

Hector Rail optimizes engine use with Åkerström's Locomote

CUSTOMER TESTIMONIAL – HECTOR RAIL

"Precision and sensitivity are crucial when handling such gigantic forces," says Petter Hydén, an engineer at Hector Rail. "Drivers want total control of the locomotive's movements. And that's exactly what they get with Locomote—a wireless remote control solution."

The Hector Rail transport company was launched in 2004. Its business concept? To offer total rail operations for freight. Consequently, Hector Rail provides turnkey services with locomotives, drivers, and sometimes wagons as well. Its customers include large companies such as ERS Railways and EuroShuttle (transport) and ScandFibre Logistics, SCA, and Stora Enso (forestry).

"Various transports demand certain types of locomotives," says Hydén. "And a key part our strategy is to always offer the right locomotive for each project. That way, we can offer high-quality cost-effective solutions."

Hector Rail's strategy requires a large selection of locomotive – from super-modern electric locomotives to trusty old diesel locomotives like BR142s.

Hector Rail is based in Sweden and transports freight to Denmark, Germany, and Norway. The Høegh family owns most of Hector Rail. And according to Hydén, Hector Rail's growth has skyrocketed since its start in 2004. As of November 2008, the company had nearly 40 locomotives and 70 locomotive drivers.

Locomotives communicate with each other

Hydén says that Hector Rail greatly benefits from remote control of locomotives provided by Åkerströms Björbo. Remote control is safer and more efficient than traditional shunting. Using Åkerströms' Locomote, drivers can stand in the shunting yard and maneuver trains using a joystick – equipment that's carried in a belt around their waists.

"Personally, I think it's fascinating how you can control 90-ton giants with a joystick," says Hydén.

Hydén says that Hector Rail sometimes uses double locomotives to enable extra pulling power. With this setup, Locomote



steers the first locomotive, which then communicates with the locomotive on the backend. That way, one person can steer two locomotives that together pull 30 wagons that weight 90 tons each!

"Safety is a big concern," says Hydén, "so we have a rigorous, highly developed safety concept that's partly implemented via Locomote and partly via a locomotive's steering and control system."

Optimal solution

Hector Rail selected Locomote from Åkerströms Björbo for two reasons: (1) they needed the solution immediately, which required a supplier that could make fast deliveries; and (2) the drivers preferred working with Åkerströms. Hydén is delighted about the choice and says that the partnership with Åkerströms Björbo worked well from day one.

"The first-class staff at Björbo has extensive technical experience and expertise, and they're quick on their feet," says Hydén.

He also reports several benefits from the Locomote solution. Besides being a robust, standard system, it's built to enable simple, safe customization for various requirements.

"Thanks to Locomote, we have a standard solution, which is optimized for our needs and requirements. For example, we added brake testing functionality, leveling out the main pipe and filling stroke. Locomote and its built-in functions let us optimize our locomotives."

Secure partner

Right now, Hector Rail is using remote control in Sweden; soon it will be implemented in Norway. According to Hydén, it's highly likely that Locomote will also be implemented in Denmark and Germany.

"A lot of customization must be done, but it's totally possible because the system is flexible. In addition, Åkerströms can offer Locomote 100, which has EU certification."

Hydén and his Hector Rail colleagues don't just have faith in Locomote: they also trust the capabilities and capacity of the developers at Åkerströms Björbo.

"Åkerströms understands us and our operation. It has the know-how we need. We always get good service. Åkerströms is fast, and it has many really top-notch technicians that know and do everything!"

