



BEST ROADWAYS LIMITED
Mobilizing Your Growth

COVERING LETTER

Our company was the first to pioneer the concept of manufacturing ISO-containers for our own fleet, thereby fundamentally transforming the whole trucking operations in India post the economic liberalization in 1991.

It is to inform the readers of this case study about the peculiarity of the circumstances that prevailed in the early 1990s in the road freight industry in general and Best Roadways in particular.

Prior to 1991, no transport company in India would be positioned to provide a written guarantee to their clients of no threats arising from pilferage, leakage or damage of their goods in-transit.

None ever thought of building fixed body containers on their fleet.

It's a classic example of how one thing leads to another, and ultimately what started out as a strong belief in our founder's thought turned out to be a breakthrough in the transport industry.

It completely revolutionized how trucks look, feel and function in our country, which would later go on to be replicated by fellow transporters riding piggyback on our successful belief.

Punjab body or Andhra body truck in today's world is all passé.

Even a single truck owner today would have a fixed steel container body attached to his truck's chassis.

But back then, this was not a common practice... Read on for more.

We just thought that the credit ought to be given where it had been long overdue. This forms the purpose of drafting this case study.



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CASE STUDY #77 – PIONEERING CONTAINERISED FLEET
OPERATIONS IN INDIA (1991)

Challenges and problems faced in traditional fleet operations (1990s) –

A majority of the clients that are served by Best Roadways, is a representation of the EXIM trade community, including the customs house agents and exporters / importers.

The major products we transport for such clients comprise of handicrafts, textiles, and other durable goods, which are of a very high value.

Often during the monsoon season, the entire FTL consignment that would be loaded and sheltered by a tarpaulin cover on a standard Punjab body truck, would get rejected at the time of the delivery at the port because of moist and sometimes decomposition.

Often in many other cases, theft or hijacking was a common practice – a part number of cartons loaded in the same Punjab body truck would end up missing at the time of the delivery.

With a growing number of such concerns and complaints coming from our EXIM clients, we were deeply worried about our reputation in the market.

To mitigate these threats, we came up with an idea- a unique selling proposition at that time, a breakthrough in the Indian road freight context that would later go on to revolutionize the entire industry in the country for years to come.

What is this idea –

In 1991, Best Roadways became the first registered transport company in India to pioneer its own ISO-containerized fleet operations in the country.



Tata LPT 1610 Modified by ISO Fixed Body Container

What is so special about ISO containers –

Freedom from in-transit

- 1) PILFERAGE OR LARGE SCALE THEFT
- 2) LEAKAGE OR SEEPAGE
- 3) DAMAGE OR SABOTAGE

No transport company in the 1990s would give an assurance to its client in writing that there would be zero likelihood of any theft, leakage or damage from taking place.

We were the first to give such assurances to our clients, backed by our strong belief in our new service offering.

Own ISO Steel Container Manufacturing Workshop in Haryana:

Best Roadways builds its own version of shipping-line containers at its sprawling workshop in Sangwari, Haryana, with the ONLY difference being that of a lighter weight vis-à-vis a standard 20' shipping container.



20' Standard Shipping Container

The idea behind lighter weight is to not compromise with the load capacity of our trucks. Unlike the shipping containers that are more damage-prone because of constant crane lifting and stacking, the question of wear and tear does not arise for the fixed body containers- they remain fixed on the chassis throughout the lifetime of the truck.

The quality of the steel used however, remains on par with that of any shipping container- they are corrosion resistant and ISO-certified ('Cor-ten' or 'weathering steel' is a well-known proprietary grade steel that is used to make shipping containers)

The high quality of the steel that we use enhances the life of the container and gives resistance against bumps and bents.



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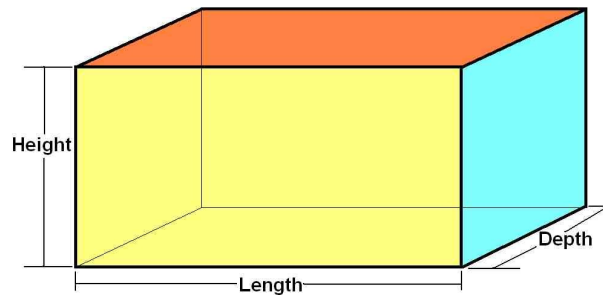
Wooden Containers & Tarpaulin Covers



ISO – Certified Fixed Body Steel Containers



Most of our efforts to build a container are gone into the their welding process, in which the steel sheets are hammered, pressed, corrugated and welded together under a careful scrutiny of our quality control engineers.



The resulting product is a monocoque cuboid with-

- a) corner castings,
- b) purin-reinforced plywood floors
- c) forklift pockets
- d) steel corrugated sheet sidewalls, roof and back panel

Best Containers are 99.99% airtight and waterproof from its 8 edges (the doors excluded) – giving at least a 69% guarantee that the goods sheltered inside won't get pilfered with, leaked or damaged from either side of the container. Rubber-flap doors on well-placed hinges mitigate the remaining 30% likelihood of these threats from occurring.



Our own company seal is placed on the doors after loading, which are to be opened only at the point of unloading, which is at our transshipment hub in Nhava Sheva, Navi Mumbai.



Company Seal

(As an additional security feature, we are currently testing a range of door sensing products that could be integrated to our vehicle tracking system, and would indicate us on our systems online whenever the doors are opened or shut)



MIXTURE OF 32', 28', 24', SINGLE AXLE, MULTI AXLE TRUCKS STATIONED AT JNPT



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What difference did containerized fleet operations make to our business, our customers and to others in our fraternity –

The significance of our one-time unique selling proposition has been far reaching from the point of view of our customers to our competitors, to even the single truck operators.

Everyone in the industry benefitted immensely by this commoditization process of fixed body container operations in the country.

- 1) Our customers lauded this mass innovation in the way we operate our fleet

“We gained an advantage that took many years for our competitors to match and one that gave our customers their own competitive advantage...”
– J.K. Gupta (Director, Best Roadways).

- 2) Best Roadways became synonymous with ‘Western-style’ trucking operations

“Woh container body wale transporter...”, was often the reaction from within our industry in the truck brokering market.

- 3) Our competitors started emulating our approach on their own fleet

What started as a very basic idea derived from a very common problem, became a mass hysteria...

Today, even a single truck operator would have a fixed-body steel container on the back of his truck, rather than a Punjab-body or an Andhra-body medieval era truck.



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Simple imagination, resourcefulness and originality put in to practice have all brought us to where we are today. Because of a well-recognized market presence, a strong service portfolio and a rich history, whatever plans and policies be envisioned by Best Roadways in recent past, more often than not they have met with emulation by new and emergent transport companies in India.



PIONEERS OF ISO 40' FIXED BODY CONTAINERISED VEHICLES

Everyday, through both our actions and our advocacy, we work to turn futuristic dreams into modern reality, setting new benchmarks in the industry.

And to think of fixed body steel containers in 1991, we would say, was still a futuristic idea at that time, a new benchmark of the nineties.



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OUR FOUNDER WHO FIRST PIONEERED CONTAINERISED FLEET OPERATIONS IN THE COUNTRY



OPERATIONS & TRAFFIC TEAM AT BEST TRUCK TERMINAL & WAREHOUSING COMPLEX, JNPT

**** THANK YOU ****