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What does it take to go from Driver to Leader?

When we recently announced the 2015 Women In Trucking Influential Woman of the Year; there were many comments on social media about the absence of professional drivers from the list.

First, it must be noted that Stephanie Klang, a driver for Conway Truckload and a former America's Road Team Captain, was a finalist for the 2014 Influential Woman in Trucking award. Stephanie is a role model and has attained national respect for her skills and professionalism. I would suspect that she could find a position inside the walls of any terminal if she wished, but she prefers to remain behind the wheel.

Is there a career progression from professional driver to industry leader?

Perhaps, but maybe not.

The characteristics that make a good, safe, professional driver are not the same as those of a woman who is working her way up the corporate ladder.

A recent survey by the Financial Women's Association (fwa.org) found that the way for women to advance in the corporate structure is to move outside their comfort

zone and take risks. How is this accomplished? It includes asking for additional assignments, speaking up at meetings, and taking on leadership roles within the organization.

George Bernard Shaw once said, "The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can't find them, make them."

Women who work in the trucking industry are surrounded by men. Most of their peers, supervisors, and staff are men as women comprise only fourteen percent of management roles in the transportation sector. Research has shown that women are often promoted for their accomplishments while men are promoted for their potential.

This means that a woman must often prove her commitment, her value, and her determination before she moves up the career ladder.

So, how is this different from a woman who chooses to become a professional driver? Female drivers are still rare, as there are nineteen men for every woman behind the wheel of a truck.

While these women are typically independent and self-confident, they must possess some characteristics that don't always support a leadership role. First, professional drivers are comfortable being alone for hours at a time. Many female drivers are hesitant to train new drivers because they prefer "their own space."

In order to be a manager, you must be a people person. You need to be happy in a corporate environment surrounded by co-workers, where you accept the fact that your day is spent inside a building instead of outdoors. To be a manager, you need to lead your staff and support and encourage them on a daily basis.

Professional drivers often prefer being their own boss.

Most drivers detest the idea of their chair being behind a desk instead of a windshield. They love the view and appreciate the sunrises and sunsets that mark the start or end of their day. Ask any driver if she would enjoy the behind the desk view for her workday and she'll usually shake her head and tell you how much she loves seeing the countryside.

Finally, a professional driver must be dedicated to safety. This means she must be patient and always remain calm. She cannot allow inept motorists, disrespectful shippers and receivers, changing

dispatch instructions or bad weather to distract her. She must take her time and keep her focus on maintaining safe distances and speeds.

Compare this to her counterpart who has chosen a life within a cubicle, surrounded by office distractions and co-workers who must push herself outside her comfort zone on a daily basis.

These two women are not typically compatible.

We applaud any woman who moves out of the truck and into the office and finds her way into the C-suite. We would love to hear from women who have made this transition and upward progression and we applaud you.

Until then, we truly appreciate the role women have as professional drivers and as leaders within the industry. Women In Trucking Association represents both of these groups, as well as their male peers..

Ellen Voie

President/CEO

of Women In Trucking, Inc.

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Mission: Women In Trucking was established to encourage the employment of women in the trucking industry, promote their accomplishments and minimize obstacles faced by women working in the trucking industry.

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Choosing a New Carrier

Now that spring is here, I like many of you are looking forward to the warm weather and the turning of things from grey to green. It is also a time when many of us get a little itchy to see if the grass really is greener on the other side of the fence. As some of you may know, I have written in the past about the need to do your homework to determine if your carrier is really at fault for your lack of success or is it simply a case of you not looking after your own business? This article assumes that you have done this and have finally decided that it is time to start looking for a new position. So where do you begin? Here is a quick look at a proper carrier search, what it should look like and a few ideas on how to conduct your search.


