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Volume 16
Issue 2

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Our editorial policy encompasses informing
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FEATURE

Scott is a former EMT (emergency medical technician), who got into the expedited trucking business in 2012, first as a fleet manager and then as a driver.

By Sean M. Lyden, Staff Writer

FLEET OWNER CONVERSATIONS: SCOTT DRISKILL



Meet

Scott
Driskill.
Scott

is a former EMT (emergency medical technician), who got into the expedited trucking business in 2012, first as a fleet manager and then as a driver.

In 2017, Scott bought his first van—a 2014 RAM Promaster extended van—to become an owner-operator. And about a year later, in April 2018, he purchased a straight truck to officially become a fleet owner.

Today, Scott runs Hammerhead Logistics headquartered in Bucyrus, Ohio, operating a fleet of three vehicles with a fourth on order—a total of three cargo vans and one straight truck.

So, what led Scott to expedited trucking?

How did he get started as a fleet owner? And what advice does he have for others who may be considering becoming an expedite fleet owner?

EO recently spoke with Scott to learn more about his story. Here are edited highlights from our conversation.

What led you from being an EMT to getting into expedited trucking?

Scott Driskill: The main thing was, obviously, money.

Working rural EMS [emergency management services], the money was not there. I mean, it's a great job, and you serve the community. So, as far as that goes, that was good.

But I was looking to further my career, and I just didn't see myself doing that job till retirement.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

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So, how did you hear about expediting as an opportunity that could help you further your career?

A guy I went to high school with was in expedited freight. So I started working for him as a fleet manager and, not long after, I was driving for him there, as well.

You became an owner-operator in early 2017. And then about a year later, you purchased your second vehicle to become a fleet owner. What led you to take that step to fleet ownership versus just staying as an owner-operator for a while?

I believe the time was right. I wouldn't say everybody's goal is to become a fleet owner but, for me, having managed fleets before, fleet ownership was a logical next step for me.

My goal is to build this business up to where I can eventually come off the road and go onto my next business venture from there.

When you say, "Come off the road to do your other business," what is that other venture?

I am actually in the process—I'm taking my final test pretty soon to become a drone pilot. So I'll be doing that professionally as a business.

What experiences from your career as an EMT do you think has helped shaped you as a fleet owner?

My leadership skills definitely transitioned over to fleet ownership. As an owner, you're part of a team. I believe that a lot of fleet owners, at some point, lose sight of the team aspect of this business. Sometimes they become too big or what have you. I believe that they need to realize that they are part of a team. And without your drivers, you aren't a fleet owner.

Now, what advice do you have to give to other expeditors who may be considering becoming fleet owners?

Don't do it. [Laughter.]

You say, "Don't do it," but you're doing it, and you're growing. And you appear to be enjoying it. So, it sounds to me that what you're really saying is that fleet ownership is not for everyone, is that accurate?

That's it exactly; it's not for everybody. It takes 24 out of the 24 hours a day that you have. That's one thing that you have to realize is that, as an owner, you're essentially at work 24/7, 365. And if you can't accept that, then don't do it.

You need to be available for those 3 o'clock in the morning phone calls from your team. "My truck is broke." Or, "Dispatch is doing this" or "Dispatch is doing that." As the owner, your job is to take care of that type of stuff.

Now, having said that, the biggest piece of advice I have is this: Don't become too big, too fast. I see that happen in this industry all the time. These guys, they get these vans or straight trucks or tractors, or what have you, and they don't have teams to put in them. You've got payments to make on those trucks, you know?

Also, make sure you save up for a rainy day because there are going to be slow times.

Now, you bought your second truck in the spring of 2018. How soon after that did you get your third vehicle?

I bought that in October.

Basically, I had somebody who used to drive for me call me and say, "Hey, I want to start driving again, do you have anything?" Of course, I didn't. And so I went and sold my personal vehicle and bought another van. **EN**

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INDUSTRY OUTLOOK 2019

The State of Expedited Trucking

By Sean M. Lyden, Staff Writer



After

a strong 2018, the expedited trucking industry appears to be tapping the brakes a bit.

At least compared to this time last year.

But is this slowdown a blip on the radar or does it reflect a trend that will define the year?

Expedite Now asked three industry experts to peer into their crystal ball and share what they see for 2019. Here are their insights.

The State of the Expedited Trucking Industry Is...

Uncertain.

That appears to be the consensus view from the experts we interviewed.

"It's kind of hard to comment [on the state of the industry] right now because most of last year we were swimming downstream all the way through October. Then, in November and December, we started swimming upstream," says Jeff Curry, president of Premium Transportation Logistics, Magnate Worldwide's ground expedite division.

