

# Commercial Van

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## UPDATE

## VAN SPECS AND UPFITS THE RIGHT WAY



**CASE STUDIES:**  
**FINDING A VAN FOR  
BUSINESS SUCCESS**

**A QUICK GUIDE TO:**  
**SELECTING AND  
UPFITTING VANS**

# FORD TRANSIT CONNECT A VINCENTRIC BEST FLEET VALUE IN AMERICA™\*



Vincentric chose the 2015 Transit Connect XLT based on the lowest maintenance, lowest fixed and operating costs, and lowest total cost of ownership in its class. That's in addition to Ford Transit Connect earning ALG's Residual Value Award for the Midsize Commercial Van segment\*\* and retaining its value better than any other vehicle in its class, according to ALG.† With the most configurations in its class,†† the Transit Connect is a smart choice for your business. Transit Connect XLT Short-Wheelbase Wagon shown.



## THE 2015 TRANSIT CONNECT

/// [FLEET.FORD.COM](http://FLEET.FORD.COM)



\*Based on the Vincentric 2015 Fleet Awards analysis, Mini Passenger Commercial Van segment and Short-Wheelbase trim level. \*\*ALG is the industry benchmark for residual values and depreciation data, [www.alg.com](http://www.alg.com). †Based on ALG's residual value forecast for the 2015 model year. ††Class is Small Vans.

**2016  
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ISSUE**

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# 4 CONSIDERATIONS TO SELECTING AND SPEC'ING VANS

**Selecting a van make and model, and spec'ing every detail to best fit your operations is more than looking at the purchase price. Here are several considerations to make when bringing a new van into your fleet.**

**S**electing the right van specs for the right application may seem obvious. But with so many considerations in spec details, from exact model to roof height to optional features, there are a lot of considerations that go into spec'ing commercial vans. Plus, over- or under-spec'ing your vehicles can be costly to your bottom line. Here's an overview of how this thought process could look like for your fleet:

**1. UNDERSTAND THE APPLICATION**

You might understand the intended use of your vans, but do you really know the real-world operating conditions, individual driver use, common issues, actual load weight, etc.? With the various technologies out there today, such as telematics and GPS tracking, it's getting a lot easier for fleets to get a clearer picture of how their vehicles are really being used.

Outside of these new technologies, it's about communication. Talk to your

drivers and your in-house technicians or third-party maintenance provider to map out your current vehicles. For example, what are common maintenance problems your vehicles run into? What are common themes of what drivers do and don't like about your current vehicles? How much are they idling? Do they have sufficient tool storage? Are drivers having a hard time getting in and out of the van? How much time do they spend loading and unloading tools compared to the job itself?

Knowing more about the vehicles you currently have in your fleet will give you more buying knowledge in replacing those vehicles with the best match for the application.

**2. DON'T OVER- OR UNDER-SPEC**

While talking to drivers is key to building the right van, keep in mind that some features are subjective. For example, your driver might say they need "more power." Do the math in terms of gross vehicle weight and payload, type of drive cycle and road conditions, and what powertrain is really going to be best suited for the job.

Over-spec'ing a van can dramatically increase the capital cost of the vehicle when including features you don't really need. On the opposite end, under-spec'ing could increase maintenance costs, and accelerate the wear and tear.

Sitting down with your dealer will help you decipher which exact powertrain combination will be best for your fleet. Take a look at the sidebar at right, which gives some sample scenarios that can help guide the conversation.

**3. THE ADDED FEATURES**

A range of new technologies are hitting the commercial vehicle market. Backup cameras, crash avoidance systems, and more driver comfort features are



Available Ford Transit upfitter switches.

making their way from what was commonly seen in the luxury market to the commercial side. While many fleets try to keep these added features to a minimum to reduce the purchase cost, there are some features fleets may want to consider that can help with safe driving, as well as simply satisfy drivers. Or, these could be features that help increase efficiencies on the job, such as dual sliding doors.

On the Ford Transit, for example, there are various window configurations that fleets will want to look at to fit their exact needs. There are also user-defined, factory-installed upfitter switches that make it easy to put in aftermarket accessories and have them integrated right into the instrument panel. These are the types of add-ons or variations in features that fleets will want to pay attention to.

#### 4. TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP

Total cost of ownership covers a range of aspects of vehicle purchasing. Combined, the following breakout provides a good look at the total cost of ownership when comparing vehicles — this analysis is also something that commercial dealers can help you work through.



