Worker "Expertise Drain" Prevented during Retirement - Worker Training Accelerated

The Ohio State University - Marion Alber Enterprise Center partnered with Triumph Thermal Systems, Inc. (formerly Parker Hannifin UAP) of Forest, Ohio to prevent the loss of worker expertise and disruptions to operations, as talented employees retired from service.

Challenge

When the Alber Enterprise Center met with Ken Jackson, Human Resources Director of Triumph Thermal Systems in 1999, the company was facing a troubling challenge - 40% of its manufacturing workforce was scheduled to retire within two years. Not only were their best employees leaving, "bumping rights" allowed existing workers to move into vacant positions… and other workers to move into newly vacated positions. The Company desperately needed a solution that: 1) captured the worker expertise and wisdom before it left the building; 2) used that information to create "expert" training materials and associated HRD tools; 3) quickly implemented the structured on-the-job training program; 4) complied with their ISO certification program. They needed all of this yesterday.

Solution

The Alber Center partnered with Proactive Technologies, Inc. to quickly job/task analyze the job classifications, in order of the scheduled retirement dates, for best practices, work performance standards, prerequisite skills and abilities, and other criteria. After the data was reviewed for accuracy by the incumbent experts and management, PTI immediately developed the tools for the human resource development process including job descriptions, structured on-the-job training manuals, training checklists

for both new hires and incumbent workers, procedural manuals and other tools to manage the process. Training progress was tracked and reported monthly to Triumph management along with the change in "worker, department and company capacity." Triumph management could now make management adjustments based on movement of personnel to maintain performance levels. To enhance the process, onsite core skill training was delivered to support the structured on-the-job training, including welder training, safety training, lifting devices, blood borne pathogens, and other manufacturing related coursework.

Results

"This approach is exactly what our company needed", said Ken Jackson. "We kept critical expertise from leaving with our retirees, some of who came back as trainers to train younger workers to their level of expertise. The Alber Center and its team were vital to making this happen." Already 19 people have received certificates of job mastery for the job classification for which they were trained; around another 20 employees have mastered 90 percent of their job-tasks. Eighteen of twenty-one manufacturing jobs have workforce development programs established. Triumph Thermal Systems continues to implement and expand this approach to train new workers, cross-train incumbent workers, process improvement and facility design planning.

Technical Training Provided for Unique Manufacturing Job Classifications

At Dana, Glacier Vandervell Bearings of McConnelsville, Ohio, an ISO/QS certified manufacturer of clevite materials for the automotive industry, employees are required to know how to operate every facet of the continuous casting process. The scope of the job made it difficult for management to ensure that everyone consistently received the right training - no matter which shift, which trainer.

Challenge

Dana asked The Ohio State University Alber Enterprise Center to create a structured workforce training program covering every aspect of the machinery. Most of the technical expertise rested in the minds of the "expert" operators, not the out-dated technical documentation. Not traditionally covered by educational institutions, the Alber Center had to create the program from scratch.

Solution

The Alber Center selected one of its partners, Proactive Technologies, Inc., to study the clevite line operator position from top to bottom. During the analysis, it was apparent that the job classification was far more broad and complex than management anticipated. Once the data was reviewed by incumbent management and clevite line operators, not only were the best practices for each of the clevite line workstations documented, so were the core skills and abilities, the safety considerations, the reference documents and associated data to generate a comprehensive HRD approach. Incumbent workers were assessed to job mastery of the listed tasks, establishing individualized, customized training models. New employees embarked on a

rigorous structured training program that accelerated the process, cut the employer's internal costs of training, and ensured a consistency of training from shift to shift. The company receives monthly training progress reports charting the closing of the "capacity" gap in reaching full job mastery. The Alber Center, in addition, provided on-site courses to support the shoring - up of foundation skills upon which to build job mastery.

Results

"By working so closely with the Alber Center, we know that the program we developed matches the job. Operators learn the right way to perform tasks the first time. More important, employees take pride in working towards, and achieving, full job mastery," said Jerry Donahue, Plant Manager at Dana -McConnelsville. "The system and software used in this project has helped us comply with our ISO and QS programs, providing the documents to support us in any audit." Dana - McConnelsville continues to implement its clevite line operator workforce development program, and are now working on a similar program for furnace repair. Recently, a sister Dana plant in Caldwell, Ohio asked the Alber Center to develop HRD programs for its manufacturing positions there as well. "Our staff is excited about this approach. This will meet our manufacturing needs so well that we feel that our organization will benefit in areas far beyond training," claimed Allen Wojcik, Human Resources Manager at Dana-Caldwell.