"It's a little cloudy," says John Elliott, chief executive officer for Load One LLC, an expedited trucking carrier headquartered in Taylor, Mich. "I anticipate that we



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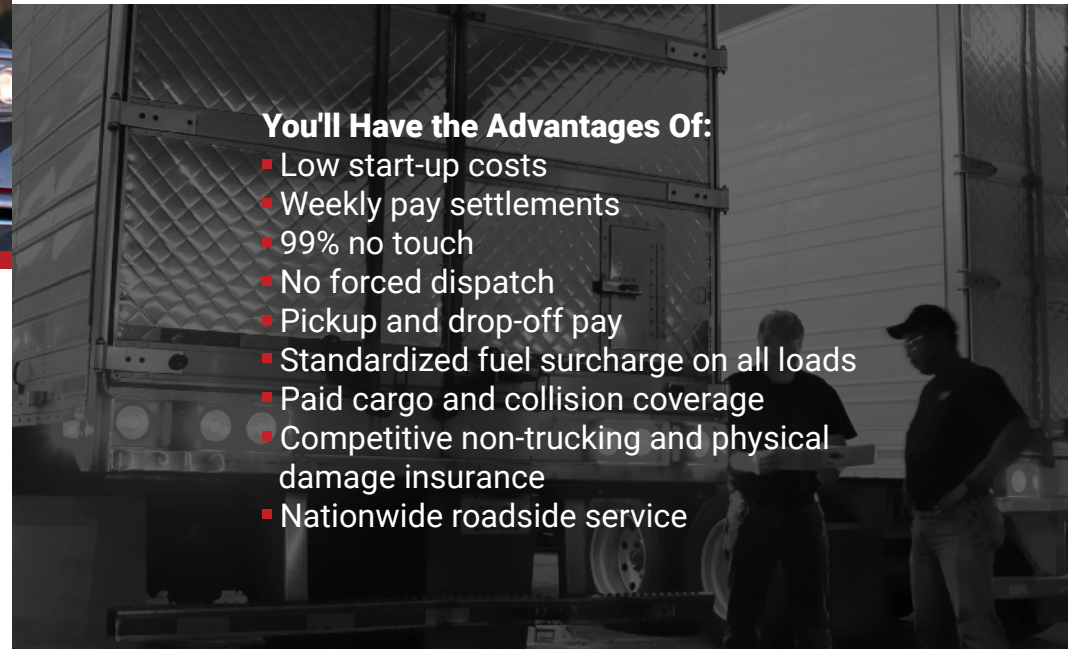
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should start to see a pick up here in the next few weeks, and hopefully you see it slowly but surely ramp back up out of this. Everybody's very cautious right now."

But regarding the big picture, Elliott says that the state of the industry is still strong.

"I believe that this [slowdown] is more of a short term anomaly," says Elliott. "It's January, and I think people need to remember that. People panic often in the short term. I don't think as an industry we're doing something dramatically different than we were doing 90 days ago when everybody was doing great. I think we're just riding some economic bubbles that have to do with factors that are outside of industry control."

Stu Sutton, CEO of Full Circle TMS, a Toronto-based transportation management software firm, says that part of the challenge right now is perception.

That's because January is typically a slow month for expedited freight. But 2018 got off to such an unusually strong start that, compared to last January, the drop off appears much more drastic than it would be relative to a typical January.

"People remember that last January was good. But they don't remember two years ago or all the other Januaries, which were all typically slow," says Sutton. "And I think that the drivers' memories are even a little bit shorter than the owners. So what I've heard from my customers is that there is a lot of driver movement right now because drivers are looking for money. Drivers start moving around to see if they can get a signing bonus or see if there's somebody else who's got more freight. But fundamentally, it's just quiet right now. And that's typical for early in the year."

MARKET TURBULENCE

If you want to get a pulse on the state of the expedite sector, look at the stock market, says Elliott.

"Expedited trucking tends to mirror the stock market which has had a very turbulent last few months," says Elliott. "When you look at the stock market right now, the Dow [Jones Industrial Average] is up 250 points. Yesterday, it was down 400 or 500 points—it's these big swings every day that bring a lot of uncertainty. You didn't see these kinds of swings daily once upon a time."

So, what's causing the turbulence?

"It's hard to know for sure," says Elliott. "It could be the government shut down, the trade tensions. And several people have theorized that there was a lot of shipping done before the fourth quarter because of the trade fears and that there's an inventory bubble and the inventory has to come back down."