##### Depreciation

Over time, a vehicle loses its value compared to the original purchase price.

Not every vehicle depreciates at the same rate, so it's important to find a vehicle with the most favorable annual depreciation.



##### Fees and taxes

This is mostly dependent on location, since every state has different registration fees and taxes depending on vehicle type.



##### Financing

How much is it going to cost to borrow money for a purchase? This can vary depending on the vehicle.



##### Insurance

Insurance not only varies by vehicle but also by state and driver, so this

can fluctuate with each fleet but it's important to look into what these costs will look like.



##### Fuel

This looks at real-world fuel costs, which can range depending on the type of operations,

including idling, stop-and-go routes and more.



##### Maintenance

Parts prices and routine maintenance checks are another cost factor. As well, OEM-provided maintenance programs can also be a consideration. Ford, for instance, has a network of 647 dedicated dealers who are trained and

certified to understand the unique service requirements of commercial customers as part of its 3,000 Ford dealerships across the United States.



##### Repairs

What do major repair costs look like for your desired van?

Combining all these strategies is likely to give you the right specs for the right application. But you're also not alone. Working with Ford, for example, gives you access to the Business Preferred Network (BPN) of Ford commercial dealers that provide dedicated service. Learn more on the following pages how BPN dealers can help you not only in spec'ing the right van, but also how to select the right upfit. ■

### Van Selection Scenarios

Here are examples of how you could spec a Ford Transit based on your type of business:

#### I am a General Contractor

- I use my van as a mobile workshop and want to be able to comfortably stand in the back.
- I carry heavier loads, and need the power and size.

**Possible van selection = High Roof, Long Wheelbase Transit Van with the standard powertrain (3.7L Ti-VCT V6)**

#### I am an HVAC Contractor

- I work in an urban area, so I need a more compact van with a tight turning radius.
- While smaller, I need a van that has ample cargo space.

**Possible van selection = Low Roof, Regular Wheelbase Transit Van with the available 3.5L EcoBoost® V6 powertrain**

#### I am a Delivery Business

- I need to get into residential areas easily.
- I drive long distances and idle frequently.

**Possible van selection = Low Roof, Regular Wheelbase Transit with the available 3.2L Power Stroke® I-5 Turbo Diesel powertrain**

#### I am a Shuttle Business

- I transport 10-15 passengers per trip and need extra space for luggage.
- I often idle for long periods waiting for passengers.

**Possible van selection = High Roof, Extended Length Wheelbase Transit Wag-on with the available 3.2L Power Stroke I-5 Turbo Diesel powertrain**

### Key Resources to Spec'ing Your Ford Transit

- [Ford.com](http://Ford.com) — Build and price your next Transit
- [TransitBodyDecoder.com](http://TransitBodyDecoder.com) — With 58 body codes available for the Ford Transit, the new Transit Body Decoder helps you build the perfect model for your customers. The system automatically reduces the number of body codes, then eliminates what can't be built.



\*aftermarket equipment shown

# DESIGNING YOUR VAN: A QUICK UPFIT GUIDE

Along with the spec'ing process, fleets need to consider their upfit needs as well.

If you've ever been to a fleet or truck tradeshow, then you're already familiar with the sea of upfitters and vehicle modifiers out there. But how do you find the right one for what you need? How do you ensure the vehicles you want match up with the upfits your operation requires? Here's a guide to commercial vehicle upfitting, with a quick look at how Ford has simplified the process.

## MAKE SURE YOU'RE NOT VOIDING ANY OEM WARRANTIES.

With upfits and modifications such as alternative-fuel conversions, there are packages that must be part of the spec'ing process so that you don't void any OEM warranties. On the alternative-fuel front, for example, Ford has a Gaseous Engine

Prep package\*\* that must be included on the vehicle if you plan to convert a commercial vehicle to CNG or propane autogas. Converting without this package will void your powertrain warranty.

Ford has made it easy for fleets to avoid complications with upfits through its Qualified Vehicle Modifier (QVM) program as well as specialized vehicle dealers. Within the QVM program, Ford engineers work with these third-party upfitters to help ensure consistent, reliable performance and customer service.

The Business Preferred Network (BPN) of dealerships can walk you through every step and includes more than 600 locations with commercial vehicle expertise, from acquisition to disposal and everything between. In the Ford Truck

Commercial Connection (FTCC) program, 80% of businesses are in a 30-mile range of a BPN dealer and more than 63% are within 10 miles.

