

# Setting Parked Locomotives in Motion

A Digital Sales Tools Story



**Wabtec**  
CORPORATION

## Aligning

- People
- Process
- MarTech

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# Fresh off the Corporate Express.

When I joined GE Transportation (now Wabtec) as the newly-appointed Digital Marketing Leader, I had a major **relevance problem.**

"I'm from Corporate,  
and **I'm here to Help!**"

Corporate had mandated that  
each business unit hire a digital  
transformer like me.

**But that didn't mean anyone in  
the business was happy about it.**

# A Lean Marketing Engine.

We had a grand total of three marketers for a \$5B business with 12,000 employees.

I was one of them, tasked with enabling hundreds of sales people and 1,000+ service reps.

# Few Stops, Major Players.

With only 6 customers in North America and 25 globally, ***every relationship was monumental.***  
And complicated.

In many markets, **our customer was the government!**

# A Long Freight Line to Consumers.

**B2B2B2B2B2.....C?**

If you followed the value chain from us, to our freight rail customer, to their customers' customers, you eventually got to a consumer. But it took awhile.

# An Idle Marketing Carriage.

Marketing was not viewed as an essential function. Our scope was reduced to:

- + Market Research.
- + Sales Enablement (called Sales Force Effectiveness back then).
- + Customer Marketing (but all those people were technically in Sales).

"So you're going to help us **sell locomotives on Facebook?** "

This was a genuine question from the engineer who showed me around the historic plant in Erie, Pennsylvania when I told him my role.

He wasn't alone in his confusion.

**The skepticism was palpable.**



# Distant signals from Manhattan.

My "digerati" buddies from the GE Corporate Digital Center of Excellence in NYC teased me about the digital immaturity of my business.

For starters, **the website was an embarrassment.** I was going to fix that, right?

# Parked Locomotives, collecting dust.

But the business had an existential challenge far more important. The high cost of diesel was driving a surplus in parked locomotives.

# A switch on the tracks of demand.

Customers no longer sought  
new locomotives.

They needed help optimizing  
their current fleet - a service  
we could offer, but struggled  
to market.

# Selling way out of our comfort zone.

- + Our seasoned sales guys (and two women) had no clue how to sell software.
- + They could configure a top-of-the-line, multimillion locomotive buildout in their sleep.
- + Selling software and services to maximize a customer's existing assets and operations? They didn't know where to start.

Bright, shiny  
iPads... also  
collecting dust.

As part of a Corporate initiative, all the sales reps received iPads to use as selling tools.

But when I joined, the head of IT explained to me that no one was using them for actual work.

# The right track: Digital Sales Tools.

My path to relevance for this business and the digital strategy clarified all at once.

***We would create iPad app sales tools*** to enable sales of software and solutions.

# Killer apps to get the gears in motion.

Over 18 months, we developed 15 different iPad apps. ***Calculators, configurators, and a Virtual War Room*** for customer and market intelligence sharing.

Sales went from using their iPads as coasters to considering them a **must-have for any customer conversation.**

# Our business had its own 'parked locomotives...'

Unused iPads and a hesitant  
sales team.

We harnessed these  
resources, proving that we  
***didn't need a big marketing  
budget or team to innovate.***



People → Process →  
Technology. In that  
order. *Always.*

- + Understanding our salespeople's comfort zones and limitations was the first step.
- + We then refined the process to make it comfortable for them.
- + Finally, we brought in technology.
- + But it all started with understanding our people.

Most businesses  
have their own  
'parked  
locomotives.'

It often takes the  
form of **Underused  
MarTech.**

# The 'parked MarTech' dilemma.

Most businesses today are awash with MarTech and aren't making full use of it.

Before adding more to the pile, first aim to optimize what you already have.

**What assets and resources  
might you unearth?**

# Upskilling & Collaboration.

We brought together teams from IT, marketing, and sales to create our apps.

We upskilled the sales force to use new technology effectively.

And with this collaboration, we were able to make remarkable progress, ***even with a tiny marketing budget.***

# Marketing can happen anywhere.

Many organizations have a tiny or nonexistent marketing team, because it's not viewed as an essential function.

***But that doesn't have to be an excuse to give up on marketing activities.***

It's about utilizing assets creatively, upskilling teams, and cross-functional collaboration.

# Misfortunate marketer or destiny?

Whether bad luck or because I was always meant to do what I do now, this has happened more than once in my career.

I've often had the dubious honor of leading an unfunded and understaffed marketing function.

# Mining the Acres of Diamonds.

Like in Russell Conwell's famous speech, I have always believed every business holds untapped resources.

Diamond-in-the rough people who get overlooked, processes that are *this close* to working. And parked assets collecting dust.

# What are the 'parked locomotives' in *your* business?

Let's work together to *set them in motion.*

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