Curry agrees. "I've always said that our biggest competitor isn't necessarily another expeditor, it's the warehouse. If the warehouse is full, then that's definitely a drag on expedite."

Sutton says that some of the market volatility could be caused by a growing concern that a recession might be looming around the corner.

"A lot of people are concerned about a potential recession because we've had a pretty good run for the last ten years if you think about it," says Sutton. "The last big recession was '08. So, here we are, over ten years in, and we've never had a massive bottom-up as we did in '08 or even '01, if you remember that one. So it seems like every seven or eight years, we have one of these babies, and we're

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kind of overdue. I think that it could be that people are sitting on the edge of their seat thinking, 'I don't know if we really want to invest right now. Let's just see what's going to happen.'"

IMPROVING THE OUTLOOK

If the state of the current market is "uncertain," what would need to happen to create a clearer outlook for 2019?

"The political stalemate in Washington has got to get behind us a little bit," says Elliott. "I think companies are uncertain, so capital investment is being held back a little bit right now until they see how things settle out. And I think we need to get the trade deal done with China. We also need to get the new NAFTA [known as the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement or USMCA] signed off through Congress and move forward with that. I think D.C. needs to realize that uncertainty is just bad for this country."

The telltale for what to expect in 2019 will likely come in March, says Sutton.

"March tends to be a little bit stronger month at the end of the quarter," says Sutton. "That's when we will get a better sense of what the year may entail."

But also keep your eyes on any resolution to the China trade war. "This whole China trade thing has got people on edge," says Sutton.

How does the China trade situation trickle down to impact the expedited trucking market?

"It has to do with the amount of freight that comes in from China and gets dumped at the ports and then has to get moved," explains Sutton. "Expedite is typically an overflow service. So if a steady state or lower amount is coming in, then there's less expediting to do."

Curry says that a possible trade deal with

China could change the trajectory of the market—back up—for years to come. "If we iron things out with the Chinese, and the Chinese really do work on helping to even out the trade imbalance, then American companies will be happy. We'll see things perk back up. And that could mean several years of prosperity."

TAKING ACTION

So, in light of the current market, how should you respond?

"You'll see some people panic and jump from carrier to carrier. But keep in mind this [slowdown] is an industry thing right now, not so much a carrier thing," says Elliott. "I don't think that jumping around or the churn that it creates is going to be beneficial to operators or solve any of their problems. Instead, it will cost them money when they should be financially conservative right now. You've got to keep your eye on the long game. This business has ups and downs. We've had some incredible ups over the last two years. You've got to remember those. Not every load, not every month is going to be a home run. You're going to have some singles. And you're going to 'ground out' sometimes. That's just part of this business."

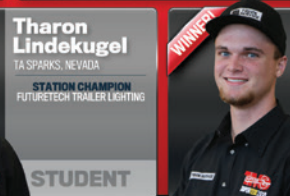
Sutton agrees. "I'd say just be careful of moving for the sake of moving. If you've got a good company that's treated you well in the past, don't move for the sake of moving."

PERSPECTIVE

So, when you get down to it, what is this market like? What can you compare it to? Is it like what the industry experienced in 2016?

"Perhaps. [2016] might be somewhat comparable. But it's a touch too early to tell," says Curry. **EN**

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FLEET OWNER STRATEGIES

4 Marketing Ideas for Recruiting Good Dependable Drivers

By Sean M. Lyden, Staff Writer



BUSINESS

"...put yourself in the mindset of good dependable drivers who have options. What are they looking for when they're narrowing down their choices for potential fleet owners?"

Talk

to any fleet owner and ask them what their biggest challenge is, and the vast majority will reply that it's finding and keeping good dependable drivers.

That's because with unemployment at historic lows and increasing demand for freight in recent years, fleet owners are struggling to compete for drivers to keep their trucks rolling and earning money.

So, how can you gain a competitive advantage in attracting the "cream of the crop" drivers to your fleet?

Here are four marketing ideas to help give you a leg up in your recruiting efforts.

1. DEFINE YOUR UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION (USP).

Posting an ad on driver recruiting websites is a smart strategy. But so many of the ads say the same thing, especially about compensation. You know, offering a sign-on bonus or promoting how teams can generate consistent revenue or saying that direct deposit is every Friday and so forth.

Yes, money is important to drivers. But is your driver compensation package indeed a differentiator compared to what other fleet owners are offering? Not likely.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 
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Or, it's that you have your drivers' back at all times, willing to take their calls at any hour of the night and help them through situations impacting their ability to make a delivery.

But don't merely look at your USP from what you think it is. Talk with your best current drivers to get their perspective.

