



Freight & Analytics

The Modern Brokerage

**A New Broker's
Guide to
Thriving in the
Information Age**

Times have changed.

Brokerages that operate on spreadsheets, passed-down wisdom, hunches, and good guesses can't keep up with the advanced tools and software capabilities of the modern brokerage. With them, brokers can analyze the market, find shippers, vet and onboard carriers, and deftly manage relationships and keep customers happy. Brokerages without modern tools simply can't keep up.

So what's a broker without those tools to do?

How do you find the tools you need?

It's difficult to sift through the product offerings and make a decision.

We wrote this guide to break through the noise and provide an overview of the tools modern brokerages use. We'll cover the core software components, their use, and how they rocket your brokerage to the next level.

At the end of *The Modern Brokerage*, you'll know the exact tools you need to not get left behind.

How do I get started?

Load boards

Load boards are a broker's bread and butter. If you're new to load boards, think of them like departure and arrival boards when you're booking flights: Every flight is posted in one place, and you choose which one you're taking.

But instead of flights, load boards show available shipments. Brokers use load boards to post their loads, and carriers search for loads they want to take. They may choose based on location, lane, or market, or maybe strictly by the rate you offer. Load boards are the most efficient way for you to find carriers. It's a matchmaking service for brokers and carriers.

Quality load boards have vetting features that add security and confidence to your carrier relationships and provide tools that make your business run smoother. Often that takes the form of reducing paperwork, preventing back office expenses, and reducing the time it takes to do routine tasks.

Every load board fosters one-off transactions – that's not hard to find. But the best load boards set themselves apart by giving you tools that help build a trustworthy carrier network and cover every aspect of moving freight. Keep it simple: the best load boards give you access to the most carriers.

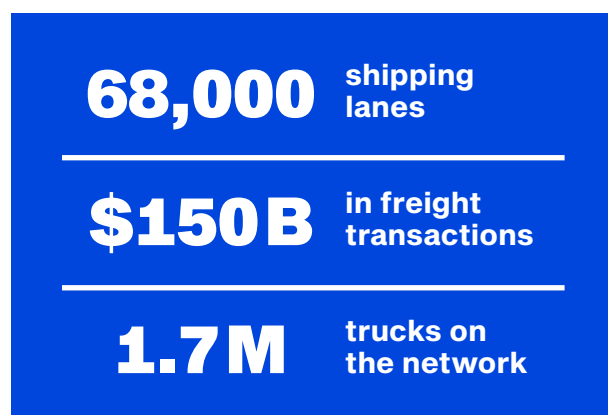
A load board worth using isn't just a load board – it's a host of tools that keep your business secure, profitable, and efficient.

Typically, a free load board just won't cut it. They often lack the tools your competitors are using, or are rife with advertisements and limited capabilities. Free load boards are good first options, but brokerages looking to compete should invest in software that doesn't put a ceiling on their potential.

Analytics tools

Top brokers also use analytics to price shipments on a load board more competitively. Take RateView from DAT IQ, for example. You'll see data and analytics to guide pricing decisions since you'll see average truck cost for every lane. Brokers can look at historical and forecasted rates for any lane or market. It's a safeguard against misinformed quotes that leave you without a profit margin.

RateView is a synthesis of over \$150B in freight transactions from over 68,000 shipping lanes – it's the most accurate market data available. Once that data is sorted and categorized, brokers have a transparent view of how the market handles rates on any given lane. That information powers confident negotiating and gives you the upper hand and loads of transparency that fosters goodwill.



Carrier vetting

DAT's load board comes equipped with CarrierWatch, a tool designed to vet carriers and give brokers some peace of mind about who they're working with.

CarrierWatch lets brokers verify carrier safety records, insurance, and authority. Of course, this goes a long way in protecting brokers from accidentally working with unsafe or unreliable carriers. Putting this information inside a load board is especially helpful, as this information is challenging to source otherwise. You can also browse the DAT Directory, which gives you more info on the carriers you're working with.

Freight tracking

To help with carrier onboarding and freight tracking, DAT's load board comes with Onboard. You'll simplify and streamline the process of bringing carriers into your network. It helps brokers shake off unnecessary administrative work and focus on their business.

Within Onboard, brokers can track where their freight is without hopping on the phones and hunting it down. You can communicate updates to the shipper, keep an eye on your freight, and get more time back.

What do new brokers need?

StartRite

Sourcing the right tools for your brokerage isn't easy – there's a seemingly endless sea of software and tool options. You're busy building a business, and researching which set of tools you need takes valuable time.

We built StartRite to cut through the noise and deliver an easy solution to modern brokerages by putting all the essential tools in one place.

With StartRite, you'll get the industry's standard DAT One load board, RateView, CarrierWatch and OnBoard at a fraction of the cost to get your business off the ground. With your essential toolbox in hand, you'll quickly build efficient processes and workflows that will supercharge your ability to price freight, onboard carriers, grow your network, and avoid freight fraud.

There are different versions of StartRite, so talk to one of your specialists to decide which is right for you.

