

THE CULTURAL NEWSLETTER FOR WABTEC EMPLOYEES

SAME TRACK



FRONTLINE SPOTLIGHT
Course Correction

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The Leading Through Change Issue
Q2 2025



LEADER LETTER

Welcome to Freight Operations

Over the last few months, you've probably heard about the creation of the Freight Operations organization, which combines the Freight Equipment and Freight Services Operations teams into one. Many of you have been a part of my organization for a long time and are familiar with *Same Track*, but for over 3,000 of you, this is your first issue, so welcome!

Same Track is the newsletter for frontline employees in Freight Operations. It includes articles focusing on frontline accomplishments across our organization, videos with managers, interviews with various leaders, and more. You're the ones pushing us forward every day, and *Same Track* is one way we celebrate that and give the organization examples to follow.

This month's edition is all about our new direction with the Freight Operations organization and the journey to become One Wabtec. You'll get to learn more about our platform leaders, get a deep dive into Mehul Mehta's perspective on the Locomotive Assembly platform, and hear from managers about what it's like to lead through big changes. Plus, you'll get a detailed look at how the Contagem site vastly improved its metrics across the board over the last few quarters, directly from the employees on the floor.

We're excited for this change and the potential that it brings for Wabtec, for all of our employees, and for our customers. We expect to deliver faster, with better quality and higher efficiency as we find better ways to harness the knowledge of employees like you throughout our teams. I know I can count on your commitment to raising the bar with our new, more integrated, even more collaborative organization.

Thanks for all you do,

Justin Downs
Global Freight Operations Leader

In the first edition of *Same Track* for the new Global Freight Operations org, Justin Downs shares his excitement for what we can accomplish.



Course Correction

Check out the ways the team at Contagem turned their site around after a difficult 2024.

Last year our Contagem site was struggling. Due to a myriad of obstacles like port strikes, materials shortages, and logistical bottlenecks, the site accumulated delays and suffered from low production efficiency. The leadership of the site knew that changes must be made in just about every element of the business.

Since then, Contagem has recovered from the downturn, going from seven consecutive quarters of negative results to two quarters of positive performance, with productivity jumping from 58% to 68%. All of this change would not have been possible without radical changes in all sections of the operation, so we reached out to Contagem's Materials, Planning, and Manufacturing leaders to find out what their process was to get the site back on track.

Big obstacles

The site's issues started with shortages that were difficult to navigate. "One of the main challenges we faced in Materials last year was managing the impact of external disruptions, such as port and airport strikes, which significantly delayed inbound shipments," says Caroline.

While Materials at any of our sites regularly deal with external obstacles due to global events, this particular materials crisis was coupled with a sharp increase in demand volume. "The uptick in demand put pressure on our planning and inventory management processes," says Raquel. "While at the same time, we had a large number of new employees coming in."

The issues that the Materials platform was facing quickly affected the Manufacturing platform's efficiency and ability to get their orders out on time. "The material shortage led to accumulated delays and impacted production efficiency," says Charles. "Limited visibility into the situation affected team engagement and complicated decision-making."

Seeing a problem and bringing about change

Upon evaluating all these issues, Planning began to assess damages and find a way to right the course. "We knew that to turn things around, we couldn't just tweak a few processes — we had to rethink how we worked," says José.

On the Materials side, leadership connected with other business units to build more efficient and productive collaboration. "We focused on improving cross-functional collaboration, enhancing our planning accuracy, and stabilizing our internal processes to



Caroline Gurjão

Senior Materials Planning and Execution Manager



Raquel Araujo

Materials Technical Advisor



Charles Medeiros

BL New Locomotives and Modernizations



Dyego Porto

Manufacturing Manager II



José Augusto Ferraz

Senior Manager, Production Planning and Control



Marina Faria

Production Planning and Control

“We knew that to turn things around, we couldn’t just tweak a few processes — we had to rethink how we worked.”

— José Augusto Ferraz

implement more robust follow-up mechanisms with suppliers and logistics,” says Caroline. “The restructured team helped us respond faster to changes in supply and demand.”

