Long Distance Truck Drivers—
Their Joys and Frustrations

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ABSTRACT

One of the most serious challenges facing the trucking industry is the future shortage of drivers. Although the driver shortage is less problematic now because of the current economic recession, it will again become a pressing problem because of changing demographics and trucking industry growth. Research shows that between 2005 and 2015, the industry will need to hire over 500,000 drivers. The problem of too few drivers is exacerbated by the fact that the trucking industry also faces driver turnover rates that in recent years have exceeded 100 percent. This study was designed to empirically investigate factors related to those two problems and to provide managers with further insights regarding those problems. One hundred four long-distance truck drivers were interviewed and asked a series of questions designed to uncover job aspects that drivers liked and disliked. Included are numerous verbatim driver statements which provide meaningful insights into their job satisfaction. Results showed that independence, the opportunity to see the country, good income, and the pleasure of driving were job features that drivers liked most. Drivers most disliked being away from home, high fuel prices, the lack of “4 wheeler” driving skills, government regulations, and loading/unloading issues. Comparisons of independent owner/operator and company drivers are presented and managerial implications of the findings are included.

INTRODUCTION

Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.

Confucius (551-479 BC)

My father taught me to work; he did not teach me to love it. I never did like to work, and I don’t deny it. I’d rather read, tell stories, crack jokes, talk, laugh—anything but work.

Abraham Lincoln (1809 -1865)
BEHAVIORAL SAFETY PROGRAMS: ARE YOU GETTING WHAT YOU THOUGHT?

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ABSTRACT

The largest aviation fleet operator in the world, the U.S. military, has implemented safety programs that moved away from an emphasis on compliance with “rules” toward an emphasis on “judgment” (decision making of individual vehicle operators). The purpose of this research was to assess the effect of this implementation on fleet safety. Analysis was conducted on mishap rates and individual mishap data using discontinuous piecewise linear regression and chi-square goodness of fit testing. Results showed that the implementation of the judgment based programs did not effectively reduce aviation mishap rates; the rates increased immediately after program implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Transportation safety is an issue of interest to both the transportation industry and the public at large. Over its history, the U.S. government has issued numerous transportation safety related regulations and laws to both protect transportation workers, as well as the motoring public. While transportation safety today is at its highest levels, there is always room for improvement. Beyond safety for societal protection, transportation carriers understand the benefit to the bottom line of improved safety. Much of the impetus for improved safety programs comes from within, in the form of increased profitability through loss mitigation, rather than from external government directives. Over the past 20 years a shift has begun regarding the nature of workplace safety programs in general (Johnston and Hayes, 2005) and transportation safety programs in particular (Melton and Van Dyke, 2004; Olson and Austin, 2001; Ludwig and Geller, 2000). The shift has been away from being primarily regulation and rules-based programs, toward more judgment and Behavior-Based Safety (BBS) programs. The BBS approach encompasses many different themes and principles (Geller, 2001, 2005; Johnson, 2003; Wirth and Sigurdsson, 2008 among others), organized around the importance of the role of the individual human decision maker as being key to improving safety performance. A key difference between the traditional programs and the newer BBS...
ABSTRACT

In the name of Homeland Security, many different policies, regulations and laws are being proposed, adopted, and implemented. There have also been attempts to change existing laws, such as those applying to air cabotage, but the argument for denial of change has been “Homeland Security.” In terms of air cabotage, a question that must be addressed is “Does cabotage actually provide improved or stronger national security?” Was the purpose of Air cabotage to protect America’s security, or was it to provide economic protection of the then struggling airline industry? To address these questions one must understand the concept of cabotage, the history of the development of air line regulations, terrorism and terrorist actions, and the consequences of overreacting to the latter; the focus of this article.

INTRODUCTION

The United States is quickly approaching the 10 year anniversary of arguably the boldest act of terrorism since the bombing of Pearl Harbor. As one reviews terrorist acts around the globe, modes of transportation are the main mechanisms of terrorism (trains in Spain, cars and trucks in England and the Middle East, subway systems in Japan, and airplanes in New York and a rental truck in Oklahoma City, USA). As the U.S. approaches this mile marker in history, there are many questions to be addressed. One of those focuses specifically on the transportation industry: “How has the transportation industry in the United States addressed the terrorist avenues provided by their mode of operation?”

