

FREIGHT UNIVERSITY · LOGISTICAL FORWARDING SOLUTIONS

The Professional Logistics Service Provider Certification

FIELD MANUAL · FRONT MATTER

CHAPTER iv

The Catch-22 and the first conversation

SESSION TWO

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keep your word · keep your deal · freight gets moved

How every chapter is built

Eight parts, in this order, in every chapter of this manual. Full explanation is in chapter i.

- 1 **Objective** What you can do when you finish the chapter.
- 2 **The teaching** The substance.
- 3 **Forms and documents** What paperwork this subject touches.
- 4 **Terms** The language of this subject.
- 5 **Official sources** Where the rule comes from, cited so you can read it yourself.
- 6 **What this protects the carrier from** The reason the chapter exists at all.
- 7 **Do this now** The work.
- 8 **Linked video and chapter** Where to go deeper.

The sixth part is why the chapter is in the book. If a chapter cannot answer it, it does not belong in your manual. That is the filter on everything in this program: **does this keep the trucking company alive.**

The Catch-22 and the first conversation

OBJECTIVE

By the end of this chapter you know why you need a carrier before you can do anything else in this business, you know how to tell whether a carrier is the right one to work with, and you know what to cover the first time you sit down with one.

THE TEACHING

You just wrote down the kind of carrier you are looking for. Now I want to tell you why finding one is the very first thing this program asks you to do.

The Catch-22.

Eighty-seven percent of the freight in this country moves through a broker. That is where the freight is. It is not hidden and it is not hard to find.

But a broker is not going to give freight information to somebody off the street. They need an active MC number. They need to know there is a truck behind the phone call.

You do not have an MC number. You are not getting one this month, and you should not be trying to.

So the carrier is your way in. That is the whole reason we started here. You are not out there looking for a client to sell something to. You are looking for the door.

Finding the freight is the easy part.

Once you can represent a carrier, you can pick up the phone and call brokers. TQL has thousands of brokers in their network. Landstar, C.H. Robinson, J.B. Hunt, and the list keeps going. There are tens of thousands of brokers across the United States, and every one of them can be called.

That is freight research. It is not something you do at a desk before you talk to anybody. The phone call is the research. You represent a carrier out of Texas, you call brokers on Texas freight, and after enough calls you start to see the lanes and what they pay. You cannot see any of that without a carrier behind you.

YOUR FIRST CARRIER IS A BUSINESS PARTNER

This is not a customer. Choosing your first carrier is almost like choosing a business partner, and I would put that first step at a twelve on a scale of one to ten.

You are going to be talking to this person several times a week for a long time. You need to be comfortable with them. They need to be comfortable with you.

So meet them. If they are local, sit down with them and buy them lunch. If they are not, have real conversations on the phone — not two-minute calls. Show them what you are working on and what you are trying to build, which is consistent freight.

QUALIFYING THEM

Wanting to change is not enough on its own. Here is what else you are looking at.

- **The right trailer.** It has to match the one industry and one trailer type you picked. If you are working dry van, a flatbed carrier is not your carrier, no matter how much you like him.
- **Close to you.** Keep your carriers inside a hundred to a hundred and twenty-five miles. Here is why. When a shipper finally says yes and needs freight moved tomorrow, trucks scattered all over the country take a week to gather. Trucks in one region are ready.
- **How long they have been in business.** A company that has been running three years knows things a company that started last month does not.
- **Their safety record.** Go to the FMCSA SAFER website, enter their MC or DOT number, and look. It is free and it is public. You are looking at how long they have been operating and whether there are a lot of infractions. If the record is bad, find somebody else. Reading a safety record properly is taught at chapter 19, and there is a full walkthrough waiting for you in Freight University.
- **Willing to let you represent them.** They have to be comfortable with you calling brokers on their behalf. If they are not, nothing else on this list matters.

WHAT YOU COVER IN THE CONVERSATION

This is not a script. Do not read it to anybody. These are the things you want to get across, in your own words.

- You would like to share how you can help their trucking business grow.
- You are networking with a lot of different shipping opportunities so you can build freight options that are consistent.
- You are focused on their geographic area, so you can connect freight going out and coming back.
- If you find something that fits their truck, can you call them about it.
- You are happy to have the broker reach out to them directly.
- If they are looking for dedicated lanes, you can represent their trucking company and go get those loads.
- What you are building toward is getting them direct with shippers.

