

## Choosing a trucking company: Reputable Placement

Moving from one company to another should bring benefit, advancement and value. However, a lot of turnover ends up not as an upward move but a lateral at best. Operators surely don't seek out situations that make matter worse. However, too many find out after moving, their new situation is different than their initial expectations. This is what popularized "the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence".

There are many issues that are often overlooked when evaluating a possible company move. One of those is balancing the level of service provided to the level of service required.

On a scale of one to ten (10 being an outstanding driver/operator) where do you rank yourself? This requires a level of self-evaluation that many people aren't comfortable with, they either over or under shoot the mark.

As a driver I would rate myself as a 7 or 7.5. Though I've never been involved in a commercial traffic accident and consider myself a defensive driver, I have dinged the occasional dock, drove over the odd curb and have been known to float around my lane. As an operator (lease/owner) I would evaluate myself as a 7.5 or 8. Even though I have a great deal of experience in the business and management side I consider myself moderately mechanically challenged. My only safety net was developing a strong personal relationship with a great mechanic.

Proper self-evaluation requires an objective view of where you fit in the driver/operator pool.

I have the luxury of meeting with hundreds of operators every year and speak to many more. There are times I have to really pull up my socks and concentrate more than normal because I'm in the presence of greatness. I also meet with the odd driver that I know won't last out the year. In the later example the biggest problem is usually arrogance, some refuse to properly evaluate their performance. What's the solution? Personally I recommend developing a very strong circle of true friends, the kind that will tell you the truth in a timely fashion.

When drivers self- evaluate, however, there is a tendency for some to under appreciate their abilities in the market place. Unchecked, this can lead to some companies taking advantage, even in a driver shortage environment. If you undervalue your professionalism, eventually your service will be under-rewarded.

If you have a clear record, never refuse a load, always arrive on time, paperwork punctual and in order, live within your means, are reliable, and hold a pleasant service oriented personality... you have high value and should present yourself accordingly.

Balancing the services require an evaluation of both the company requirements and your personal abilities. It must be a realistic approach to both. Companies will always attract and retain a certain level of quality. Look at all the other drivers. Are you realistically willing to perform at their level? If you would routinely outperform them, will you be adequately compensated? If not for either question, the honeymoon period ends pretty quickly.

Step back, look at how you serve your current company, are you at the top, at the middle or on the bottom?

If you are considering a move to a new company, where will you rank in the company? Will you be at the top, middle or struggle and fight at the bottom? If you start at the bottom how long will it be till you work yourself into the top spots (if at all)?

If you are currently at the bottom, the best business question would be: why? Why are you performing and being treated so badly? Is it really the company? Or is it you? Somewhere, somehow did you communicate that it was ok to be treated like you are? Can you communicate

a different message rather than leaving? Will it be received? What makes you think you'll communicate a different message than what you're used to communicating?

These may be personal issues but remember, you ARE your business. I can't fire myself. I follow me wherever I go.

Ultimately we must say what we mean, and make sure people know that we mean what we say. A consistent performance is our best objective, no matter how good, average or bad it comes across. In the trucking industry, drivers (and companies) are evaluated by their service or productivity not by their ability to talk.

It's always best to be inspired and challenged to your highest level of consistent service. In the end it will be the path to the highest level of return on your investment.

Robert D Scheper operates an accounting and consulting firm in Steinbach, Manitoba. He has a Masters Degree in Business Administration and is the author of the Book "Making Your Miles Count: taxes, taxes, taxes" (now available on CD). You can find him at [www.thrconsulting.ca](http://www.thrconsulting.ca) and [thrconsulting.blogspot.com](http://thrconsulting.blogspot.com) or at 1-877-987-9787. You can e-mail him at [robert@thrconsulting.ca](mailto:robert@thrconsulting.ca).

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