

## CASE STUDY:

# Metal Fabricator Revises Training and Process Standardization to Improve Quality

## The Client

A large, international metals processor located in the eastern United States.



## The Challenge

This was a classic example of why many clients hire outside consultants. It was a case of a client having a need — the development and implementation of standardized training procedures at a new facility — and not having the capacity or expertise on staff to get the job done. But, as it happens with many projects, it wasn't that simple. Some challenges included:

**Training in a new facility.** The company had hired a training manager who developed and implemented training in one facility. They wanted a similar process installed at a new facility, baselining the competence of operations at eight workstations, but lacked the capacity to do it. Because it was a new facility...

**...They didn't know what they didn't know.** The training process needed to involve standard operating procedures, but because the facility was

new, that proved to be a challenge. The company tried to leverage experience from other plants, but because the site was new, they did not already have well documented processes. Moreover, only one of their plants had a formal training program.

**Loss of institutional knowledge.** Turnover. The Great Resignation. Seasoned employees retiring. It means a loss of institutional knowledge gained through years on the job. It's a blow to a company in many ways, but most of all in training. Many manufacturers train new people by having them work on the line with their best, seasoned employees ... who are retiring or otherwise leaving the workforce and taking that knowledge with them. According to the Association of Equipment Manufacturers, the lack of knowledge transfer when an experienced worker retires can cost individual companies \$47 million per year. That's why SOPs are so necessary. Documented standard operating procedures preserve that institutional knowledge.

### USC would be responsible for:

- Development of SOPs within an agreed-upon set of work centers
- A defined training program schedule
- Training the company in the training USC developed, setting them up for success post-USC involvement

### Key deliverables included:

- Identification of mature processes ready for standardized documentation and training development
- Analysis of inconsistent processes that need redesign before standardized documentation and training development
- Identification of training management and tracking opportunities
- Detailed timeline for SOP development, training development, and initiation of training implementation
- Employee engagement opportunities
- Leadership development opportunities

## The Solution

USC conducted a comprehensive analysis to identify and prioritize mature processes that lacked documentation and training, inconsistent processes that needed redesign to then be documented and trained, and to assess leader capabilities and opportunities.

To tackle all of these challenges, USC used a graded, systematic approach to training development, ADDIE.

- **Analyze:** SOP review and updates, needs analysis, job and DIF analysis, task list development

- **Design:** Sequenced and group learning objectives, training setting and evaluation methods, trainee evaluation via test questions, training matrix and programs
- **Develop:** Training and evaluation materials
- **Implementation:** Attendance records, exemptions, trainee feedback, training observations
- **Evaluation:** Summaries of trainee feedback, initial training effectiveness evaluation, gap training effectiveness evaluation

## The Results

USC worked side-by-side with the client to develop a closed-loop process that documents and updates SOPs, builds a time-based training program, tracks and reports on that training, develops leaders and is dependent on employee involvement that when implemented properly improves employee retention by way of effective management and leadership.

### Some of the tangible results and benefits the client has seen:

- Increased safety because all employees are following the correct SOPs and safety procedures
- Boost in yield and quality
- Preserved institutional knowledge by developing and documenting SOPs
- Increased employee retention

Through standardizing operating procedures and ensuring all employees across the plant are being trained in the same way, the client increased safety and retention, saw an increased yield and quality of output, identified this training program as an opportunity for implementation across the rest of their plants, and in the process, made their customers happier.