

5 Services a Great Freight Broker Should Offer

If you are a company that ships LTL freight and uses a freight broker, or are going carrier direct and wondering why you would consider using a broker, the following services should be required of any quality freight broker. We know a lot of the competition out there does not provide many of these services and to get the most bang for your transportation buck you should seek an LTL broker that can handle all of these requirements.

Automation

Our sales team often runs into companies that ship decent volumes of freight but are not using automation in their daily shipping processes. In this day and age of cloud computing, a quality broker should have software options that allow you to simply and easily manage your freight activities. A freight broker's number one priority is simplifying an often confusing and difficult LTL shipping world, and one of the ways we make our customer's lives easier is through our efficient automation systems using web-based software.

Using personalized, secure logins, our customers can quickly and easily manage their LTL freight shipping. Customers can instantly quote, book, and build shipments remotely from any web connected device. In only a few easy steps a customized bill of lading is created and our team handles the rest of the logistics from there. Customers do not have to worry about making handmade bill of ladings to send with the freight, or calling dispatchers to schedule pickups. They also won't have to worry about getting ETA's or checking up on tardy drivers.

Our personalized system also allows our customers to default locations, shipping items, and even specialized instructions that are placed on the bill of lading. Together, these processes streamline the LTL shipping process. If you are one of those shipping companies out there that is manually calling around for quotes or filling out bill of ladings by hand, then you need to find a broker or carrier that can offer you some simple automation tools. It will take a huge headache out of your freight processes.

Manually Booking Shipments

You are probably already wondering, "Wait, why would a broker manually book freight shipments? My broker already does it all electronically...isn't that better?" Guess what, our online software does allow us to electronically book pickups with almost all of our LTL carriers, but we've found that the process isn't reliable. Therefore, we call in each of our pickups.



FreightPros at a Glance

32 Employees, HQ in Austin, TX

Founded in 2009

282nd Fastest Growing
Company on 2013 Inc500 List

Freight Solutions

LTL Quoting & Transportation
Management

Full Truckload Services

Strategic Carrier Planning

Billing Auditing

Fantastic Pricing

Why We Rock at Freight:

We Are Transparent with our
Customers

We Treat our Customers as
Partners

We Excel by Actively
Embracing our Core Company
Values:

- Support
- Produce
- Respect
- Balance
- Develop

Making sure that your freight pickups are scheduled and completed is one of the most obvious and important jobs a freight broker has. Most freight brokers use the EDI automated system to book pickups. EDI stands for Electronic Data Interchange and is used to automatically send pickup information from the broker to the carrier. Though this automated system is convenient, it is also inherently flawed. There are no confirmations that the request was received and pickup requests are commonly dropped or incomplete.

There's nothing worse than calling in to an LTL carrier to check on a missed pickup and being told that they never received the pickup in their system, even though you know you sent the request over via EDI. When you're dealing with freight shipping, missed or dropped pickups lead to delays and angry customers – two things your broker should be ferociously avoiding.

At FreightPros we've developed our own system that eliminates the uncertainty that comes with the broker EDI booking system. For each pickup, our Pros take the time to call the dispatcher and personally confirm all the relevant pickup information. We take dispatcher's names, numbers, and pickup confirmations before we hang up the phone, insuring pickups aren't missed or forgotten. This attention to detail drastically cuts down on the number of missed pickups, generating better transit times with fewer delays. If your current broker relies solely on an electronic booking method, then you definitely are not getting the most reliable method of pickup scheduling for your freight shipments.

PRO Report/Pickup Report

LTL pickups are much more likely to be missed than a full truckload pickup. Your broker needs to be on top of all of your shipments and figure out what didn't pickup that was supposed to or what did pickup but was handed off with the incorrect paperwork. This audit could go by several names, but we internally call it the PRO report because the first check is to make sure that all shipments that were supposed to pickup the previous day have a PRO number (tracking number).

Most brokers will schedule the pickup, and after making sure all parties have the correct documentation (bill of ladings), will move on to the next shipment. This causes

issues when pickups are missed, as many times information between the shipper and the carrier can be muddled and contradictory. Oftentimes the broker will have no idea that a pickup was missed until the customer eventually informs them.

