Flexible rail freight transport - a contradiction?
28.10.2011 Michael Lückenbach
Contargo at a Glance

Founded: 2004
Workforce: 400
Transport volume p.a.: 1 Mio. TEU
Inland container terminals: 18
Inland container shipping lines: 4
Inland container rail lines: 2
Actual Situation / Drivers of efficient “inflexible” hinterland traffic

Drivers...

Ocean carriers

Seaport terminals

Rail operators

Usage-efficiency

Significant factors...

- Size of vessels (Triple E-Class)
- Increase in “Moves per call”
- Limited handling/yard resources
- Slot availabilities sometimes critical
- Limited capacities (train paths, tractions, equipment, staff...)
- Lean Production (Shuttles...)
- Reducing cycle times

Source: HHM, H.J. Hettchen
Source: HHM, M. Lindner
Flexible rail freight transport – A basic necessity for …

Core Products like Contargo’s

- Peaks
- Low/High water Periods
- Customized Solutions
- Empty Positioning
- Cases like “Waldhof/Loreley”

Win/Win for both transport modes

Flexible rail transport is NOT A CONTRADICTION

Source: WVA Bingen
Experience of flexible rail freight transports from Contargo’s view

- Effective possibility to master different short term and medium term situations

- Benefits from advantages of deregulation of the railway sector

- Operability, e.g. depends on:
  - Available resources (traction, wagons...)
  - Flexibility of terminals (Seaport, Hinterland)

- Advantages outweigh the increased need for co-ordination along the transport chain

- Flexibility can be “scheduled” and is basically competitive
Concrete examples of flexible rail freight transports – Low water + “Waldhof/Loreley”

- Fast initialization of flexible Shuttle connections
- Restoring effectiveness (Area Mannheim/Ludwigshafen) by using own rail shuttles
- All services in one hand (Advantage: Contargo’s Trimodality)

- Initialization of various flexible Shuttle connections with several partners
- Maintaining basic “Barge” programme by using rail shuttles in selected areas
- Combination of trimodal and intermodal benefits
Contargo’s Basel-Multimodal-Express (BME) Flexibility – Door to regular solutions with potential

- February 2011: Contargo launched a regular trimodal rail solution between Basel and the Western Seaports
  - Previously: Connection was first implemented as a flexible solution during Low Water/High Water and the Waldhof case

- Flexible in the seaport by inland barge – fast over long-distances by rail
  - BME avoids rail congestion at seaports by using Barge connections

- System can be expanded flexibly in different cases
  - e.g. as direct trains to/from seaports
Conclusion - Important parameters for future development

- Extension of highly-frequented and cyclical shuttle systems
  - Ideal for large flows of containers (e.g. Roundtrip)

- Maximum use of rail capacities (train paths, train length…)

- Buffer planning for flexible solutions
  - Highly-developed systems create risks which endanger both themselves and also systems which are not directly affected

- Flexibility: very often an opener for regular solutions

- Finding a balance between “industrial rail solutions” and flexible systems: *Diversification is the key, less one-size-fits-all approaches!*
Thanks for your attention.

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