All Ford-certified upfitters can be found online at [fordtoughtruck.com](http://fordtoughtruck.com). This site includes a directory of QVMs and ship-thru upfitters — all of which can be searched based on upfit type, location, by vehicle, etc.

## IDENTIFY ALL THE UPFIT FEATURES YOU WANT WHEN SPEC'ING THE VEHICLE.

As with the alternative-fuel example, there might be modifications or upfits that require certain specs, so make sure these additions are planned out during the spec'ing process.

Identifying the upfits you want also means getting feedback from drivers

about the current vehicles and upfits in your fleet as well as considering ergonomics and job productivity. As part of the spec'ing process, it's important to have a full and detailed understanding of how your vehicles are used and the operation requirements of each and every vehicle.

Don't start this process right before you need a new vehicle or need to replace a large group of vehicles. Take into account the production time, upfitting time and actual delivery time, as these could all put your spec and upfit planning process far earlier on the calendar than you were originally thinking.

### PICK PREFERRED UPFITTERS AND TRY TO STICK WITH THEM.

Working with multiple upfit companies on a single van can add delays to your delivery and create headaches in having to deal with multistage purchase orders. While it may seem like you're bargaining to get the best deal for each part of the upfit — a ladder rack with one upfitter, shelving with another — by the time the van gets to you, the added lead time and other fees and interest rates may actually cost you more than you saved.

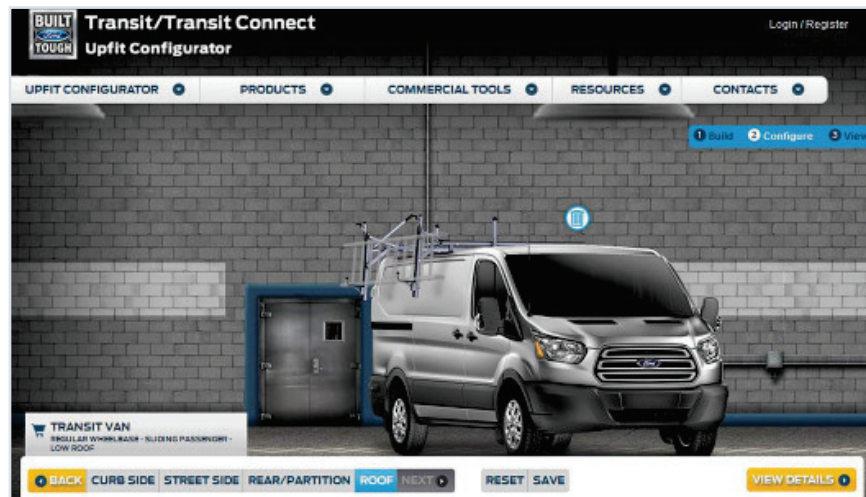
This also means sticking with OEM-preferred upfitters. Sometimes fleets might purchase vehicles out-of-stock because they need a vehicle quickly. However, the upfitting lead time could take just as long compared to doing it through the dealer ordering process or in purchasing through your fleet management company.

This is another reason Ford has its QVM program. On the Ford Transit, for example, the vehicle is upfitter ready with 11 upfitter ship-thru facilities available within 20 miles of the Kansas City Assembly Plant — the Ford Transit factory.

### DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE FINAL TOUCHES.

To help market your business or brand your organization, it's important to get vehicle graphic wraps or decals. To make the process easy, this can also be part of the upfit and ordering process.

Through these steps, you should have a commercial van that fits your every requirement without spending more than you need. ■



This screenshot of [TransitUpfits.com](http://TransitUpfits.com) gives a glimpse of how easy it is to upfit your Ford Transit Van. Pick your van model, roof height, etc. and select your Ford-approved upfits from there, from ladder racks and bins to shelving units.

## Ford Simplifies Order to Delivery

From dealer order through customer delivery:

1. Dealer and customer determine appropriate vehicle based on application, payload, and range.

2. Dealer places vehicle order and vehicle is delivered to a Ford Qualified Vehicle Modifier (QVM) or approved ship-thru facility.

3. QVM/upfitters install components or upfit items.

4. Vehicle is delivered to dealer and dealer delivers vehicle to customer.

### Key Resources to Upfit Your Ford Transit Van

**TransitUpfits.com** — A guide to upfitting your Transit, complete with a live configurator with drag-and-drop functions so you can see what your upfitted van will look like and cost before you buy.

**FordToughTruck.com** — Learn about the latest incentive information, online brochures and browse through a comprehensive upfitter guide to find an upfitter that is right for your needs.

