

# CSCMP hottopics

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## HIGH TECH & HIGH TOUCH: Bridging the gap for customer success

TQL

The Big Questions for Logistics  
Service Providers

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In this digital age of rapidly changing technologies and infinite information at our fingertips 24/7/365, service providers are left wondering how both customer service and technology fit in the equation, particularly when it comes to successful customer interactions. It's a delicate balance and an important one to maintain – 1/3 of Americans say they would consider switching companies after **just a single instance of poor service**. Thus, the stakes are high when it comes to effective customer experiences.

### THE BIG QUESTIONS FOR LOGISTICS SERVICE PROVIDERS

The logistics industry is no stranger to these challenges. Between other “hot issues” like fragmented supply chains and growing freight demand reconciling with the labor shortage, great customer service is more important than ever for supply chain management professionals juggling those complexities. Digital solutions have blossomed out of these needs – like self-service apps and transportation management systems (TMS). Electronic data interchange (EDI) also remains a common supply chain management solution but popular technologies like application programming interface (API) integrations are also rapidly being adopted.

However, as an industry that has been around a lot longer than the technologies that now pervade it, how do you continually introduce and implement these digital experiences and retain the high levels of customer service? Where do the personal relationships fit in?

### THE HIGH TECH AND HIGH TOUCH SOLUTION

Total Quality Logistics (TQL) President Kerry Byrne believes a hybrid approach is the answer to customer success. “It’s really a marriage of both. Customers benefit from a hybrid of digital and person-to-person account management.” This aligns with buyer expectation—while 63% of U.S. consumers prefer digital self-services tools for simple inquiries, **40% are more likely to seek out human phone communication** for more complicated troubleshooting.

So, the answer lies in bridging the gap between technology and humanity. Particularly in the logistics services industry when keeping up with demanding consumers and protecting sensitive freight or tough lanes is vital. Or when emergency situations require contingency plans and a calming voice on the other end of the phone. Peace of mind is key. A personal touch is transformative.

TQL’s unique business model, rooted in customer-centric philosophy and obsessive focus on premium service, considers the personal touch. Started in 1997, triggered by the founder’s own service frustrations in the industry as a customer, TQL offers a one-point-of-contact account structure to counteract lack of efficiencies and accountability. A customer’s logistics account executive is their gateway to any and all service offerings, specialized or otherwise—and it’s a successful model. According to TQL’s 2019 Customer Survey, customers on average ranked them a **9.2 customer satisfaction score out of 10**.

## About CSCMP Hot Topics

Issues of *CSCMP Hot Topics* may include early results from ongoing research being conducted for CSCMP or other organizations; new supply chain practices, thought-provoking ideas, or emerging trends; discussions of changes in the broader business and regulatory environment that may impact the supply chain and logistics field.



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Here's what TQL has learned: You can't automate everything. And our customers appreciate that we understand that. There are complicated shipments with multi-stops, specialized freight, temperature regulation, and other considerations that require more than just a few clicks and swipes. TQL recognizes the anxiety in the supply chain and tailors our service to that.

TQL also equally focuses on investments in people and technology. This allows us to offer a three-prong solution to shippers. Consider the benefits of the following and choose what's right for your business:

1. **The LAE Advantage.** A phone call with a live person can mean a world of difference for a shipper's business. An actual representative can accommodate to their needs with the utmost attention and convenience. As TQL's 22-year business model shows, access to one Logistics Account Executive (LAE) means hassle-free service for the customer.
2. **Digital-Infused Services.** Logistics professionals stay "plugged in" to keep up with their business and expect their carriers to cater to that—plus, they want transparency and efficiencies. Our self-service technology, **TQL TRAX**, offers just that. And in addition to being able to quote, tender, track, and pay for freight, TQL TRAX is still backed up by in-house, live support.
3. **Integrated Digital Solutions.** In addition to handling the day-to-day needs of your customer's freight, be prepared to embrace their internal technology as well. Optimize business with seamless integration with EDIs, APIs, and TMS systems. TQL is proud to offer custom integrations based on our customers' specifications and platforms. We also support customers with customized reporting to generate relevant data in a format they can use.

With the three-prong solution, our customers pick the way they do business with us – and they can leverage our logistics account executives for the "high touch" approach as well as our web, mobile, and integration solutions for the "high tech" service.

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IS KEY

Bottom line: This pursuit for improved customer experience isn't just imminent – it's here. According to Microsoft's annual State of Global Customer Service Report, 59% of the 5,000 surveyed have higher expectations for customer service than they did even just a year ago. A full 95% said that **customer service was the most important factor** when choosing and being loyal to a brand. It's right there in the numbers - consumers are driving businesses to embrace technology, but not replace humanity. Your competitive advantage will be to learn how to marry both and set the customer up for a successful and hassle-free journey. Don't let convenience for you interfere with peace-of-mind for the customer.

## ABOUT TQL

At Total Quality Logistics (TQL), we create greater supply chain efficiencies for our customers by combining industry-leading technology and unmatched customer service. Customers and carriers turn to us daily to solve their transportation needs with competitive pricing, continuous communication, and a commitment to do it right every time. We move more than 1.6 million loads across the nation annually through our broad portfolio of logistics services and our network of more than 75,000 carriers. Headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio, TQL is the second-largest freight brokerage firm in the nation, founded in 1997, with more than 5,500 employees in 57 offices across the U.S.