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**Publisher**  
 Peter Charboneau  
 peter@otrgroup.ca

**General Manager**  
 Ed Novoa  
 ed@otrgroup.ca

**Director of Operations  
 & Editor-in-Chief**  
 Cathryn Charboneau  
 cathryn@otrgroup.ca

**Account Executive**  
 Luke Zentil  
 luke@otrgroup.ca

**Account Executive**  
 J.C. Arseneault  
 jc@otrgroup.ca

**Account Executive**  
 Earle Madden  
 earle@otrgroup.ca

**Graphic Design  
 & Advertising**  
 LKDesign  
 lennykuiper@gmail.com

**Controller**  
 Estela Navarrete  
 estela@otrgroup.ca

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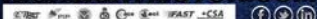
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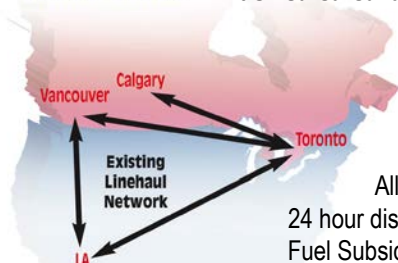
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**Robert D. Scheper**



### *A Lecture on Success*

I was giving a speech a while ago and had a short question and answer time at the end. I was asked a fairly standard question about success and what is the biggest leverage to achieving it. I have many books on the subject and there are more books written about the subject than all my library shelves could hold. It's a nearly endless topic that can be approached from thousands of different perspectives. What was alarming to me was my response. I found myself talking about things I rarely discuss... it was like I was hearing it for the first time.

I am a planner; a hard and diligent worker. Plan your work and work your plan is my motto. Become proactive rather than reactive. Get ahead of the curve or in front of the wave. Don't leave things to chance, predetermine your success. These are the foundations of what I believe. However, my response to the question focused on reactions rather than proactivity. I was intrigued by what I was saying yet apprehensive. I was listening to a speech from my heart, not my head.

The point I made was that often our greatest success comes from how we REACT to our adversities. Too many people

are headstrong and forceful in trying to build their own success to fit how they themselves define their success. They have exact expectations of how things should be rather than nurturing things to grow. As I look back on my career I realize that there were three or four major events that caused me to change the direction I took towards success. Each change produced significant success. It was not ME forcing MY plan to work but how I REACTED to my changing circumstances. Each major success I achieved was rooted in a major crisis of some sort. My crisis was seeded in my inability to be flexible; my stubbornness to see MY plan through no matter what. I refused to react to my changing circumstances. Success only came when I exercised patience and humility. I learned it the hard way.

However, my speech contained more than just a lesson on flexibility. It was to encourage the art of proper REACTIONS to highly negative circumstances. Too often, burning a bridge, humiliating someone, overplaying authority, cutting and running or any of a number of excessive responses is too evident in unsuccessful people. Patience and self-control is often too hard to find in the middle of a crisis and yet,



successful people embrace its virtues at the exact time when unsuccessful people do not. The art of mature reactions can be one of the most highly leveraged situations in business and personal life.

Being an accountant for a couple decades gives me a 30,000 foot insight into highly successful people and people who are not (or certainly less) successful. If I tried to define success in one word, that word would be discipline. Whatever a person is disciplined in they will be successful in. If you want to be successful financially you must be disciplined in all the areas that financial success is rooted in. Blowing up emotionally at a dispatcher will most likely affect your financial future because personal relationships are needed for trucking cash flow. Too many times I have witnessed needless and costly turnover rooted in overreactions. Years, sometimes decades of productivity have been lost to burnt bridges, impatience and pride. Then, once recovered and circumstances present themselves again, the costly reactions start the loss cycle over again. People don't have to be impatient and proud all the time to perpetuate a life circle of loss... they just have to time it every few months or years to drop themselves down again.