Many things should be investigated before you commit to a new carrier. First and foremost, you should understand that for the most part, if you have clean equipment and a clean driving record, you are in the driver's seat so to speak. Carriers are in dire need of good Owner Operators and Drivers so feel free to be bold with your demands for information. I believe that if you are looking for a long-term relationship with a progressive, successful carrier you need to know as much about them as they need to know about you.

As with all business decisions, I suggest that you start with a pen and pencil and write out a plan with a goal that includes the results you want. Many factors need to be contemplated like; how long do I want to be away from home? What part of the job do I like doing the most and least? Is it the driving part of the job that is my main interest? The least stops the better? Or is a good day determined when you have had multiple stops and met lots of different people over

your shift? If so, maybe an LTL operation would fit your needs? Do you like a good mix of physical labor along with driving which might mean that flatbed work is where you want to be? Obviously there are as many types of operations as you can imagine so decide which sector of the industry best fits you and only focus on that group.

The ads that are in magazines such as this one are designed to catch your eye and have you consider them first. No secret here and many of them do the job well. But now that you've narrowed the field down to what you're specifically looking for, it's time to bring some detail into the search. Make a list of all the possibilities and put each company on a separate piece of paper. Then you can start to investigate each company and keep notes on each sheet so that you can compare them rationally. Next, contact these companies to get as much information as possible over the phone. Ask them to send you any information they have, including the contract you will be signing. When you have this information you should be able to narrow your search down to two or three candidates.

Each company will have different pay packages and various bells and whistles for you to consider. The common elements will be similar from company to company and they need to be tracked so on the top of each sheet, list the following items. There will be a revenue section that would list; rate of payment, if it is by the mile or percentage and list the average miles driven by their O/O fleet or the average gross if they pay by percentage along with the average miles driven. Also lists drops or pick up payments, waiting time rates of pay, safety bonus, layover payments and any other per diem payments that might apply such as tarping and un-tarping.



Below that you should list all the necessities that are either company paid or paid by yourself that need to be considered. These items would include things such as base plate, insurance (this area should also include some detail of what your deductibles are should you have an incident of any kind), tolls, permits, border crossing decals, HUVT (Heavy Vehicle Use Tax) along with any items the carrier might require you to have to work in your chosen sector such as a wet line for tank haulers or bulk carriers. Holdback amounts are your money but until they are paid they are an interruption to you of future cash flow so put this amount here for now - but ask if interest is paid on the amount and if so, when and what amount?

All the information you have collected so far are what I consider to be the hard facts and you should have had very little challenge in getting the information from your prospective new company. If you have gotten resistance in disclosure, this should tell you something of what the future might hold for you. Some carriers are very open with sharing information on the generic results of their Owner Operator fleet, so ask for it.

The next step once you have your facts on paper is the critical one; you have narrowed your search so now it's time to get to work and find out the fine details. Remember not to be fooled by the numbers. Large gross numbers do not necessarily equate to money in your pocket and that's why a visit to the carrier with your eyes wide open is the next step. Many carriers have developed infrastructures that are very Owner Operator user friendly and their infrastructure will allow you to take significant operating costs off your bottom line. Remember, it's what's left over that counts! For example, the carrier might offer preferred shop rates that are significantly below market rates. Depending on your individual situation, these factors may or may not be of importance to you. When I ran a small, three-truck fleet I did all my own oil changes and minor maintenance so

this wouldn't have been a big deal for me at the time. But for others who are not so inclined, this lowering of operating cost would flow right to your bottom line.

Finally ask, what is their turnover rate? They should be able to give you this answer quickly if they are concerned with the success of their contractors and drivers. Ask for the names of a couple of their Owner Operators so you can talk to these people about their experience with the carrier. When you are talking to these people you might want to also get the names of a couple of O/O's who are not so happy so you can talk to them as well. What does the terminal look like? Is it neat and clean with a good driver's room? Ask to meet the operations manager and one of the dispatchers for a quick chat and try to determine the culture of the company inside and outside the building. Is it a win/win professional climate or is it adversarial with tension in the air? Are the people in the company treated like professionals with respect?