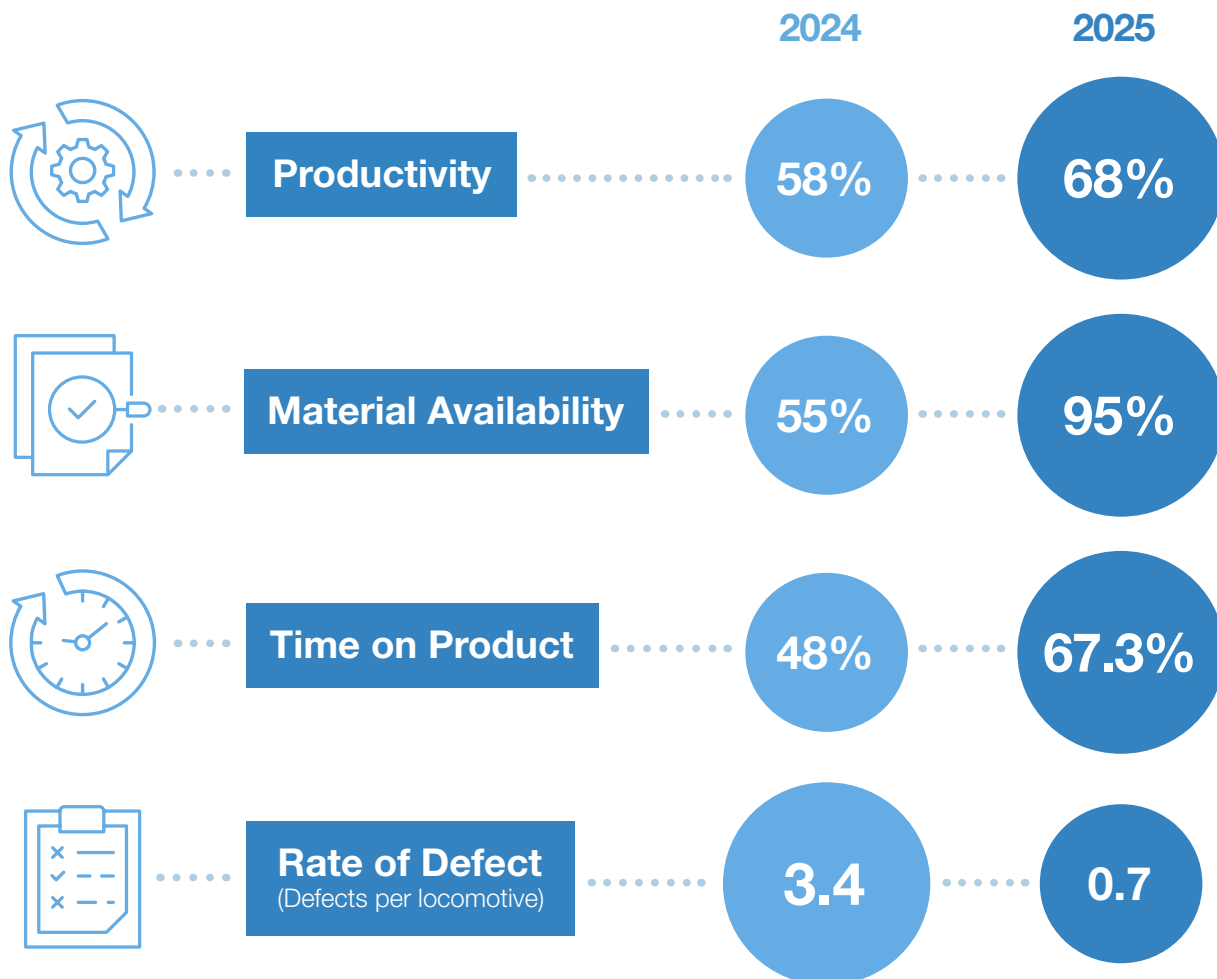
With Manufacturing and Materials having a stronger cross-functional workflow, the teams could stabilize their operation and focus their efforts toward finding pain points in their Standard Work processes. Dyego explains: “We started making decisions and managing the site based on data. Instead of simply observing a situation and reacting based on experience, we adopted a structured approach driven by concrete information.”

Finding success

An important element of improving Contagem’s productivity was using our frontline employee’s technical knowledge to identify bottlenecks throughout our processes. Raquel says, “The front line’s involvement in daily problem-solving helped us react quickly to supply disruptions and adjust priorities in real time.”

Marina and José say the successful realignment of Contagem was a team effort across the entire site. “The turnaround was possible because we stopped operating in silos and started acting as one team,” says José. “The Planning team was part of this integration, promoting real connections with Manufacturing, Materials, Quality, and Logistics. This collaborative approach, guided by data and purpose, is the essence of what we call One Wabtec: one team, one mission, one result.”

Contagem’s numbers have improved in many of its key KPIs. “More than metrics, these results represent the consolidation of a new culture,” says Marina. “We’re building a culture on data-driven collaboration. We’re committed to consistently delivering value to the customer and the business.”



