

Wolter Puts ROI On Track at FSI with a BOSS Railcar Mover

Challenge: Bottlenecks in the delivery and storage of laden railcars with a 3rd party was limiting expansion and costing up to \$40,000 per month for FSI.

FSI is a polyurethane systems house headquartered in Earth City, MO. specializing in manufacturing high performance foam products and technologies for thermal insulating, sound insulating, floatation, adhesives, packaging, flexible and rigid applications, automotive applications, marine applications, and many other market sectors. FSI receives tank cars loaded with raw chemicals via their rail spur, where the cars are unloaded, materials are processed and product is then shipped out by tanker truck, shipping totes, drums, and pressurized vessels.

FSI's growth was hindered due to their reliance on railroad delivery schedules of just three shipments per week and the demurrage (railcar storage & moving) fees associated with holding cars off site. With available spur line track extending onto the Earth City manufacturing facility, FSI began to explore the possibility of purchasing a railcar mover and acquiring a lease from the railroad for unrestricted access to the section of track. The advantages of the plan were two fold: unrestricted use of the entire spur line would allow FSI to store loaded railcars on their property, while owning the railcar mover would facilitate shuttling of loaded and emptied cars around the plant, on FSI's schedule.

The purchasing team calculated that FSI would save nearly half a million dollars per

year in demurrage fees, and that they would also benefit from being able to make bigger purchases at lower rates from their suppliers. "It changes your way of thinking about how we store raw materials. We were at the mercy of the railroad, we were locked in to their scheduling and deliveries. By eliminating the bottleneck, we can project much greater growth," said FSI Production Manager, David Clare.



"Our Wolter rep, Jeff Nichols, had helped us out with our St. Louis facility, taking over all the forklift maintenance there," said Kyle Myers, FSI Maintenance Manager. "We were pleased by the way they were able to turn it around for us over there, so when it came time to look into a railcar mover, we naturally reached out to Wolter." FSI reviewed bids from a number of highly qualified manufacturers specializing in railcar moving systems and awarded the contract to Wolter, Inc. "We did like-to-like quoting, but Wolter's expertise made us feel very confident," Kyle said. "We were very green when it comes to railcar movers," David added, "the guys at Wolter were very professional, understood our need, hooked us up with the best to get a very ambitious job moving."

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Solution: Wolter’s sales team included Jeff Nichols and technical expert Matt Gintert, who conducted an on-site rail survey to determine the tractive effort required for the railcar mover to move through the most complicated section of track at the FSI plant. This included determining the slopes of grades, radii of turns, switchgear junctions and other restrictions to precisely pair a piece of equipment with FSI’s unique application and needs. Wolter determined that there were two size options available from BOSS Railcar Movers, the LX and the larger ZX.

David was quick to point out the professionalism and integrity of the Wolter sales team, “Wolter talked us down from a ZX, they could have made a bigger sale, but the LX was the right size for our current and projected usage. They sold us what we needed, not what they wanted to sell.”

“ We paid around \$800,000 for the LX and the ROI is 1 ½ years. I don’t know anywhere else you could get that kind of return.

David Clare, Production Manager



With the survey completed, Matt Gintert arranged for the FSI purchasing team to tour the BOSS Rail Mover manufacturing plant in Grandview, MO. They noticed the combine style cab design which places the operator in the center of the vehicle. “It makes the most sense to have a cockpit that gives 360° views and cameras on mirrors that help you navigate,” David said. “There are just a ton of little features that you don’t think of that BOSS built into the unit. The automatic sanding for extra traction is a very nice addition.” “I like all the safety features,” said Kyle. “The lighting helps add to the safety, our people start at 7 am and the LX is lit up everywhere. The guys love it, they love the technology and the cameras. It gives them a high level of confidence.”

It was determined that the existing track of the spur line was in need of repair, and that the railroad would need to approve those repairs prior to allowing FSI to move railcars on the track with the LX. With a build time for the LX of just 90 days, the track repairs actually became the biggest hurdle to the project. This allowed for BOSS to train FSI personnel on the LX prior to delivery. “Upon delivery, it made an impact in one week and will continue to change their operation drastically,” said Matt Gintert.

With the track repairs completed and the LX online, FSI has been able to take advantage of their added storage capacity. Previously, they were limited to 4 million lbs. of chemicals in cars, currently the number approaches 12 million. “I can look out my back door and I can see 18 cars that we can get to any time instead of having to email the railroad and ask them to move them around for us. We were at their mercy, and now were not. The LX takes the handcuffs off,” David said.

“The one thing I don’t like is that we didn’t do this sooner,” David Clare, Production Manager.

