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Many salespeople start off on the wrong foot. They think they’re renting skid space or an entire trailer for a customer to move their product. You’re not selling or leasing a truck to your customer.

_You’re not selling ‘the biggest discount of the week.’_

Your job is to help your customer become more profitable by delivering their products to their customers on time, undamaged and for a price that is compatible with the level of service provided. You’re not selling space on a truck. You’re moving America and the world. You’re helping Landstar’s customers by increasing their ability to better service their customers; and, best of all, you can earn great money doing it.

Work to develop your sales skills and to increase your knowledge of the transportation industry and your customer’s industry. Read more and listen better. What your customer is buying from you is increased sales and better service to their customers. The more often you can provide solutions to your customer’s transportation needs, the more frequently they will call you for assistance, the more money you’ll make, and the more money your customer will make.

You become a vital part of your client’s success when you provide them information they don’t already have. Your value increases when you help them solve problems they’re having difficulty solving themselves. You waste their time when you tell them things they already know. Resolve to prepare better for your calls and to become an asset to your clients—you’ll become one of their business “partners.”

You must establish yourself as the expert in solving shippers' problems. Your goal is to be an authority.

_Selling is the best job in the world!_ Combine selling with Landstar and you have two components that guarantee success. Professional salespeople enjoy unlimited income, freedom, and a clear means to take control of their career. Landstar on the other hand, provides services that are needed by virtually every company in the U.S. Your profession, transportation sales, beats any other occupation hands down.

**“SELLING THE STAR”** is a tremendous tool for you, the Landstar sales professional. Use the information provided here to help distinguish you from all the other transportation sales people your client will see this year.

Your customers are better informed than ever before. The tremendous amount of information available to your clients and the speed in which they can acquire it is so fast. Thanks to the internet, it’s literally at their fingertips. From your very first contact with a prospect you must be able to demonstrate your knowledge and your successes with previous customers. You must also show an interest in their business and needs. Listen and be prepared to discuss the specific ways you have increased your current clients’ profitability through specific benefits you’ve delivered.
In a push to adopt a consultative sales approach, many transportation sales people have forgotten their number one goal - to sell something. Be aggressive. You’re in charge. **Sell the Landstar solution.** Ask prospective customers what they do, how they do it, when they do it, why they do it a particular way, and how you can help them do it better.

There are three stages that complete a successful sale when selling Landstar. To grow and maintain your successful Landstar agency, you must master all three. They are simple and easy to learn, but due to their simplicity, they are also easy to forget or to omit.

The three distinct stages of selling that will ensure your agency’s success and growth are summed up by your focus and expertise before, during, and after “The Sell.” Each stage deserves special attention. Once you’ve mastered the time proven techniques applicable to each step in the sales process, you’ll see your revenue soar. ‘Selling the Star’ leads you through each stage:

**Before ‘The Sell’**
- Planning
- Prospecting
- Appointment Setting

**‘The Sell’**
- Meet & Greet
- The Fact Finding Session
- The Sales Presentation
- Overcoming Objections
- Pricing
- Confirming the Sale

**After ‘The Sell’**
- Handling Rejection
- Referrals & Testimonials
- Customer Service
- Handling Problems After ‘The Sell’
- Handling Stress

Everyone has the ability to successfully sell Landstar. ‘Selling the Star’ provides you with the tools you will need to achieve your sales goals. So, get started ‘Selling the Star’ today.
Before ‘The Sell’
In the complex world of transportation sales, the game is won or lost before the salesperson even walks in the door. **Preparation before the sales call is critical!**

The surgeon who performs surgery on you or a loved one studied medicine, did his internship, and is properly licensed. You wouldn’t expect him to walk into the operating room without being properly prepared. As in any profession - medicine, law, accounting, and architecture - customers deserve the same treatment from the Landstar sales professional.

How many times have you been confronted by a salesperson that knows nothing about you or your business? Did they launch into a barrage of “situation” questions and expect you to take the time to educate them? Or, worse yet, the salesperson doesn’t ask any questions. They jump right into their presentation on something in which you have no interest or need. Unfortunately, the salesperson that is ‘shooting from the hip’ is the norm, not the exception.

“You have to do what others won’t to achieve what others don’t”

The planning process is critical to the success of any sales call. The transportation industry is ever-changing and unless you keep abreast of it, you can’t properly serve your clients.

**Knowledge is power.** Obviously, to successfully sell Landstar, you should know all there is to know about Landstar service, your industry, your competitors, and your competitors’ strengths and weaknesses. You should also take time to familiarize yourself with everything you can possibly find out about your prospective client before making your first contact with them.

“The will to win is worthless if you do not have the will to prepare.”
- Thane Yost

There are many ways to be better prepared. Listed below are what I consider to be the big four.

1. **Know our industry.** It’s your job to know as much as you can about the transportation industry. Know the strengths and weaknesses of the major motor carriers and air service providers. Technology is rapidly changing. New transportation services are being offered continuously.

Successful salespeople read “Transport Topics” “Logistics Management” and/or “American Shipper” along with other industry specific periodicals. You can put yourself at a distinct competitive advantage in comparison with many salespeople by becoming familiar with these publications and other regional magazines just like them. It appears
Planning

that every industry has their own focused periodical(s), use them to keep abreast of industry trends. Extensive and up-to-date knowledge of your industry provides your customers with greater confidence in your recommendations and ability.

2. **Know Landstar.** By having a clear, thorough understanding of Landstar, you’ll field customer questions and objections more easily. Know your customers’ preferred buying conditions and why certain customers do not choose Landstar as their carrier of choice. What areas need improvement? Know what is unique or value-added about Landstar’s services. To give an honest and realistic presentation of Landstar’s shipping solutions, you must be candidly aware of our true market position. Learn as much as possible about the history of Landstar by talking with your Regional Manager, Regional Vice President, BCO’s, and others involved in our business. Read all company brochures, magazine articles, and Landstar’s annual report. And finally, develop a written presentation about Landstar. Use the key ideas in your sales presentations.

3. **Know your competition.** Learn everything you can about your competition. Know their strengths and weaknesses and ask your customers what they like or dislike about your competitors. In what areas do they excel? What services are inefficient? What are some of their unique services? Compare Landstar’s Service with that of your competition. Also compare features, equipment, billing processes, service levels, dispatching methods, and any other aspects of their company that makes a comparison possible. Thorough research of your competitors’ services provides you with the differentiating factors and where you can contribute to making changes that will improve your agency’s performance.

4. **Know your customer.** Complete knowledge of your customer’s company will show interest, always impresses, and represents an important first step in earning a customer’s confidence and business. Do you know how your customers use Landstar and what they demand from their transportation providers? Do you know their requirements for service? Survey your customers on a regular basis. Let your customers educate you on where your agency and Landstar should be headed. Learn as much as you can about each customer before making a sales call. Well-prepared salespeople are perceived as more professional. Exhibiting an understanding of the customer's company and business speeds the vital relationship building process.

You must be mentally prepared before you make a sales call. The old saying *You never get a second chance to make a first impression* is important to remember. If this is the first call, the degree to which a salesperson can create rapport and build trust is in direct relationship to the amount of preparation that has taken place before the sales call is made. Preparation is not just limited to the first call. The result of every sales call reflects the amount of time the salesperson invested getting ready for the appointment.
No matter what you have scheduled for any particular day there is one part of your job you should do everyday - Prospecting. There are no sales without customers and there are no customers without frequent prospecting. To keep a positive revenue flowing to your business, you have to keep prospects in your pipeline. Set a daily or weekly minimum number of cold calls or prospecting contacts for yourself - your success depends on it.

One of the biggest reasons transportation salespeople are reluctant to approach prospects is because they don’t feel confident about their company’s ability to provide the service the customer needs. A lack of confidence in Landstar’s ability to do what we promise will stunt your desire to approach new prospects. You may be fearful that they might just buy. **You have to believe that Landstar can help your customer.** You must know instinctively the benefit people will derive from working with you and you must believe in your heart that Landstar’s efforts are in your customer’s best interests. If you’re leaving a trail of angry former customers in your wake – you’re destroying any chances at success with Landstar. Your reputation as a straight shooter and knowledgeable resource for your customer is your most valuable asset. Landstar represents you as well as you represent Landstar.

Landstar is a company you can be proud of. Shout your affiliation with Landstar from the mountaintops! Tell everyone you meet who you work for and what you sell. Make a point of broadcasting your expertise in solving companies’ shipping problems to everyone you meet. I’m not suggesting you subject everyone you meet to a sales pitch. My suggestion is that you say, loud and clear, to every person you meet that you’re a salesperson for Landstar. You’ll be surprised how often someone’s going to say, “Landstar, huh? You know, we’ve been thinking about trying a new provider.”

**Be proud of being a salesperson. There’s no greater job than yours - we move America! What other professional salesperson can say that?**

Okay, now that you represent a company you can be proud of, get **busy** prospecting.
1. **Talk to and develop relationships** with everyone you meet in your industry. I’ve received tons of business over the years from sales reps from other trucking companies whose company could not provide the service the customer needed. Make sure your competitors know you and what you do. Share information. Never give away company secrets, but sometimes you can help each other achieve goals and gain new business you might not have uncovered without the others help.

2. **Join clubs and organizations.** You never know where your next big shipper will come from. Organizations that are good places to start are Traffic clubs, Chamber of Commerce, Toastmasters, Civitan, Lions Club, Knights of Columbus, and the Optimists.

3. **Subscribe to magazines like “Transport Topics” and “Traffic World”**. Make a trip to your local library twice a month and read through trade publications that would apply to your largest customers (automotive, plastics, medical suppliers, etc.). Read your local newspaper and one national or business paper daily, paying particular attention to the business sections.

4. **Attend trade shows and seminars.** Those that are aimed at supply chain solutions, as well as major tradeshows specific to your biggest customers’ industries. This can be a great opportunity to exchange business cards, and pick up some great leads.

5. **Give speeches every chance you get.** Don’t sell from the podium, but make sure everyone gets one of your business cards. This establishes you as an expert in our industry. After just one or two speeches, you’ll be recognized as the most knowledgeable transportation specialist in your local area.

6. **Take the time to write** an occasional article to any publication that might print your ideas, even letters to the editor. This is another way for you to be recognized as an expert. It also adds credibility when you present copies of your published articles to new prospects.

