Premium vs. Economy Grade Brake Linings

For many years fleets have wrestled with the trade-offs between specifying a premium grade brake lining vs. saving money with an economy grade friction material. Today, a friction kit with a top performing premium brand lining like Marathon's Heat Star can cost almost twice as much as an economy grade product. So, it's got to be tough to justify going with that top-of-the-line product, right?

Wrong! You start with the lining's performance features of brake fade, effectiveness and power that give you confidence in stopping power and recovery. Add in the lining's durability and consistent wear characteristics and you become more comfortable that you'll pass unexpected brake inspections. And of course there's the often overlooked drum compatibility and wear factor. Ok, so the premium grade lining will perform better, but we still must deal with cost. And twice as much is hard to justify.

Or is it? Industry leading friction material's like Heat Star deliver a long lining life that can help you extend brake reline cycles. For example, in a typical varied 23,000 lb. application, Heat Star will run 500,000 to 600,000 miles before needing to be replaced. A typical economy grade lining will wear out after 250,000 to 300,000 miles. As the Return On Investment (ROI) analysis below shows, a longer service life with a drum friendly lining like Heat Star will actually save you significant money over a typical 3 year maintenance cycle.

Before your fleet spec's an economy grade lining, be sure they understand how to save REAL money by going with an industry leader like Heat Star!

Premium vs. Economy Grade ROI Analysis

Example below based on a married tractor and trailer (5 axles, 23,000 lb. rating) with a three year maintenance cycle traveling 750,000 miles.

	Economy Grade Friction 2 brake jobs		**Heat Star™ Premium Grade** 1 brake job	
Friction Material	$45.00/friction kit (2 lined shoes + hardware kit) x 10 wheel ends $450/brake job x 2 brake jobs =	**$900**	$70.00/friction kit (2 lined shoes + hardware kit) x 10 wheel ends $700/brake jobs x 1 brake job =	**$700**
Labor and Overhead	10 hrs./brake job x $110/hr (hourly labor rate + overhead) $1,110 x number of brake jobs x 2 brake jobs =	**$2,200**	10 hrs./brake job x $110/hr (hourly labor rate + overhead) $1,100 x number of brake jobs x 1 brake job =	**$1,100**
Drums Replace drum every other brake job	Replace all drums once $150/drum x 10 wheel ends =	**$1,500**	No drum replacement =	**$0**
	Economy Grade Life Cycle Costs	**$4,600**	**Heat Star Life Cycle Costs**	**$1,800**

Heat Star life cycle savings
$2,800*

* This life cycle financial analysis does not include vehicle downtime and improved tire wear. Both of these issues are positively affected by Premium Grade Friction and could result in significant additional $ savings.