What Does This Change Mean?

Mehul Mehta discusses the recent Freight Operations reorganization and its effects on the business and our teams.



Mehul Mehta

Group Vice President
Operations

In the wake of the Freight Operations reorg, Mehul Mehta, Group Vice President – Operations, will lead the Locomotive Assembly platform, where he will oversee all global locomotive assembly sites.

Mehul started with Wabtec 22 years ago as a summer intern at the Erie site. Early in his career, he joined the LEAD program, worked in materials, was the business leader and plant leader for Erie Mining, and led Service Operations in Las Vegas before moving to GE Aviation. After that, Mehul returned to Wabtec to lead International Locomotive Operations.

Before the Freight Operations reorganization, Mehul was working for our North American Transit P&L, where he worked to create synergies for both customers and the company. Now, he's finally returning to his roots in locomotives, leading the Locomotive Assembly platform. We caught up with Mehul and got his thoughts on the reorganization and the upcoming changes employees can expect in the years to come.

What's going on?

One of the first thing employees often ask when faced with organizational change is: What does this mean for me? How will this affect my day-to-day interactions with my team? Surprisingly, Mehul and the rest of the leadership team say there won't be much change in day-to-day operations, except the creation of more synergies across the Locomotive Platform. "The reality is that there will be very little, if any, immediate change for most of our teams," Mehul says. "What we're asking of everyone, both leadership and employees alike, is to shift our focus to unlocking the full potential of the entire structure."

For that reason, these changes could be framed less as a business reorganization and more as an opportunity for reflection and experimentation. "Now is our chance to look across the entire platform, learn from each other, and steal shamelessly," says Mehul. "If someone is solving a problem better, why not apply that learning everywhere?"

This can be truly transformative

One of the biggest reasons for the Freight Operations reorganization is to break down silos so we can increase our overall efficiency. Mehul says all of this is centered around making the customer experience better. "Customers matter. They pay our bills. We can get a bad product out the door at an exorbitant cost, but that's not going to help us in the long run," says Mehul. "I would like to reinforce the idea of customer, customer, customer."



"The reality is that there will be very little, if any, immediate change for most of our teams."

Mehul says he's excited about the prospect of what this new organization can do for our customers. "We find ourselves at an exciting and pivotal crossroads in our company's journey," says Mehul. "From creating synergies across all locomotive sites to driving standardization, optimizing capacity, and enhancing efficiency, the potential to make a lasting impact is tremendous. This is an exciting time to be part of something truly transformative."

Experimenting to find the answers

One of the things Mehul stressed the most was the exciting uncertainty of these changes. "Many times, employees across the organization think that the leaders know all the answers. We don't have all the answers, but the creation of Freight Operations is a part of the process of discovering those answers."

The goal, in the end, is for our operations to be seamless, and Mehul thinks finding a seamless process requires experimentation and fluidity. "There may be a preconceived notion that we've found a solution and executed it with this singular organizational change," Mehul says, "But that's not really the case."

Mehul stresses that these changes are meant to be malleable, and while the leadership team is excited about what these changes could bring, they're also ready to switch lanes if things aren't working. "We're just at the beginning of this journey, and with this change, there will be a lot of learning and experimentation" says Mehul. "What matters most right now is that we remain patient, keep asking questions, and engage in open dialogue with the collective goal of benefiting the entire Locomotive Platform, Freight Operations organization, and, ultimately, the company as a whole."

Mehul in Marhowra with CEO Rafael Santana



Mehul's career journey

- 2003 Started as a summer intern in Erie
- 2004 Participated in the LEAD program
- 2006 Materials Technical Advisor
- 2007 Business Leader
- 2009 Materials Manager
- 2012 Plant Manager in Erie
- 2014 Plant Manager in Las Vegas
- 2016 Moving to GE Aviation as Executive, Materials Planning and Execution
- 2019 Back to Wabtec as VP Operations Management — International Freight
- 2023 VP Transit North American Operations
- 2025 Now the Group Vice President—Operations with the creation of Freight Operations

Growing Through Uncertainty

Managers in Arteaga, Erie, and Fort Worth reflect on some of the biggest challenges they've faced in their careers and how their teams adapted.



When's a time you've had to lead through change?

Carlos: One of the hardest moments I've faced as a leader was the beginning of the pandemic. Our business was deemed essential, so we had to continue working

under new safety and environment conditions. We're a very united team — we pulled together as a team to investigate these new requirements, then met at the beginning of every shift to communicate every change and make sure we were always on the same page.