Broker start-up packages

	DAT Broker StartRite STARTS AT \$335 / 3 months	Competitor's package \$678 / month
Load Board		
Unlimited truck searches	✓	✓
Unlimited load posts	✓	✓
Automated booking	✓	✓
TMS & FTP Integrations	✓	Limited
Predictive carrier sourcing	✓	Limited
Tracking & visibility	✓	Limited
Quick rate lookup	✓	Spot only, no contract rates
Market conditions map	✓	
Block and favorite carriers	✓	
Batch load posts	✓	
Carrier Monitoring / Vetting		
Continuous carrier monitoring	✓	✓
Insurance certificate database	✓	✓
Daily carrier compliance status alerts	✓	✓
Complete TIA Watchdog reports	✓	✓
Carrier Onboarding		
Automated onboarding for active carriers	✓	✓
Automated carrier selection tools	✓	✓
Rate Analytics		
Lane rate history	✓	✓
Current market lane rates	Unlimited	Up to 1,000 lookups / 5 users
Rate forecasts	\$125	Limited

If you're a bit further along and need more advanced tools than what's in StartRite, a TMS could be right for you.

A load board helps brokers connect with carriers and service shippers, but transportation management software (TMS) helps brokers run their businesses. Accounting, freight tracking, network management and more all stay in one place, and in the ideal situation, seamless integration with your load board.

When do you need a TMS?

More often than not, brokers spring for a TMS once they've grown enough to need software to help with accounting. In the beginning, brokers may be using homemade TMS solutions. We see brokers build their entire business in spreadsheets. While that may be fine when your brokerage is laying its foundation, but once it's time to scale up, spreadsheets will begin to hold you back. They aren't built to grow and evolve with you, can't connect to a load board, and

can't match the capabilities of a modern TMS – a requirement if you have serious aspirations of competing.

We've also met brokers who, instead of one master spreadsheet, use several different programs to manage their business. One for accounting, one for freight tracking, one for freight tracking, etc. – they're hopping from program to program, between applications that struggle to work together and create efficient systems.

A proper TMS puts all of the broker's primary business needs in one software that easily connects to their load board. In effect, this puts their entire business in one spot and reduces headaches in the process.

DAT Broker TMS

In working with thousands of brokers over the years, we've picked up on what they want and need from their TMS, and for a long time, there wasn't an option that fulfilled those needs. So we made our own.

DAT Broker TMS is built to grow as you do – no more paying for features you don't need, only the ones you do. Avoid TMS solutions that weren't built with brokers and freight intermediaries in mind. Several popular TMSs are built for shippers then make minor adjustments to placate brokers. DAT Broker TMS is built from the ground up for brokers. DAT's suite of optional modules turn your TMS into a custom solution just for you with features like:

Benchmark Analytics Compare your revenue with the overall market to assess not just your costs and profits – but also your potential profits.

Unparalleled performance insights Real market analytics based on transactions by your peers.

Accurate carrier and regional assessments See which carriers had the most competitive prices by lane and regions.

Planning tools to put more money in your pocket See where costs and margins might be misaligned with the overall market.

Because of its robust library of custom modules, DAT Broker TMS can be outfitted exactly for your brokerage. You won't pay for the features you don't need, only the ones you do. Add modules such as:

Load board

CRM sales module

Hubtrans

Document management

Rating features

Load tracking

LTL consolidation

Outside agents module

Multi-modal module

**Electronic
data interchange**

Protecting your business from bad actors



Fraud is everywhere. From phishing and spyware to identity theft and hacking, fraud comes at us from every angle, and scammers have more tools at their disposal than ever before. It impacts our personal lives and puts every business in every industry at risk.

DAT is no different. As the operator of North America's largest on-demand freight marketplace, DAT and our customers are targets for would-be scammers. Over the course of four decades, we've built, evolved, and replaced systems to safeguard both our user network and our own internal systems.

Just like in any other platform-based business, criminals attempt to use our network for fraud. That's where our Network Integrity Unit (NIU) comes in, a team that's grown by 40% in the past two years. While this team has been

[recognized by law enforcement](#) multiple times for our role in taking down cargo fraud operations, they have largely operated behind the scenes up to this point. As fraud and cybercrime have exploded worldwide across all industries, the team's efforts to keep our customers safe has garnered more attention. We continue to invest in the highest-quality cybersecurity personnel available.

Vetting carriers is difficult and daunting. Tools like CarrierWatch allow you to verify that a carrier is legitimate and vet their credentials – it makes the whole process easy and fast. Both you and your customers will know shipments are in good hands. With CarrierWatch, you can validate the carrier's cargo insurance and safety ratings, so you're not caught off guard by carriers with less-than-ideal operating standards. You can even bring on carriers

quickly with other tools like OnBoard, making network-building even faster. We offer private networks so that brokers can develop more exclusive relationships with the carriers. You can verify what other brokers have to say about specific carriers by visiting our DAT Directory page.

Optimize your profile on DAT by including as much as possible, such as contact information, how you post your loads, and credit scores. Source company reviews and ensure you use a domained email address (yourname@yourcompany.com instead of yourcompany@gmail.com) consistently to help generate trust among the carriers that you work with.

As you begin your journey, DAT is proud to partner with brokers like you as you grow, scale, and profit.

As always, DAT is ready to help. We've helped thousands of brokers, from the top brokerages in the country to start-ups like yours. Our products and resources are built to fit your growth journey.

About DAT Freight & Analytics

DAT Freight & Analytics operates the largest truckload freight marketplace in North America. Transportation brokers, carriers, shippers, news organizations and industry analysts rely on DAT for market trends and data insights based on 400 million freight matches and a database of \$150 billion in annual market transactions.

Founded in 1978, DAT Solutions LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Roper Technologies (NYSE:ROP), a diversified technology company and constituent of the S&P 500 and Fortune 500 indices.

**To learn more, connect with one of
our experts and get your brokerage
off the ground.**

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