# FOUNTAINHEAD EXECUTIVE INTELLIGENCE BRIEF™

Strategic Advisory Model — Client Engagement Sample

*Prepared by Fountainhead Business Solutions | This reflects a real client engagement. All figures, scoring, and analysis are genuine. The client's company name and exact location have been withheld for confidentiality.*

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|---|---|
| **Role:** | Terminal / Hub Manager — Last-Mile Delivery Operations |
| **Market:** | Eastern Tennessee — Mid-Size Metro Market (location withheld) |
| **Sector:** | Transportation & Logistics (Last-Mile Delivery) |
| **Date:** | Client Engagement Sample — Identity Withheld |

## 1. EXECUTIVE SNAPSHOT

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|---|---|
| **Hiring Difficulty:** | Hard |
| **Job Gravity:** | High (Burden Score 7.4/10, P82) |
| **Candidate Supply:** | Narrow — requires blended P&L, compliance, and people-leadership skill set |
| **Compensation Position:** | 10th Percentile |
| **Recommended Percentile Target:** | 60th–70th Percentile (~$78,000–$88,000, burden-aligned) |
| **Primary Risk Driver:** | Pay at P10 while role burden sits at P82 — a severe two-axis misalignment |
| **Estimated Time-to-Fill:** | 8–14+ Weeks |
| **Hiring Success Outlook:** | At Risk |

## 2. EXECUTIVE STRATEGIC NARRATIVE

This role is scoped like a genuine last-mile hub leader: inbound receipt and sortation, routing and dispatch, end-of-day reconciliation, full KPI ownership (on-time delivery, scan compliance, productivity), frontline staffing and coaching, direct DOT/OSHA safety accountability, and management of both W-2 employees and independent contractor (1099) delivery partners under strict compliance boundaries.

Current pay ($55,000–$65,000) is positioned at the 10th percentile of the local market, while the role's burden score sits at 7.4 out of 10 — the 82nd percentile of hiring friction across benchmarked roles. That is a materially larger gap than a typical pay-vs-burden mismatch: this role is priced like an entry-level supervisor position while it actually demands the accountability profile of a genuine operations manager.

The early 5:00 AM start, an open-ended "additional hours as needed" expectation, and full compliance exposure (DOT/OSHA plus IC/1099 boundary management) mean the realistic candidate pool is smaller and more experienced than the posted pay would typically attract. Regional comparables for genuinely similar terminal/hub leadership roles run $65,000–$100,000, with several clustering well above the current offer.

If pay remains anchored at its current level, expect a substantially extended vacancy, a real risk of settling for a less experienced hire who then struggles with the compliance and accountability load, and — if a genuinely capable manager is hired — a high risk of losing them to a better-paying competitor once they prove they can do the job. Executive takeaway: this is a severe two-axis misalignment, and the recommended $78,000–$88,000 band directly targets it.

## 3. ROLE & BURDEN ANALYSIS

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|---|---|
| **Role Classification:** | Salaried operations/terminal leadership, single-location accountability |
| **Scope Breadth:** | High — P&L-adjacent accountability, safety/compliance, IC/contractor management |
| **Job Gravity:** | High |
| **Burden Score (1–10):** | 7.4 — Burden Percentile: P82 (Classification: High) |

**Primary Burden Drivers:**

• Early start (5:00 AM) plus an open-ended "additional hours as needed" expectation

• Full accountability for inbound sort, dispatch, and real-time disruption/exception handling

• Direct DOT/OSHA safety and regulatory compliance ownership at the location level

• Management of both W-2 staff and independent contractor (1099) partners, with compliance boundary risk

• KPI ownership (on-time delivery, scan compliance, productivity) with immediate, visible error cost

• Physical warehouse environment; standing/walking, lifting up to 50 lbs

**Mismatch Risk Summary:** Pay is positioned at the 10th percentile while role burden sits at the 82nd percentile — a severe misalignment between what the role actually demands and what it is currently priced to pay, well beyond a typical compensation gap.