**BPNDdealerDirectory.com** — Dedicated service, customer commitment, and advanced commercial vehicle expertise come standard with every Ford Business Preferred Network (BPN) Dealer.

\*\*Vehicle will be equipped with the standard factory gasoline fuel system. The package does not include CNG/LPG fuel tanks and lines etc. See your dealer for details.

Time Warner Cable plans to replace about 500-700 Ford Transit Vans every year until the E-Series vans are completely replaced.



Vehicles shown with aftermarket equipment.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TIME WARNER CABLE

# A WELCOME EVOLUTION: A BETTER VAN FOR A BETTER SPACE

**By looking at vehicle selection through a three-pronged approach, Time Warner Cable is able to find efficiencies, select a more appropriate powertrain for the application, and ensure transparency and satisfaction with the end-user.**

Looking back at his first job out of the Army, George Survant wasn't surprised to see a recent major shift in the commercial fleet industry — an evolution of a tried and true cargo van so many fleets had come to trust. "In 1970, I went to work for a phone company where I drove an E-150 van. With obviously a little change and refinement, that E-150 looked and felt not too differently than the E-150s we have in our fleet today," explains Survant, senior director of fleet management at Time Warner Cable. That evolution was the introduction of the Ford Transit Van.

With many fleets looking to increase efficiencies wherever possible, the Transit came at a good time for Time Warner Cable. "We were really looking for

a more creative way to use our cargo space and the payload, and to take better advantage of the significant advances in engine and drivetrain technology," Survant says. "The introduction of the Transit set that stage for us."

Predominantly a truck and van fleet, Time Warner Cable takes a three-pronged approach when considering vehicle selection: weight, powertrain, and driver experience. By looking at vehicle selection through this lens, the company is able to find efficiencies, select a more appropriate powertrain for the application, and ensure transparency and satisfaction with the end-user.

The seed for Time Warner Cable's move to the full-size Transit Van actually started with the Transit Connect. Just in New York City, the company has

**THE FLEET NUMBERS:**  
**Time Warner Cable**  
**Overall fleet size:** more than 20,000 (not including trailers or off-road equipment)  
**Cargo vans:** about 11,000  
**Pickups:** about 4,000  
**Ford Transit Van:** about 700  
**Ford Transit Connect:** about 400

1,600 vehicles within 16 square miles. The Transit Connect hit on everything: it was small and nimble for the urban terrain, brought a level of fuel efficiency\* that satisfied company goals, and it also created a more ergonomic-friendly environment for the drivers, who no longer had to hunch or squeeze into



a small space to reach for materials compared to previous work vehicles.

“The Transit Connect — while we got some resistance from drivers in going to a smaller van — once they drove it and got accustomed to how easy it is to drive in congested traffic and to park, as well as how we configured the cargo space to maximize the technician’s ability to work out of the smaller van, it became the default vehicle of choice,” Survant says.

In the meantime, Time Warner Cable saw that Ford was also preparing to bring a Euro-style full-size van to the U.S., which fit right into the cross hairs of what they were aiming for — a van that’s rugged, narrow, and light weight with an advanced powertrain.

### THE RIGHT SPECS

On the full-size Transit Van, Time Warner Cable is spec’ing a mid-roof, extended length van in efforts to make it easy for drivers to get in and out of the rear and reach needed parts.

The biggest shift Time Warner Cable was able to make with the Transit was moving to a diesel engine. The company is spec’ing diesels wherever possible because of the high idle times across

“We were really looking for a more creative way to use our cargo space and the payload, and to take better advantage of the significant advances in engine and drivetrain technology. The introduction of the Transit set that stage for us.”

—George Survant, Senior Director of Fleet Management, Time Warner Cable

the fleet, while getting the most miles out of each tank. “For our purposes, we get the best possible configuration, range, payload, and performance out of these specs,” Survant says, adding that while most of the fleet runs on gasoline, the company will continue to look for new diesel options.

### A BRANDING OPPORTUNITY

With the rollout of about 100 Transit Connects a year and a planned rollout of about 500-700 Transits a year until



Time Warner Cable is creating a more usable space in the rear of its full-size Transit Vans, and with the medium-height roof, workers are able to stand and easily access equipment. The company is also standardizing the upfits where possible.

the van fleet has been completely replaced, Time Warner Cable has been using it as an opportunity to refresh the company and fleet branding as well.

