

Workforce Development

Helping You To Meet Your Workforce Challenges

Training the Next Generation: The Need for Professional Development

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Professional development and staff training are important to the success of every shop. Professional development ensures employees maintain appropriate certifications, knowledge, safety and ethics in the professional environment. The goal of professional development is to have a qualified staff. Qualified employees have the skills needed to deliver the highest quality of service to our customers. This can be accomplished by establishing training programs, workshops and ongoing educational opportunities. This benefits the company as a whole by improving productivity, culture and customer loyalty while helping employees achieve their highest and best performance.

Establish a Training Program

Establish a training program that identifies the necessary requirements to be fulfilled. Safety training, technical competency and performance techniques are all possible deliverables. By providing this kind of training, the company can feel comfortable knowing they have improved staff knowledge leading to improved performance from their employees. Better performance means improved safety, quality and customer satisfaction. Training improves competency, so it improves performance and trust. Improved trust improves teamwork. Everybody wins. Why would you choose not to establish a training program?

Administer the Training Program

Identifying training needs is the first step. Administering a program to provide the training, testing that it has been effectively learned, and tracking training accomplishments are the next steps. Any course materials should be accredited to recognized national standards such as National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS), of which PMPA is a founding member, or the Department of Labor Apprenticeship. Implement the training through your people, or rely on a provider of training that can assure the accreditation of the material and also monitor

the completion of each training course by each learner. Training can be provided by a face-to-face demonstration of skills on the job by mentors in the shop, while other materials can be provided via an online forum. The online materials and the students' progress are tracked through the online portal.

Evaluate the Effectiveness of Training

In order to ensure that the training is helping the trainees and the organizations reach their goals, a means to evaluate its effectiveness needs to take place. This can be done by managers or by a professional development committee. Feedback from trainees, their team leads and data from the online portal can help the team further refine their training offerings and methodology. Assessing trainee performance is just as important as identifying passing scores on quizzes and tests. Most employees will pass the coursework, but feedback will help the company refine the training to clarify materials that seem unclear or difficult to master, as well as develop a plan to ensure that each employee has multiple opportunities to meet the requirements of the standard.

Evaluate the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Program

It is not enough to evaluate the training. It is just as important to evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness and impact that the training provided had on the employees and its impact on the company's overall performance. Less downtime? Shorter setup times? More independent decision making on the shop floor? Better teamwork as trained employees become more trusted employees? What do these mean in terms of uptime, operational fulfillment and bottom line profitability?

What is the Cost of Training?

Better yet, what is the cost of not training? What is the benefit of having qualified personnel, a qualified program and a qualified and aligned team? What is

the value of having a standard work of best practices in your shop? How can you get to standard work and best practices without some training means to create that knowledge throughout your shop? Which of your performers could not benefit from some additional training?

How important is funding? Funding is what it takes to bridge the gap between your company's current performance and your aspiration to be the highest performing shop serving your customers. Appropriate funding is necessary to ensure that training is effective, authoritative and appropriate. Without funding, inappropriate training or lack of training may result in misinformation, some staff remaining uninformed and possibly working dangerously because they have not been trained to recognize unsafe practices.

Overcoming our Shared Challenges

The challenges we share revolve around the ability to remain consistent in the approach to training and developing personnel. They can be overcome by establishing, administering and evaluating the training that we provide, as well as our program that provides it. Planning, persistence and teamwork are keys to getting this done. When an individual is trained, they feel comfortable with information and guidelines, and thus, become successful as they positively impact those with whom they work.

There is no doubt that all our companies need and can benefit from professional development. There are many resources that will help an individual to grow and develop both professionally and personally. All companies claim to have the ability to communicate, document and provide instruction on the skill sets needed. If we are to achieve our desired professional development outcomes, we must be a savvy shopper and keep our eye on the goal.