

Manufacturing Process Documentation

Challenge

Maxwell Technologies, an electrical components manufacturer, needed to document its factory floor processes to achieve two key objectives:

- Reduce the defect rate in its U.S. factory by having up-to-date documentation of its processes for use in training, and on the shop floor.
- Train workers for a new plant being built in China.

There were a number of challenges. Maxwell had only a limited amount of documentation on the manufacturing processes and did not know how up-to-date that documentation was. Additionally, the existing documentation had been written by engineers for an engineering audience, not for the manufacturing staff, which has a different perspective and frame of reference. Maxwell also wanted to use a tool in which they had already invested to create the documentation, thereby allowing its engineers to maintain the documentation. Finally, the company needed someone to come in and “own” the project as the company’s own employees were committed to other projects and meeting production deadlines.

Maxwell engaged InfoPros to create the process documentation and develop job aids for each of the manufacturing workstations.

Solution

Over a two-month period, InfoPros made several visits to Maxwell’s California factory, taking photographs of the manufacturing process, watching the company’s line operators work, and interviewing product engineers. InfoPros also reviewed all existing documentation and compared it to information

gathered from observation and interviews. InfoPros worked with engineers and line operators to resolve discrepancies and ensure the accuracy of the new documentation.

InfoPros created a series of 15 documents of various lengths, which detailed each workstation in the manufacturing process. To ensure the shop floor personnel would find the documentation easy to follow and be more inclined to use it, the documents relied heavily on graphics and reduced word count, thus lowering future localization and translation costs.

Result

Maxwell received a comprehensive set of documentation and job aids for its manufacturing processes. By outsourcing the project to InfoPros, it was able to minimize the time commitment required of its line personnel and engineers, and any disruptions to the day-to-day operations of the plant. The documentation was developed to facilitate updates at minimal cost, and translation into other languages when required.

The net result? The factory floor process documentation achieved both of Maxwell’s goals – the overall defect rate in the U.S. factory was lowered as a result of the customized, up-to-date documentation used by shop floor personnel. The same documentation has allowed Maxwell to better train its employees in the U.S., as well as to support the ramp up of a new plant in China.

***The net result?
Improved ability to train
employees.***

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