7. **Offer help and resources** at fundraisers, telethons, and charity drives. Make sure that Landstar’s name is associated with good deeds that take place in your community. Have an inexpensive sign made so that your agency will receive the goodwill generated from such an event.

8. **Develop and practice networking skills** - the most powerful business tool. Read all the articles you can about networking. To master networking could be the difference between a mediocre and magnificent career.

9. **Surround yourself with successful people.** It’s the best way to learn how to be successful yourself. It will pay dividends now and in the future. At the same time, avoid negative people who are not striving for success.
Prospecting

There are several things that a salesperson should do before making an actual face-to-face presentation. Obviously, an appointment must be made with the prospect. These appointments will usually be set by telephone. Also, assuming that the salesperson is qualified to make the sales call (qualified means that he or she has acquired the necessary product knowledge, is properly prepared to answer all industry-related questions, and possesses a basic understanding of the customer’s needs). Effective time management is essential to achieve the maximum number of sales presentations each day.

Poor appointment setting habits is the death knell to a productive sales week. Appointment scheduling and general office work should not be performed during prime selling time. Broken appointments, however, create an opportunity to set appointments for the following week. Appointment setting, in my opinion, is the second best use of prime selling time, with face-to-face sales presentations being in first place by a wide margin.

When setting appointments, always consider the characteristics of your territory. Divide your territory into industrial parks and city areas that will accommodate your ability to make the most sales presentations in one day. Too much windshield time kills your earning potential. Remember, your goal is more sales presentations and less wasted time and energy.

Before you pick up the telephone you should have in your possession the following information: the decision-makers name, title (purchasing manager, traffic manager, supply chain officer, material control manager, warehouse supervisor, etc.), address, phone number, and information on how you obtained the lead. A qualified prospect is anybody who ships or receives freight or makes those decisions for other locations. If you received this lead from a referral, be sure to have your source’s name ready to cite to the prospect. Referred prospects are by far Landstar’s best leads.

Never call a prospect without knowing his or her name in advance. For example, if I want to speak to the Vice President of Purchasing at EFG Company, but didn’t know his name, I make a call a day or so in advance and ask the main switchboard operator or receptionist, “Who is your company’s purchasing VP?” Later, I put in a call to the proper individual. The internet is also a great source for this information.

There are many obstacles you will face in setting your appointments: getting past the gatekeeper, getting your prospect to agree to a face-to-face meeting, and the newest challenge—the dreaded voicemail system.

When speaking to an assistant or receptionist, assume control of the conversation quickly. This is an absolute must. If she asks too many questions, there’s a good chance she’ll suggest that she’ll relay your message to the Director of traffic, and “If he’s interested, he’ll call you back.” You have to be the person who speaks to the prospect—not a disinterested, uninformed third party, in this case—the receptionist! You could lose the sale before you’ve even had the opportunity to present Landstar’s services. Because there are so many sales reps representing so many freight companies, people managing
the movement of their company’s freight are besieged by your competitors making cold calls and it is more difficult than ever to get through to a prospect. To compound the problem, cold calls are even more difficult when a transportation salesperson represents a company whose name is unfamiliar to the general public. In some cases, the prestigious reputation of a major company serves as an effective door opener. A call from a sales representative with Landstar, FedEx, Exel, Roadway, or CH Robinson for example, is more likely to capture the immediate respect of a gatekeeper. There are times though when representing a well-known company can backfire. It’s an immediate tip-off that the caller is selling for a transportation company when the salesperson identifies himself as being with Landstar, which often is followed with a, “We’re not interested, we’re happy with our current carrier,” response.

**Your only objective for using the telephone on a cold call is to schedule an appointment. Never attempt to sell at this stage. Your only objective is to set up a time for the prospect to hear your presentation.**

As little as necessary should be said to the gatekeeper. Assume that the call will be put through. Sound important and confident, but not pushy. I simply say, “Hello, this is Dave Dallas. Is Mr. Johnson in?” Sometimes, that’s all it takes.

However, when I’m calling a referral and I’m asked, “Does Mr. Johnson know you?” I say, “Carl Walker recommended that I call Mr. Johnson. Is Mr. Johnson in?”

If it’s not a referral, I say, “I’ve been assisting people in the plastics industry (or whatever business they happen to be in), and I’d like to share some important information with Mr. Johnson.” Once again, assertively ask, “Is Mr. Johnson in?”

If asked, “What are you selling?” I reply, “I’m with Landstar. I help companies increase profits, while improving customer service.” I pause, and then ask, “Is Mr. Johnson in?”

**Because I speak with conviction, I’m rarely asked additional questions and my call is put through.**

This approach works for three reasons:

(1) I’m persistent, but polite.

(2) I’m well prepared with answers. I don’t stutter and stumble for an answer when questioned by the gatekeeper; and

(3) I’m aggressive and I control the conversation by not pausing in my responses long enough to give the gatekeeper an opening to ask more questions.
Prospecting

It’s a matter of how you see and carry yourself. You must always keep in mind that your objective is not to leave the decision in the hands of a third party screening the prospects’ calls. The assistant or receptionist should not be permitted to be the one who determines whether the prospect is interested in learning more about Landstar. The decisions your prospects make on who they will trust to ship the products they manufacture is one of the most important decisions they make. Be persistent. Make sure they get the opportunity to enjoy the benefits that only you can sell them.
Voicemail is both a terrific tool and also the world’s most effective gatekeeper. All salespeople that I know hate it. We’ve all left voicemail messages that went unanswered. You have to become comfortable with leaving messages. Use all the same tools you use when speaking with a live gatekeeper: **be aggressive, assume control, sound important and confident.** When the prospect you’re calling is the result of a referral be sure to mention it. For example, “Carl Walker recommended that I call you”.

If it’s not a referral, say “I’m in the business of helping companies improve profitability and increase customer satisfaction; Companies like EFG Plastics and Guardian Polymers,” (give examples that they would be familiar with).

Be clear and clever. Make sure you sound enthusiastic and authoritative on your business and his.

Leaving good voicemail messages requires practice. Leave practice voicemail messages on your own or fellow salespersons’ machines. It’s a great way to improve. Don’t repeat yourself, and be sure to leave your telephone number. You’d be surprised to find out how many people forget to leave their number. Be sure to speak slowly and distinctly enough to be clearly understood.

With a little work, you will leave voicemail messages that create interest and clearly make the case that you can do something valuable for the prospect. Make your message short - less than 30 seconds. Give the prospect headlines instead of the entire sports section.

Don’t expect all prospects to return your call. After you’ve left two voicemail messages for a prospect, your next strategy is to get around the machine. Call before 8AM or after 5PM, or during lunch. After all, your ultimate goal is to set an appointment when you can meet the prospect face-to-face.

When all else fails and you cannot speak to them directly, try to e-mail your respective client by asking the switchboard operator or utilizing their website and looking for a ‘contact us’ page. This can sometimes provide clues as to what the proper e-mail extension would be for your elusive potential customer. In the subject line of the e-mail type “Requesting informative meeting time” – make it brief and precise in the body “Landstar would like to spend thirty minutes of your valuable time to better understand how with all of the services we have available today (air, ocean, rail, truck, heavy haul, warehousing and supply chain software) we might be able to help you and XXX work through any problems you might currently be experiencing.”

When you finally reach your prospect on the phone remember you didn’t call to make the sale, only to make an appointment.
Appointment Setting

Speak slowly and clearly. Smile with your voice. A friendly voice holds your prospects interest. Prospects like to buy from people they’re comfortable with. Be sure to project your friendliness over the phone line.

Be an energetic speaker. An energetic voice expresses your enthusiasm for Landstar.

Make it clear to the prospect that you’re not calling with the hope of selling your service over the phone. Suggest an appointment the following week. This implies that you’re busy helping other clients, which in turn translates to a perception that you’re successful. It’s also easier for the customer to make a commitment to an appointment that’s still a whole week away.

Listen attentively. No one appreciates being interrupted. Sometimes the prospect will give you some useful information that you can use during your face-to-face appointment. Be sure to take notes while you’re talking on the phone with the prospect. Verify the prospect’s address and any other information needed for your scheduled meeting.

“Things may come to those who wait, but only things left by those who hustle.”

- Abraham Lincoln
‘The Sell’
The initial approach to a prospect is the most crucial part of the sales presentation. All the selling skills in the world won’t matter if you don’t get your foot in the door.

Up front I state my name, the company I represent -- Landstar, and the particular transportation services I’m there to sell. Unlike a lot of salesmen and saleswomen, I don’t beat around the bush. I’m a big advocate of concept selling. I tell the prospect, “I’d like to share an idea with you. I’m in the transportation business. I’m assuming that you’re always looking for ideas that will help your company ship or receive goods in a way that will make your company more efficient, more service driven, and more profitable. I’d like to run some ideas by you.”

This statement is a big attention-getter and opens the door. It creates immediate interest. Of course you have to substantiate your statement in your presentation.

The first moments of your sales call should create initial interest by making a statement. “Landstar is in the business of providing solutions for a variety of different transportation needs. Technology is moving very fast, and I deal with many companies similar to yours. You need a transportation provider which not only can handle your current needs, but is also working on your needs for the future.” Another great opener is, “Our main goal at Landstar is to enhance your productivity.”

Early in your initial meeting be sure to mention the names of several of your satisfied customers. This is done to establish credibility. It lets the prospect know that Landstar’s shipping solutions have benefited leading logistic decision-makers that came to the well-informed decision to trust you and your ideas. I always make it a point to discuss other customers in their industry who are working in similar environments. I wouldn’t, for example, mention how we handle an account like Microsoft to a small locally owned computer software company. Their problems are so different that the prospect won’t be able to relate to an organization that is one hundred to one million times bigger. When I speak about familiar customers who have found the solutions to similar shipping problems through Landstar, I get the prospect’s immediate attention.

When you use a prospect’s competitors or companies in similar industries as examples, it creates an opportunity to use another great opening approach. “Ms. Fulton, I’m Dave Dallas with Landstar. Has John Collins mentioned my name to you?” It doesn’t make any difference what the prospect answers, this breaks the ice. In fact, even when I don’t have a referral, I’ve been known to mention the name of one of the prospect’s competitors who’s a client of mine. Now, it’s highly unlikely that his competition would have talked to him about me, but again, it’s an icebreaker. And you can bet that he’s interested in all the transportation services that are available to his competition.
Meet & Greet

If I know beforehand that the prospect knows little about Landstar and nothing about me, I sometimes send a short bio-sketch and a few magazine and newspaper articles that have featured Landstar or were written by me. I provide something tangible to the prospect that adds a new dimension to the relationship. Rather than simply sending them a brochure about Landstar, I personalize it, and at the same time the articles express something about me and my philosophy on transportation.

