



# **Key Techniques**

## **to Find & Retain the Next Generation of Drivers**

**Chapter One:  
3 Step Process to Increase  
Your Driver Count.**



## Introduction

**Chapter One** of our three-part eBook “3 Step Process to Increase Your Driver Count ” explains the three basic steps to help increase the size of your fleet. **Chapter Two**, “Strategies to Decrease Driver Turnover” reviews key retention processes that can help stem driver attrition. **Chapter Three**, “How to Attract Millennials for Trucking Jobs” will provide insight into what Millennials value and a game plan to make trucking attractive to them.

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**The first step** to keeping your fleet of trucks full of safe drivers is to evaluate how you recruit, hire, onboard, train and retain your drivers. These are separate, distinct processes that require different skill sets. The first of our three-part eBook series will provide you with a three-step process that can help increase your driver count:

1. Create a compelling **value proposition** that leaves no doubt you offer a quality driving career;
2. Develop a compelling **message that attracts** drivers to enter the recruiting funnel;
3. Evaluate the **effectiveness of your advertising sources.**

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## Creating Your Value Proposition

Great businesses don't sell products, they **solve problems**.

A value proposition is the **concise statement** of why your company is the best **solution** to a problem.

**Take a look** at your current driver recruiting advertisements, could you put the logo of your competitor on the top and realize that all of your selling points would apply to them as well? If so, your ad is full of platitudes—selling points that everyone can say, such as “Great Pay!” or “Drive for the best!” How much money is “great”? How are you “the best” if 15 other trucking companies have a similar tag line on their trailers? In order to successfully sell your job and company, start by creating a unique value proposition:

1. Define the psychographics of your target driver;
2. Identify their pain points;
3. Review competing alternatives—direct and indirect competition.

### **Define Your Ideal Driver**

You have great drivers who have been with you for years and you wonder, “why can’t there be more drivers like them?” Let’s start by putting together a profile of your top performing 15-20 drivers.

# Psychographics

Psychographics classify potential drivers by their attitudes, social class, lifestyle, values, motivations and personality. Broad driver psychographic classification examples:

**Social Class:** Professional truck drivers are blue-collar skilled workers who take pride in their craft.

**Values, Motivations and Personality:** Quality drivers are conscientious, safe, independent, compassionate, compliant and ethical.

**Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:** Drivers must be able to understand and execute defensive driving, avoid injuries, satisfy customer requests, dispatch communication, correctly fill out paperwork, and follow DOT/FMCSA rules and regulations, etc.

**Lifestyle:** Trucking is a tough lifestyle that requires personal sacrifices of family time to be successful—drivers prioritize their career over family and personal needs.

## You can put more specificity to your driver's psychographics by asking open-ended questions such as:

- Thank you for driving for us for so many years. Why do you stick around?
- What do you like most about the job?
- What satisfaction does the job give you?
- Why do you show up on time every day?
- How have you driven X number of miles without an accident?
- What does our company do well? How about Operations? Or Safety?
- What does the management do well?

**You'll get different perspectives** if you ask these questions to your senior drivers and those who have been hired in the last year. The responses should also be used as driver testimonials for potential applicants to review.

This exercise will help make identifying a good fit driver easier for your recruiters, tighten your marketing message and help you select the right advertising sources.

### **Identify Pain Points**

Drivers will only consider joining your company if you solve a problem they have at their current employer. AvatarFleet has conducted over 2,000 driver exit interviews for their trucking clients and the summary of the most common responses were:

I don't make enough **money**.

I'm not satisfied with my **home time**.

I don't like my **supervisor**.

I'm not happy with the way I'm **dispatched**.

The job isn't what I **expected**.

There are no **opportunities** to improve my situation.

The company doesn't **communicate** with me.

I'm not **appreciated**.



**Your recruiters** should start their process by asking diagnostic questions such as:

- What job would be a great fit for you?
- Why are you looking to leave your current job?
- How often do you want to get home?
- Who do you have at home waiting for you?

Think about what your company does well and ask questions around your strengths. For example if you get drivers home every weekend and once during the week, center your diagnostic questions around home time.

Make sure your recruiters diagnose the driver's pain before they begin to prescribe your company's job(s) as the cure.

# Know Your Competing Alternatives

If thirsty consumers walk into a store, they are met with hundreds of thirst-quenching options: sports drinks, soda, milk, juice, water, etc. If your company sells water, all of the additional types of beverages are considered **competing alternatives**, not just your direct competitors who also sell water.

Similarly, a driver is faced with just as many competing alternatives as the thirsty consumer. Without the flashy signs, high-budget advertising campaigns, and celebrity endorsements beverage companies may boast, your company must stand out among the competing alternatives to capture the attention of quality drivers. To be different and better than your competing alternatives, you must know their value propositions inside and out.

