STEELWHEELS.CO™ | CHANGE THE QUESTION.

ADVISORY · OPERATIONS · IN THE FIELD

EXPOSURE READ 20 · OVERVIEW

THE BOOK OF BUSINESS

For the railroad that has to win its traffic, and keep it.

A read of a short line's traffic, customer by customer: what the line inherited, what it keeps, what it lost and why, which accounts still pay, and where new carloads come from. This overview sets out the question the Read answers and the seven things it examines.

07

WHAT WE EXAMINE

Each one read on your own line, one name at a time.

ISSUED BY
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THE RECORD No rule is cited on this page.

Animis opibusque parati.

§ 01 A SHORT LINE'S TRAFFIC IS A LIST OF NAMES

WHAT YOU CAME HERE FOR

> *What you came here for:* **How do we find new traffic for our line?**

You want more carloads, customers who stay, and a line that pays for its own track. *You want the railroad to grow instead of waiting for the next customer to call.*

And under it, mostly unsaid: you want to know why the ones who left actually left, and whether any of them would come back if someone asked.

§ 02 · THE QUESTION, RESTATED · *what the list has lost*

> *The question this Read asks:* **how many carloads we lost in recent years, and how many of the customers who stopped sending them anyone asked why.**

A large railroad's book of business is a market. A short line's is a list of names. *Every name on it is a share of the year, and the line is paid for by whoever is still on the list.* Not every share pays for the track it uses.

A railroad is obliged to carry what is offered to it. **Nothing obliges it to go and find the offer.** The traffic a short line inherits came with the line. The traffic it keeps, it earns, one switch at a time.

And a short line seldom loses its traffic all at once. It loses it one customer at a time, often without anyone asking the customer why.

So new traffic is the second question. The first is what the line has already lost, and whether anyone asked.

§ 03 EACH ONE READ ON YOUR OWN LINE, ONE NAME AT A TIME

WHAT WE EXAMINE

Seven things decide whether your book of business is growing or quietly closing. *Each is read in your own records, then customer by customer.*

	WHAT WE LOOK AT	WHY IT MATTERS TO YOUR LINE
01	How much of your traffic rests on your largest customers, and which of them still pay	A line that depends on a few names is only as durable as the least committed of them, and only as sound as the accounts that cover their cost.
02	Who has left or shrunk, and whether anyone asked why	A customer who leaves without being asked takes the reason with him.
03	Who near your line moves freight by road today, and which sites are still open	The next carload is often already moving, on a truck, within reach of your track, or still choosing a site.
04	Whether a customer can see his cars and his charges without calling	A customer who has to call to find his car is a customer counting the calls.
05	Who owns a complaint, and how fast it is answered	A complaint answered late is remembered longer than the failure that caused it.
06	When you last sat with each customer's plant manager	The plant manager decides how his freight moves, and he hears from the truckers every week.
07	What a prospect finds when he looks you up	A shipper looking for rail service reads your pages before he reads your rates.

§ 04 · WHAT THIS ADDS UP TO · *and how to reach us*

Seven things show what your line has lost, what it keeps and where its next carloads are. *The book is read one name at a time. Read it before a customer closes it for you.*

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Where the Wheels meet the Steel

The work is done on the day every customer on the line has been asked, by name, what would make him send one more car. The railroader who takes it reads your book customer by customer and talks to the names on it, signs what he finds and answers for it from the first day to the last, and after. Nobody we send learns railroading on your property. Write with the line, its customers and the one you would most like back. You will have a reply within one business day, from the principal and not from a form. Writing puts you on no list. If what we find says you have no problem, you will be told so, in so many words.

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FIND IT. NAME IT. DISSOLVE IT. · READ ON THE BALLAST, NOT THE CHART.

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