The Value In Asking For Help

Taking on too many responsibilities is never going to be a benefit to your employees.

Anna Wells, Editor, IMPO

"It's true that many training initiatives are only successful with the complete support of the organization. This doesn't mean there aren't industry experts to rely on to conduct and follow-up on the training procedures." **-Anna Wells**

In this segment, our editors square off on timely issues relating to industrial maintenance and plant operation. The editorial staff would like to stress that we are not intending to specifically endorse any one viewpoint, however our intent is only to encourage dialogue by showing a point-counter-point on contentious issues.

For today's manufacturers, dealing with increasingly technical equipment and maintenance procedures, coupled with a shortage in skilled workers, most likely puts employee know-how at a critical place in the list of priorities for success.

While it's true that many training initiatives [1] are only successful with the complete support of the organization and full 'top-down' commitment, this doesn't

mean there aren't industry experts to rely on to conduct and follow-up on the training procedures.

In the end, it comes down to the shape of your particular organization. Some facilities put company culture at such a premium that they find it necessary to tailor-make training programs. Others—perhaps with a fluid or seasonal workforce—can get away with more general methods. In these cases, rather than take the onus of responsibility, why not utilize the myriad resources available when it comes to training?

In relationship to technical areas, many distributors will be willing to come in and conduct training programs—this is beneficial to you and your employees because it teaches your workers how to use these machines usually utilizing the expertise of the company who builds it. It's also in the distributor's best interest to put qualified folks in front of those machines—more know-how means, in the end, fewer emergency maintenance calls. Even small component manufacturers, more and more, are also disseminating resources in the form of webcasts, white papers, and through a bigger web presence. Need tips on how to best cut costs in bearings, or better maintain conveyer motors? Go straight to the source, and see what your equipment manufacturer has to say.

Another resource to utilize, especially when the powers-that-be start pushing for another continuous improvement approach, are consultants. Sometime consultants get a bad rap, but industry-wide, many of them house a lot of knowledge in particular areas such as Six Sigma, Lean, or project management—and have years of experience. Some consultants can create a program for your facility that feels as though they are full-time staff—by literally embedding the new initiatives into the workforce, and conducting the necessary follow-up until the new processes and procedures become second-nature to your employees.

At the end of the day, you want your day to end—meaning, taking on too many responsibilities is never going to be a benefit to your employees. In-house training programs are great, if they can be managed with adequate time and resources, but don't be afraid to lean on other outlets.

Click here to read Product Design & Development Editor David Mantey's take on training. [1]

Comments? Email *IMPO* Editor, Anna Wells: anna.wells@advantagemedia.com. **[2]**

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