



**SALES COMP:
FROM TRUCKS
TO TECH**



June 7-9, 2026, | Denver, CO

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30 years Sales Comp Design

- Towers Perrin > Cygnal Group > Prosperio Group

20 years providing comp design to Transportation & Logistics companies

- Freight Brokers, TL and LTL Carriers
- Warehouses, Private Fleets
- 3PL and Managed Transportation
- Freight Forwarders and Customs Brokers

500+ lifetime clients · 100+ industry talks

Author of *Taming the Compensation Monster*



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EDUCATION

BA · MA + 2 yrs Doctorate · MBA



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T&L IS GETTING MORE COMPLEX – MORE MODES, DIFFERENT SALES COMPENSATION NEEDS

Knowing one sales compensation method <> knowing them all

Transportation & Logistics industry has exploded in terms of complexity of customers, solutions, and sales motions

Case Study #1:

A former trucking sales leader moved to leader of brokerage sales and recommended shifting sales reps to commission on revenue rather than GM\$

Case Study #2:

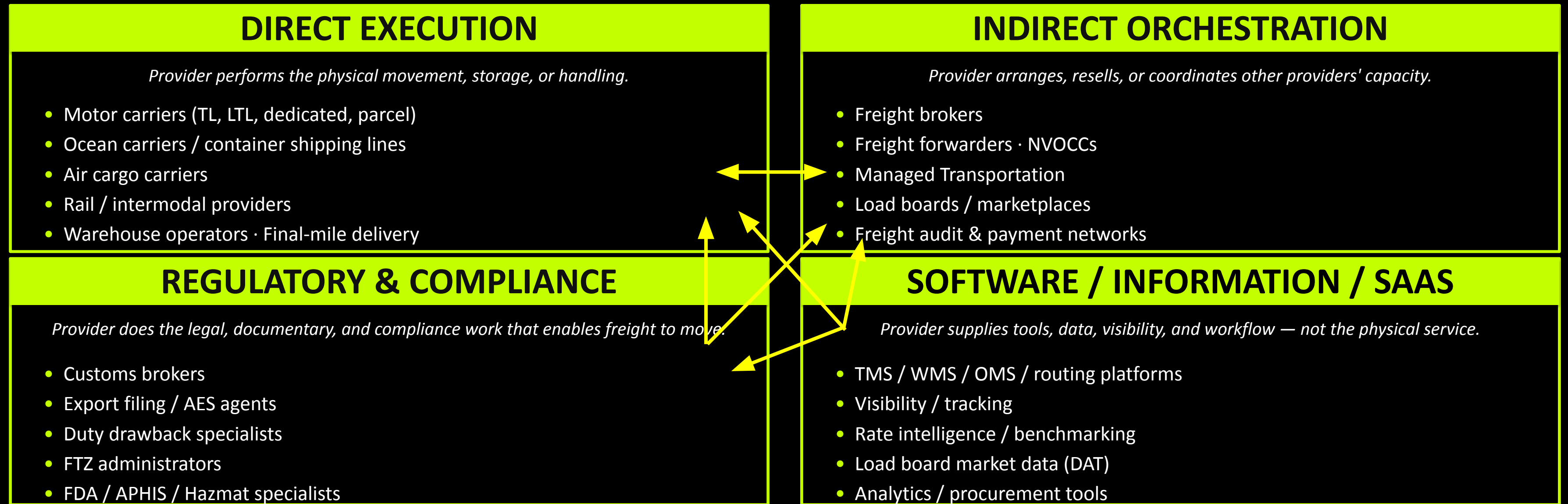
A former brokerage sales leader moved to head of NAM at TMS SaaS provider and wanted to shift from goal-based retain and grow plan to dollar 1 commission



AT LEAST FOUR DIFFERENT SALES MODELS EXIST AND THEY SELL TO EACH OTHER AS WELL AS SHIP

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I may kill regulatory and compliance as it's the area I know the least about...but I like the symmetry of 4 quadrants



Many companies span more than one quadrant and use multiple types of sales roles (lead gen, hunter, farmer) — this is where compensation confusion sets in.



AND NUANCES EXIST WITHIN EACH QUADRANT

Seven Clarifying Questions BEFORE Design

1. What quadrant is the role in — execution, orchestration, compliance, or software?
2. What is being sold? — Transactional sale, usage-based sale, or long-term contract?
3. Who is it being sold to? — Direct Shipper or Indirect Provider?
4. When has sales "completed" the sales job? — on shipment, delivery, invoice, payment, milestone, or contract signature?
5. Who owns the customer post-sale — the rep, an account manager, or operations?
6. What's the sales cycle — days, months, or years?
7. What's the retention/renewal mechanic — and who's paid for it?



