

Portman Mining, Australian Railroad Group & WestNet Rail

When one is better than three

Portman (now part of Cliffs) is Australia's 3rd largest supplier of Iron Ore. They use the Australian Railroad Group (ARG) to transport iron ore within Western Australia, on track that is operated and maintained by WestNet Rail. Mining is a challenging business and a project involving three clients made it even more so.

"What you have done is brought the 3 companies together so that they can make more accurate & accommodating decisions using the installed process and systems."

D. Price
CEO, Portman

Key Results

153,000 tonnes p/w

Unload time improvement -
6.1%

Average no. wagons
unloaded up 7.8%

Travel time reduced by 5.2%

Significant intercompany
communication
improvement

ANALYSIS

Renoir was invited to carry out a preliminary survey of train operations including planning, scheduling, terminal times, maintenance, interfaces between the three organisations, and the behaviour of management and supervisors across the three businesses.

The survey highlighted specific opportunities to increase the amount of transported tonnes of ore, mutually benefitting all parties by decreasing the number of "short" trains and cancellations by improving train running performance and optimizing wagon capacity with increased tonnage.

Renoir then laid out a project to work with all three companies with a goal of transporting an additional 300,000 tonnes of iron ore a year.

PROJECT

During the 15 week Focus Process™, 3 Management Action Teams (MATs) were formed. The first MAT was Train Management and consisted of employees from both ARG and WestNet. The key findings developed by the team were:

- Rules of Access not adhered to or measured.
- Planned section times were inaccurate.
- Driving style varied considerably amongst drivers.
- Speed restrictions were added but not removed.
- Poor interface between Train Management and Train Control.

The second MAT was Terminals and established the following:

- Underloading was causing a loss of 200-300k tonnes per year.
- Loading to ship at the port caused an additional 50 min when unloading.
- Poor communications between the train /mine/port and train control caused significant delays.

The proposal gained commitment from all parties, ensuring good cooperation and buy-in throughout the 4 phase, 40 week project.

- Definition & quantification of issues
- Development of the solutions
- Installation of the revised systems and processes
- Auditing and aftercare to ensure sustainability.

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“This process has forced us to work together and I can see the results.”

K. Lewsey
CEO, ARG

“What amazes me about this process is that we are achieving our targets with a 16% reduction in track availability.”

P. Larsen
GM, WestNet

The final MAT addressed Train Maintenance. Conclusions were:

- Poor maintenance planning caused high number of wagons out of service.
- Little/poor supervision of work carried out on the shop floor.
- Poor utilization of root cause analysis behind breakdowns.
- Poor vendor review processes and quality assurance of products.

Upon completion of the 40 week initiative, the results were consistently over target, the management control systems were installed and there were regular reviews of the KPI's.

One key KPI with a considerable impact on the success of the project was monitoring the impact of adverse on-board decisions by train control. In addition, correct section times, an accurate application of the rules of access, and a system to regularly review loading performance, contributed to delivering the results.

THE RENOIR GROUP

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