Why did they choose you? What do they like most about driving for you?

Your drivers' answers to these questions will reveal your strongest value proposition. And it's that USP you will want to communicate in your job ads to set you apart from the competition.

2. PROVIDE ADVICE ON ONLINE FORUMS AND SOCIAL MEDIA.

If you haven't already done so, join the discussion forums on ExpeditorsOnline.com. And request to join various expediting groups on Facebook and other social networks.

The point here isn't to spam everyone with posts about jobs you're looking to fill. Instead, use online forums and social

media groups as platforms for giving back to the community. Answer questions. Offer advice. Help people make valuable connections with other folks in the industry.

This will raise your profile in the community and give prospective drivers a strong first impression of how you might be as their fleet owner. This will give you a competitive advantage. And you'll find that top drivers will be reaching out to you.

Does this mean you shouldn't ever use these online platforms to advertise when you're looking for drivers?

No. Getting the word out on social media can be an effective way to find new drivers. But wait until you've made sufficient "deposits" into the relationships you're building online before making "withdrawals" with "drivers wanted" posts.

Entrepreneur Gary Vaynerchuk wrote a book titled "Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook: How to Tell Your Story in a Noisy Social World" that provides a powerful metaphor from the world of boxing to illustrate for how we can most effectively communicate on social media—and that is to "Give, Give, Give, then Ask."

So, in your online interactions, maintain a similar ratio of give-to-ask. Give advice, help make a connection, provide industry insights...then ask for help to find good drivers.

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And it doesn't need to be fancy either. It could be something as simple as this:

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This way, when you do have openings for drivers, you can alert your email community. And since they already know you, the odds are strong that you'll find good candidates reaching out to you.

Even when you meet drivers who are with other owners, ask their permission to keep in touch and add them to your email list. You never know when their situation might change and they would be open to speaking with you.

4. CREATE A PROFESSIONAL LOOKING WEBSITE.

Do you have a website?

If not, why not?

If so, are you proud of it?

You don't need to spend a lot of money on a website to get good results. For example, services like Squarespace (www.squarespace.com) offer ready-made beautifully designed templates where you don't need technical expertise to put a website that gives off a great first impression.

Why invest in a website? After all, do drivers really care?

Well, put yourself in the mindset of good dependable drivers who have options. What are they looking for when they're narrowing down their choices for potential fleet owners?

Is this a stable company? Are they professional with how they represent themselves?

Your website becomes the first impression you make with these drivers. And making the right first impression is especially critical when attracting younger drivers who are conditioned to evaluate options online before deciding to contact a company.

THE BOTTOM LINE

You're competing with a lot of other fleet owners and carriers to hire good dependable drivers. So why not give yourself an advantage? Think about what makes you different. Give back to the expedite community. Expand your email list—and your influence. And create an online presence that communicates the right message to the right drivers. **EN**



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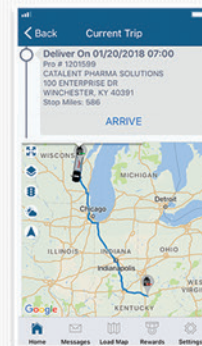
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Weather information



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Tractor Teams
888-716-1921

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London/Windsor**
888-404-2218

Tractor driving opportunities
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Drivers/Team**
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Sprinter Owner Operator
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TEAMS WANTED

I have a 2014 FECC White Glove Tval Freightliner Cascadia that I need a team for. We offer a \$4,000 sign-on bonus. \$2,000 upfront and \$2,000 at the end of 3 months of service. We offer as much as 45% for an experienced team!

David 205-242-0471

\$4000 SIGN-ON BONUS! Class A CDL WELL-ESTABLISHED TEAM COUPLE. 2015 Volvo VNL780 tractor with a GORGEOUS 144" ARI Sleeper. Loaded, bathroom with shower. Deadhead miles paid.

George 419-410-2800

2016 D straight truck (with tag axle) available for a T-VAL, SAME HOUSEHOLD couple. Generous sign-on bonus based on experience, weekly & monthly bonuses, plus additional bonuses throughout the year in appreciation of your hard work.

Chris 704-881-3782

We have an Immediate need for a team for of our 2016, 2017, & 2018 trucks. We have a fleet of Freightliner M2-112s, with a DD-13 power plant paired with a fully automatic transmission. Our trucks have well-equipped 96" Bolt Lux double bunk sleepers.

Adam 419-297-3773

We have a 2016 Cascadia 10-speed manual transmission for an established team. It is a tractor-trailer leased on with FedEx Custom Critical in the White Glove division pulling a temperature-controlled trailer.