Diana: The biggest change I've had to lead through was the Wabtec and GE merger. The team faced a lot of uncertainty, fear, and anxiety in that time, so it was tough keeping everybody focused on the day-to-day plan. It took a lot of communication and listening, and being there to answer their questions, especially in the face of rumors that could have been destructive. It took a few months for everyone to really have that sense that everything was going to be okay, but it was a huge achievement when we did.

Carlos Ovalle with the Engineering team in Arteaga



Carlos Ovalle

Advanced Manufacturing/
New Project Manager
Arteaga, Mexico



Diana Kitchen

Business Leader
Erie, USA



Gerardo Gonzalez Garza

Business Leader
Fort Worth, USA

Gerardo: For me, like a lot of people, the biggest change was COVID. The business changed a lot, we had new safety rules, we had a broken supply chain, and many people working remotely — everything was changing. I was working with two teams, one in Fort Worth and one in Mexico, at the time, and the teams responded pretty differently because of some of the unique challenges each was facing.

In the US, when we weren't able to get the necessary materials to be able to build, we had to totally change the ways we planned, and we had to work on keeping adaptable, open minds. With the Mexico team, they had materials but much stricter social distancing guidelines, so we had to come up with very detailed plans to complete builds with a small crew. In both cases, we focused a lot on clear, consistent communication, and I think that's the most important thing you can do as a leader when you're facing change.



What are some of the challenges teams tend to face when met with change?

Carlos: The first is always resistance to change. It's natural to avoid the unknown and even be afraid. As leaders and teams, we can address that by looking back on the past experiences where we've succeeded together, and building confidence based on the past that we can make anything possible together.

Diana: Change is really difficult for some of us, right? It's the uncertainty of what the change will bring and knowing there are things we don't have control over. That's why I try to help my teams focus on what we can control — I think that eases that anxiety and helps us push through to what's next.

Gerardo: There are always people who are going to be concerned, and it makes sense. They'll be afraid of losing their jobs, or not getting paid, or something else that can happen. As a manager, our biggest responsibility is to give them clarity and, as much as possible, peace of mind. Be very honest and candid. People respond well to that, and they know when you're telling them the truth.



What advice do you have for frontline employees going through change?

Carlos: My group, the Engineering team, receives lots of engineering changes and needs to constantly be open to changing the process to give the customer what they're asking for. My team stays ready for that by focusing on close communication, whether it's within the team or with the engineering departments in India, the US, and Brazil. We are always communicating with them every single day to make sure we're receiving and agreeing on all the requirements.

Diana: In addition to focusing on what you can control, I encourage them to leave the outside noise in the background. When you can leave the rumors and the what-may-happens alone, you can focus on the things in your control and get a real sense of accomplishment. And focus on the positive instead of dwelling on the negative.

Gerardo: Listen to your leaders and, if you have questions, don't be afraid to ask. Your managers are here for you. They might not have all the answers, but they'll do their best for you.



Check out the Managers' Roundtable video on the digital version of *Same Track*.

Diana Kitchen with her team in Erie after winning the Ergo Cup



Meet the Platform Leaders

Our new platform leaders have extensive careers with Wabtec, and have taken on challenging assignments throughout their careers to prepare for this.



Mehul Mehta

Locomotive
Assembly Leader

- 22 years of operations experience
- Began as a summer intern at Wabtec
- Has worked in Materials, Service Operations, GE Aviation, Locomotives, and Transit

Operations is where the rubber meets the road. The things we do are what our customers think of when they think of Wabtec. That means we own the results.

— Mehul



Mike Bratt

Propulsion and
Motors Leader

- 33 years of operations experience
- Majority of time with Wabtec in supply chain and quality
- Former Erie plant manager

Each plant has its own culture — be open to the idea that your way might not be the only way.

— Mike



Justin Sokol

Engines Leader

- 27 years of operations experience
- Spent early career in GE Lighting before Wabtec merger
- Former Cleveland Service Shop plant manager and Grove City site manager

Over my 27 years of service, I've found that treating people like they're our most valuable asset is the most important thing.

— Justin



Jeff Smith

Controls and
Components Leader

- 28 years of operations experience
- Experience in field service, new manufacturing, and UX remanufacturing
- Moved across the country multiple times to take on new roles

I always say we need to block and tackle well to have a shot at winning. In other words, if we don't do the fundamentals well, we're probably not going to be in a position to do something special.

— Jeff