Add up all the facts, both hard and soft items and make your decision. This is just a quick overview of how I would make a decision. This article could easily be 5 plus pages and still not cover every item. This decision is paramount to your future success so take your time and do it properly and at the end of the day, if you are left with two very close candidates, all I can say is trust your gut. Let your instincts take over as to where you might be most comfortable working.

One final thing when you make your decision. Go into the relationship with a positive attitude and a determination to succeed. Remember you only get one chance to make a good first impression. Let everyone know that you are a professional and do your part to get things off to a good start.

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Employment income - line 101
Revenus d'emploi - ligne 101

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Company Drivers
earnings for 2014**

24

Employee's CPP contributions - line 308
Cotisations de l'employé au RPC - ligne 308

16

Employee's QPP contributions - line 308
Cotisations de l'employé au RRC - ligne 308

17

Employee's EI premiums - line 312
Cotisations de l'employé à l'AE - ligne 312

18

Union dues - line 212
Cotisations syndicales - ligne 212

44

Charitable donations - Schedule 1
Dons de bienfaisance - Annexe 1

46

RPP or DPSP registration number
N° d'agrément d'un RPA ou d'un RPDB

50

52

Pension adjustment - line 206
Facteur d'équivalence - ligne 206

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Drivers need Incentives Not Safety Bonuses

This past week I participated in an online discussion regarding driver safety bonuses. The people participating were all safety trucking professionals. I was the only voice to express the view that I didn't like safety bonuses. I think I shocked many of the other participants.

Why am I against driver safety bonuses? There are a couple reasons I think that paying a driver a safety bonus is the wrong approach. The first reason is that I believe there is a better way to give drivers an incentive and secondly, I don't believe we should pay anyone a bonus for doing the job that we hired him or her to do. Did we not hire a professional driver to drive collision and violation free? Every time a driver gets a violation, ticket, or is involved in a collision, are they not going against everything that a professional driver and trucking company stands for?

So I don't believe in driver safety bonuses! But I do believe very strongly in incentives. Many companies outside of the trucking industry offer their employees "profit-sharing". Why is the trucking industry so different? Why are we not looking to other industries for great ideas?

Here's how I think a trucking company could give a driver a bonus and encourage him/her to stay longer with the organization. After all, isn't one of the goals of the bonus to improve driver retention? What if we paid the driver profit-sharing? In the trucking industry it is a little more complicated but I do believe that we have the technology to make this process fairly simple. A colleague of mine once said that each truck "is a profit center". I believe that! If each truck is making a profit then can we share some of the profit with the driver who operates the vehicle?

So how might this work? With engine technology and our computer systems the way it is today we should be able to identify each truck and its profitability. For example, if a

driver does a thorough and complete vehicle inspection before leaving the yard for his trip and finds a defect on the vehicle and gets it repaired before leaving the yard, hasn't the driver contributed to the vehicle's profitability? After all it is significantly less expensive to have the vehicle defect fixed in the yard than it would have been on the road. That's one example of how a driver can positively affect profitability. The second example may be fuel efficiency. We all know that there are several ways that you can operate a vehicle and affect its overall performance. A driver who has good shifting technique and is relaxed and patient on the road usually gets better fuel economy than those drivers who are constantly in a hurry. This again contributes to profitability as well as reduced maintenance costs. Another example could be route planning. For the long-haul driver there are many different ways to get to his/her destination. If you are paying a driver by the mile they most often will take the shortest route. That shortest route however may not be the most fuel efficient or safest route. By giving the operator a portion of the profits, the driver would be encouraged to take the most profitable route.

There are several more examples that could be cited as to how a truck can be more profitable. But the idea of this article today is to get you to think how this might be applied to your company and to your drivers. I firmly believe that a profitable truck is also a very safe truck and isn't that at least one of the goals of the bonus; to encourage the operator to be safe, without violations and to make the truck profitable? I would love to hear your feedback on this article.