Responding to a crisis or circumstance inappropriately (with impatience, pride or some other form of immaturity) will guarantee unsuccessful results. However, proper placement of patience and humility during a time of crisis multiplies returns more than any other discipline.

Everyone encounters setbacks and crisis. Reacting appropriately is what makes the successful people successful. Every greatest leap of success in my life is rooted in a proper reaction to failure and crisis... EVERY SINGLE ONE! Every one of my failures is born in pride and impatience. Guarding our reactionary attitude is the foundation of all success.

**About the Author:**

Robert D. Scheper is a leading Accountant and Consultant to the Lease/Owner operator industry in Canada. His first book in the Making Your Miles Count series "taxes, taxes, taxes" was released in 2007. His firm exclusively serves Lease/Owner Operators across Canada. His second book "Choosing a Trucking company" is the most in-depth analysis of the operator industry available today. He has a Master degree (MBA) in financial management and has been serving the industry since he and his wife came off the road in 1993. His dedication, commitment and strong opinions can be read and heard in many articles and seminars.

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## SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

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### JUST ASK!

There are many ways to create a driver-centered culture and if done properly they are all capable of being fun and effective. With driver turnover cost estimates ranging from \$6000.00 dollars up to \$12,000 dollars per person, it makes cultural and monetary sense to invest in turning your company into a fun place to work and to reduce turnover. So how do you do it? One of the first things to do is to ask people what they like and don't like about your company. Doesn't it seem obvious? Ask the questions and react to the answers. You don't have to be an industrial psychologist to get to the bottom of your issues --- Ask!

A simple survey of your driving force can reveal all kinds of opportunities for improvement to turnover. Another off shoot of asking pointed questions is that you are showing your drivers that their opinions have value. I hope this point is understood. If I ask your opinion on a subject it is because I value your opinion. It's powerful but only if I react and reply to your answer. If an opinion is asked for and no reply is given then the natural instinct of the person who offered the information would be, so why did you ask? So don't start this exercise unless you plan on following through!

What do you ask? Well, it's again very simple when you break it down into small chunks. I would ask each area of your company to come up with three questions to start with. Payroll might ask the drivers if their pay statements are easy to read, maintenance might ask for a rating on how punctual their scheduled maintenance appointments are. Safety might ask how engaging their safety meetings are. Operations might be interested in knowing their opinion on the functionality of the satellite system or phone system. Whatever the common points of contact are with the drivers, each department should address them. An overall approval rating by department should also be obtained and a 1-10 measurement is all that is needed. I would also leave space for additional comments.

After the request for feedback of your internal procedures and policies it is natural to try and get feedback on your Driver and Owner Operator's daily environment. Ask them who their favorite shippers and receivers are and then who their least favorite shippers and receivers are. You might want to inquire as to your driver's favorite fuel stops and least favorite fuel stops.



Run a contest for the collection of surveys and put the names of those who participated into a draw for company merchandise. Or have your safety department have them filled out during a safety meeting etc.

Once the information is collected, it needs to be reacted to and the people who gave you their opinions need to know what you did with the data. You might want to show them the results of each question so they can see how other drivers reacted to the questions asked. You should obviously react to finding out who the worst shippers are by trying to help them change how they are perceived by your drivers - or by replacing them. They are causing you turnover! Let your drivers know that you did react and what you did about the information you collected. Your best shipper could be thanked in letter form, or with the presentation of a plaque and copies of the letter from your drivers.

The information collected is now the basis of your retention effort going forward. Every area of the company can improve somehow with the information collected. It's gold. This type of program can also establish a measurable system of driver approval from department to department. A benchmark is established and then it is up to individual departments to work at improving their overall approval ratings. They should set incremental goals for improvement and then devise a strategy to get there.