There are too many supply chain solution sales reps in the U.S. today to even come up with an accurate number. I think it’s important for your prospect to know about your qualifications. Tell the prospect about yourself. No grandstanding or patting yourself on the back, just an informative look at your career and the customers you’ve helped. It lets the prospect know that he’s dealing with a professional. It tells him that he’s not dealing with the run-of-the-mill supply chain solutions rep. In the transportation solutions business there are two kinds of sales people: those who add value to the client’s traffic department, and those who seem to mishandle every shipment or transaction their company is involved with (late, damaged, billed incorrectly, etc.). Let the customer know early on that you fall into the first category.

Of course, when the moment of truth arrives, you’ll have to find the best way to make a good first impression. Take into consideration the particular dynamics of your prospect’s age, position, and gender in comparison with your own. Accommodate and welcome the differences.

Every prospect will react differently to what you have to say. Some prospects will give you all the time in the world, while others believe making time for a ten minute meeting threatens a crisis. Some are skeptical, while others are freethinkers who pride themselves on being open to new ideas. The point is you can’t win everyone over with a single script designed to handle the first few minutes.

Usually there is an advantage to beginning an exchange by focusing on your own observations and experiences. Doing so takes some of the pressure off of the prospect, who’ll be expecting you to try to “draw him out.”

You can always find something that will serve as a positive conversational starting point that has to do with the way your prospect has chosen to decorate his or her surroundings. It may sound corny, but it’s a fact, people say a lot about themselves in the way they decorate their offices.
**First impressions are lasting impressions.** By using the advice in this chapter you’ll put the customer at ease and give them confidence in Landstar’s ability to handle their demanding logistic needs. In the process, you’ll develop a lot of new customers and lasting friendships.

“The better your relationships the shorter your sales cycle and the more money you will make.”

- Dan Brent Burt

Here are fourteen additional suggestions that will help you create a winning first impression.

1. **Believe in yourself.** If you don’t believe you can win the prospect’s confidence, you’ll self-destruct in the opening moments of your first sales call.

2. **Develop and maintain a positive attitude.** The first thing a new prospect notices is if you’re upbeat and positive.

3. **Visualize the first meeting with your prospect before it takes place.** It will help you become more assertive and confident.

4. **Shake hands firmly, but don’t overdo it.** This applies to men and women. A weak handshake creates doubt in the mind of the prospect.

5. **Be conversational.** Speak as though you’re talking to an old friend.

6. **Don’t prejudge the prospect.** Everyone is different. Respect their differences.

7. **Qualify the buyer early, preferably before your first face-to-face meeting.** Don’t waste your time on someone who has no impact on the decision about whether or not to use Landstar.

8. **Believe in Landstar and the services you sell.** If you don’t, the prospect won’t either.

9. **Know the prospect’s industry** before you make the call.

10. **Know the prospect’s business** before you make the call.

11. **Look professional.** Your appearance is the first thing the prospect notices.

12. **Be prompt.** Lateness tells the prospect you don’t respect his or her time. In our industry, it’s particularly telling. How can the prospect expect Landstar to be on time with his shipments if you can’t make it to your very first meeting on time?

13. **Use humor early.** It’s one of your most effective sales tools. Laughter signals approval, so make your prospect laugh.

14. **Be sincere.** Sincerity wins customers - insincerity loses customers and prospective customers.
I’m a big advocate of consultative selling. But before I tell you how great I think the consultative sales approach is, I want to warn you of the negative impact this type of selling has had on some salespeople. Some sales reps visit a customer two or three times, ask them every question they can think of except the most important question of all - asking the customer to buy their service.

If on the second call you don’t ask for the shipper’s business, it then becomes a social visit and not a sales call. You can and should qualify the customer and re-visit their needs on a regular basis. If they’re qualified to buy and you don’t offer Landstar’s help, then you’re doing them a disservice. On the other hand, if you keep calling on a customer who’s not qualified, you’re stealing time and money from yourself. Be sure after you’ve made a consultative sales call that you follow up by asking for the sale.

Treat all your sales work as a consulting assignment. Consultative selling turns salespeople into experts and clients into partners. When you first meet the prospect take your “sell” sign down for the majority, if not all, of your first call.

The best salespeople are professional problem solvers. We’re in the business of solving transportation problems. But you have to know and understand the problem first before you try to solve it. You have to be willing to walk in the door without any preconceived notions as to how best to solve the problems identified.

Since you sell to other companies, you should consider yourself in the business of solving profitability problems. That’s the key concern you’ll ultimately be addressing: how to increase profitability. Everything you do should eventually lead to the goal of the clients’ company increasing its level of profitability. If you can’t break your sales efforts into solutions that help the customer, you’ll either base your sales on manipulating others or fail to persuade prospects that you’re offering anything of value.

On every sales call, be the student, because you really are. In real estate, they say it’s all in the location. In transportation sales it’s questions, questions, and more questions. You’ll be surprised and sometimes shocked at what a customer will tell you.

Not only is the consultative sales approach effective in finding the correct sales solutions, it’s also very helpful in eliminating people who are not potential customers, thus saving you time in the long run.

Even though it’s okay to call an initial visit with a customer a qualifying call, don’t only make the call to qualify. Make the call primarily to learn.
The Fact Finding Session

Sales listening is patient listening. Don’t anxiously wait for an opportunity to jump in and solve all the customer’s problems right away. After I ask a question I shut up and allow my prospect to speak. Sometimes I wait for several minutes. I don’t feel threatened by the silence. Most salespeople can’t stand a pause in the conversation. Take a deep breath, relax, and listen. Some prospects want to be listened to more than they want their problems solved. If a client or prospective client has had a bad day, let them talk about it. Don’t try to stop them. Once they lighten themselves of their burdens they can better concentrate on Landstar’s services.

Everyone is so busy that asking for someone’s time is a big request. A prospect that agrees over the phone to give you a ten-minute appointment will give you an hour in person once you establish value. One of the best ways to establish value is to show that they are important and that you recognize that fact. People love to talk about themselves, their jobs, and their companies. Encourage them to do so.

“Pretend that everyone you meet has a sign around their neck that says MAKE ME FEEL IMPORTANT. Not only will you succeed in sales, you will succeed in life.”

- Mary Kay Ash

Transportation salespeople who have been in our industry for a long time should re-visit how they qualify and maintain accounts. It’s easy to start believing that you possess all the answers. Too often we make assumptions based on outdated information. Visit accounts often and ask questions. You never know what changes might have taken place since your last call until you ask.

Take notes! Taking notes during your meeting with the prospect can be one of your most powerful sales tools. It will reinforce the reason you made the appointment in the first place: to learn more about the prospect and his company’s transportation needs.

Taking notes helps you listen. There’s something about holding an empty notepad in front of you that makes you pay better attention to what is being said. It also makes it more difficult to miss important points.

Taking notes puts you in a position of authority. You can also glance at notes and questions you prepared prior to making the sales call. Taking notes will also encourage the prospect to open up. Taking notes sends strong positive signals to the prospect. It says, “I’m listening to you. I won’t forget. I’ll use the information you’re giving me to find solutions when I get back to my office or to my agency.”

It’s a fine line between asking questions that will help the prospect solve their transportation problems, and a cross-examination. Be sure your prospect feels at ease. Be natural. The consultative sale should be a comfortable two-way conversation.
The Fact Finding Session

Never waste the prospect’s time. That may seem like an obvious point, but many of your competitors never know when to get to business, or for that matter, even when the appointment is over. **There will come a point when the customer will be ready to move past the small talk, and usually it’s quicker than you might think.** Your contact, like most of us these days, is short on time. Most traffic managers, purchasing managers, and other decision-makers you call on appreciate you getting to the point. You can tactfully do this without jeopardizing the emerging relationship.

First, give the prospect a reason he or she should answer your questions. Second, **make sure everyone involved in the decision making process is present** if at all possible.

**Salesperson:** “We currently work with General Motors, ASW Technologies, and (use your own local examples of similar companies) in several areas to improve their service while reducing their costs! I feel there’s a good chance we can do the same thing for you, but I’m not sure yet. Do you mind if I ask you some questions?”

The prospect expects to answer questions and they’ll give you their permission to proceed.

**Salesperson:** “At most of the companies I’ve mentioned more than one person was involved in carrier selection. Are there any other people here that would be involved in this decision?” (If NO, proceed on. If YES, obtain their names and ask if they could also be present). Next, move on to your questions.

The following list will provide you with good examples of questions that you can adapt to your sales presentation. Know the questions you’re going to ask before you arrive at the customer’s desk. The list below is provided to stimulate ideas that will help you customize your own list. The information you collect in the customer’s answers will increase your chances of putting together a great proposal after you’ve made the consultative sales call.

1. What does your company do? Manufacturing? Distribution?
3. What commodities do you ship?
5. What are some of the cities you ship to?
6. How often?
7. What service level is required? To where?

9. Average weight?

10. What is the normal pick-up time? What unusual pick-up requirements do you require?

11. Are your shipments normally prepaid? Collect? If so, what percentage?

12. What are your average monthly freight transportation costs?

13. Who’s handling these shipments now?

14. How long have you used them?

15. Do you have any vendors that you receive products from on a regular basis?

16. Who chooses the carrier that handles those shipments?

17. Where are those vendors located?

18. What commodities are they?

19. What is the frequency of those shipments?

20. Who’s handling those shipments now?

21. How long have you used them?

22. What percentage of shipments is routed by your customers?

23. How do you feel about your current service?

24. How do you feel about your current pricing?

25. What tariff or base rate does your carrier offer on those shipments? Do you receive a discount? If so, what percent or kind of discount do you receive?

26. What are the minimum charges you have in place with your current carrier?

27. Do you pay extra for single shipments or special services?

28. What would you like to change about your current carrier’s pricing?
29. Would it benefit you to have a more efficient price structure without sacrificing service?

30. Would it benefit you to have the ability to add shipping services to your customers that are not currently available with the carrier you use now?