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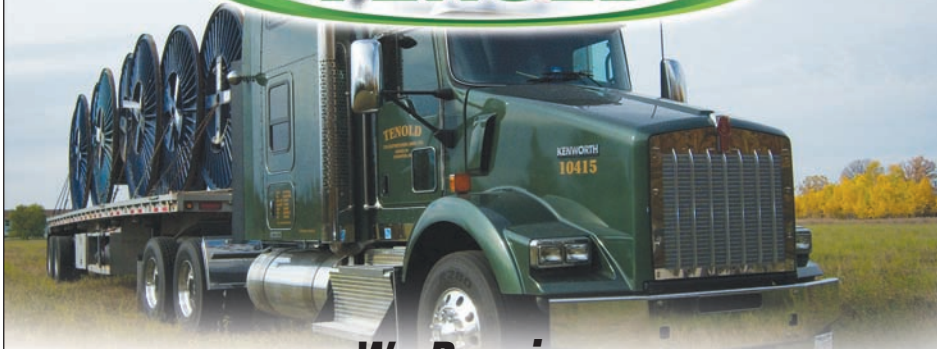
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Trucker Buddy International

Sohm Named to Trucker Buddy Board of Directors

Trucker Buddy International's Board of Directors has unanimously elected Krista Sohm, vice president, Marketing & Communications for Meritor, Inc. as its newest board member. "We are very excited to have Krista join the board," said Randy Schwartzburg, executive director of Trucker Buddy International (TBI). "Krista is recognized for her ability to create and implement innovative ideas. We look forward to the contribution she will bring to our board in helping us advance Trucker Buddy's mission of enabling schoolchildren to understand the importance of the trucking industry in our everyday lives."

Sohm, who has 25 years of industry experience, said, "I am proud to join the board of TBI and represent Meritor. TBI creates a shared experience and helps support many of the essential skills children are learning in the classroom, including writing, math and geography."

Meritor, a platinum sponsor of the organization, has supported Trucker Buddy for more than 15 years. In addition to the philanthropic contributions from the Meritor Trust, the company has also endorsed the volunteer efforts of its employees. Most recently Mike Pennington, who passed away last year, represented Meritor on the TBI board and served on its advisory committee.

Trucker Buddy International, an independent, non-profit 501(c) (3) organization, is often called the number one trucking image campaign in North America and has helped educate schoolchildren and introduce educators to the trucking industry. This gives them the world through the eyes of a professional truck driver. The Trucker Buddy program helps to educate and mentor schoolchildren via a pen pal relationship between professional truck drivers and children in grades K-8 as supervised by their teachers.

After an extensive screening process, the professional truck drivers are matched with a class and as directed by the teacher, drivers share news about their travels with their class. Students write letters and send pictures to their drivers. Students' skills in reading, writing, geography, mathematics, social studies, and history are enhanced and learning is made fun.

Since 1992, Trucker Buddy International has helped educate more than a million schoolchildren and introduced them to caring, compassionate men and women, professional truck drivers. The ongoing success of the program is due to driver volunteers, participating teachers and the contributions of sponsors. There are no fees to the drivers or teachers to participate in the program. The Trucker Buddy program is funded entirely through sponsorships and donations.

About Meritor

Meritor, Inc. is a leading global supplier of drivetrain, mobility, braking and aftermarket solutions for commercial vehicle and industrial markets. With more than a 100-year legacy of providing innovative products that offer superior performance, efficiency and reliability, the company serves commercial truck, trailer, off-highway, defense, specialty and aftermarket customers around the world. Meritor is based in Troy, Mich., United States, and is made up of more than 9,000 diverse employees who apply their knowledge and skills in manufacturing facilities, engineering centers, joint ventures, distribution centers and global offices in 18 countries. Common stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol MTOR. For important information, visit the company's website at meritor.com.