

across America. This meant that each piece of rolling stock might be connected to any other company's stock, including the brake systems. But how to persuade several dozen companies to adopt the new system?

Westinghouse examined the routings of railroads across the country to see where the main nexus of rail transport was. This turned out to be Chicago, where rail links from the West and the prairies brought cattle to the slaughterhouses, and rail links to the Eastern cities carried the meat to the tables of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. The same links moved manufactured goods from the East to the new towns and ranches in the West.

The Burlington Railroad was the company that had opened up the West, operating trains across the prairies: if Burlington accepted the new system, Eastern railways would have to go along as well, or would have to unload and reload boxcars in Chicago. After running a series of demonstrations, Westinghouse persuaded Burlington to adopt the system—thus forcing every other railroad operator in America to do the same. Many engineers still believe that the vacuum brake is superior to Westinghouse's air brake, because it responds faster—Westinghouse's success came from becoming the industry standard.

In practice

- Make sure you have identified the real key account.
- Be prepared to offer concessions if necessary—the key account is likely to know that they are the key to your success, and will negotiate strongly.
- All your eggs are in one basket—don't drop the basket!
- A superior product, of itself, is not sufficient: even an inferior product will succeed if it becomes the standard.