31. What would those services be?

32. How would it benefit you and your company?

33. What is most important to you: service, carrier stability, technology, or something else?

34. Why?

35. How do you rate your solutions providers?

36. What are the ratings of the providers you use today?

37. If you could change one thing overall about your current providers, what would it be?

38. Does this problem lead to… (Build up problem with multiple implications / need pay-off questions)?

39. Would you change anything else?

40. What would cause you to begin using a different provider?

41. Do you currently warehouse your product? Are these owned or outsourced facilities?

Last, but not least, be sure to wrap up the appointment by asking for the next appointment, and by getting a positive response on a trial close. It should sound like this:

**Salesperson:** “Mr. Smith, I’ve learned a lot here today, and I want to thank you for taking the time to talk to me. We’re at the point now where we should set up another appointment, one where I can come back after having sorted through everything I’ve learned here, and show you more about what Landstar may be able to do for your company. Is Thursday at 2PM okay?”

**Prospect:** “Sure, next Thursday at 2PM will be just fine.”

**Salesperson:** “Great! One last question (pause) if you like the program I develop for you, would you be willing to give us a try?”
Salesperson: “I really appreciate you taking the time to answer these questions. Based on what I just learned, I’m confident there’s a fit between our companies and that we can definitely help you solve some of your shipping problems. I’m going to make a commitment to you to develop a customized proposal, which will include my recommendations to you and your company. What I’d like in return from you is a commitment to give us a shot. Let us prove how good we are. I’m confident you’ll be very happy! Can I get that kind of commitment from you?

“Great! I’ll need about a week to get with my team back at the office and develop a package just for you. Is this time next week good for you?”

Both of these approaches let the prospect know that when you come back for your second appointment, your sale sign will go up. It prepares them to say “yes” when you come back later and ask them to buy.
We’ve focused so much of our respective sales energies on the consultative approach that very little emphasis is placed on the sales presentation. I think this is a huge mistake. In the old days, many salespeople could care less about what the customer wanted or needed; all their energy was on the presentation. Nowadays some people in transportation have no definable presentation at all. They just go back to the customer and answer any questions or shipping requirements that surfaced in the qualifying call. I think both are hugely important—the consultative call and the presentation. **Give your customer a dynamic sales presentation.** He deserves it. It will make you stand out from the other freight reps.

Be sure to focus your presentation. Only after I spend considerable time conducting a consultative/fact-finding session do I present Landstar’s services. Thorough research and questioning should give you an idea of your prospect’s logistic problems and the solutions you can provide. Tailor your presentation to suit each individual company and focus your presentation on the benefits—not features, that Landstar has to offer. Before making the presentation ask yourself: what kind of presentation will convince the prospect to buy (analytical? logical? emotional?), then model your presentation to match them.

**“Samson killed a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass. That many sales are killed everyday with the same weapon.”**

Know your audience. Make absolutely sure that all the important decision-makers are in attendance. You’ll want as many VIP’s involved as possible to see your presentation of the quality transportation services that Landstar offers. When possible, be sure to include the traffic manager, purchasing manager, maintenance supervisor, VP of sales, and anybody else involved in the final decision. Include the CEO or President of the company whenever possible. Be sure you know their level of expertise about the transportation industry, Landstar, and their company’s shipping needs. Use terminology appropriate to the attendees’ knowledge of the transportation industry.

Prepare a presentation folder for everyone who will be in attendance. Since we’re selling an intangible service; this presentation folder will have to suffice for your product demonstration.

I only present the services that Landstar offers that applies to the prospect’s needs that I uncovered on my consultative call. I stay close to my customers, and if their needs change, I make a new presentation based on their new needs. This way I don’t waste their time or mine. It also eliminates confusion.

Even in your sales presentation you must remember to **be a good listener.** Being a good listener generates confidence, and demonstrates sincerity in your desire to understand the prospect’s needs. During the fact-finding session, I let my prospect talk as
long as he wants. It’s simply a matter of respect for the other person to let him have his say. Unfortunately, too many transportation salespeople forget to extend this basic courtesy during their sales presentation. **Listening can’t be emphasized enough.**

Most salespeople who are successful in our industry are strong supporters of concept selling. Consequently, each devotes a major portion of their presentation to securing agreement on the need that their particular transportation solution fills before specifically focusing on the nuts and bolts of how they move the prospect’s freight. We sell an intangible service, so we can’t actually give a demonstration (you can’t physically take the prospect along with their shipment on a Landstar truck from their dock to the consignee’s dock - you can only describe what happens). The product we sell is nothing more than a promise - a commitment to the customer to move his or her freight when we said we would, at a reasonable price, with no damage.

The final phase in the presentation of a complicated sale to a large shipper, with several locations, might involve making a formal proposal, complete with a PowerPoint presentation, or flip charts and slides. Included might be a projection of cost savings, a plan to educate the customer’s shipping personnel, guaranteed or example supportable pick-up and delivery times, and special billing agreements. In short, the prospect is told, “I’m going to lay out the exact series of detailed events that will take place, complete with all service standards and procedures.” The prospect knows exactly what to expect, and because there will be no surprises, he or she will feel comfortable doing business with Landstar. When presenting Landstar’s logistics solutions to a group, always stand at the head of the table. Create a classroom atmosphere. Be the instructor, not ‘one of the gang.’

An even more difficult scenario than a group presentation for controlling the sale is selling over the telephone. Telephone selling offers no eye contact nor can you employ facial expressions or body language to help get your prospect’s attention. You also don’t know what distractions may be going on in his office while you’re trying to sell him. **Never sell on the phone.** You can agree to take a shipment to help the prospect out, but don’t attempt to sell him over the phone. Also, **don’t give a discount over the phone.** Make time to see the prospect in person; it serves him better, and protects you and Landstar. Phone selling is for telemarketers, not for highly paid and highly trained sales agents. The consequences are obvious when a salesperson loses control of the conversation on the telephone. The prospective client can become distracted by other matters in his office and end the conversation. In a split second he can cut you off. In general, people’s poorest manners surface both more quickly and more frequently on the phone than when you’re face to face with them.

Psychologically, **the most memorable parts of sales presentations are the beginning and the end,** so they deserve special attention. Engage the prospect from the beginning and get to the point quickly with an imaginative opening that showcases the most important benefits of using Landstar. Use your conclusion to summarize the key points of your presentation. As you plan it, ask yourself what last impressions you want to leave your prospect with before you finish and ask them to choose Landstar.
“It’s not your customer’s job to remember you. It’s your responsibility to make sure they don’t forget you.”
- Patricia Fripp

**Practice, practice, practice.** Increase your odds of closing more sales by practicing your presentations. After you’ve made sales presentations, they become practice sessions for presentations you’ll give in the future.

Collect the ideas you’d like to suggest or selling points you want to make; then organize them according to your purpose and the needs of your prospect. Give your words greater credibility by backing them up with data or testimonials. Keep your words as simple and direct as possible; use active, not passive language; and vary your tone, volume and pitch to keep the prospect interested. Illustrate your words with examples and interesting stories to add color to your presentation.

Lastly, get to know everything you can about the transportation business - Landstar - as well as the competition. **Make sure the prospect realizes that you’re an expert.** When you demonstrate how much you know about your industry, you’ll gain the respect of your customers and prospects. When people believe they’re dealing with an expert it’s a lot easier to close the sale. Most customers want you to advise them. When they realize that you have a great knowledge of the transportation industry and of available carriers, then they’re happy to let you take control. You become their consultant. It’s when a salesperson doesn’t know as much about the transportation industry as his or her prospect that people resent a strong sales presentation. However, there’s no doubt that logistics, traffic and purchasing people are better informed today than they’ve ever been.

The best way to make a compelling sales presentation is by demonstrating that you’re an expert in your business as well as his. When you exemplify excellence in your sales presentation, the customer is eager to find out what you can do to offer solutions to his or her particular transportation problems.

To make the best presentation possible, you must have conviction in the services you’re there to sell. A customer instinctively knows whether you believe in your service. If you do, they in turn will believe in you. Only then can you make a sales presentation that turns into a sale every time.
“Every sale has five basic obstacles: no need, no money, no hurry, no desire, no trust.”
- Zig Zigler

If it weren’t for objections everybody would be in sales. Without objections there’d be no need for companies to pay big, fat commission checks. So, while none of us likes objections, we must accept them as part of the business and make sure we know how to overcome them.

Your main goal when faced with an objection is to turn the objection around into a reason to purchase our service. If a prospect raises the ever-popular “Your rates are too high” objection, counter it by saying, “Our prices accurately reflect the value you’ll be getting from Landstar. And good value is important to you, isn’t it?”

Occasionally you’ll run into a prospect in the traffic or purchasing department who’s sure he’s seen everything there is to see regarding logistics companies. In other words, he’s seen it all. You might hear, “Get right to the bottom line and show me your rates?” Generally, all this person really wants is attention, and to show you how much he knows about our industry. Recognize his expertise and give him all the attention he craves. This is always a better way to handle a tough customer than to put him down. With compliments and kindness you can eventually win him over, or at least wear him down.

“Sales are contingent upon the attitude of the salesman, not the attitude of the prospect.”
- W. Clement Stone

People love to buy but hate to be sold. Objections are inevitable. Not only should you expect objections, I think you should welcome them. An objection is a positive part of the sales process. A purchasing VP who gives you an objection is listening closely. They’re considering buying your service to solve their transportation problems. And most importantly, their objection gives you an opportunity to answer the objection and add one more good reason why they should buy from you now.

Expect objections, but never create them. Prepare a list of the top ten objections your customers and prospects have had with all their transportation providers in the past and then prepare two or three appropriate responses to answer each one.

When faced with an objection, first restate the question or statement.

“The rates are too high?”
“You feel your service is too slow?”
Overcoming Objections

“You’re worried about damage?”
“You wish we offered next day service to Seattle?”

Give the prospect an opportunity to confirm your understanding of his objection, and hopefully your prospective client will give additional reasons for his or her objection.

Clarify the objection.

“I’m curious why you feel that way?”
“Could you be more specific, please?”
“Do you need more information?”

Remember this is not a contest. Nobody should win or lose. This should be a conversation where two people are answering questions and gathering information.

After you’ve re-stated the question, and clarified the objection, and you’re sure you understand the objection fully, then answer it. Don’t just handle your customer’s objections, instead answer them. Answer the objection head on, honestly, simply, and succinctly. Handle objections early and often. A direct approach to handling objection guarantees greater sales results.