Seven design decisions

1. **Pay mix** — How much is at risk
2. **Pay frequency & period** — When and over what window
3. **Performance measures** — What you measure
4. **Mechanics** — Commission, matrix, goal-based
5. **Crediting point** — Booking, invoice, paid-ins
6. **When credit ends** — Per-period or in perpetuity
7. **Capped or uncapped** — Ceiling or none



FROM QUESTIONS TO DESIGN DECISIONS

Each clarifying question drives one or more of the 7 design decisions. The answers are why two roles in the same company can't share a comp plan.

Q1 — Quadrant sets the overall **shape** of compensation — the frame every other decision lives inside.

Q2 — What is being sold (transactional, usage-based, or contract) drives **pay mix, pay frequency, when credit ends and mechanics.**

Q3 — Who's being sold to drives **pay frequency & performance period.**

Q4 — When is the sale "complete" determines the **crediting point** and the **number of measures** that matter.

Q5 — Who owns the customer post-sale determines **when credit ends.**

Q6 — Sales cycle length determines **pay mix and mechanics.**

Q7 — Retention & renewal mechanic shapes **when credit ends, the type of measures, and the mechanics.**



QUADRANT I — DIRECT EXECUTION

Decision	TL Sales	LTL Sales	Warehouse Sales
Pay mix	20–30% variable	12–15% variable	15–25% variable
Frequency / period	Monthly or quarterly, discrete		Annual goals + milestone bonuses
Performance measures	Yield, revenue, headhaul/backhaul, profit		Contracted revenue, occupancy, retention
Mechanics	Matrix or tiered on yield + revenue		Goal-based with milestone bonuses bridging the cycle
Crediting point	Invoice / shipment-credited to account		Contract-signing with milestones; invoice thereafter
When credit ends	Per-period — annual reset		Declining commission over 2–4 yrs of contract
Capped or uncapped	Capped (200–300%)	Capped — every element	Capped

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 Will try to think of a way to make this more graphics – less “wall of text”



QUADRANT 2 — INDIRECT ORCHESTRATION

Decision	Brokerage	Freight Forwarding	Managed Transportation
Pay mix	50–80%+ variable; agents 100%	40–60% variable, trending lower	20–40% variable; long cycle, more salaried
Frequency / period	Monthly (paid as cash collected)	Monthly to quarterly	Quarterly with annual reconciliation
Performance measures	Margin / spread on paid-ins	<p>bethb 20260430_1121 BC to refine validate the actual TEXT here pending deep dive review of recent projects</p> <p>growth,</p>	Revenue under management, client savings, retention
Mechanics	% of margin commission; tiered accelerators	Commission moving to hybrid goal+commission	Goal-based with consultative-sale modifiers
Crediting point	Paid-ins (collected, load by load)	Paid-ins or invoice	Invoice
When credit ends	Per-load — never “ends,” every load is fresh	Historically perpetuity (the bad pattern)	Declining commission over contract life
Capped or uncapped	Uncapped on margin	Historically uncapped, increasingly capped	Commonly capped



QUADRANT 3 — REGULATORY & COMPL

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Decision	Customs Broker	Drayage Compliance	Hazmat Filer
Pay mix	10–20% variable	10–20% variable	10–20% variable
Frequency / period	Quarterly to annual		Quarterly to annual
Performance measures	Revenue per filing, ac rate	count count, error	Filing accuracy, on-time rate, regulatory audit results
Mechanics	Goal-based with quali modifiers	on on new account	Goal-based with strict accuracy modifiers
Crediting point	Filing-completed or invoice	invoice	Filing-completed
When credit ends	Per filing / per account-year	Per account-year	Per filing
Capped or uncapped	Capped	Capped	Capped

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 Doing all 4 of these
 could get sloggy –
 perhaps push the last 2
 to an appendix...



QUADRANT 4 — SOFTWARE / SAAS

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Decision	Contract (subscription)	Consumption (usage-based)	Hybrid
Pay mix	40–50% variable for AEs	30–45% variable; CS 10–20%	40–50% variable
Frequency / period	Quarterly with annual measure	Monthly on usage; annual on base	Quarterly with annual reconciliation
Performance measures	New ARR, expansion ARR, NRR, logos	Activated accounts, usage growth, retention	ARR + usage; expansion + retention
Mechanics	Commission with accelerators (1.5–2.0x)	Rate cards on usage tiers; smaller accelerators	Base ARR commission + usage overage spiff
Crediting point	Contract signing (booked ARR)	Recognized usage / billed consumption	Signing for base; usage as recognized
When credit ends	Initial booking + in-period expansion; trail 3–12 mo	In perpetuity by structure — every period is fresh	Per-period on usage; trail on contract
Capped or uncapped	Mixed; growth-stage uncapped, mature capped 200–300%	Often uncapped — usage is self-limiting	Capped on base, uncapped on usage



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QUESTIONS?

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SCAN THE QR FOR THE FRAMEWORK ONE-PAGER →