandag Retread**

website: <https://www.bandag.com/en-us/index>

# About Azuga

Azuga, a Bridgestone company, is a leading global connected vehicle platform, helping our customers turn data about vehicles and their use into intelligence that improves operations and safety while reducing costs and risk. Azuga provides reliable end-to-end solutions for commercial fleets, government agencies, insurance companies and automotive industry suppliers, encompassing hardware, the Azuga One platform, award-winning fleet applications and data analytics. Azuga is headquartered in Fremont, California.

Our award-winning Azuga Fleet solution is used by thousands of customers –from the small fleet of one or a few vehicles up to several thousand—and is lauded by our customers for its ease-of-use, robust features and affordable pricing.



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