Rob 330-571-9502

Husband/wife or same household team for straight truck. Must have 1 year verifiable OTR experience and be willing to stay out minimum of 3 weeks. You will need to travel to Minneapolis to sign contracts and get the truck.

Inessa 888-649-0299

DRIVER WANTED

Sprinter driver opening. Lease to own options Sprinters, transits, or promasters Fuel card, weekly direct deposit. Weekly mileage 3k to 4k Lease to own options Take home average \$800 to \$1000 per week

Randy 419-984-7946

Looking for a qualified Sprinter driver with 2 years minimum experience in expediting freight. My fleet is leased on with Load 1.

Sean 702-400-2153

Looking for an experienced solo sprinter van driver. Vans are insulated and paneled, they have auxiliary batteries with AC inverter, etrac system, straps, bed with mattress, buddy heater and all equipment needed. Leased to Bolt.

Tony 989-225-4372

Class A team/solo driver for OTR. We are currently leases on to UPS. All drivers must be able to pass a background check and drug screen test, speak and read English to qualify. Driver gets 32% of the load.

Carl 954-336-6262

Driver wanted - Monday thru Friday with weekends off. Some hand unloading required. \$900.00 average weekly pay and good equipment. Must be able to qualify for FedEx Custom Critical.

Tony 734-717-0157

\$1000 Sign on Bonus Class A Driver needed. 2013 Peterbilt 587 10sp 413k miles, tandem axle, Please TEXT us if interested and we will give you a call back

April 205-864-9477

Semi Drivers wanted for dedicated runs in Florida. Home daily Must be at least 23 years of age 18 months of verifiable tractor trailer experience within the last 3 years Must have a CDL class A

Robert 309-287-4000

EXPEDITE TRUCKS FOR SALE

2014 Freightliner M 2 112 Detroit DD 13 410 hp, 10 speed Ultra Shift, Engine Brake, 561 k miles, 96 " Bolt Custom Sleeper, Carrier APU, 22" Dry Van, Tool Box

Brandon 888-881-1872

2006 Dodge Sprinter Diesel, 158" wheelbase, 13' Load Space, 4/18 New Battery, Alternator and EGR Valve, Cruise.

John 888-556-4089

2016 Freightliner Cascadia BOLT SST100 Custom Sleeper w/Side X Side Double Bunk, Lift Axle, TriPac Evolution APU, Factory Warranty, UltraShift Automated Transmission.

Jason 888-745-0349

2013 Freightliner Cascadia 113 72 inch Raised Roof Sleeper. Detroit DD13 engine and an Allison automatic transmission and APU unit. (Expediter, Expediter, Expediting, Dry Van)

Jason 888-258-7795

2017 Freightliner Sprinter 2500 Extended Van with custom sleeper with microwave, flat screen tv and refrigerator. Only 53k miles. The van is currently branded with Fedex CC. Asking \$45,000

Paul 850-933-9683

2007 Sterling Acterra, Allison automatic, Mercedes 900 series engine, 1,085,000 miles, 96" sleeper with full size bed, lots of cabinets, sink, big refrigerator, Microwave Convention Oven. Currently with Fed Ex CC decals. Great H/W team truck.

Alicia 706-994-6477

2012 Freightliner 2500 Reefer Sprinter, Currently leased to FedEx Custom Critical White Glove. Wide sleeper, flat screen tv, microwave, refrigerator, inverter and bunk area powered by separate batteries, hardwood floor. One owner.

Steve 814-244-0017



TRUCKING CAREERS & OPPORTUNITIES

TIP!

Keep track of who you have called and yet to call by checking the box next to the company name.

TT TRACTORS	ST STRAIGHT TRUCKS
RF REEFER	CV CARGO VANS
FB FLATBED	SV SPRINTER VANS
	TS TEAMS

	COMPANY	PHONE	ST	TT	TS	CV	SV	FB
<input type="checkbox"/>	All State Express	888-691-8304						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bolt Express	888-281-6865						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Expediter Services	888-565-6403						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Expeditus Transport	888-552-2174						
<input type="checkbox"/>	FedEx Custom Critical	800-398-0466						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jung Express	888-575-6251						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Landstar	800-622-0658						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Load One	888-824-4954						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Panther Premium	866-344-5898						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Premium Transportation Logistics	888-471-7811						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Roadrunner Expedite	888-565-6586						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tri-State Expedited Service	888-245-4325						
<input type="checkbox"/>	TST Expedited Services	888-796-5699						
<input type="checkbox"/>	XPO Logistics	866-857-4546						

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