

90% of all Training is Wasted!

Idhammar

Feedback on this [reliability article](#) is appreciated. Send to info@idcon.com

I believe that most training efforts are wasted unless the training is focused on the training needs of each individual. After going through training, a person should immediately apply the new skills. As the saying goes, "If you do not use it, you lose it."

There are many examples where the above has not been practiced. For example, in the last 15 to 20 years, most mills have spent considerable effort in negotiating more flexible work rules with their unions. However, after agreeing to more flexibility on a piece of paper so that, for example, millwrights could perform basic welding and pipe fitting, operators could perform some inspections and essential equipment care, and so on, most mills soon discovered that not much changed in reality. For example, operators did not do any maintenance work and a pump job still took two millwrights and two pipe fitters to complete.

The fact is that most mills have a flexibility agreement on a piece of paper, but no flexibility in reality. The most common reasons for this are:

Lack of training in additional skills. With few exceptions, mills spend a lot of time and money on new contracts, but never train their craftspeople in the new skills they need to become more flexible.

First line supervisors do not change the way they assign work. First line supervision often takes the easy path. Instead of assigning work so that cross training takes place as on-the-job training, supervisors continue to schedule work according to the old craft lines so that no new flexibility is introduced.

MULTI CRAFT OR MULTI SKILL? To be successful in improving crafts skills and to increase your work flexibility while maintaining high proficiency in critical skills, I advise that you first determine governing principles. For example, are you implementing multi craft or multi skills?

Multi craft means a craftsperson is trained for multiple crafts. For example, a person who is both an electrician and a millwright is multi craft. Multi skills means a craftsperson is trained for a craft along with additional skills from another craft. For example, an electrician with skills in aligning a motor and a pump or an operator with mechanical inspection skills is multi skills.

Personally, I believe that the right thing to do is to implement multi skills, since it is more likely to result in flexibility and proficiency.

INCENTIVE. To motivate people to learn more and to use more skills, I believe that there must be an incentive beyond self satisfaction. For example, the most successful multi craft mill that I have worked with required its craftspeople to have proficiency in one craft when hired. After three years, an additional craft had to be acquired in order to maintain employment, with three crafts for each craftsperson as the ultimate goal.

However, the incentive to learn more involved not only job security, but also increased pay. Starting pay was about \$15 per hour, but, after learning and using three crafts, the pay increased to about \$26 per hour.

This particular multi craft mill produces over 500,000 tpy with 65 craftspeople. Overtime is 15% and contractor hours in maintenance are 14%. These figures put this mill in the league of world-class reliability and maintenance productivity. It is one of the few mills I have worked with where true multi craft training has been very successful, although a

major concern at the mill is that the instrumentation craft is having more and more difficulty keeping up with new technologies while maintaining multi craft skills.

IMPLEMENTATION. In implementing a training program that will support better performance-whatever level of flexibility you strive for-I recommend you do a craft skills analysis. The objective of this analysis is to develop individual training plans for each craftsperson.

Start by documenting what skills are needed to maintain the equipment in your mill area. Then compare this to the actual skills of each individual in the maintenance crew. The gap that presents itself forms the basis for the individual training plans. Most probably, you will not need everybody in the top skills segment because everybody will not be able to acquire and maintain those skills. So, you might end up with three skill levels in your organization.

I recommend that you do this analysis with much involvement from the craftspeople, because they are the best source of information. There are also many experts, as well as literature, in this area that can help you.

As a result of the analysis, you will now train only the people who need and will actually use the training. Instead of the scenario described in the November column where 25 people are trained in hydraulics, you will now train only five and you will do it much more thoroughly.