## 4. WAGE POSITIONING & BENCHMARK

**Estimated Local Market Percentile Bands (Annual Base):**

| Percentile | Annual Range |
|---|---|
| P10 | $58,000 – $64,000 |
| P25 | $64,000 – $69,000 |
| P50 (Market Center) | $69,000 – $83,000 |
| P75 | $83,000 – $92,000 |
| P90 | $92,000 – $100,000 |

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|---|---|
| **Current Pay Position:** | $55,000–$65,000/yr — 10th Percentile |
| **Interpretation:** | Current pay sits below even the bottom decile of the local benchmark for this role family, despite the role carrying genuine P&L-adjacent and compliance accountability. |

**Competitive Pay Signals:**

• Comparable terminal/hub manager postings in the same state run $65,000–$100,000 depending on scope

- A comparable multi-terminal linehaul manager role posted $90,000–$100,000/year
- Narrower-scope roles (single-terminal, less compliance exposure) still commonly clear $65,000–$75,000/year
- Sign-on bonuses are uncommon at this level; competitiveness relies on base salary and scope clarity

**Stability Target Recommendation:** Move to the $78,000–$88,000 band (anchored near $80,000–$85,000) — the burden-aligned pressure point, landing within the 60th–70th percentile of the regional benchmark.

## 5. COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE SNAPSHOT

**Named Regional Competitors (real market postings):**

| Employer | Role | Posted Pay | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Regional Multi-Terminal Operator | Team Manager / Multi-Terminal Linehaul | $90,000–$100,000/yr | Travel between terminals; broader scope |
| Regional Terminal Operator | Terminal Manager | $65,000–$70,000/yr | Flexible schedule; driver supervision |
| Regional Logistics Operator | Operations Manager (Last-Mile) | $68,000–$75,000/yr | Contract carrier oversight, KPI focus |
| Regional Transportation Employer | Transportation Manager | $70,000–$80,000/yr | Warehouse/fleet oversight, staff supervision |
| Regional Terminal Operator | Terminal Manager (CDL Preferred) | $52,000–$62,000/yr | Weekly pay structure; equipment oversight |

**Market Selection Pressure:** The market rewards candidates who can carry full P&L-adjacent accountability, safety compliance, and contractor management together; postings offering broader scope and clearer growth paths are outcompeting narrower, lower-paid "supervisor"-style postings for the same experienced candidate pool.

## 6. HIRING VIABILITY & RISK OVERLAY

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|---|---|
| **Compensation Pressure:** | Severe — market paying materially above current rate |
| **Structural Risk:** | High (early start, open-ended hours, compliance exposure) |
| **Offer Acceptance Risk:** | High |
| **Early Attrition / Poaching Risk:** | High — capable hires are attractive targets once proven |
| **Market Competition Intensity:** | High |
| **Overall Hiring Viability:** | At Risk |

**Likely Stall Points:** Experienced terminal/hub managers with comparable scope typically expect pay at or above the market median and decline or negotiate aggressively at the current offer; candidates who do accept at this level are more often less experienced and may struggle with the full compliance and accountability load.

**Financial Signal:** Estimated value exposure during an 8–14+ week vacancy runs roughly $120,000–$210,000+. The annual cost of moving pay to the recommended band is approximately $20,000–$28,000 — a financial case the analysis classifies as **Strongly Justified**.

## 7. STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

**Compensation Strategy:**

- Move base salary toward the burden-aligned $78,000–$88,000 band

• Anchor the final offer near $80,000–$85,000, consistent with the regional benchmark for this scope

**If Compensation Cannot Move:**

• Consider narrowing the role's scope (e.g., reduce direct IC/compliance authority) and hire at a lower supervisor level instead

• Add a clearly defined KPI-linked bonus (on-time performance, safety, exception reduction) to close part of the gap

**Posting Strategy Adjustments:**

• Name the true scope explicitly: P&L-adjacent accountability, safety/compliance ownership, and IC/contractor management

• Avoid generic "manager" framing that undersells real accountability and attracts under-qualified applicants

**Screening Priorities:**

• Assess prior experience managing independent contractors/1099 partners specifically, given compliance boundary risk

• Confirm comfort with the early start time and open-ended hours explicitly, early in the process

**Speed-to-Offer Discipline:**

• Move deliberately once a genuinely qualified candidate is identified — strong candidates at this scope are often passive and have other options

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