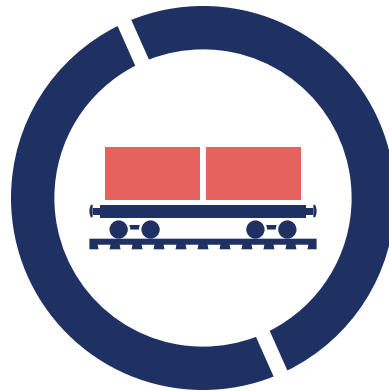


# *The Essential Guide to* **3PLS**

Selecting & getting the most out of your Third-Party Logistics



**CHOPTANK**  
DELIVERING RESULTS. DAILY.



# Introduction

## *Why use a 3PL?*

In one word, convenience. 3PLs take the pressure off of companies like yours so you can focus more on your actual product and less on getting it where it needs to be. 3PL's come with a wide array of tools and resources including logistics technology, knowledge on various forms of shipping, and a wide array of trucking companies that will ship your product.

If you're reading this, then chances are you want to know more about 3PLs and get the most out their services. In this e-book, we'll go over just that so you can spend less time worrying about your product getting to its destination and more on your actual product.



# Part 1

## Selecting the Right 3PL

*Not all 3PLs were created equal.*

With **thousands** of 3PL's in the United States alone, it's important to select the right one. Different 3PL's specialize in different types of shipping. When selecting a 3PL, it's important for you to consider the following:

- **What services do you need?**  
What type of freight are you shipping? Do you need LTL, reefer, intermodal, and/or air shipping? Not all 3PLs offer all of these services. If you need more than one type of shipping, it's best practice to find one that does it all.
- **Where are you shipping to?**  
Does your product need to go across the country or even possibly out? Some 3PL's don't do shipments out of the country so this is something to consider.
- **How 'hands on' does your product require the 3PL to be?**  
The right 3PL will work with you to find the right transportation company to ensure your product arrives safely and in time. They'll listen to your needs and ensure that your product receives the attention it needs when in transport.
- **Do they have a proven track record?**  
Be sure to check a 3PL's credentials. Look for customer reviews, awards, certificates, and certifications to ensure that the 3PL is trustworthy and will get the job done right the first time.
- **Is scalability a priority?**  
Can the 3PL handle spikes in demand? This is critical in your company's ability to grow and handle more orders. The right 3PL should be flexible and able to adapt to your needs.



# Part 2

## 3PL Customer Service

### *7 questions to ensure you're treated right*

What separates an average 3PL provider from an amazing one? Often it boils down to customer service. A company that prioritizes trust and relationships, shows extreme attention to detail and goes above and beyond to fix problems is one that you want to work with.

Unfortunately, too often companies with shipment needs feel slighted after a freight deal is brokered. If your 3PL provider is more interested in the next transaction than your en-route freight, you deserve better.

But how do you find the diamonds among all the rocks? These seven questions will help you learn more about 3PL customer service so you can make the right choice for you:

#### **1. What does the website say?**

Start by exploring the 3PL's website. Read the mission statement and check for case studies and look for quotes from satisfied partners.

At Choptank Transport, we have an entire page that details our philosophy about why integrity yields results to give present and potential partners' insight into what we value most.

#### **2. Has the company won any awards?**

A company that focuses more on brokering deals than building relationships won't likely win a whole lot of industry awards. Check the website for awards past and present. "Broker" or "partner" of the year awards speak well to the relationship you can expect with a 3PL provider.



# 3PL Customer Service

## *7 questions to ensure you're treated right*

### **3. What is the company's experience?**

First, verify how long the company has been operating. Experience that has developed over time as the industry has evolved can be invaluable. Another great thing to check is membership to leading industry organizations and involvement in thought-leadership initiatives.

### **4. What is the 3PL's reputation with partners?**

Word of mouth is powerful. Reach out to your professional network and see what they have to say about working with the 3PL provider. Do they feel they were treated well or have they had to cancel contracts? Would they recommend the company?

### **5. What is the 3PL's reputation with drivers?**

If the 3PL has a positive relationship with the freight and cargo drivers that will be transporting your goods, it can result in a streamlined supply chain for you. This is particularly important considering the current driver shortage across the country.

### **6. How does the company approach communication?**

Get to know the 3PL provider and understand their communication policies before signing a contract. How do they communicate with shippers? Ask which technologies are used to track shipments and get real-time updates on freight locations. If you have special requests, make sure they can accommodate them.

### **7. Who exactly will you be communicating with?**

Will you be speaking with a single account rep throughout your partnership, or will you have access to a team of logistics coordinators? Synergy is an important part of business partnerships and you want to know who you'll be communicating with most often.



# Part 3

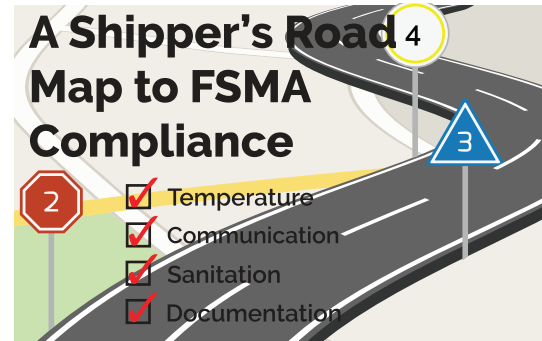
## Using Your 3PL

### *Ensuring you utilize your 3PL's services*

Now that you've selected your 3PL, it's important to maintain your relationship to ensure that shipments go as smoothly as possible. Use these best practices to keep your supply-chain running smoothly:

- **Maintain Communication**  
Keeping constant communication with your 3PL is critical. Keep your communication as clear as possible so that they are able to pass any important information to drivers.
- **Be Prepared**  
Before meeting with your 3PL, go over your specifications and any critical details regarding your shipment. Be as thorough as possible in preparation to expedite the shipping process. This will save you not only time but money.
- **Stay Up to Date**  
Much like your company, the right 3PL is consistently evolving by adding services and more capacity. Staying up to date on your 3PL's growth can enable you to take full advantage of any possible needs.
- **Stay Informed**  
The transportation industry is constantly evolving and adding and changing policies. Staying updated to these policies can help you with planning and implementing supply-chain strategies. It will also ensure the transportation of your product goes smoothly.

*For more information on 3PL's and other industry related materials:*



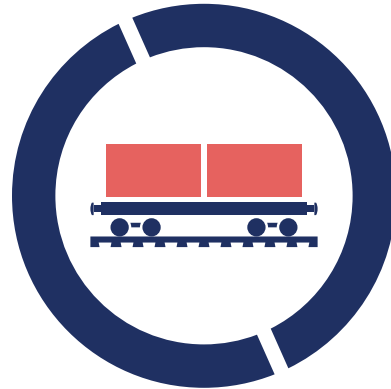
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