How 3PLs Banish Prospects’ Fears

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As rewarding as having a successful 3PL business can be, it is fraught with challenges on a daily basis. Some of those bigger challenges might include building your contact list, gaining more customers and growing your overall business. With those and other challenges come obstacles, and the root of all obstacles with your prospects and customers is fear. It is then up to the 3PL to better understand its causes to eliminate and overcome those fears.

Generally speaking, it is “need” that drives someone’s interest in purchasing a product or service, but fear that prevents them from committing. But what exactly are your prospects and customers afraid of? Here are some major categories regarding fears that might prevent a potential customer from choosing to do business with you and what you can do to help them alleviate those fears:

**Fear of Change**
The fact is, most people are comfortable with what is familiar, even when change can result in something significantly better. For instance, if you are trying to win business from a shipper who is already working with 3PL, chances are they are most likely wondering why they should step out of their comfort zone and switch to doing business with you.

I am sure some of us have heard the saying, “Better the devil you know than the devil you don’t”. Basically, it means that even if a shipper is not 100 percent satisfied with their current 3PL, making a change could be even more painful due to the unknown.

**How to overcome it:**
A good approach to combat the fear of change would be to soften your initial sales approach with similarities. The next time you come across a prospect that is reluctant to switch to a new 3PL, try aligning your services to their current expectations. This might give them the comforting nudge that is needed to help them ease over to you. Demonstrate how those similarities will prevent unnecessary disruption and hassle, minimizing the risk of change. Then, once their fear has been lessened, you can demonstrate how you excel above and beyond your competition by providing additional value.

**Fear of Impact**
It is always a good idea to consider things from your prospect’s point of view when conducting business. You may not realize it, but for them to make the switch to a new 3PL, they might be visualizing something like the aftermath of a crash. It is not just them deciding to make the move to someone new or not it is the impact of moving from someone familiar to someone foreign. The idea of what could go wrong may be enough to make them stay with their current 3PL. And what about how working with you will affect their business, their bottom line, their career, their family? You can guarantee that until their concerns are reassured, they will not be making any changes to their current process.

**How to overcome it:**
The way to soften the fear of impact is to soften them with knowledge. Knowledge is power—for both you and your prospect. Take the time to listen and learn what their objections are and why they have them. That way, you can address their areas of concern with informative, targeted solutions which will dissolve the possibility of risk and alleviate the fear.

**Fear of Failure**
It is reasonable for any potential customer to be afraid of failing but, in all probability, they are most afraid of YOU failing! It is a tough pill to swallow if they take the risk and you fail to live up to the promises and guarantees offered at the point of sale. If your shortcomings harm or damage your prospect’s business and reputation, they suffer a double whammy. Not good.

**How to overcome it:**
In order to overcome their fear of your failure, you MUST provide them with proof. In the realms of business and personal, it is not what you say but what you DO that matters most. Here are some examples of what you could do to show your potential customer that you are more than just a sales pitch.

Take the time to educate your prospect about how you and your company help your customers succeed. Remember, it is NOT about you, it is about THEM. They do not care how awesome you or your company is, it is how you can make THEM awesome! A great way to illustrate this is by providing them

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with customer case studies. It sounds complicated, but it is really not—and OH so worth doing. First, select one of your customers that you have helped overcome some obstacle. Second, create a case study that outlines the actions taken or steps you took to solve their area of concern or a hurdle you’ll help them overcome.

Become a source of expertise in your industry. With each passing year as a 3PL, you amass a wealth of knowledge and seasoned proficiency that is golden! Go a step further and build on this solid foundation by sharing your acquired skills and best practices with others. By doing this, you will build credibility, trust and—more importantly—likeability. Start sharing information today through your own online blog, podcasts, vlogs (video blog) and promote your accumulated knowledge on any of the social media networks. All of these options are great ways to help quickly position yourself as a thought leader in your industry.

Make customer support a foundation cornerstone of your 3PL business. I cannot stress this enough! How many times have you had a salesman dog you, winning and dining you to get your business but once they did, you never hear from them again? And good luck trying to get a hold of them when something goes wrong—because that will never happen. Make it a point to position yourself ahead of the pack by not forgetting about your customer once you get their business. I can guarantee you that if you continue to follow up with your customers and be at the forefront to soothe a concern or tackle an issue, they will be your customer for life! Two quick points on this…first, happy customers tell two to three people about their experience with you while unhappy customers tell eight to ten people! And the second point is that it costs FIVE TIMES MORE to acquire a new customer than it does to retain one.

Quelling fears of potential customers is to actually live up to your own claims by providing testimonials from customers who will validate what you say. We all know word of mouth is a powerful thing and referrals are KING! Want to really impress and banish their fears? Try offering them the opportunity to speak to one of your customers on the phone. What better way to show them you are the real deal than having them hear first-hand how you have conquered someone else’s fears?

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