Two other initiatives are a natural spin off of this exercise and are important to overall success. First, each and every improvement or increase in approval rating should be celebrated. Let your people enjoy their victory. Nothing spectacular is required, but something that they can all enjoy and that allows everyone to reflect on their success. Small milestones are what are needed to continue the momentum and to reach the goal. Second is broadcasting to the entire company the success that has been attained. Communicate what has been accomplished and what is to come. Every company with two employees has a rumor mill so feed yours with as many positives as you possibly can.

This stuff is simple but very powerful - but it is important to remember that what is being collected from your people must be reacted to or you will be in a worse position with turnover than when you started.

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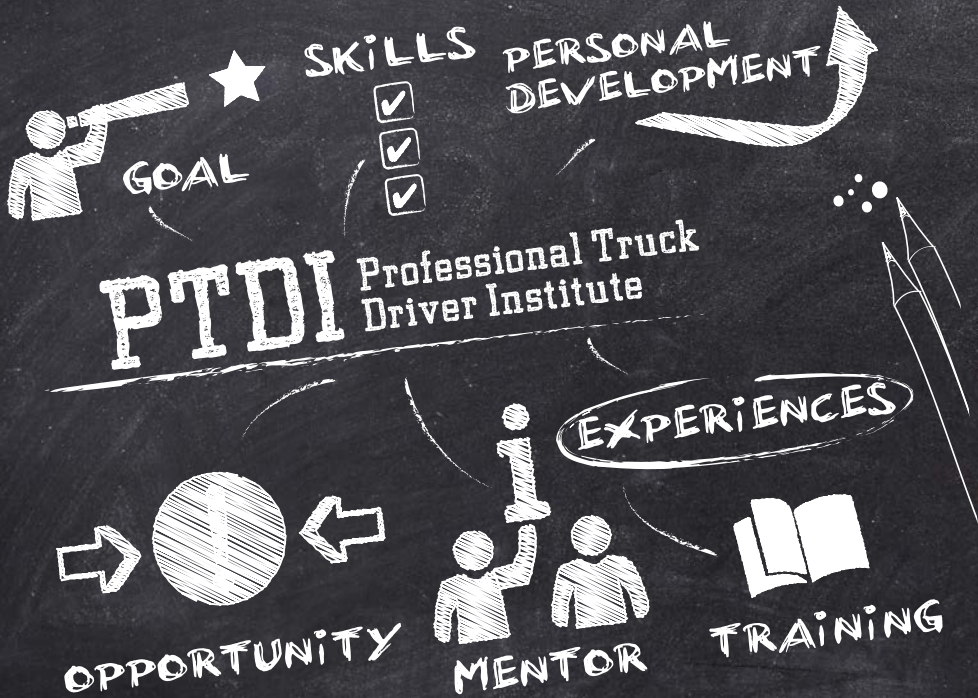
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**5th Wheel Training Institute**



## *Triple Threat*

Ticktock...Ticktock...Ticktock! The clock is ticking for anyone in Ontario who wants to get a Class AZ driver's licence. The mandatory entry-level standards will be a reality by July 1, 2017. But I believe the clock is ticking even louder for all trucking companies. If they are not awake yet, they soon will be. The industry is at the threshold of Triple Threat... a driver shortage; an aging workforce and now mandatory standards for new drivers. I think it may be more of a time bomb than a clock ticking and it's getting ready to explode.

A few weeks ago, I received an SOS call from a carrier who has long avoided all opportunities to interview and hire graduates from any truck driver training school. For the last 30 years their position has been strong and unyielding... they will only hire drivers with 3 years experience. Recent graduates need not even apply, they are not even considered and are told to go and get their experience somewhere else. Somewhere else? Where?

Who doesn't want the perfect candidate? I would also like to hire only employees who have experience, who know exactly how to do each task perfectly, who get along with everyone and who can come up with good suggestions for improvements from time to time. The reality is far from that mirage. I am now beginning to see that the tables are slowly turning on the trucking industry. The

day is coming where the inexperienced truck driver may soon be in the driver's seat to pick and choose a job.