**Direct Competition:** Your direct competitors for drivers are typically within a 50 mile radius of your terminal (less if you offer a local position) and offer jobs with similar home time. Over-The-Road, Regional and Local tend to be the three segments that define your direct competition. Frequently your sales team competes with direct competition for the same freight and your recruiters compete for the same drivers.

**Indirect Competition:** Your indirect competitors are outside your home time segment of Over-The-Road, Regional and Local. For example, an LTL carrier is an indirect competitor to a regional carrier.

**Alternative Industry:** As the unemployment rate drops, trucking tends to lose drivers to outside industries. When the housing market is growing, drivers leave to work in construction where they can make comparable money, be home every night, not have to worry about the responsibility of an 80,000 pound truck, and deal with ever-changing regulations.

## Why should truckers choose to drive for you?

You've defined your best-fit driver. You understand who they are, what they value, where they live, and how they act. You've uncovered their pain points and what keeps them up at night. You've studied competing alternatives and carved your unique niche in a crowded recruiting marketplace. Put it all together and you have a value proposition formula:

**For this driver**

**+ with these pain points**

**+ these competing alternatives**

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**We have a superior driving job because...**

Here's a perfect real life example of a value proposition that exists in the marketplace:

For CDL-A drivers with at least six month's experience in a 50 mile radius of our seven terminals, who are fed up with inconsistent paychecks and home time, we offer a guaranteed weekly paycheck of \$1,000 and guaranteed weekends home.

- **Demographics:** CDL-A drivers with at least six month experience in a 50 mile radius of their seven terminals
- **Psychographics:** A driver who values consistency
- **Pain points:** Unreliable pay check and home time
- **Competing alternatives:**
  - **Direct:** OTR mileage based pay structures
  - **Indirect:** Local
  - **Alternative industry:** Oilfields (due to their location)

This example is one where a company brought operations, safety and recruiting to the table to define the ideal state for a regional job. They were willing to change their operations to make a strong, unique driver value proposition. As you can see this is not something that an ad agency can whip up for you—this comes from senior management having a deep understanding of their drivers.



## Turning Your Value Proposition into a Compelling Advertisement

With a clear value proposition crafted, the second step is to **create advertising** which will **excite and attract** quality drivers to either contact you or apply with your company. The trucking industry is spending **millions each day** on driver recruiting.

## Use the following steps to be heard in a noisy marketplace:

### INTERRUPT:

You have **.5 seconds** to capture a driver's attention when you're one of a hundred jobs to choose from on Indeed, Craigslist or any other option. Visual images are very powerful and can quickly portray a driver's pain points. If home time is a key pain point that your company solves and you know the majority of your drivers have kids, use a photo of one of your drivers wearing your company's hat and shirt at their child's game. **Interrupt with video and images** that hit your driver's pain points, not words.

### ENGAGE:

After you've captured their attention, you have **one second** to hook them. This is where you pull the specifics from the value proposition. Using the previous example, the company stated **Guaranteed \$1,000 per week and Guaranteed Weekends Home**. This gets an A+ because it gives a specific dollar amount and a specific commitment to get drivers home. A more common advertisement in trucking is "Great Pay and Great Home Time." This lacks specifics and is used by hundreds of trucking companies. Be specific, avoid platitudes and keep it to one sentence, but remember that you will need to deliver on your guarantee. **Don't make promises you can't keep.**

### EDUCATE:

**Success!** A driver has invested 1.5 seconds into your advertisement and is willing to commit to learn more. Keep your pitch to three bullet points based on what you discovered during your driver interviews. Put your strongest bullet point first and your weakest in the middle because **the brain remembers the first and last points more clearly than the middle**. These three bullet points should leave the driver with the feeling "I would be an absolute fool not to pick up the phone and call this company!"

### CALL TO ACTION:

The Call to Action (CTA) is **the next move you want the driver to take**. Most drivers want to learn about your company on the phone before they invest the time to apply online. For this reason, we recommend putting the **phone number as your number one CTA**. The second CTA is a link to a job-specific page on your website with a contact form for drivers who are unable or unwilling to call. Both options should feel low-risk for drivers.



## Evaluating Your New Advertisements

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After using the previous formula to craft an advertisement, ask your current drivers if the ad is an **accurate portrayal**. They'll provide suggestions on how to **tighten your pitch**. Most importantly, if they believe in the content, they will help your recruiting efforts by **bringing in referrals**.

## Evaluating Advertising Sources

There are a multitude of advertising channels to choose from; however, there isn't one great source. It's important to constantly change, test and evaluate your sources following this process:

**1**

Look for a direct line of communication to your target audience. TV is inefficient for recruiting experienced drivers because you're paying mass market rates when 99% of viewership doesn't care about trucking jobs. Trucking specific-job boards tighten your demographics to job seeking truckers. Pay-per-Click ads through Google, Bing, Yahoo and social advertising platforms such as Facebook allow you to serve ads to your target audience through the right keywords and targeted personas.