And ask them questions. How many loads have you been running? What rates have you been getting? Where have you been going? Where do you not want to go? When do you want to be home? A driver out of the West Coast probably does not want to run downtown New York. You need to know that before you book him anything.

THROW THEM A BONE FIRST

Here is the part most people get wrong. Do not lead with a dispatch agreement.

Where I come from we say throw a man a bone. Give him something before you ask him for anything.

So as you are doing your freight research and you come across something that fits his truck, send it to him. This looks like it fits what you run. It is thirty-five miles from where you are. Call this broker — I already told them about you.

Then do it again the next day.

You are showing him you are actually doing the research and you are not afraid to share it. You are not trying to get him to sign something. And even if he books that load and goes on about his business, he has seen what you are. When you come back with consistency, he remembers.

The agreement comes later. You earn it first.

LOAD BOARDING — WHAT YOU ARE PULLING THEM OUT OF

Most small trucking companies are load boarding. They get on the board at the end of the day and take the best number they can find right then.

What happens is the truck turns into a pinball machine. It is all over the country. Different fuel prices, different tolls, different lumber fees, no lane repeating, nobody who knows him twice.

They are chasing three dollars a mile, and to get it they end up pulling a dollar eighty a lot, and a dollar ninety-five, and two dollars.

Two dollars and twenty cents a mile, consistently, in one region, beats three dollars a mile every now and then.

That is what your freight research is for, and that is what you are offering him. Not a better load. A better week, over and over.

Be honest with yourself about the time. Real freight research takes two to three months of steady work before it turns into anything. That is the part most people will not do, and it is the reason the ones who do it end up with something.

KEEP YOUR WORD, MAKE THE DEAL

It is on the bottom of every page of this manual, and here is where it starts meaning something.

If you keep your word and the carrier keeps his word, the deal happens. That is the whole arrangement. When you say you will call, call. When you say you found something, it is there. When he says his truck is empty Thursday, it is empty Thursday.

You are watching for that in him while he is watching for it in you.

WHERE THIS IS GOING

One carrier gets you in the door. Enough carriers gets you capacity. And once you have capacity, you can go direct to the shipper — because now you have trucks to put behind the freight.

That is later teaching and we will get to all of it. Right now you are learning who to do it with. Do not run ahead.

FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

- Your carrier qualifying notes — one page per carrier you are considering.
- A printed SAFER company snapshot for each one.
- Your list of questions to ask, written before you go.

TERMS

The Catch-22 — brokers hold the freight, brokers need an active MC number, and you do not have one — so the carrier is your way in.

MC number — the operating authority number issued by the FMCSA that identifies a motor carrier or broker.

SAFER — the FMCSA's public website where you look up a company by MC or DOT number and see their operating and safety record.

Freight research — calling brokers on behalf of a carrier to find out what freight runs where, and what it pays.

Load boarding — taking whatever pays best on the board today, with no lane and no consistency behind it.

Capacity — the trucks you can put behind freight. What you need before a shipper will deal with you.

OFFICIAL SOURCES

FMCSA SAFER System — safer.fmcsa.dot.gov. Free and public. Enter an MC or DOT number to see a company snapshot.

The regulations behind operating authority, insurance, and safety records are cited by section in Part 3.

WHAT THIS PROTECTS THE CARRIER FROM

A carrier signing with somebody who led with an agreement instead of results. No freight research behind it, no lanes, and no plan past the next load off the board. The carrier gives up part of his week to somebody who has nothing to give him, and he is worse off than before he had help.

DO THIS NOW

1. Pick the strongest carrier from your field notes and run them through the qualifying list on this chapter's pages. Write your answers down.
2. Look them up on SAFER. Enter their MC or DOT number and print the snapshot. You are looking at how long they have been operating and whether the record is clean.

3. Write out, in your own words, what you would cover the first time you sit down with them. Not my words. Yours.
4. Write down three questions you want to ask them about how they run.

All four come back at the opening of the next session, along with your field notes from chapter iii. You will be asked for them by name.

LINKED VIDEO AND CHAPTER

Chapter iv audio lesson — _____

In Freight University: *How to Choose the Perfect Carrier and Starting Conversation to Build Dispatch Carriers.* Start at the top of the page and work your way down.

Hands forward to chapter 1 — the motor freight industry, and who's who.

BEFORE THE NEXT SESSION

1. Your qualifying notes on your strongest carrier, written out.
2. Their SAFER snapshot, printed.
3. What you would cover in the first conversation, in your own words.
4. Three questions you want to ask them about how they run.
5. Your field notes from chapter iii. Bring them.

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