Those companies who have looked at their workforce honestly know that the average age of their drivers is between 55 to 60 years of age. Those who will successfully manoeuvre through this crisis are those who have established quality training programs for new drivers. And these companies are prepared to recruit from many sources and have solid on-boarding programs.

Some carriers may believe that having a Driver Certification Program (DCP) will shield them from the shortage. Although a company can become a Signing Authority and issue Class A licenses, it can only train its own employees and must meet and comply with the Ministry of Transportation's standards. Getting a program ready for approval from MTO and setting up a training program is not that easy. It takes time and costs money. And how many employees can a company hire and then pay for their training without knowing if they'll stay? Not many can afford these upfront costs to solve a driver shortage.

As a 30 year veteran of the truck driver training industry, I have seen many companies start up and then close their internal "schools". There are many reasons why it won't work for a trucking company.

I believe it boils down to a simple truth. Basically, trucking operations conflict with training activities. They do not blend well together and have a fundamental conflict of interest.

One would think that it is an ideal arrangement to have a student start training in a company where they can actually learn on the job. Although it works to have a licensed driver work alongside an experienced coach, it requires a complete teaching system to start a driver from "scratch". And the customers... how many would accept having students, who do not have a driver's license, practice backing or delivering goods on their property?

Now remember that most people who are truck drivers want to be truck drivers. They don't necessarily have the skills, the interest or the ability to teach. Yet for some reason, employers think that if a driver is a good truck driver, he/she should be a good instructor. And 'this good truck driver' is certainly not trained or ready to teach a person who has never been behind the wheel of a truck. Trust me... you will run out of interested trainers in a very short time. It is just not sustainable.

It would make more sense to groom some of the drivers who express interest and have the skills, to become coaches of newly licensed drivers. Some larger carriers have very good on-boarding programs. But let's be honest. They have the resources to make the DCP happen. The smaller trucking companies cannot afford to operate a DCP program. Even if curriculum and resources are made available at a reasonable price, it still remains the responsibility of

the carrier to find, recruit and pay their own instructors and dedicate equipment to teach students according to the MTO standards.

So what's the solution? It's never one thing that will make the problem go away. Trucking companies who are serious about succession planning, must use several approaches that work for their organization.

There's one thing that I know for sure... All carriers need to start NOW. Start by meeting truck training schools throughout the province. Visit their facilities, ask about their programs and observe their teaching. Interview their graduates and take them for a test drive. Start with one new driver and develop a system that prepares them for your operation. You will know quickly which schools are the most compatible with your organization. Find out about the DCP program and decide if it's right for you. Educate yourself about the new standards and educate your staff. Knowledge and focused actions are key.

The clock may be ticking but each carrier can make the decision to take a proactive approach to this new reality. The impact of these trends are coming and are here to stay. Don't wait. Act now.

**Louise Philbin**

Co-founder and Education Director  
5th Wheel Training Institute  
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## ***Are you a risk taker?***

Imagine you wake up at 3 am to a fire alarm in your hotel room on the 15th floor. The announcement from the loudspeaker instructs everyone to exit the building immediately, without using the elevator. What do you do?

This recently happened to me, and after trudging down the flights of stairs and being guided to a parking lot across the street, I was not in a good mood. At least I had pulled on my jeans and grabbed a jacket, as some people were still in their pajamas and were shivering in the chilly morning air.

As you can imagine, we were all relieved, but irritated to learn it was a false alarm. The waiting line for the (very slow) elevators was long, so I decided to walk back up the stairs to my room. Later, I asked a companion how many stairs he had to maneuver and he told me he had just gotten into the shower and decided to take a chance that there was no fire and it was only a false alarm.

He beat the odds this time, but what if it had been a real fire? What would you do?

If you're a risk taker, you'll do what my colleague did and bet that there's no fire. If you're not a risk taker, you'll be the person in

the pajamas scurrying down flights of stairs and shivering in the cool morning air.