According to one study focusing on a single industry segment, the parts manufacture and assembly for the transportation industry, some companies are making changes in an attempt to secure their firms and supply chains from disruptive events. Other companies are not so inclined (Glisson, Dobie and Rishel, 2008). Autry and Bobbitt (2008), through investigation of the supply chain security orientation, found that few companies are addressing this issue to any substantial degree. Autry and Bobbitt (2008) found that most of those responsible indicated that government support is necessary to advance security issues within their industries.

In the name of Homeland Security, many different policies, regulations and laws are being proposed, adopted and implemented. One example has been the development of Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT); a voluntary government-business initiative to build cooperative relationships that strengthen and improve overall international supply chain
INVESTIGATING PRIVATE RAILROAD OPERATIONS AND THE LOCOMOTIVE ISSUE

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ABSTRACT

Changes in the railroad industry in North America, and around the world, have forced shippers to reconsider how they move rail shipments, particularly in and around large industrial facilities. Current costing and operational strategies of many rail carriers are encouraging shippers to operate private, in-house rail operations. Limitations of this industrial practice include the lack of operational management skills and the availability of required railroad locomotive equipment. This exploratory research attempts to answer several basic questions, including 1) to what extent do private rail operations exist 2) what are the basic reasons that private rail operations exist, and 3) what are the locomotive powering options for private rail operations. Findings indicate that there are a large number of private rail operations in existence in the United States and Canada, often using contract operators, and that there are significant issues in managing these operations and in obtaining locomotives for the practice.

INTRODUCTION

Private, industrial or in-plant rail operations are a seldom explored and little researched practice that, nevertheless, play a major role in the movement of freight worldwide. Additionally, with changes in the railroad industry, the issue of how to power these private railroads has become a major issue for the system owners.

Transportation textbooks seldom cover the practice, and if they do, generally state that private rail operations are not commonly used. For example, one text states that private rail transportation “basically means that the user buys or leases railcars, provides rail tracks on the property, and in some limited cases, provides switching within the plant” (Coyle, Bardi, and Novack, 2000), with later editions not even discussing the practice. However, research into the shows that just as with the motor carrier industry, where private fleets comprise the largest segment of the trucking industry (National Private Truck Council), private railroads greatly outnumber common carrier railroads.

According to the Association of American Railroads, there are more than 600 freight railroads operating today in Canada, Mexico, and the United States, forming a seamless integrated system across North America accounting for more than 40 percent of all freight transportation (2009). However, what is not clearly recognized is that all of these shipments start and end at tens of thousands of individual locations. In the United States alone, The Comprehensive Guide To Industrial Locomotives (Reed, 2002) lists more than 2000 private rail operations using more than 3500 full-sized railroad locomotives. Canada, according to the Canadian Trackside Guide (Roberts and Stremes, 2005), has almost 250 private rail operations using nearly 600 full-sized railroad locomotives. In addition to these
FEASIBILITY OF JP-8 TO JET A FUEL CONVERSION AT U.S. MILITARY FACILITIES

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ABSTRACT

Using Lean concepts, we address the technical feasibility and opportunity for cost avoidance of a conversion from JP-8 to Jet A fuel at six Northwestern United States military installations. We map the supply chain for West Coast JP-8 distribution and analyze jet fuel commodity pricing. The results of this research are counterintuitive in that a customized product turned out to be less expensive. We found it critical that all actual costs relating to the acquisition of a product be closely examined. Our results show no technical barriers to a complete conversion, but there is no opportunity for cost avoidance.

INTRODUCTION

The Secretary of the Air Force remarked recently that the United States Air Force (USAF) spent approximately $6.6 billion on aviation fuel in fiscal year 2006. This is $1.6 billion more than budgeted for that year alone (Wynne, 2007). In 2005 the Defense Energy Support Center (DESC) purchased $4.96 billion worth of Jet Propellant -8 (JP-8) and Jet Propellant Thermally Stable (JPTS), over $1.4 billion more than the previous year (DESC Fact Book, 2006). The need to address these rapidly increasing fuel costs demands the collective attention of Department of Defense (DoD) leaders and government lawmakers.

One option is for the military to abandon its consumption of unique, custom-blended fuels and instead use the same commercially available fuels that the airlines use. In this spirit, our research investigates the technical feasibility and cost of using Jet A to replace JP-8 at multiple Northwestern United States military installations. In this paper, we map the relevant bulk JP-8 supply chain to determine the commodity price for the Pacific Northwest and identify options for storing and issuing Jet A in lieu of JP-8. We also determine if the applicable military aircraft or equipment can use Jet A as a primary or alternate fuel. We conclude with a cost assessment of feasible options.