

## Calling All New Hires: How to Survive Your First Month at XPO

November 27, 2013



Hey there, new hire. So, you're officially a member of Team XPO, poised to play a part in the success of one of the top 50 logistics companies and the fourth largest freight brokerage provider in North America, ranked by industry publication *Transport Topics*. Your new office supplies are lined up neatly on your desk, your lunch is in the fridge, and your phone is just begging to be dialed. It's time to get down to business.

The XPO training team and human resources department are here to guide you,

so sharpen your pencils and get out your notebooks. What's the key? First things first – start with the wonderful world of paperwork.

**The Nitty-Gritty** – Want to get paid? Of course you do. However, you are the first link in the payroll process and you need to check off several items from your to-do list before you see your first check. “We want everyone to have a smooth onboarding process,” said HR coordinator Dhvani Thaker. All new hires – this means you – must submit onboarding paperwork within their first three days at XPO. *Remember, no paperwork means no paycheck.* You can find a list of required documents at the end of this article.\*

You'll also be attending a mandatory New Hire Orientation on the first or second Monday after you start. Keep an eye on your inbox for an email from Dhvani for further instructions.

**Questions** – During your first few weeks, you may experience a learning curve, particularly if trucking logistics is a new industry to you. “Be a sponge,” said Marie Fields, director of training. “Soak up all the information you can get about the company, the industry, and lead generation. This is your time to ask a lot of questions and get a jumpstart on what we do and how to be successful here.” You're expected to ask questions, but write down the answer. Your peers and supervisors will be happy to inform you, but they don't want to repeat themselves after they've told you the first time. Something else you should avoid doing twice: making the same mistake. Study your notes, stay vigilant, and you'll be fine.

**Customers and Carriers** – All right, you've asked your questions. How do you handle your clients? “Manage expectations with your customers and carriers,” said Beth Peterson, training consultant. “If you are honest about what you can and cannot do from the beginning, your accounts will know what to expect, which means your working relationship with them will be better.”

“When building your book of carriers, try to be as honest as possible,” said training consultant Claire James. “Even if something is going wrong, they'd rather hear from you that you're aware and you're working on it than from someone at the dock.”

She added that you should always enter carrier offers – “Even bad ones. Not only will sales reps know someone is working on their load, they will be able to see the market price for future reference and other carrier reps won’t call the same carrier about that load.”

When talking to a carrier, sell volume. Think beyond the original topic of conversation. Sure, you may have touched base to talk about a single load, but ask about other available trucks and list the options you offer to cover these trucks.

“Remember, a carrier isn’t making money unless their wheels are turning,” said Claire.

Did you know there are available trucks email distribution lists? No? Get on one and start increasing your earning power. Ask carriers if they can add you to these lists. Even if you don’t have anything, shoot them a quick email letting them know you don’t have anything right now, but that you’ll keep an eye out for any availability.

**Networking** – Connections are vital. Get to know your peers in and outside of your department to learn how you can help them – and yourself. Networking, after all, is a two-way street. Make friends with sales reps and carrier procurement reps alike; developing rapport will pay dividends in the end. Additionally, you can join sales and logistics groups on LinkedIn to meet contacts and learn about industry developments. Start following XPO’s LinkedIn page and join our Early Career Logistics Sales Professionals group, where you can ask questions and add to the conversation.

Another winning strategy: get a Lunch/Backup Buddy. “Pair up with someone in your group who can field phone calls and service your accounts when you are at lunch or on vacation,” said Beth, adding that you should do the same when your buddy requires a helping hand. Let your accounts know who will be calling them so they know what to expect. Choose someone you trust and tell your manager about the arrangement. “Tell your buddy about your accounts and what they can do to help you, and ask them what you can do to service their accounts in return,” said Beth. “Your book of business will be managed more effectively and your customers and carriers will be happier if you have someone to assist them with their freight and trucks even when you are not in the office.”

**Communication** – In this industry, communication is fundamental. “Work hard and be diligent with communication,” said Claire. “This goes a long way with building your reputation not only in your team, but with other departments as well.” When you set out to be Communication Queen or King, there is one rule to follow: be nice. “Even if you communicate a lot, acting like a jerk in doing so will have the opposite effect of what you need,” Claire added. If you are assigned to a sales rep’s load, send an IM to tell him or her. “The worst feeling for a sales rep is to work for months trying to get a load, only to get crickets once it’s posted on the brokerage planning board,” Claire said.

**Attitude** – You’re probably around your coworkers more than your own family or roommates, so you should do what you can to create a positive work environment. Smile and say good morning to your coworkers and ask how they’re doing. “XPO is what you make of it,” said Beth. “If you have a good attitude, others will follow – I promise it is contagious!”

**Technology** – Leverage technology to lighten your load. “Get familiar with our technology resources: intranet, Freight Optimizer, and McLeod,” said Claire. “When used properly, they’re great tools that can make your job a lot easier.” Visit the [Freight Optimizer Blog](#) on a regular basis for tips on mastering these tech tools and other ways to maximize your success.

**The Floor** – Two words: Don’t panic. “It can be intimidating on the floor, but there are a lot of good resources. Don’t be afraid to reach out to someone more experienced, like your team lead or another rep,” said Claire. “The training department is always available as well.”

Got it? Pencils down. Now go out there and kick some truck butt.