



TECTALK

People Do Business With People They Like

Greg Schuttenhelm, COO

Five years ago, when I met David Thompson for the first time, one of the things that really stood out and made an impression on me was his commitment to ALL of his business partners. “Our customers are important to me. Our employees are important to me. Our vendors are important to me. Our lenders are important to me. It takes all of us to make this work”, he said.

Fast forward to the Thompson Tour this last June, David again spoke to all of us about the importance of forming real relationships with people. “People want to do business with people they like.” David also spent time reemphasizing the importance of our Mission, Values, and Culture. When all of this comes together, what does it look like?

Now, I know there are many great examples of this all over TEC but I want to share an example that I was lucky enough to see first-hand this past August. The partnership I would like to highlight is the one between TEC, Proficient Auto Transport (Our Customer), and Kentucky Trailer (Trailer manufacturer). The real partnership is with the people, but we will get to that. First, let me tell you a little bit about Proficient Auto Transport and Kentucky Trailer.

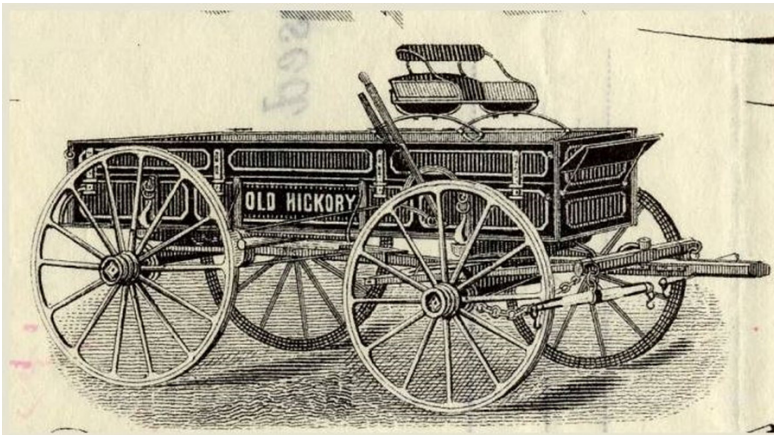
PROFICIENT AUTO TRANSPORT

Proficient is based in Jacksonville Florida and was founded in 1993. Proficient prides themselves on delivering the world’s finest cars with their passion for flawless on time execution, zero damage and absolute reliability. Proficient has over 150 open and enclosed trucks and a team of amazing employees that serve elite customers like Porsche, Mercedes, BMW, Lotus and Maserati to name a few. Randy Beggs (CEO and one heck of a tap dancer), Dewain Hanlon (Director of Maintenance) and Bill Rister (Safety and Training Manager) are a few of the very fine people we have the pleasure of working with.



KENTUCKY TRAILER

Kentucky Trailer started in 1897 when Kentucky Wagon Manufacturing in Louisville, Kentucky delivered one of their early products to our Kurt Zwetschke who was likely the same age he is now.



Kentucky Trailer is driven to be the world leader in design, manufacturing and service solutions for the specialty trailer, custom transport and mobilized business markets. "We value and respect our employees and their families because inspired people do inspired work." What does inspired work look like? I'll show you what Kentucky built for Proficient later, but here are some examples of the amazing things they create:



Kentucky Trailer's products are nothing short of amazing, clearly inspired products from inspired people. Some of the inspired employees we are able to partner with are Tom Harper (Assistant General Manager and VP of Sales) and Debbie Landman (Inside Sales Manager). Tom and Debbie both work out of the new beautiful production facility in Wixom, Michigan.

PEOPLE DOING BUSINESS WITH PEOPLE THEY LIKE, "YOUR BEST BUSINESS PARTNER" IN ACTION

This past August the TEC, Proficient, and Kentucky Trailer teams met in Wixom, Michigan to inspect and deliver a beautiful new custom auto hauler to the Proficient Team. Representing TEC Equipment was David Fleischman (Auto Transport Sales Manager), Duane Weigel (Auto Transport Sales) and myself (Just lucky to be there!). The star of the day was TEC's very own John Mast who brought a used Volvo VNL64-780 from Portland to Wixom for Proficient. Prior to the trip the Volvo received an impressive facelift from the Portland Body Shop led by Gary Swenson. Here are some pictures from a great afternoon:





So what made for such a great experience? I thought a lot about that question in the weeks following the trip. Here is what I came up with:

1. The mission and business model for all three companies aligned perfectly. Proficient, Kentucky Trailer and TEC all want to be the best at providing ultra-high quality products and services. From that standpoint, each company has a well-defined sense of identity and culture. All three companies are passionate about the pursuit of excellence.

2. The People were perfectly aligned and committed to each other. Everybody involved in that day had the same incredibly important attributes:

- They were passionate professionals as individuals – Each individually talented and fully committed to ultra-high quality auto hauler equipment. Everybody was really good at what they do.
- They were fantastic teammates – Each selfless and committed to successful outcomes for everybody involved. We see examples of our own people or an OEM partner taking care of a customer, but how many times do you see a customer who is equally committed to you. There was a level of mutual respect and integrity that was undeniable.
- They were fantastic people that you WANTED to spend time with. You could tell that everybody genuinely enjoyed the company of each other. I always think that we are going to be the best versions of ourselves when we are surrounded by people we truly like. It seems natural to put your trust with people that care about you.

3. A True Partnership – One of the things I love most about TEC is that there is a long term commitment to the company and to each other that I never had experienced at other companies. When you plan on working with somebody for the next 20 years, I think it changes the nature of your relationship in a good way. I think people are more willing to invest in each other when they feel they will be around to see the benefit. Proficient was taking delivery on one Volvo and an enclosed auto-hauler, but it never felt like a transaction. It didn't feel that way with Proficient or Kentucky Trailer. As I met people and interacted with them, I thought, "How cool! I will GET to see all of these people again! This is just the beginning."



As I said at the beginning, I know there are other great examples of people doing business with people they like. I'd love to hear about it! If you have a great example please share, I'd love to learn about what you are experiencing and share it with others!