**2**

For example, if your company hires about 10% of every Recruiting Qualified Lead (RQL), you can infer the future success of a potential lead source. Some sources will have a higher conversion rate, so when you try out a new source adjust accordingly when predicting Return On Investment (ROI). Ask vendors to give you their best estimate of the number of leads that they will generate and work backwards to determine if the ROI is acceptable.

**3**

Don't sell your drivers short on their ability to adapt to technology. Today's drivers are more adept than their non-driving peers. They are motivated to connect with their significant others, children and grandchildren through Facebook and Skype. Yes, some drivers are old school but they are not the future of your company. Think digital advertising first because it's proven to get to your target drivers more effectively.

### **Cost-per-hire (CPH) and cost-per-lead (CPL)**

CPH measures the total costs of advertising, background checks, MVRs, PSPs, assessments, salaries of recruiters and anyone else in your organization involved in the recruiting and selection process. The high-volume lead sources are not always the best. CPH is looking for the biggest bang for your buck and is the single most important recruiting metric. If you have an Applicant Tracking System (ATS), most systems can help you calculate this metric.

CPL measures the cost of each Recruiting Qualified Leads (RQL). All advertising vendors will give you a monthly report of how many leads they've generated. The problem is they don't know who was a waste of time and who was a good fit. An RQL is a lead that meets your minimum qualifications and is someone your recruiters want to have fill out an application. CPL is a leading indicator about the health of your recruiting pipeline.

Tracking RQL with specific reject reasons for leads who are not qualified and CPH will help you hold your advertising vendors accountable. Good vendors will use the feedback to help improve your ad performance. A full-featured ATS has tracking and reporting features of referral sources to help calculate this information.



## A/B Testing

A/B testing is a quantitative method of testing conversion rates of revised webpages, landing pages or advertisements against a control (the original). Experimenting with changes in copy, art or a total redesign can be observed through A/B testing. The objective is always to improve the conversion rate of your call to action. Follow these steps for a successful A/B test:

### STEP 1: Identify Goals

The number one goal for your recruiting page should be the conversion of visitors to applicants. Any additional goals you create should support the conversion goal.

### STEP 3: Generate Hypothesis

Create a list of ideas for website improvements and state how you believe these changes will help you achieve your goals.

### STEP 5: Run Experiments

Launch the A/B test for a 1-4 week window (depending on your amount of web traffic) and allow visitors to explore either your control site or your variant website.

### STEP 7: Revise Website

Once you've discovered a positive correlation between your revisions and the performance and efficiency of your website, launch your revised webpage and continue to monitor conversion rates.

### STEP 2: Collect Data

Analyze your website traffic to determine conversion and drop-off rates of each of your individual recruitment pages. Review the pages with high conversion rates and evaluate what is working well. Take this knowledge and apply it to those pages that are experiencing high drop-off rates—continually modify your copy until results are improved. Google Analytics will give you all of this information for free.

### STEP 4: Create Variations

Always start with low-effort, high-impact objectives. Using A/B testing software, make revisions and create new content based on your hypothesis.

### STEP 6: Analyze Results

Compare results of the control and revised webpages. Observe changes and determine their statistical significance.

### MEASURE THE PROCESS, CELEBRATE SUCCESS

ROI is, and should be, your primary concern with each dollar spent on the recruiting process. Breaking down performance into smaller, more manageable metrics allows for reachable, short-term goals for improvement. **Set SMART goals** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) **and meet them**. One example would be: increase landing page conversation rates by 10% in one month.

Improving the effectiveness of your recruiting practices is not an overnight fix, but a never-ending marathon. Because there is no end, celebrate hitting monthly and quarterly goals with your team. **Your job is to make sure those short term, measurable goals move the boulder in the right direction.**

## Summary

By utilizing this three-step process, you can help increase driver counts. Arm your team with the right message, processes and tools to get more out of your recruiting investment.

Create a compelling **value proposition** that leaves no doubt you have a quality career for drivers.

Develop an effective **message that attracts** drivers to enter the recruiting funnel.

Continually evaluate the **effectiveness of advertising sources**.

**Special thanks to AvatarFleet for providing content for this eBook.**

### **About AvatarFleet**

AvatarFleet's mission is to help companies keep their trucks full with professional, safe drivers. Trucking companies use their innovative products and services to Recruit, Hire, Train and Retain safe drivers. AvatarFleet provides an Applicant Tracking System with behavioral assessments, a complete Driver and Truck Compliance Management System, Professional Safe Driver Training Courses and customized Recruiting and Retention services.

### **About HireRight**

HireRight offers on-demand employment background checks, drug and health screening, and electronic Form I-9 and E-Verify solutions. Many companies, including more than 9,500 transportation organizations trust HireRight because we deliver customer-focused solutions that provide greater efficiency and faster results.

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