

Training the Next Generation of Employees

Challenge

A major manufacturer of complex industrial machinery realized it would soon lose a significant portion of its most experienced employees as they retired. With each retirement, they would lose “tribal knowledge.” That is, undocumented rules, processes, and lessons that are learned from years, in many cases decades, of on-the-job experience. Simply put, as experienced employees retired, the company lost tribal knowledge. This in turn caused a large skills gap between generations of employees. The importance of extracting and documenting this knowledge became a business imperative.

As experienced employees retired, the company was at risk of losing expertise that was learned as a result of years - in many cases decades - of on-the-job experience; leaving a large skills gap with the younger generation of employees.

As part of the training, InfoPros developed a Train-the-Trainer course. This course taught the instructors, which were selected from within the company, how to lead an effective training course. With expert knowledge of the material, the instructors have a high level of control over the pace of their delivery. This control provides them with the ability to individualize the material based on the participants' needs.

Solution

The manufacturer selected InfoPros to capture and convey tribal knowledge throughout its company. InfoPros brought in its Consulting Services group. This group determined that instructor-led training (ILT) would be the most effective method to transfer the highly technical knowledge and skills to the next generation of employees. They identified a set of learning tools that would reinforce the classroom sessions and serve as a reference once they were back on the job.

To create the ILT curriculum, the InfoPros project team developed the course outline and conducted interviews with the most experienced employees (in other words, the subject matter experts). They went onsite to the client’s manufacturing facility to document, photograph, and video-record the actual work processes. Using the gathered information, InfoPros developed the classroom training and the reference materials.

Results

The ILT includes a classroom presentation, a facilitator guide, and a participant guide. The classroom presentation includes animation and video followed by hands-on training. Participants learn machinery operation, maintenance, diagnostics, and troubleshooting. The take-home guides provide additional levels of detail and reinforce the classroom training. The company, with an effective platform to train a new generation of employees, retains the knowledge of the previous generation. A safety net for the company’s intellectual property, allowing for its continued growth and progress, secures its place in industry.

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