The right questions at the beginning of your presentation can help prevent objections at the end of it. For example, ask questions to confirm that your prospect has the authority to make a decision by himself to make sure you don’t hear, “I need to talk to Mr. Anderson about this,” right before you’re ready to close.

Be careful about what you say when faced with an objection based on one of your competitor’s services. I handle a prospect’s question, “What makes you think your expedited service to Akron is better than XYZ Expedited?” by responding, “I’ve never been a customer of theirs. I can only tell you what our customers say about Landstar’s excellent service to Akron. I can be very specific with you about what Landstar’s services are like. Then it’s up to you Mr. Prospect, to make a comparison.”

If I’m told that another carrier is also presently under consideration and asked to give an opinion of them, I reply, “It’s a fine company. The key is for you to determine who can give you the greatest value. Who’s going to help your bottom line? And when you run into difficulties, who is going to be there to solve your problems? I am. I’m the person who’s going to provide all of that for you. Through me and my access to all of the resources within Landstar, we’ll get the job done.”

If you worked for a company that offered objection-proof service, you’d have no competitors. Every transportation company in the country has a shortcoming or limitation. If your prospect finds it, don’t try to prove him wrong. The fact that our service isn’t perfect doesn’t lower its potential value to the prospect, but the fact that you acknowledged the objection’s validity might help you build trust and rapport. Admitting
our service’s imperfection also helps give the prospect a sense of control that may reduce his fear of making a buying decision.

When possible, let prospects answer their own objections. Sometimes you can stop an objection in its tracks by asking, “Could you tell me why you feel that way?” If your prospect can’t answer, then you and the prospect know the objection has little or no validity. If your prospect does answer with a more specific objection, you have a chance to eliminate it and move one step closer to the close.

Buying decisions are risky for your prospects. Choosing the wrong provider can be harmful to the prospect’s career. Objections are the only way they have to help make sure that risk will pay off for them. If you can eliminate those objections, you’ll help provide the reassurance they need to say yes.
Take control of the sales call, especially on the subject of price. If you can change the customers pre-conceived notions in the first five or ten minutes, then you’ve won the biggest sales battle of all. Right up front, I make it clear to the prospect that the sale won’t come down to a wrestling match over price. I quickly and firmly set up an alternative framework for making a deal. If price isn’t going to be the issue, then what is? You must sell value-added. To me, that means selling exceptional service and customer support. Often, I have to close the deal on the strength of my personal commitment to my customers and the quality of service provided by Landstar.

**Never concede that Landstar’s service is just like our competitors.** Once you do, you give away your competitive edge and ability to differentiate your service, and therefore, to receive a higher price. The worst sales pitch I’ve ever heard was a freight rep whose presentation was built around the line, “Our service is just like Best-Competitor Trucking, only we’re cheaper.” The job of all Landstar sales agents is to know how and why our service is different, why that difference is important to the customer, and how to effectively communicate the importance of those differences. Your customer will pay you a premium price if you’re a better choice for his career and his company’s success. Once you prove your service is better, price diminishes as an issue. Prove to the customer that Landstar pays greater attention to customer needs, quicker response time when dispatching their pick-ups, hassle free service, less paperwork, accurate billing, few damaged or lost shipments, etc.

**Landstar customers don’t buy based on price.** They really don’t. They sometimes believe that they do, and they almost always tell you that they do. We’ve all been guilty of telling little white lies, and your customer is no different.

When the customer tells you that he can get the exact same service to Philadelphia by using a competitor, the first thought you should have is: Can he really get the same service? The answer is “NO” 100% of the time. No two companies operate exactly the same. The service may be similar. But it will never be exactly the same. The slight difference in service may be unimportant on nine out of ten shipments, but the consequences may be disastrous on that one shipment that delivers at 3:00PM instead of noon. In this, and almost all instances, your customer is receiving services that are similar but not identical. Sometimes these slight differences in service levels won’t matter, but often they will. It’s your job to point out why the slight differences matter.

The business highway is littered with out-of-business transportation and logistics companies who thought lowering price was a way to increase profits. Refuse to be part of the problem. Any no-talent salesperson can offer the customer the lowest price.

It takes a sales professional to sell a service that’s higher priced than most of his or her competition. **When a prospective customer tells you that Landstar’s prices are too high, you should say, “Of course we’re higher than those other guys. That’s one of the reasons why I’m proud to work for Landstar. Let me tell you why we charge what we do.”**
Pricing

And then, tell them with confidence exactly why we’re higher. Your price makes a statement about your service. A cheap price makes the statement that your service is also cheap. A high price sends the message that your service is of high quality. **A customer can’t argue with success.** Let them know you successfully sell at these prices. Point out that when price can’t be negotiated, each customer is treated equally and fairly. The goal is to help Landstar devise a fair pricing system, and then uniformly offer that price to customers with similarly classified goods and who ship similar quantities.

One great idea that can differentiate you from your competition, and which also justifies your customer paying a higher price, is partnership selling. Your partner could be almost any of your co-workers, but I suggest that your partner be your sales coordinator, a fellow sales agent, appointment setter, or the customer service agent who handles customers in your territory. I’ve even gone as far as having my sales assistant’s name and telephone number printed on the back of my business cards. I explain to my customers our unique partnership. Because of our partnership, one of us will always be available to take his or her calls, work with the customer on unique shipments, handle service failures, provide overall great service, and of course answer any and all pricing questions. **Selling a customer is the easy part. Keeping a customer is more difficult.** Partnerships always justify a higher price. Sometimes a partnership situation might be all you need to sell a customer on a higher price.

No matter how skillfully you develop your value-added sale, you may still have to negotiate price in order to close. For some Traffic and Supply Chain management, haggling is an important part of their job description or at least a necessary prelude to doing business.

Explain to the prospect why other decision makers for other companies have bought at your higher rates. Be sure to emphasize how Landstar’s service will help him, his company, and their customers. Explain the economics of pricing and then go for the larger order. **Discounts should only be offered when you receive a large number of shipments to justify the lower price.** Be as persistent as your customer. Assert “Far more shipments are needed” to receive that discount.

There’s always the customer who says, “I can do better. Dave’s Trucking gives me a 40% discount.” Never rely on a customer’s word that “Dave’s Trucking” has cut your price. That’s when I ask to see a bill of lading. If the customer is not telling you the truth, he’ll refuse to show you the bill. But, let’s say he does show you the bill of lading, and it does represent a 40% discount off of a comparable tariff or rate. That’s when you tell the customer that Landstar is better. Period. I tell the prospective customer that Landstar and its transportation solutions are better and warrant a higher price. Point out your competitive edge, special services we offer that adds value and cost, and any unique selling points. This is a great time to use testimonials.
Pricing

What if the prospect looks you straight in the eye and firmly says, “I don’t have time to listen to your whole sales pitch. I know all about Landstar. Just give me your rate.” Some traffic managers use this tactic to unnerve you into giving them a rate at the onset. The main purpose is to take control of the sales call away from you. I turn around and use the same technique. I say, “Can you make a firm commitment right now?” or “Will you sign a routing letter to go to all of your vendors designating us as your carrier of choice effective today?” Take control and do your job. Don’t let the prospect plow you over.

For most customers, seeing is believing. My point (and my value-added position) is driven home when customers know that I mean business. You gain credibility by making it clear that while you’re eager to win their business. You are offering them a fair price for the service Landstar provides and you’re not about to cave in at the first sign of price resistance.

Over the years our industry has been inundated with competitors who wielded cheap rates like deadly weapons, usually injuring their own business most of all. The best way to survive a price-cutting fool in your territory is to keep your cool and wait them out. Keep playing by our rules, don’t play by his.

Never let the cheapest guy in town determine your price!

Remember that you could hurt Landstar’s ‘image’ if you cut the price of your service. Be prepared to sustain some loss of business. Keep your core customers happy, those who abandon ship for cheaper rates will eventually come back - and maybe you can get a price increase when they do return.

We already have too many salespeople in our industry who’re willing to cut their rates at the drop of a hat. Don’t join that crowd. Treat your customers fairly and expect them to treat you the same way. The price should be a direct reflection of your services worth. Remember, it’s you, not the customer or your competitor, who determines your price.
Confirming the Sale

In the trucking industry, a lot of credit is given to a salesperson who is a proven closer. That has always been my reputation - a guy who always asks for the sale and expects the customer to say “YES”. Being known as a “Closer” is a big compliment. The only downside, as far as I’m concerned, is the negative connotation of the word *Close*. I appreciate being recognized as a *Closer*, but I think it’s more accurate to call what I do *Confirming the Sale*. Whatever you decide to call it - there’s no magic to confirming the sale. Right from the initial approach to the very end of your presentation, bit by bit, you should be confirming the sale. It’s when you find out if you did your job properly. I go with my instincts. I close the sale when my customer lets me know it’s time. Closing or confirming the sale is the most natural thing about selling. It’s the only reason for your job. Confirming the sale should be automatic. Don’t hesitate to ask a shipper for his or her business. The only time you shouldn’t be outwardly confirming the sale is when you’re on the fact finding call, and even then there will be a series of opportunities for minor closes that prepare your prospect for your next sales call.

*You have to have complete confidence in your ability to close the sale, if not, the prospect becomes consumed with doubt.* The prospect can sense when it’s time for you to confirm the sale, and it’s up to you to ask for the order. He knew you were a salesperson when he agreed to see you, and if you lack confidence to ask for his business, he’s going to lack confidence in making a decision. It’s like driving onto a car lot, walking the entire lot looking at each car, and never having a salesperson approach you.

Confirming the sale is simply demonstrating a confidence that you’re ready to provide the prospect with the service that he wants. When the prospect feels comfortable with you in this regard, it’s time to say, “Okay, when are we going to handle your first shipment?”

It’s contagious. When you confidently ask for the prospect’s business, the other person becomes confident too. The prospect should feel like it would be a mistake not to act. It’s only when a salesperson is full of doubt himself that people hesitate and feel as though they’re being put under the gun to make a decision. *Hesitation is as contagious as confidence.*

Your sales presentation should be smooth. The close should have a rhythmic flow that naturally blends in with your proposal so that the prospect is unaware of a precise moment when he can think, ‘Ah, now he’s putting pressure on me to buy.’ *Pressure selling is outdated and counterproductive.* People who make decisions on who to trust with their freight are resentful of a sales rep who tries to stuff their transportation solutions down their throats—the buyer will resist such pressure.
“I’m the world’s worst Salesman, therefore, I must make it easy for people to buy.”