As a full service broker, we take responsibility for our customer's LTL shipments from origin to destination. The PRO report is one of our greatest and most unique tools in that we use it to identify any possible delays from the previous day's shipments. With this knowledge we can quickly solve the problems presented at the pickup and make sure the shipment is not missed a second time, thereby avoiding further delays.

Missed pickups affect all LTL carriers but the most common reasons for a missed pickup are tardiness on the part of the driver, trucks filling with freight earlier than expected, and dispatcher/driver miscommunications. Rather than just notifying our account management team of missed pickups, our PRO report team speaks to dispatchers, carrier customer service agents, and terminal managers to determine the true reason for the missed pickup, and the best action to remedy the situation and get your freight picked up and in transit.

This daily process also allows us to focus on finding pickup patterns for customer locations as well as carrier habits. This process helps us cut down on the number of missed pickups as we highlight patterns of misses, further enabling us to solve pickup issues before they even arise.

A great freight broker is always proactively handling issues before they become customer delays, and the PRO report is our most effective and detailed tool in cutting down on missed pickups.

Delivery Report

The Delivery Report is a daily report that we run alerting us to late LTL shipments that are still in transit past their estimated delivery date. This allows us to pinpoint shipments that have been delayed, and find the fastest way to get them delivered.

Reducing delays is the name of the game in LTL shipping, and a delivery report helps a broker do just that. By taking the time to track shipments through transit, a broker can stop delays before they even happen by recognizing location, carrier, or transit lane patterns.

Once we've identified the reason or cause of the delay we take the immediate step to resolve the issue, remove the delay, and get the freight delivered as quickly as possible. This continuing, daily process finds shipments that have been delayed and along with the PRO report plays an active role in our ability to limit both pickup and delivery issues.

As most shipping veterans know, the logistics business is very fluid and we've learned that vigilantly monitoring our freight is the best option in reducing delays. With tools like the Delivery Report, we can keep our eyes on shipments long after they've left their initial shipping dock – tracking them until their delivery. Make sure that you are working with a broker that actively tracks your shipments and that they are actively communicating delays to you, not the other way around.

Billing Auditing

One of the most important jobs of a freight broker is to make sure their shipping quotes match what is actually invoiced to the customer. This may sound simple, but with the large amount of additional charges levied by carriers in the LTL shipping industry, it can be anything but.

While most brokers simply pass on additional invoiced charges from the carrier to their customer, we first audit all charges to confirm their legitimacy. This ensures that by the time the customer is invoiced for the additional charge, our FreightPros have done the necessary research and pulled the necessary documents to not only prove the legitimacy of the additional charge, but also find ways to avoid such charges in the future.

Of course, not all charges invoiced from the carrier are legitimate. When faced with false charges, our team disputes the charges until they are dropped or the carrier has provided sufficient explanation. Of course, the customer will not be charged while we handle the dispute.

Our billing/auditing process is unique in that it both saves time for our customers as well as identifying LTL carrier trends such as limited access locations, extended delivery points, and even location-dependent accessorials. With this information, our brokers can ensure that future LTL shipments for each customer go as smoothly as possible

If the first time you are notified of additional fees on your freight is the day you receive the bill from your carrier or broker, then you are missing out on a huge opportunity to reduce your freight spend. A great broker will work with you and battle the LTL carriers for you to dispute illegitimate charges. Don't let your broker or carrier merely use these additional charges as a pass thru or additional revenue stream. Work with your broker to fight these charges and challenge your broker to figure out ways for you to ship your freight in the most economical and efficient way possible.

Great Brokers Provide More than Only Great Pricing

Hopefully your current carrier or broker is providing all of these additional services when handling your freight. There is so much more that goes into evaluating savings from a transportation provider than just looking at the absolute hard costs. The soft cost savings alone from many of these services can oftentimes represent a huge % of overall freight spend. At FreightPros, all of the services above come included for all of our LTL freight shippers, for no additional fee. We've got great LTL rates, but feel that these additional services set us apart from the rest of the competition out there and are just part of what we do each and every day to ensure that we are a great freight broker for all of our customers.

For more information about shipping with FreightPros, please contact us at 888-297-6968.