



Collaboration Drives Growth and Superior Customer Service

Pope Trucking is a family owned and operated business, and is focused on providing the highest level of service and reliability to its flatbed customers.

Challenge

Pope Trucking serves flatbed customers within a specific geographic region, and some delivery locations result in inefficient deadheading. The company wanted a more strategic plan to reach new customers and provide a high level of service to current customers. Driver retention and satisfaction is also a top priority. And since this is a family run business, Pope Trucking depends on reliable customer payments.

Solution

Over the last decade, Pope Trucking and C.H. Robinson have developed a strategic relationship. It enables Pope Trucking to expand their range and customer base. It also allows C.H. Robinson and Pope to more effectively utilize equipment across Pope's service area. C.H. Robinson serves as an extension of the Pope Trucking sales force, collaborating closely at all levels of the organization to identify opportunities that align with the company's business goals.

Result

As Pope Trucking has increased lead time notifications, C.H. Robinson has provided more strategic freight opportunities and has helped Pope Trucking reduce deadhead miles by over 25%. In addition, Pope Trucking can effectively position equipment so their drivers will be home for the weekend. Prompt payment from C.H. Robinson helps Pope Trucking maintain a healthy cash flow.

Operating 65 trucks throughout the eastern half of the United States and Canada, Pope Trucking has over 30 years of experience in serving flatbed customers from their offices in Pearson, Georgia.

The challenges of the flatbed market

Like many other carriers in the flatbed market, Pope Trucking continually seeks ways to grow their business by keeping trucks moving efficiently and profitably. Their challenges include:

- **Freight Availability.** Flatbed loads are typically more difficult to procure than traditional freight—a point compounded by the fact that many loads deliver to remote areas of Pope Trucking's service region, which can result in a high percentage of deadhead miles. Proactively finding a load for every truck in both directions while providing competitive freight rates to their customers can sometimes be difficult.
- **Driver Satisfaction.** Finding and retaining good drivers is a top priority for Pope Trucking because flatbed drivers often have more responsibilities for their shipments, including tarping, strapping, and securing freight. Like all drivers, they want to avoid delays and keep their trucks moving so they can get home to their families for the weekend.
- **Reliable Payments.** As a family run business, Pope Trucking depends on reliable and timely payments from their customers. They value relationships with companies that are vested in each other's success. When they schedule a load, they need the highest level of confidence that they will be paid promptly for their shipment.

Productive Collaboration Leads to Savings and Efficiencies

Pope Trucking started working with C.H. Robinson in 2002. Over the years, their strategic relationship has grown. Today, C.H. Robinson is a key customer that works with Pope Trucking almost daily. The two teams have developed a high level of mutual trust that results in a win-win for both organizations. "We don't classify C.H. Robinson as a broker; we look at them as a customer," says William Pope, CFO of Pope Trucking.

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More Shipment Opportunities

With C.H. Robinson, Pope Trucking accesses a nationwide network of shipment opportunities that keeps their trucks moving in both directions. Many Pope Trucking customers require deliveries to regions where they do not have customers to secure a backhaul. William Pope explains, "C.H. Robinson has helped us service customers in areas that we normally would not serve, because they can help us get

out of that area with a load. We've expanded our service to our customers, now that we can go into different areas." This provides an expanded service region to better serve both Pope Trucking and C.H. Robinson customers.

Building Efficiency in Dispatch

Pope Trucking wants to retain its good drivers, so it exerts considerable effort to plan all loads in advance. The goal is to keep their trucks moving and help get their drivers home for the weekend, which increases driver satisfaction.

Dispatchers at Pope Trucking work with C.H. Robinson almost every day, preplanning loads several days in advance of the shipment dates. In many situations, this involves booking two or three chains of loads. Taking this approach has the added benefit of reducing deadhead miles.

When one of Pope Trucking's existing customers needs a delivery in an area where they do not currently have an opportunity for a backhaul, Audrey Ponsell, Logistics Manager at Pope Trucking, collaborates with C.H. Robinson to proactively plan for the repositioning. With more advance notice, C.H. Robinson can be more selective about the types of freight it tenders to Pope Trucking, and introduces Pope Trucking to new and more strategic freight opportunities, as well. As Ponsell explains about the quick response from C.H. Robinson, "Usually, it's just a matter of minutes before we find out if they have anything available in an area. That cuts back on a lot of phone calls with other people and definitely saves us time."

REDUCING DEADHEAD MILES BY 25%

Pope Trucking sees financial benefits through an ongoing collaboration with C.H. Robinson. The company obtains loads from C.H. Robinson in previously underserved regions. At the same time, they have eliminated 25% of their deadhead miles. That makes a powerful impact on the company's bottom line.

A Deep Understanding of Business Requirements

C.H. Robinson provides a single point of contact for dedicated account management and collaboration with all levels of the organization, from drivers to dispatch to executives. This point of contact understands Pope Trucking's business objectives and can apply them for better results.

William Pope explains, "It's not just about the deadheads if we can get a good rate out of the origination. C.H. Robinson knows what kind of rate we have to get out of this area. They know what we want per mile, and they know what we expect. So we don't waste time talking about loads that we cannot take."

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their drivers home for the weekend. The accountability of both companies to one another has created a relationship of loyalty and mutual trust as they work together to understand how to improve the operation and grow together in the future.

Future Opportunities

The mutual trust that has developed between Pope Trucking and C.H. Robinson has led to an ongoing commitment on the part of both companies to grow the relationship. Pope Trucking recently invested in EDI functionality to share information electronically with C.H. Robinson.

"C.H. Robinson is a large organization that has
the power to...find loads. But working with
them makes you feel like you're dealing with
a small organization because of the individual,
personal assistance."

—William Pope

Automation of load tenders and invoices relieves the need for manual entry, and makes it easier to share pickup, check call, and delivery information. All of this saves time for Pope Trucking's dispatchers and administrative personnel.

Through a strong collaboration, Pope Trucking and C.H. Robinson have established a solid foundation for future growth. By understanding Pope Trucking's strategic goals, C.H. Robinson has become an advocate for the company's success.