- F.W. Woolworth

Ask for the customer’s freight. At the very least ask for a trial shipment. When an attractive transportation solution is properly presented to a prospect, it becomes obvious that the prospect’s problem can be solved. Therefore, there’s a built-in urgency to go ahead and switch to Landstar as their carrier of choice. It’s a matter of demonstration that your proposal is so cost and service justified from the customer’s point of view that as a prudent business person, he or she readily recognizes the value that Landstar offers. When you accomplish this, the prospect is ready to sign.

One technique that I use is the minor-major close, a method of selling used by many successful sales specialists. The premise of this close is to avoid asking a prospect to make a major buying decision. Instead, I ask a series of relatively minor questions to which the prospect can easily answer yes. It’s often easier for the customer to make several minor decisions than one major one.

Instead, I ask easy questions that require little thought to answer, such as:

- Would you like pre-printed waybills?
- Would you like me to send a letter and routing guide to your vendors?
- Would you like a monthly detailed report of all inbound and outbound shipments?

None of these questions are hard to answer. On the other hand, imagine the difficulty a prospect would have when asked, “Do you want to give me all your shipments to your biggest customer effective today?” There’s too much anxiety created by that question. Most prospects would have trouble saying yes to a closing question like that.

As previously explained, most people simply don’t like to make major decisions. They don’t want to risk making a mistake, so they tend to procrastinate. However, it’s not difficult to make up one’s mind about things that are relatively insignificant. Sometimes the least threatening question and the most effective is, “How about giving Landstar a try?” It’s an effective request for business that gives the customer a chance to test your service.

The odds for success are in your favor if you close the sale while the prospect is still hot. Some people simply cool off. The best time for them to make buying decisions is while all of the facts are fresh in their minds, and that’s immediately after you’ve presented an explanation of your service. The more time that expires, the less people’s memories retain what you’ve told them. They can’t remember the reasons why they need Landstar, and in some cases, how to use our service (dispatch phone number, lanes where we’re strongest, air vs. surface expedite, etc.). But they do remember how much it costs. With each day that passes, they remember less and less about your service and its benefits.
Confirming the Sale

and simultaneously the price seems proportionately higher for the benefits they think they will get. For this reason, you should confirm the sale during the presentation call.

The longer a customer has to think it over, the lower the odds become that you’ll make the sale. I go with the odds and **always make a strong attempt to close the sale while eye to eye with the prospect.**

I confirm the sale bit by bit throughout the presentation. Relatively early in the presentation I let the prospect know that I expect him or her to make a decision at the close of my presentation.

It’s important to bring up again that you must make sure all decision-makers will be present before you make your sales pitch. When I call to set the appointment for my presentation, I always make it clear that whoever is necessary to make a buying decision should be present. Sometimes it’s the VP of sales, Purchasing manager, Traffic manager, Maintenance supervisor, Comptroller, or maybe even the CEO. Because I’ve prepared them in advance, I’m rarely told at the end of my presentation, “I need to talk it over with....”

**Ask for a customer commitment at the appropriate time**—after you’ve done a good job of probing, exchanged information about the customer’s needs, and shown how your service can help meet those needs. Then the customer and you are ready to make a decision about how to close the sales call and what steps should be taken next.

One of the best times to confirm is when you get a clear signal of the customer’s readiness to commit. The signals that good freight salespeople may read from the customer include:

- A smile, nod, or expectant look.
- A clear statement of satisfaction, such as “That sounds like what we’re looking for.”
- A statement that shows the customer wants to close, such as, “What’s the next step?” or “How do we proceed?”
- Questions about hours of dispatch support, costs, etc.

When you get these signals, it’s important to recognize them and not try to discuss other things and miss the moment to ask for a commitment.

**Do not oversell!** Some salespeople enjoy a successful close so much that they want to hear it again - even if it re-opens the door to a “NO.” When the customer says yes - you should SHUT UP! The sales pitch is now over. You and the customer are now business partners. Do not oversell. Learn to take YES for an answer.
Confirming the Sale

I’ve made sales calls with dozens of successful sales people and every one of them is unique. Each one closes or confirms the sale in their own way, but there are some recurring techniques. While you may have found certain closes work better than others, that shouldn’t deter you from using a variety of closes or confirming techniques, depending on different situations. By learning the ten closes listed here, you’ll stand a better chance of getting more sales, more often, from more accounts.

1. “IT COSTS TOO MUCH” CLOSE
Emphasize the benefits you know the prospect finds irresistible. In the following script, the sales agent uncovers low freight costs as one of the prospect’s hot buttons and emphasizes that the more expensive transportation solution will actually save him money in the long run:

Prospect: “I like your service, but it costs too much.”
Salesperson: “It costs too much? Most carriers who are cheaper than we are more frequently damage freight, deliver late, and miss pick-ups. Our service is designed to eliminate those headaches for you and your customer. Obviously, that will save you money, and increase future business from your customers who’ll be more satisfied.”

2. THE “WHAT YOU REALLY WANT CLOSE”
Help the prospect see themselves using your service. Speak to them as though they already use it, and tie in a hot button benefit to its use: “When you use our next day service to Dayton, after only a few shipments you’ll notice that your customers are happier that they’re now receiving their shipments when they were promised. Then you can move on to something else, and quit wasting ten hours a week on trying to fix your Dayton problem, and that’s what you really want isn’t it?”

3. THE “MINOR-MAJOR” CLOSE
The Minor-Major close builds a chain of affirmative answers to questions you ask to help lead the prospect into saying yes to the sale. To put the prospect in the habit of saying yes, ask questions you’re sure will get affirmative answers:

Salesperson: Do you believe in giving your customers great service?
Prospect: Yes.
Salesperson: Do you agree that meeting your customers’ shipping deadlines and requirements improves your chances for future sales?
Prospect: Yes.

4. THE “IF I CAN” CLOSE
The “If I can” close uses the prospect’s questions and comments to help you get them to buy if you can provide what they want. Instead of immediately assuring the prospect that you can meet all of their wants and needs, ask them if they’ll buy from you if you can…:

Prospect: I need a carrier who can guarantee deliveries to O’Hare by 3:00PM.
Salesperson: If I can guarantee deliveries to O’Hare by 3:00PM, would you give us a try?
5. THE “GIVE US A TRY” CLOSE
If the prospect is waiting for an invitation to buy, give him one. Make a persuasive argument for choosing Landstar, including the reasons why the prospect should buy, then invite them to do it. Say, “Why don’t you give us a try?” or “Would you like to get started right away?”

6. THE “TESTIMONIAL” CLOSE
To build credibility and reassure the prospect that he’s making a wise decision, tell him about the success other companies have had with Landstar. Collect letters or stories and share them with your prospect to settle buying anxiety:

Prospect: I’m not sure this will work with the way we currently handle your traffic needs.
Salesperson: These companies use our service and they’ve had fabulous results. “You will, too.”

7. THE “ALL THAT” CLOSE
To use the “All that” close, simply reiterate the client’s needs and wants, and how your service satisfies them: “From what you’ve told me, you need a provider who will provide spotted rail equipment for loading and then 4 day service from Memphis to Oakland. Landstar can do all that. This is a service that we have experience with, and this would fit your needs perfectly. Don’t you agree?”

8. THE “BEN FRANKLIN” CLOSE
Since few salespeople can offer prospects the perfect supply chain solution, it’s often difficult to overcome every one of a buyer’s objections. When an unanswered objection stands between you and a sale, make a list of benefits vs. objections (Just make sure that the benefits far outweigh the objections) and present them to your buyer and say, “As you can see, the reasons for buying outnumber the reasons against.”

9. THE “REVERSE” CLOSE
The reverse close turns prospect’s reasons why they shouldn’t buy into reasons why they should buy. When your prospect voices an objection, think of a benefit to that objection: “That’s the very reason why you should use Landstar.”

Prospect: Your price is too high!
Salesperson: That’s the very reason why you should use Landstar. The slightly higher price buys you a higher quality, faster response time and a safer transportation service that will save you money on damage and shortage, and will result in more repeat business from your current customers.

The more closes you know, the better you’ll be prepared to face that moment of truth at the end of your presentation. With so many effective ways to confirm a sale, odds are you’ll be able to choose the appropriate one to confirm a sell on your very next call.
It’s no secret why you’re making the call in the first place. And, it’s no secret why your prospect is listening. He knows you’re there for the purpose of selling him your services. He’s listening in the hope that you’ll make his job easier and the performance of his job more efficient.

Be a closer (confirmer). Your main objective is to get new business. At the end of the presentation, a real sales professional will confirm with their prospect that they’ve done a good job. That confirmation will come in the form of a sale.

Never give up and never give in.
Go for the Close!
After ‘The Sell’
Handling Rejection

Rejection is a daily occurrence in the sales profession. **No matter how good you are, you’ll be rejected.** How you handle rejection can be compared to long distance running. In running, you’re going to become fatigued. The proof to how fit you are is determined by how quickly your body is able to rebound. The same applies to sales rejection. You’re going to be rejected. How quickly and how well you recover will determine how successful your next sales call will be.

When I coached baseball there was one situation you could always bank on. If a player committed an error and reacted by kicking the dirt, throwing his mitt, and letting his chin droop, the next hit was definitely coming his way. Instead of shaking off the first error and being prepared to make the next play, some players would still be beating themselves up when the second hit would shoot right between their legs. Suddenly one error would become two. Too often, sales people let this happen with rejections. Instead of missing one sale, a rejection mishandled can lead to several more rejections.

The best Landstar sales reps get rejected, maybe not as often as some, but it still happens. Learn to **accept rejection** as an occupational hazard and **move on**. One of the biggest mistakes a salesperson can make is to get rejected and never go back. Don’t close the door on a client forever after receiving just one rejection. People are more likely to give you their business if they know you really want it. **Stay in touch.** Let the customer know you really want their business. If they’re a good prospect keep them apprised of developments in the industry and at Landstar. Send them a quarterly newsletter, etc. Keep in touch and demonstrate your professionalism.

**75% of all salespeople quit after the first NO, another 5% quit after the second NO, and only 20% persist until the third NO.**

It’s not surprising that **20% of salespeople** make **80% of all sales.**

Just like Major League ball players, you won’t be remembered for your strikeouts; instead you’ll be remembered for your home runs.
Referrals & Testimonials

Referrals are the easiest sales you’ll make. It’s your job to tell a purchasing manager that Landstar offers the best service available; that’s what he expects you to say. But when he hears it from a fellow purchasing manager that he knows through the local traffic club, then that’s something entirely different.

