

# STRAIGHT to the POINT

## VTC Gives Dial Corp a Lift to Increased Quality, Lower Costs

Dial Corporation, the \$1.3 billion manufacturer of well-known household products, recently reviewed its practices of transporting raw materials with an eye toward increasing product quality and lowering costs. Pete Opsomer, Transportation Resource Manager at Dial Corp's headquarters in Scottsdale, AZ, focused first on Purex Laundry Detergent, one of the company's top-selling products.



### The value of A BRIGHT IDEA

*It took timing and know-how and a custom-crafted rig that picked up an ISO and tipped it, but Ventura Transfer Company helped make Dial Corp shine.*

#### SITUATION

"The most critical ingredient in Purex is a proprietary surfactant that I'll just call PS. As far as I'm concerned, the chemical composition of this compound makes it the best on the market. But because it's such a high-quality compound, it can also be susceptible to contamination. If it were to become contaminated and unloaded into our 300,000 lb. tank, it could cost us thousands of dollars and possibly a shutdown of the plant."

For Opsomer, maintaining the integrity of Dial Corp's raw materials during transit was such a priority that he

See A Bright Idea inside>



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contracted with a number of transport and transload companies in hopes of finding one completely capable of servicing his company’s unique needs. “None of them was a perfect fit,” he observes. “None offered us the performance and consistency we needed, until we found Ventura Transfer Company (VTC) <http://www.venturatransfer.com>. They didn’t pretend to have all the answers, but they were willing to work with us to develop the answers.”

Opsomer points to one transport/transload challenge solved by VTC as an example, the movement of the PS compound from St. Louis to Los Angeles. “Moving it from point A to point B takes about 3–4 days by truck,” he tells. “But because the PS is sensitive to temperatures, it can cool from its viscous liquid form into congealed chunks, making a higher probability of for heel.” Heel can collect in traditional tank

trucks, creating not just a mess, but a costly waste, because it cannot be reclaimed. For that reason, Dial decided to utilize insulated ISO containers on stack trains.

***“What I really hoped for was a way to wring out every drop that we could, but how do you wring anything out of an ISO?”***

Although slightly slower than trucks (5 days), the insulated ISO containers permitted the movement of the PS with minimal temperature loss. As a bonus, the rail transport proved to be more dependable and less expensive for Dial. However, there were still a few logistical wrinkles to be resolved.

The value of  
**A BRIGHT IDEA**



**LOADED HOT**

Heated to 140° F, a costly ingredient was readied for its move from St. Louis to Los Angeles.



## CHALLENGE

“Well, we had this very expensive compound in an insulated ISO,” Opsomer explains, “and I wondered how efficiently we could move it from the ISO into our plant. What I really hoped for was a way to wring out every drop that we could, but how do you wring anything out of an ISO?”

VTC’s Galen Clifford and Charlie Ring were assigned to overcome the challenges of moving the PS from the ISOs into the plant. The fundamental challenge was the compound’s viscosity. “The PS is heated to 140° F and placed in the ISO,” says Galen. “At that time, it’s pretty much the consistency of warm Vaseline. Now, we did some tests and discovered that, once the PS has made the trip and cooled some, it begins to thicken. What we had to do was quickly get it out of the ISO and into the plant—while it was still warm Vaseline and before it became completely solidified.”

## SOLUTION

Ideally, they needed a way to tip the ISO and drain the product out, and his brother Steven knew just how to do that. In fact, he had already done it many times. A few years before, he had seen a stationary lifting unit and wondered if a similar device could be made more mobile by rigging it onto a tractor. He immediately began installation on one of VTC’s own triaxle tractors.

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VTC now had their portable device, capable of the mobile lifting and tilting of large loads. This unit was first used on 20’ seabulk containers to transfer plastic pellets into Hopper cars. Over time, the device became a material-handling technology all its own, and established VTC as an innovator within the industry. “It was perfectly suited for unloading Dial’s PS compound,” Galen says with a smile. “With it, we can lift an ISO eight feet into the air and tilt it 40 degrees, which was just what we needed for this job.”

### LAVISHED WITH CARE

Rail meant a longer, but less costly trip, and the insulated ISOs kept the load from turning cold.

### LIFTED AND Poured

Upon arrival in LA, the ISO was tipped and the expensive ingredient flowed efficiently into the tank.





**RESULTS** >>>

"It works the same way as getting ketchup out of a bottle,"

Dial Corp's Opsomer adds, "just tilt that big ISO and pour.

"It's really amazing."

***The risks have become much lower and the profits much higher, now that VTC is sweating the details for them.***

For cooler months, when the PS can begin to congeal, VTC custom-developed a means of warming the compound by sending heated water into the coils of the ISO. Ordinarily, these coils are used for steam, but steam would overheat the product and render it unusable. VTC conducted experiments to learn how to get the most heat possible from a warm water flow, and discovered a point where they could keep the PS from congealing at a safe 140°, eliminating heel in the ISO.

And now, week in, week out, in fair weather and foul, the St. Louis Dial Corp plant sends its heated PS compound west. They used to sweat the details of the journey, but no more. The risks have become much lower and the profits much higher, now that VTC is sweating the details for them.



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