



QUESTIONS to Ask a Freight Forwarder



Ask These Discovery Questions

Our industry experts gathered these critical questions you can use when vetting freight forwarders. Below are a few questions you can start with during your discovery process.

- How long have you been in business?
- How do you recruit and retain employees/drivers?
- What is the tenure of your staff, cargo handlers, and drivers?
- What is the condition and age of your equipment?
- Are the drivers uniformed?
- What are your systems, and are you investing for a seamless visibility experience?
- What type of business do you handle?
- Describe your cargo handling process
- Describe your escalation process
- Describe how you handle that business and provide specific examples
- Please provide references in the space where we (you) operate the most. Specifically, clients you've had in a similar industry or require similar services.
- May we contact your references?

Ask These In-depth Discovery Questions

Before you begin interviewing, ask yourself what problems are you looking to solve? What services are you sourcing for? Then, use these questions to identify whether the partnership is a good fit for you.

- Please give examples that make you stand out within (the services you're searching for.)
- What are you doing to limit disruption in those chosen services?
- Probe to ensure the LSP has familiarity with your challenges, SLAs, pain points, etc.
- Walk us through a challenging negotiation scenario where creativity and collaboration helped you win for the customer.
- What is your customer support model?
Will I have a dedicated account team that is familiar with our needs?
- Do you customize your services to support your clients?
- What do you specialize in? Please break down your revenue by your service offerings (WG/Truckload/Expedite/LTL).
This information will ensure their focus aligns with your needs.
- How can you help provide efficiencies and reduce costs?
- What is your approach to partnership?
- How do you provide transparency in the application of tariff and accessorial rates?
- Do you do QBRs? If so, can we see examples?
- How do you scorecard your service beyond standard OT%?
Walk us through your partnership network.
How do you scorecard them?
- Where do you fit in the competitive landscape of our chosen services?
- What type of commitments do you put around service?

Don't Settle for These Things

If you're looking to switch partners, ensure that the freight forwarder you're vetting offers more services than you receive today. Utilize these tips to ensure you're receiving the best service possible.

- All freight forwarders will say they can support your business. Focus on the quality of their people and ensure they have an empowered workforce. Focus on their technology and how it can make your business better.
- Stay clear of rigidity in the customer support model, the inability to provide transparency to the rates, and the lack of responsiveness and communication.
- They must maintain a 'can-do' attitude and have a support structure beyond the customer service team. Responsiveness is a must. They must back up their solutions with a degree of flexibility.
- They must stay true to your pricing proposals when services are clearly in scope.

Keep an Eye Out for These Red Flags

There are many red flags to be aware of when vetting a freight forwarder. Below are a few of our most significant red flags we believe you can be aware of.

- Is the provider unable to provide positive, credible references or give specific examples of handling your type of business or other similar industries or services?
- Do they have unique ways of recruiting and retaining employees/drivers? If they don't, turnover will be a problem that will impact the consistency of service.
- Do their actual rates differ from expected rates without a clear explanation?
- Are they unwilling to provide useful reports/KPIs/visibility?
- Do they say "yes" to everything just to get the business, even if they are not the right fit?
- Do they have poor scoring on client and employee satisfaction surveys (GPTW, Glassdoor, NPS)? Satisfied employees are a good indicator of service capabilities.
- Do they have any bad press around their company?
- Are they the low-cost provider with certain services?
Being a low-cost provider is usually a sign of scope creep in the pricing and limits flexibility.

Identify These Positive Signs

Finally, you can utilize these critical signs of a great freight forwarder. Keeps these in your back pocket for when you're asking questions.

- Do they have an empowered workforce?
An empowered workforce is often overlooked in the age of technology but is a huge differentiator.
- Do they have flexible systems that drive transparency and visibility?
- Do they have resource augmentation?