Always ask for referrals! Asking for referrals is the difference between middle-of-the-pack sales agents and star performers. And yet sales agents are usually terrified to ask for referrals. Don’t be timid. In our business, you have to ask for what you want. If there’s not a competitive reason for a satisfied customer to object to giving you a referral, then they will about 70% of the time. Always start by asking for referrals within their own company, on-site and at different locations. Then, (while on the same visit or in later calls) branch out and ask for referrals to businesses in the area where they might know a decision-maker.

Carry index cards with you that are prepared with fill-in blanks on printed labels, so the customer is prompted to give you the information you need, i.e.; company name, contact name, new contact’s title, what they ship, address, telephone number, and how your client is acquainted with the referral.

I always ask the customer if he’d mind calling the referral for me. Often your customer will decline, so at this point you should ask permission to use their name when making the call yourself. I’ve only been turned down twice in my career on that request.

Never pass up the opportunity to give referrals to your customers. When you refer someone, be sure your customer mentions your name as the source of the referral. Be explicit. Say, “Give Mark a call, and please tell him that I referred you.” In many cases, you should even call Mark and let him know that a referral will be calling him. Remember the next time you speak to Mark to ask if the referred person called and how the situation turned out.

You can use testimonials instead of referrals. When you call on a prospect who was not a referral, then use testimonials in place of a business associate of his who would have referred you. Use testimonials to support your claims. Pick out the testimonials you will use in your presentation prior to each sales call. Use testimonials that are from companies that have similar transportation needs, ship or receive similar products, and are close to the same geographical location.

After receiving a compliment from a satisfied customer for work well done, ask right then for a testimonial letter—they’re worth their weight in gold.

Using referrals and testimonials in your presentations and qualifying calls sends and reinforces the message that it’s a good business decision to trust you and Landstar. Others have trusted you with good results.

People like working with a winner. In many ways it makes them feel like a winner too.
When you demonstrate your successes you make the customer more comfortable with their decision to buy from Landstar. Send letters and articles to your customers and qualified prospects announcing your successes, like winning an award for outstanding sales results. The purpose of the letter is not to brag on yourself, but rather to thank your clients for their business and to make it perfectly clear that the only way you achieved this goal was by helping your customers achieve their goals.

**Ask every prospect you meet for referrals**, and ask every satisfied customer for a testimonial letter. If they don’t have time, offer to type up their comments and then bring it back in for their approval and signature. You’ve got nothing to lose and everything to gain - **ALWAYS ASK!**
Repeat business and referrals are the two biggest keys to long-term success in transportation sales. You can ensure long-term growth by paying more attention to service. “You can’t build a reputation on what you’re going to do.” – Henry Ford

Clients expect service but agents, salespeople, and clients often have trouble defining “service”.

Driving across town to deliver donuts often gets listed as a service call. Dropping in to see how things are going often appears on weekly call reports as service. To some sales agents, service is what they do when they don’t feel like selling. Service can be a way to put off more important activities. Servicing your customer is very important. Just be careful. Don’t use service calls as a way to pad your call report. A service call should have definable objectives.

One problem with service calls is that there’s very little short-term reward for doing it. Few agents or sales managers greet returning salespeople at the end of the day with, “Did you provide great service to your key clients today?” Instead, managers ask, “Who did you sell today? Did you put any freight on Landstar’s BCO’s?” Certainly, there’s more financial reward for, and more attention paid to selling than to servicing.

Let’s define SERVICE as anything that builds trust and confidence in Landstar and the services we provide to the customer.

Following is a list of services that are specific and measurable. The purpose of this list is to help you develop an ongoing service system for Landstar that kicks in when you make the sell. You can use this checklist to make service a more specific part of your sales planning. There’s enough lip service paid to it already.

1. **Write thank you notes as part of your service system.** I sometimes write as many as 10 thank you notes per day. I’ve made sales calls where I’ve seen my handwritten notes on my clients’ desk three weeks later. Carry cards in your car and fill them out at the end of the call while still in the customer’s parking lot.

2. **Clip an article you saw about the client’s industry and send it to them.** This works best when you send the original article, not a copy. Your client will appreciate the special attention.

3. **Conduct a training session for the client and their staff.** Perhaps you have sales training or customer service programs that could benefit salespeople and customer service personnel. Make them available to clients and add value to being a shipper or consignee with Landstar. This says you care about the client’s future growth and not just about the business you get from them today.
4. **Schedule a visit of upper management to your client.** This is a symbolic and information gathering visit. Agents, Region Vice Presidents, Region Managers, dispatch supervisors, and customer service managers are ideal for this purpose. It says to the client that you appreciate their business, and also gives management the opportunity to stay connected.

5. **Conduct agency or corporate office tours on a regular basis.** Clients need to see the agency or corporate office, especially large shippers, so that they can see the depth of the professionalism and dedication that goes into moving their freight.

6. **Hold round table discussions about business trends and opportunities with key clients.** I love the idea of customer councils. It’s a great way to improve your business and your customer’s business. Getting successful people from other businesses to talk and help each other is another service Landstar can provide. These meetings can help you get good information about how to serve your clients better.

7. **Throw a client appreciation party, cookout, or breakfast.**

8. **Bring Landstar service people to meet your customers.** Those people within your organization that actually make the decisions about how the freight moves can be your best sales associates. They can also solve problems on the spot that you might not be able to handle yourself.

9. **Bring coffee and donuts.** It’s cheaper than buying lunch, and most of the time easier for your client. Get stickers to put on the box with the Landstar logo and your agency’s telephone number. This gives you a dozen chances to register name awareness. It helps to be known by many people in the organization from the boardroom to the breakroom.

10. **Help clients with long-term planning and strategizing.** Offer to participate on a project planning team.

11. **Send a Mailgram or thank you card to your client when he makes his first shipment with Landstar.** This sends an important message to the customer. It shows that you appreciate their business, and that you stay abreast of what’s going on at Landstar. Be sure to work closely with customer service and your dispatching staff to ensure that they alert you of all first shipments.

12. **Surprise a customer with a little gift that relates to a hobby or special interest that you know they enjoy (i.e., humorous tapes, golf balls, a souvenir from their home state, a gift that contains their favorite sports team logo, etc.).**

13. **Invite your customer to accompany you to seminars, speeches, and functions.**
14. **Return all phone calls immediately.** With the increasing number of people using voicemail, the simple act of returning a phone call can differentiate you from the competition.

15. **Take advantage of e-mail.** Your prospects and existing customers can screen their calls, and many receive so many it may be difficult for your information to grab your potential customer’s attention. They may attach a greater sense of urgency to an e-mail. If the prospect spends 10 more seconds reading your material because you e-mailed it, that could be all the time you need to pique their interest. Be sure to personalize the e-mail—make them brief and simple, featuring clear benefit statements.

16. **Establish a follow-up schedule.** Remember that last month’s no may be this month’s yes. Try to touch base with prospects regularly without being intrusive. Also, group prospects according to when you expect them to buy (within 30 days, within 60 days, etc.). Consider their unique shipping cycles. Is their product seasonal? Do they have a contract expiring soon with another carrier? When will they accept bids? The sooner you expect a prospect to buy, the more frequently you should stay in touch. Design a follow-up contact form to help you keep track of your prospects and the contacts you make with them.

17. **Vary your modes of contact.** A call, package, or e-mail will have more impact if it’s reinforced with another form of contact. Follow phone calls with a letter or e-mail outlining the highlights of your conversation and confirming any action steps your prospect approved. Call your prospects and current customers within a week after you send a letter or package to confirm receipt and offer to discuss any questions or issues they may have. Personalize your method of contact and show your customers that you’re persistent in your desire to help them.

18. **Collect leads on follow-up calls to established customers.** Repeat customers need to know they aren’t being taken for granted, so contact them regularly to make sure you’re still meeting their needs and expectations. If you’ve provided good service to these customers, don’t hesitate to ask for the names of business acquaintances and others in their own company who might benefit from the shipping solutions offered by Landstar.

19. **Send literature sparingly.** If prospects are interested in Landstar’s services, you can withhold literature and make additional contacts to provide more information and build rapport. Withholding literature selectively also keeps your service information (late pick-ups, customized billing, early delivery, etc.) customized for each individual prospect. Use your customers’ requests for information to gauge their level of interest in your service.

20. **Make buying fun.** Selling doesn’t have to be all serious business. An upbeat, exciting attitude often makes customers want to join the party. Lighten up! The appearance of desperation or extreme seriousness can cause doubt in the customer’s mind. Relax; show them you’re at ease with what you’re doing. You’re not worried about Landstar’s ability to deliver their product on time and without damage, and they
shouldn’t be either. Adopt an energized, off-the-wall approach to show your customers you’re a forward-thinking, innovative go-getter. You don’t have to sacrifice professionalism to make buying an energizing, enjoyable experience that will keep your customers coming back.

21. Make sure internal employees are well-trained in good customer service techniques. Your customer or prospect will probably have lots of contacts with your staff and Landstar’s transportation providers. Your co-workers are your best sales assistants. Treat them like gold, and they’ll do the same for your customers. It’s up to you. Make sure they’re as excited as you are to provide outstanding customer service.

22. Never sell your customer a method of moving his freight that you believe he doesn’t really need (i.e., charter air when surface expedite will be less expensive and still make your customer’s deadline, or telling him his freight will be delivered the next day by 2PM when you’re almost positive that it will turn out being a two day delivery). Don’t do it. Know your prospect, know their needs, and sell to those needs.

23. Most importantly, do what you promised, do it when you promised, and do it more often than the competition.

Sales professionals in our industry who don’t take care of their clients are shortsighted, and in the long run end up on the short end of the stick. If you’re worried about showing your face at the local traffic club meeting, then you’ve got a serious problem.

Constant communication is the key to building a lasting relationship with customers and prospects. You must stay in touch.

Many customers are suspicious of salesmen. They think that we’re there at the time of the sale but not when they need us if something goes wrong. Many people get buyer’s remorse. Soon after the sale they think, “Did I make the right decision? Maybe I should have chosen another provider or kept using ABC Logistics Company.” When they get that follow-up letter, e-mail, phone call, or they experience the other customer service techniques discussed here, it makes them think, “Yes, I made the right decision.”

