



## **Case Study: Terminal Railroad Association (TRRA) of St. Louis**

### **Giving Customers Accurate Communication and Instant Tracking Data**

#### ***Situation***

TRRA plays a vital role in the railroad operations and growth of the St. Louis metropolitan area and has been relied on as the interchange point for the “Gateway to the West” since 1889. Currently, TRRA processes more than 300,000 cars annually, provides shipping services for more than fifty different industries and provides switching service for five Class I railroads. This critical rail junction point, however, found itself at a crossroads recently, made evident by numerous business challenges including:

- Accurately processing hundreds of faxes a day received from customers requesting or submitting information about cars and/or shipments
- Managing a mainframe computer system, which was difficult and expensive to maintain and yielded very little management information
- Communicating effectively with customers who expect real-time updates and information at their fingertips
- Reporting information to its connecting railroads and to the rest of the industry in a timely manner to ensure that the TRRA was not a “black hole”

Three hundred employees strong but hindered with an outmoded IT system, TRRA employed many manual processes to operate its business and communicate with customers. Shipping instructions and billing information sent via fax were re-keyed into TRRA’s system or dealt with by hand. Technology was more of a burden than a benefit, as TRRA’s outdated computing infrastructure couldn’t keep pace with the growing demands of the business.

#### ***Solution***

TRRA knew there was a better way to serve its customers and manage its business. The railroad turned to RMI for a new transportation technology system that would deliver real time operational and shipping information to TRRA management and customers. Recognized for its ability to deal with complex systems like TRRA’s, RMI quickly assessed TRRA’s current system and the needs of the business and put together a comprehensive solution to transform antiquated to state-of-the-art.

TRRA deployed two RMI RailConnect services: RailConnect Transportation Management and RailConnect Equipment Management Services. Transportation Management is used for yard and inventory control, managing local work / train crews, switch billing, demurrage billing and management reporting at all management levels. Additionally, TRRA deployed the web-based shipper interface that allows TRRA's customers to communicate shipping instructions and other requests electronically. Equipment Management Services were implemented to handle car hire payable accounting and car repair billing, two complex and time-consuming tasks.

The railroad also used RailConnect to provide full system integration, which mandated the development of several interfaces between RailConnect and existing applications within the complex TRRA technology infrastructure. For example, RMI developed an interface for TRRA's Hump Yard System "Pro Yard," which automatically classifies cars as they are handled through the hump yard. Additionally, RMI implemented an interface to TRRA's Digicon dispatching system, which automates the process of billing for haulage and trackage rights trains. RMI also developed an interface between RMI's Switch Billing, Trackage Billing, Demurrage Billing, and Repair Billing modules and TRRA's Lawson accounting system. Finally, RMI developed enhanced AEI interfaces that automatically create train consist information and generate switch billing charges.

### ***Outcome***

The new transportation technology system is a great success. Among the key benefits are:

- The elimination of hundreds of faxes a day. TRRA customers now communicate information through the Internet, automatically updating TRRA's system. More than 60 of TRRA's local customers are currently using the system, which also provides greater visibility of their shipments while they are on the TRRA
- Faster and more accurate car hire payable accounting and correct car repair billing, thanks to RailConnect's Equipment Management Services
- The ability to provide TRRA customers with clearer, faster visibility into their inventory and Class I customers with coordinated shipment scheduling
- A reduction of manual processing shortfalls and on-site technology needs
- Greater insight into the TRRA business to improve operational efficiencies

These significant gains, made possible by the deployment of RMI's RailConnect, have helped the railroad become more agile, efficient and better equipped to manage its business and meet its goals.