One definition of risk is "a situation involving exposure to danger." Certainly, allowing yourself to ignore a fire alarm is exposing yourself to danger.

Good professional drivers are typically risk averse and female drivers are even less likely to put themselves in a situation involving risk. However, a 2012 study in Norway compared professional drivers to non-professional drivers and found some interesting results.

The study looked at the responses of 1864 individuals of which 113 were professional drivers. Here's what they found. The professional drivers took more risks in some areas but had less risky behavior in others.

First, professional drivers were less likely to wear seatbelts, which could be identified as risky behavior. However, professional drivers were much less likely to operate a vehicle after alcohol consumption. (This could be contributed to the possible loss of a job, but is still a good risk to avoid.)

The report also found that professional drivers were more likely to use phones or other electronic devices while driving than



their four-wheeler counterparts. This type of activity is related to the job and the need to communicate with family, friends, customers and carriers, but was more prevalent in commercial vehicles and is identified as risky behavior.

It was interesting to note that the study found differences in how professional drivers take personal responsibility for road safety overall. A person with a strong safety priority will be more proactive in avoiding risks. Professional drivers have stronger attitudes toward safety because of training and company values, however, due to the higher demands placed on them, they experience higher levels of stress and fatigue which could contribute to lower personal responsibility regarding traffic safety.

It wasn't surprising to note that the report claims that professional drivers have a negative opinion of non-professionals as they perceive themselves as being more skilled and trained than others.

While the Norwegian study identified drivers by age and gender, they didn't comment on any risk-taking tendencies for female drivers other than claiming that younger men are the most risk-taking group on the road.

A report from the Social Issues Research Centre focusing on automobile drivers found that women take fewer risks and men are more likely to be in crashes involving speed, or those that occur while passing or on curves.

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that male (automobile) drivers were more likely than females to report aggressive driving behaviors and the World Health Organization claims that "masculinity" may be hazardous to health and cited risky driving as one factor.

Women are driven by estrogen, which encourages bonding and connections while men are motivated by testosterone, which results in the desire to win and to demonstrate power. Women activate the amygdalae, which is the brain's fear center, more quickly than men. For these reasons, we can assume the typical female drivers have less risky behavior than men.

Regardless of your age or gender, risk taking on the road is not something anyone, professional or not, should be doing. Ignoring a fire siren in the early morning hours and hoping it's a false alarm is another form of risk, and one we should all avoid.

#### **Ellen Voie**

President/CEO/Founder of  
Women In Trucking, Inc.  
ellen@womenintrucking.org  
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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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Anvil Ring .....	14	K-DAC Expedite .....	20	Robert Scheper Article .....	16,17
Atlantis .....	26	Kelsey Trail .....	34	Rosedale Group .....	38
AYR Motor Express .....	13	Keypoint Carriers .....	37	Service Pro Truck Lines .....	10
Bestway Cartage .....	10	Kindersley .....	12	Speaking from Experience .....	24,25
BTC Express .....	37	Laidlaw .....	18	TCA inGuage .....	22
Caravan Group of Companies .....	9	Liberty Linehaul .....	30	Thompson Emergency .....	7
Carmen Transportation Group .....	30	Louise Philbin Article .....	28,29	Total Logistics .....	3
Challenger Motor Freight .....	23	McEwitt Trucking Ltd. ....	11	TRANSAM Carriers .....	2
CNTL .....	40	Midwest Transit .....	35	Trans-frm McNamara .....	15
FTI .....	14	Mill Creek .....	19	Transpro Freight Systems .....	8
Genesis Express .....	20	Nu-era Freight Lines .....	39	Trappers Transport .....	4
Highlight Motor Freight .....	5	OTR Digital .....	36	Veeboards .....	8
Hyndman .....	21	PTDI .....	27	Walmart .....	6
JBT Transport .....	31	Ranger Truck Lines .....	39	Women in Trucking Article .....	32,33



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