Outstanding customer service means more money in your pocket. Research has shown that companies who use service as their primary competitive weapon can charge about 10% more for their product compared to undistinguished forms. With increased customer satisfaction you can increase your income by at least 10% starting today.

So start today— Make service an integral part of your sales strategy.
Sooner or later, maybe even on the first shipment, you’ll encounter problems that necessitate making a *difficult* call—informing a new, hard-to-sell customer that something’s gone haywire with his shipment. The best way to handle these situations is promptly and directly, always getting right to the point. Don’t procrastinate—make the call immediately.

It doesn’t take long for anyone in the transportation business to realize that occasionally bad things happen to good people.

- Pick-up or delivery times are missed
- Freight gets damaged
- A shipment is delayed
- A billing problem becomes frequent

You name it, it can and occasionally will happen.

Football coaches have a saying: “When a quarterback throws a pass, three things can happen, and two of them are bad”. When customers aren’t happy, whether it’s because a shipment is late, damaged or lost, five things can happen—and four of them are bad:

**THE CUSTOMER DOESN’T LET US KNOW HE WAS UNHAPPY WITH LANDSTAR’S SERVICE. NOT GOOD.** The next time the shipper calls in a pick-up (if they give you a second chance) they’ll have a negative attitude right from the start.

**THE CUSTOMER CHANGES CARRIERS IN SILENCE. NOT GOOD EITHER.** At best, we know only that the customer switched carriers, not why or how we can get them back. Worse, we just don’t hear from the customer or can’t make contact.

**THE CUSTOMER TELLS HIS OR HER FRIENDS. WORSE.** If this happens you stand to lose several customers; the customer you originally dissatisfied, plus all the people they influence.

**THE CUSTOMER TALKS TO THIRD PARTIES. WORST OF ALL.** This can lead to bad press, or even lawsuits.

**THE FIFTH OPTION IS COMMUNICATION.**

The best possible outcome is that your unhappy customer talks to you. This gives you a second chance to understand their needs, identify and correct problems, and convert your dissatisfied customer into a happy customer - one who’ll keep coming back.
Handling Problems After the Sale

Getting them to contact us is just the first step. What’s really important is what we do once we’ve got a dissatisfied customer on the line. Here are the proper procedures to best help your customer.

1. **Inform the customer as soon as you can**—they’re absolutely going to find out—no news travels more swiftly than bad news. Be sure you have the opportunity or set the tone to break the bad news in the most positive/proactive way possible.

2. **Get to the point quickly** by saying something like, “You’re not going to like hearing this”

3. **If your customer approaches you with a complaint, don’t interrupt.** Don’t become defensive. Don’t make judgments until you’ve heard all the facts as the customer sees them.

4. **Take complaints seriously**, no matter how trivial the issue may seem to you. It takes a lot of frustration to inspire most people to complain; therefore the complainer must take the issue very seriously. Remember, problems exist when customers perceive they exist.

5. **Be proud to be associated with Landstar.** **Don’t create distance from Landstar** by referring to it as “they.” Use “we” instead, and proudly stand behind our service without making excuses.

6. **Apologize sincerely.**

7. **Avoid focusing on fixing the blame**; instead focus on fixing the problem. The customer has already assigned blame to your entire organization and usually couldn’t care less if you can pinpoint the blame more specifically. The customer is only interested in the service. So fix the problem to fix the sale. Take responsibility for solving the problem and then solve it.

8. **Let your customer suggest alternatives.** Every customer has some idea of what they want as a solution to every problem. Find out what that expectation is. If any of the alternatives the customer suggests is reasonable, agree to them immediately and then follow up after you’ve complied with their request.

9. **Do something extra.** Correcting the problem isn’t always enough. Recognize the fact that the customer has been inconvenienced.

10. **Trust the customer’s sincerity.** It’s better to err by believing too many people than by not believing enough people.
11. **Never just say, “I don’t know.”** When you don’t know an answer, simply say, “I’ll look into the matter,” and then look into it, soon. Resort to this when (a) you are unable to satisfy a customer after offering reasonable alternatives, (b) the solution the customer wants is beyond your authority to grant, or (c) the situation is too unusual to classify as a normal complaint.

12. **Empathize with the customer.** We’ve all complained at some time. If you can’t relate to the complaint itself, at least relate to the process of complaining.

13. If the timing is appropriate, **ask for future business**—let the customer know this does not represent Landstar’s usual high quality of service.

14. **Follow-up.** Make sure the customer is truly satisfied.

15. **Don’t let it affect your interaction with the next customer.** And most importantly: Most customers will accept occasional mistakes. How you deal with the problem and how you resolve it is what will distinguish you as a real professional.

16. **Always remember that listening to your customer is the best way to help in an uncomfortable situation.** Some people want to be listened to even more than they want their problems solved.
HOW TO GET TO HEAVEN

A man knocked at the heavenly gate - his face was scarred and old.
He stood before the man of fate - for admission to the fold.

“What have you done,” Saint Peter asked, “to gain admission here?”

“I’ve sold in Transportation sir - for many and many a year.”

The pearly gate swung open wide - St. Peter touched the bell.
“Come in and choose your harp, my son. You’ve had
your share of hell!”

Selling offers more highs and lows than most other professions. Most salespeople suffer through periods of stress that are direct results of their sales jobs. Salespeople who succeed in the long run never let disappointments get the best of them. They know rejection goes with the territory and learn not to take it personally. They view mistakes and failures as lessons that will help them improve. On the other hand, some very promising sales careers have died premature deaths due to stress. Some salespeople run away from the stress and those customers who cause it. They avoid difficult clients, ignore new leads, and quit following up on tough prospects. They begin spending too much time in the office. Logistics salespeople who’ve succumbed to stress begin spending more and more time talking to the agency owner, customer service reps, dispatchers, drivers, and fellow salespeople than they spend speaking to prospects. They often fill their day with nonessential activities. They make more service calls on established customers than sales calls on new prospects. Salespeople who’ve given in to stress begin to hide from their customers and supervisors.

There’s not one salesperson at Landstar who has not had to face a customer who was upset about something we got wrong (damaged, lost, or late freight usually tops the list). We’re also faced with lots of rejection on our daily search for success. If you dwell on the negatives, they’ll bury you.

“The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will.”
- Vince Lombardi

We’re all different, but in some very basic ways we’re very much the same. Lighten up and look for ways to lessen the stress on your job. Give these 20 stress
releasing ideas a try. You’ll be amazed at how much more you’ll enjoy your job and your life.

1. **Focus.** Focus on what’s truly stressful to you about a situation and why—the idea being that understanding the stress lessens it and gives you some control over it.

2. **Put stressful situations in perspective.** After a particularly stressful event, try to imagine specific ways that event could have been better or worse. Then visualize what you could have done to make the better outcome a reality. This method also helps you improve your sales skills.

3. **Postpone thinking about problems until an appropriate time.** Successful people learn how to compartmentalize their thinking.

4. **Take a deep breath.** Size up stressful situations and decide which aspects are worth worrying about and which can be ignored.

5. **Take vacations** and occasional time off.

6. **Don’t be afraid to laugh at yourself.** Being overly concerned about appearing foolish creates stress.

7. **Talk to others about job pressures** - fellow sales people, friends, spouses (I suggest your own).

8. **Expect the unexpected.** Allow time and reserve energy to deal with the inevitable stressful events that occur daily when moving customer’s freight or when moving between or conducting sales calls.

9. **Do something for yourself.** Take a course in something that interests you. Develop a hobby. I recommend golf.

10. **Volunteer** to do something in the community that’s rewarding to you and gives you satisfaction.

11. **Figure out the source of your stress.** Focus on whether or not it’s your fault and, if so, whether there is anything you can do about it.

12. **Talk to people who work in similar jobs**—it doesn’t necessarily have to be transportation sales, but preferably someone in outside sales.

13. Talk to someone about your situation who will help you **develop an objective perspective.** It doesn’t have to be a professional. It could be someone at work that you trust. If they’re not the cause of your stress, your agency owner or sales manager would be ideal.
14. **Find something that makes you laugh.** I collect funny newspaper articles, usually about not-too-bright people doing something that makes absolutely no sense. Sometimes when I’m really stressed out, I pick up one of my notebooks full of newspaper clippings and enjoy a good laugh.

15. **Spend more time with people who make you laugh.** Get together regularly with co-workers and share funny stories about daily disasters with an eye toward constructive solutions.

16. **Customers and co-workers need to see you smile.** Smiling is a great way to relieve stress, especially at work. It makes you and your customers feel better. It gives the customer greater confidence in your ability to solve his or her transportation problems. When you smile, the folks you’re with smile back at you.

17. When we’re under stress, our bodies use up nutrients faster and less efficiently than they ordinarily do. Do yourself a good turn by trying to meet your body’s greatest nutritional demands at times of high stress. Take more vitamin B and vitamin C. Increase your intake of proteins and calcium. Cut out fats, and cut back on caffeine and sugar.

18. **Stick to a regular sleep schedule.** Try to retire and wake up at about the same time each day. Get plenty of rest. You need to be sharp when calling on a hot new prospect.

19. **Write down what you expect to accomplish and then get it done.** Few things create stress as much as a to-do list left undone at the end of the day.

20. **Start your sales day prepared.** Get your clothes ready the night before. Pack your briefcase. Double-check your proposals and the brochures that you’ll need on your sales calls. If any one factor will relieve more stress than another, it’s preparation.

**A well prepared Landstar salesperson can handle anything that comes their way.**
“And old Dave, he’d go up to his room, y’understand, put on his green velvet slippers – I’ll never forget – and pick up his phone and call the buyers, and without leaving his room, at the age of eighty-four, he made his living. And when I saw that, I realized that selling was the greatest career a man could want.”
- Arthur Miller, Death of a Salesman

Supply Chain Sales is competitive. You’ll have to fight to win customers, and then you’ll have to fight to keep them. There are a lot of salespeople out there competing for the business you work hard to obtain and grow. Some of these competitor’s salespeople do an outstanding job, make a lot of money, and build satisfying careers. Others don’t. They sell customers services they don’t need. They make promises they can’t keep. Their success depends more on fast talk than on what they can do to increase profitability and productivity for their client. ‘Selling the Star’ provides you with the roadmap to sales success. Start learning and applying the techniques from ‘Selling the Star’ today.

“Nothing happens until somebody sells something”
Arthur H. “Red” Motley