GUIDE

RAIL FLEET MANAGEMENT METRICS & ACTION

Executive Summary

Effective rail fleet management hinges on establishing and consistently tracking key metrics that drive actionable decisions. By implementing a strategic measurement system, organizations can identify underperforming assets, optimize cycle times, and reduce operational costs while improving service reliability. This cheat sheet provides rail fleet managers with essential metrics and practical action steps that can deliver 10-20% improvement in utilization and significant cost savings without acquiring additional assets.

THE IMPACT OF METRICS

Drive action and create value through measurement:

- Track performance with concise, actionable reports
- Match inventory precisely with forecasted and current loadings
- Leverage existing fleet for new markets without acquiring more cars
- 10-20% utilization improvement can yield significant savings

5 KEY METRICS FOR SUCCESS

Metric	What It Measures	Why It Matters
Fleet-to-loading ratio	Alignment between the car inventory and actual/forecasted loadings	Ensures optimal fleet size
Car miles per day	Distance covered by cars in 24-hour periods	Reveals velocity issues
Empty-to-load cycle time	Time required for empties to be loaded and available again	Identifies utilization gap
Delivery accuracy	Correct day, right location for car delivery at loading points	Improves customer satisfaction
Dwell time	Delays at terminals, customer facilities, and in transit	Pinpoints bottlenecks

ACTION STEPS FOR FLEET MANAGERS

Optimize Assets vs. Annual Loadings   01

- ✓ **Inventory audit**: Identify the status of each car (moving/storing product, idle, under repair)
- ✓ **Target underperformers**: Focus on 20% of your fleet not hitting metrics
- ✓ **Review lease rates**: Leverage current market conditions for better terms
- ✓ **Consider storage options**: Offer space for lessor's excess cars to enhance agreements

Make Fleet Performance Visible   02

- ✓ **Establish clear metrics**: Connect performance to dollar value
- ✓ **Set baseline & targets**: Create measurable improvement goals
- ✓ **Implement reporting cadence**: Maintain persistent focus on improvement
- ✓ **Partner with carriers**: Identify shared KPIs and secure commitments

Leverage Emerging Technologies   03

- ✓ **Identify tracking gaps**: Map 'black holes' in equipment monitoring
- ✓ **Evaluate data consistency**: Assess variability across different rail lines
- ✓ **Implement real-time data**: Use accurate ETAs to drive process improvements
- ✓ **Pioneer new solutions**: Explore opportunities as an industry 'test bed'