

Material Handling

MANAGEMENT

Best Practices

Outsourcing Bulk Container Management

By Lisa M. Kempfer

Outsourcing the management of bulk containers is a hot trend that is saving companies' big money. Some companies like Dial Corp. (Scottsdale) use containers owned and maintained by transporters like Union Pacific (Omaha).

Dial Corp. needed a better way to transport AES surfactant, a liquid ingredient for its top-selling Purex liquid laundry detergent from St. Louis to its manufacturing plant in southern California. Dial teamed with Ventura Transfer Co. (VTC, Long Beach, Calif.) and Union Pacific



Dial Corp. uses Union Pacific BulkTainer service to transport product from St. Louis to southern California. The ISO containers are shipped on stacked rail cars.

ic, to create a more efficient and less expensive method to transport the temperature-sensitive AES. The solution frees Dial from having to purchase and maintain its own fleet of expensive containers.

It uses Union Pacific's BulkTainer Service for the cross-country leg of the journey. The AES is carried in Union Pacific-owned ISO containers



VTC built a custom hydraulic tractor that tilts the chassis to empty AES containers at Dial's manufacturing plant.

from origin to destination, eliminating the possibility of contamination from transloading. Product contamination is a big concern, says Dial's Pete Opsomer, Transportation Resource manager. A load of contaminated AES can shut down the manufacturing plant, costing thousands of dollars in production, clean up and disposal costs. At each end of the route, VTC carries the temperature-controlled ISO containers on its trailer trucks to their destinations.

Dial faced one more problem—unloading the AES at its plant. VTC's Galen Clifford says Opsomer wanted to greatly reduce the water in the AES in St. Louis and ship a more concentrated product “so it could get a bigger bang for its transportation dollar.” Getting the viscous concentrate out of the container was a problem. VTC uses a custom-built hydraulic tractor that tilts the chassis with the attached ISO, and lifts it eight feet into the air, enabling the contents to be fully unloaded. Dial's Opsomer says, “It works the same way as getting ketchup out of a bottle, just tilt that big ISO and pour.”

After the AES is unloaded, VTC returns the ISO to Union Pacific, which cleans the container and ships it to its next destination. **MHM**