



Are You A Customer Of Choice?

The truck driving profession is facing a demographic crisis. A study by the **Conference Board of Canada** forecasts a shortage of up to 33,000 truck drivers by 2020. Attracting prospective drivers to serve customers' ever-expanding transportation needs is becoming a huge challenge. With freight demand increasing across North America and capacity tightening, buying power is swinging in truck drivers' favour – giving them not only more choice of who they work for, but also which customers they want to serve.

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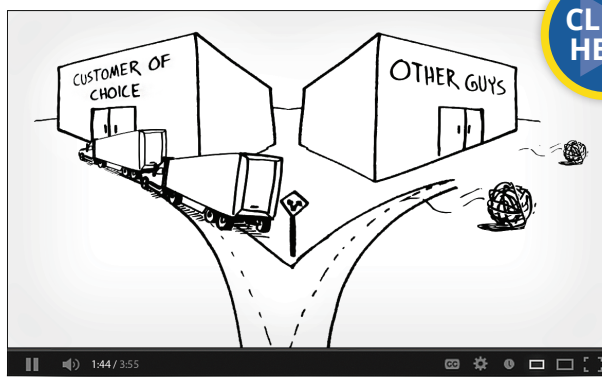


Ontario
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Limited Capacity is the New Normal



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Limited capacity is the new normal, meaning those customers who can secure satisfied professional drivers for the long-term will win. And those who push drivers – and dollars – out of the industry might start to notice the expenses of having freight sit on the dock longer.

The **Ontario Trucking Association** recently completed **Operation Upgrade** – a six-month campaign to find out how truck drivers are treated at shipping and receiving facilities and measure their level of satisfaction with their carriers' customers. Boiled down, the survey found that **'good'** customers – or **'Customers of Choice'** – scored highest in safety, waiting time and providing an environment free of harassment and discrimination. Not surprisingly, 'bad' companies received failing grades in the same categories.

'GOOD' Customers Break Down



Specifically, drivers complained about how little attention is paid by bad customers in honouring appointments and turnaround times. Delays and wasted time eats up drivers' allowable working hours, costs them money and keeps them away from their families longer. Worse, many drivers report maltreatment and even discrimination at more than a few of the worst-offending facilities.



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Truck Driver Treatment

Truck driver treatment starts at the top – it's a culture created by CEOs. As a business leader who depends on trucking services, it's becoming increasingly important to create a truck driver-friendly environment. Failure to nourish and manage a positive, productive atmosphere could jeopardize your access to quality carriers and drivers in the future.

Ensuring that doesn't happen to your business isn't very difficult. Simply, try this:

- 1 Walk around your shipping docks and listen to how your workers interact with real drivers. Do you like what you hear?
- 2 Are your turnaround times reasonable? Do you honour appointment times or consider policies to accommodate drivers if they arrive early or are forced to stay late?
- 3 Finally, ask yourself this simple question: If I spent hours on the road, battling traffic, to safely deliver these valuable products to someone, is this how I would want to be treated?

If the answer is **'yes,'** then you're probably well on your way to creating a driver-friendly culture and becoming a 'Customer of Choice' – a true partner of the trucking industry. We thank you!

For more information of **OPERATION UPGRADE** or for the full survey report contact Jonathan.Blackham@Ontruck.org