

Don't Overlook Retention in Your 3PL Marketing Strategy

Many 3PLs chase growth while losing customers out the back door. [Aaron Alpeter](#), CEO and Founder of [izba](#) and multi-business entrepreneur, points out, ***“Clients that don't turn often bring friends.”*** This month, our Marketing Special Interest Group (SIG) leaned in, listened actively, and asked questions as Alpeter challenged them to rethink how growth really happens.

Don't Fill a Leaky Bucket

Many 3PL marketers focus on lead generation while ignoring churn. ***“We see an annual churn rate of anywhere between 30 and 50 percent,”*** says Alpeter. Even though your sales team is working hard, they could simply be replacing lost business. The way Alpeter sees it, ***“It's more of a replacement engine.”*** He adds, ***“If you want to grow, you can't be trying to fill a leaky bucket. You've got to fix the hole.”***

Fit Beats Price

The biggest deal is not always the best deal. Alpeter challenged the SIG members to think beyond what a deal looks like on paper. It's easy to get swayed by the dollars, but what about the effort, future growth, acquisition cost, and the likelihood of winning the bid? Instead, dig deeper into fit, future, and leveraging an existing relationship. ***“It's important for our industry to think about where the customers are going, not necessarily where they are today.”*** This approach leads to a much higher win rate, not only on the deal but also in retention.

Alpeter pointed out that sometimes you have to say no. ***“You don't win by chasing every deal that comes across your inbox. You win by choosing the right ones.”***

Collaboration and fit are critical for 3PLs and their clients, and are equally important with internal warehouse teams. How do you tell and share the story with the rest of the warehouse ecosystem? One SIG member shared a dashboard of deals to help operations understand which opportunities mattered the most.

SIG Questions

This session wasn't just a sit-and-get for our SIG members. It sparked curiosity and meaningful discussion. Here are some of the key questions they asked Alpeter and each other.

1. How do you qualify prospects more effectively upfront when they look like a good fit initially, but problems surface after onboarding?

2. How do you maintain multiple points of contact inside customer organizations when you lose visibility to decision-makers?
3. How do sales teams get operational buy-in quickly on fast-moving RFP opportunities?
4. How long have everyone's longest-standing customers been with them?
5. Can some churn actually be healthy, since flexibility and problem-solving are part of what 3PLs sell?
6. With agentic commerce, when will advertising start becoming part of that ecosystem?

Growing the SIG Community

As IWLA continues to grow the SIG community, we think back to what one member said: she just wanted to learn from people who are awesome at their jobs so she could be better at hers. That's the community we are building. If you are interested in joining a SIG or helping launch a new one, [complete the application](#) and get connected with peers who are raising the bar across the 3PL industry.

Another great opportunity to learn from SMEs and fellow marketers in the 3PL industry is at our upcoming [IWLA Marketing Workshop](#). The event will feature [Kara Smith Brown](#) and sessions on collaboration, storytelling, ROI from tradeshow, and executive coaching. It's a "can't miss" event for marketers in warehousing and logistics.