Taking design cues from other large, recognizable fleets, the company has simplified its branding image by putting fewer graphics on the vehicles, while making it identifiable and easy to spot

from a distance. “We actually took a lesson from some of those guys,” Survant explains. “It really opened the runway to look at a very clean-looking, unencumbered truck without a lot of billboard stuff.”

### DRIVER SATISFACTION

For the first time in Time Warner Cable’s fleet, the Transit Van will make it possible for a vast majority of the company’s drivers to stand up in the back of the vehicle. “That went beyond our ex-



pectations,” Survant says, adding, “If you talk to our drivers and ask them, ‘How do you like this truck?’ The most common response we get is, ‘This is the nicest vehicle I’ve ever driven for a work truck.’”

Providing these vans has helped make drivers feel appreciated, and makes the job less physically demanding when they can quickly find equipment without climbing around or crawling. For example, the company is working on a wheeled toolbox and integrating that into the interior so that technicians can take everything needed up to the 14th floor of an apartment complex without having to go back to the van until the job is done.

Driver satisfaction has actually been the one area that has almost made Time Warner Cable a victim of its own success. Survant says now that word has spread amongst the drivers, everyone wants one, and they want one now — which doesn’t quite fit into the planned replacement that will take several years before the van fleet is fully replaced: “It’s not a terrible story and is definitely a good problem to have.” ■

\* See fueleconomy.gov for EPA-estimated fuel economy of Transit Connect engine/transmission combinations. Actual mileage will vary.

# BRINGING A CONVERSATION PIECE TO FLEET

The 2016 Ford Transit has changed the way Monty's Plumbing does business. The new work vehicle has attracted customers with its eye-catching graphics, while offering easy upfits, ample space, and a positive impact on ergonomics in the workplace.

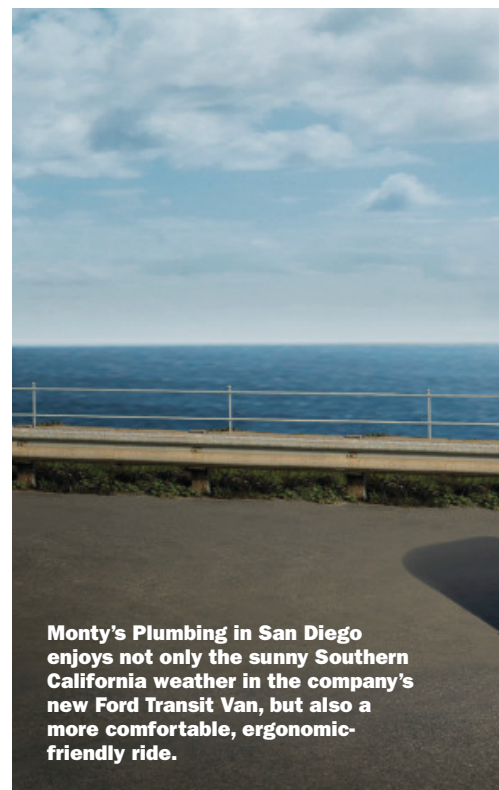
**K**C Montgomery didn't always plan on running his own business, but shortly before the recession, he realized he was feeling overworked and underappreciated at the plumbing company he previously worked for. So he decided it was time to begin earning what he deserved. He began chipping away at becoming a legitimate plumber in the industry: he got his contractor's license, built a website, and bought himself a used truck.

After a year of working solo, Montgomery began recruiting a team of others he'd met on the job. Together, the four of them make up Monty's Plumbing in San Diego, CA. For nearly six years, Montgomery has successfully run his company in the way he always wanted, adding three more trucks over the course of growing his business.

With the vehicles averaging about 14,000 miles per year, Montgomery tried to repair rather than buy new until finally he had the opportunity to re-



With the ease of getting in and out of his new Ford Transit Van, KC Montgomery spends less time gathering necessary equipment while working on site compared to his previous work vehicle.



Monty's Plumbing in San Diego enjoys not only the sunny Southern California weather in the company's new Ford Transit Van, but also a more comfortable, ergonomic-friendly ride.

place his first vehicle with a 2016 Ford Transit Van.

## CUSTOMIZATION MADE EASY

"What attracted me to the Transit was the versatility and the ability to fine tune a vehicle to my specific needs," Montgomery explains, further detailing the main reasons he's enjoyed having the Transit so far:

- **A good-looking vehicle with utility value** — Besides knowing that with a diesel vehicle, the truck will last a long time, Montgomery says he finds the vehicle aesthetically pleasing while still making it easy to upfit with easy-to-access ladder racks and other equipment. In fact, he notes that the ladder rack options available make it possible to load and unload from the ground without doing any climbing, helping prevent potential injury.
- **Provides power** — With the added power inverter, Montgomery can charge his batteries or power tools out on the job site, which frequently comes in handy.
- **Ergonomically friendly** — Because Montgomery chose the medium-roof height and the medium wheelbase,



“It’s like the utility knife of work vehicles. It’s really functional.”

*KC Montgomery, Owner  
Monty's Plumbing, San Diego*

age,” he recalls. “If you slam on the brakes, everything would kind of shimmy its way up to the front of the bed. In which case, if I needed something, I’d have to get down on my hands and knees and physically crawl back in order to get it. If there was something in the back that I needed I’d have to pull everything in the front out. And then at the end of the day I’d have to slide everything back in.”

Now, with dedicated storage space on his Transit, all of his equipment has a proper place in a cubbyhole or compartment. “I went from having a 5-pound box to a 20-pound box that I can put stuff in,” he says.

Not having to crouch down or bend over to get what he needs has removed some of the physical demand that hurts his back and prevents him from doing the work that needs to be done. “If my boots aren’t on the ground, I’m not making money,” he says.

### LOOKING DOWN THE ROAD

Montgomery is hoping to use his new truck and new incoming business as a way to leverage more work in the area of sustainable plumbing. Monty’s Plumbing is one of the only companies in Southern California that offers alternatives for water conservation and greywater reuse.

Montgomery says that he’d love to get into more television and “DIY” channel opportunities with the work he is already doing — and the van helps give him a professional look to do just that.

In Montgomery’s perfect world, he would outfit his whole fleet with Ford Transits because of how easy the single truck has made his life already. “This was my first experience with Ford, and I have to say that I’m extremely pleased and thankful for the opportunity,” Montgomery says. “I love my Ford Transit.” ■

the truck is simultaneously tall enough for him to walk around in, while also low enough to the ground to easily load equipment into.

The beauty of this vehicle, Montgomery recognizes, is it can be customized to meet any driver’s needs. “It’s like the utility knife of work vehicles,” he says. “It’s really functional. If you’re a locksmith, it’ll work. If you’re a handyman, you can dial it in for yourself. You can design it perfectly right to your standards.”

The vehicle is so multifunctional that Montgomery has even camped in it. When he planned on attending a party at a friend’s house and found out the house didn’t have enough beds, he brought his sleeping bag and his dog, and spent the night in the Transit. “You know, if somebody wanted to make a really fun recreational vehicle and go on a cross country road trip, you got everything,” he says.

### A CONVERSATION PIECE

Besides the truck’s size and spaciousness, he explains that it’s very attractive. “It’s a really bright, shiny, flashy, new vehicle and a lot of my customers

have come out and said, ‘Wow, look at this nice, new truck.’ And I always get asked, ‘Hey, how do you like that thing?’ It’s like a conversation piece. It’s a giant driving billboard.”

The vehicle has even helped in attracting prospective clients. He’s often seen people taking photos of his vehicle in order to get his information, and when customers reach out, they tell him they saw him driving and wanted to get a quote or find out more about his business.

Additionally, with a brand new, clean truck, Montgomery says that it boasts a level of confidence and professionalism that his previous vehicle didn’t have. He says it’s nice to show up to a customer’s home in his Transit rather than in “some beat-up, old rust bucket that’s leaking oil all over the driveway or something.”

### KEEPING COMFORT IN MIND

Due to an injury he sustained 20 years ago, Montgomery suffers from herniated discs. While the pain isn’t constant, the strain put on him by his previous vehicle, which had an enclosed utility box, could cause the pain to flair.

“The biggest drawback was stor-

# FORD TRANSIT 150 A VINCENTRIC BEST FLEET VALUE IN AMERICA™\*



Vincentric chose the 2015 Ford Transit 150 based on the best fuel economy, highest resale value and lowest total cost of ownership in its class. With the most vehicle configurations in its class,\*\* the Transit is a smart choice for your business. Transit 150 XLT Medium Roof shown.



## THE 2015 TRANSIT

/// [FLEET.FORD.COM](http://FLEET.FORD.COM)

\*Based on the Vincentric 2015 Fleet Awards analysis, 1/2-ton Cargo Van segment and Medium Roof Slide 130 trim level.

\*\*Based on body type, body length, wheelbase and roof height. Class is Full-Size Vans.