

### Company

Mid-size Utility

### Solution

Online Training Library,  
Training Program Services

### Industry

Electric Utility

### Size

70 Employees

### Location

Caribbean

# Utility rebuilds training program to develop certified operators.

## Challenge:

A mid-size Caribbean utility was facing multiple challenges:

- **Lack of clear career path for employees** – With three plants – water, steam, and reciprocating engine – they wanted to give employees the opportunity to move up in the plant they worked in or take advantage of opportunities at other plants.
- **Lack of progression planning** – They were discussing employee progression with their union, who wanted employees treated equally regardless of skills, knowledge, or experience.
- **Lack of evaluation system** – They couldn't evaluate employee competence or identify gaps and address them effectively.

The utility knew training was key to resolving their issues, but weren't sure how to move forward. Unfortunately, many plant documents, including manuals, drawings, and training materials had been lost or not maintained. Their current training program was pieced together from remaining materials and delivered inconsistently or not at all. Some information was shared, but they didn't have a formal process.

After meeting at a trade show, the utility invited HSI representatives for an on-site visit. In addition to the lack of documentation, the utility didn't have formal job descriptions. Roles weren't defined and job levels weren't identified. The utility wanted to restructure the process, so employees moved up based on skills, not length of employment. Not

only did they need to create the training program, they needed to convince HR, the union, and employees to adopt it.

## Why It Matters

Formal job descriptions to clearly communicate employee responsibilities

Enhanced evaluations to ensure employees perform at the required level

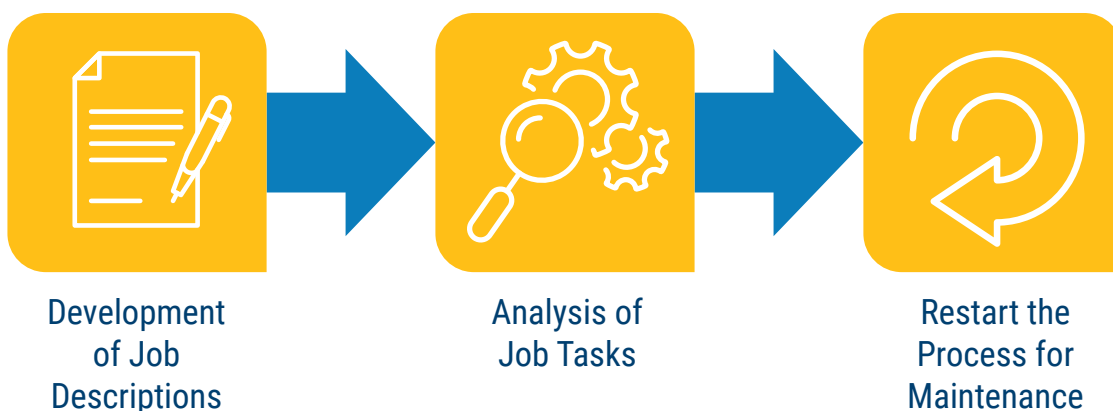
Clear career progression to establish employee goals and increase retention

## Solution:

After the on-site visit, HSI determined the utility need to start over with their training program before appropriate training could be assigned to employees. The project began with plant operators. Subject matter experts (SMEs) met with the production supervisor and developed a duties and responsibilities outline. Using that outline, HSI SMEs developed in-depth job descriptions.

Once the job descriptions were finalized, HSI performed an abbreviated job task analysis to identify what training was needed to ensure employees could perform in their current role and prepare for advancement. HSI reviewed the existing documentation – which was in three different languages – and used as much as possible. However, most materials had to be created.

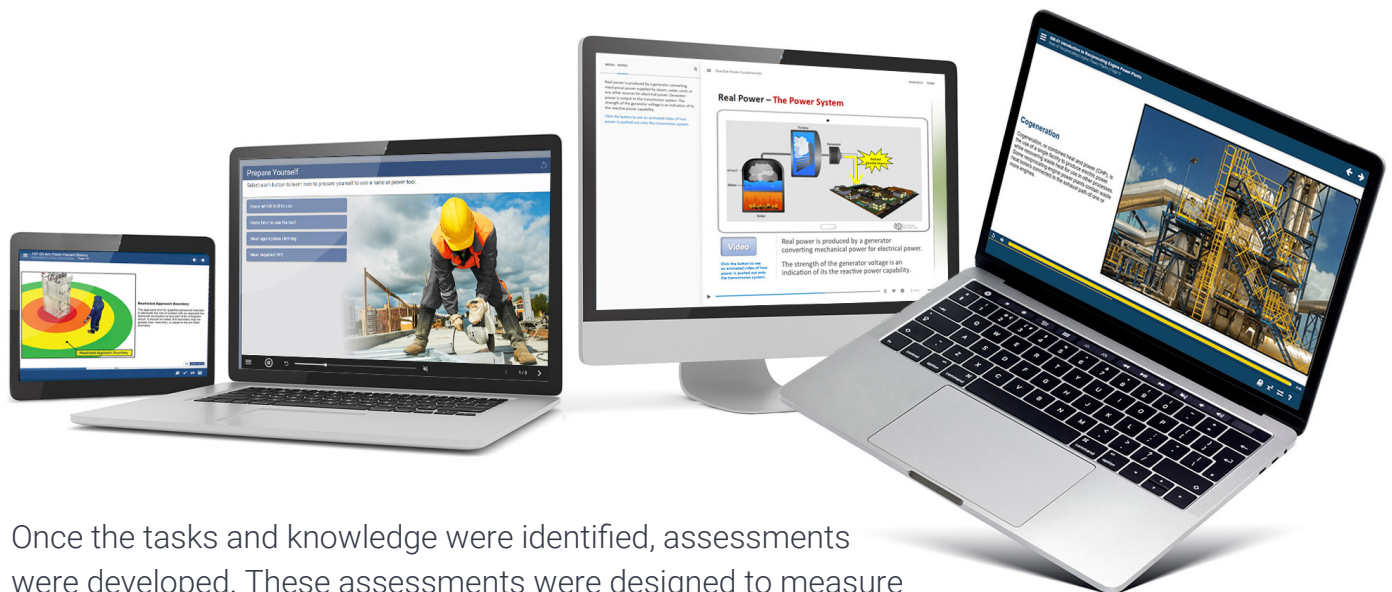
Once the plant operator program was underway, HSI started a similar process for maintenance workers.



# Implementation:

After the material was sorted and developed, HSI began work on employee progression plans. Complicating matters was identifying paths for employees to move up in their specific plant or from one plant to another. Adding to the challenge, the utility was going to close the steam plant, so those employees needed new skills to move to the other two plants.

To get the training program started, the utility subscribed to the HSI Industrial Skills library. The generic training covered the basic needs, but more work was needed to provide the utility-specific training.



Once the tasks and knowledge were identified, assessments were developed. These assessments were designed to measure system level knowledge and operating ability of each operator in their respective plant area. They also identified any trends that indicated a need for further training, either plant-wide or on an individual basis.

At the request of the utility, HSI traveled on-site to perform the assessments. The assessment results indicated operators were capable of performing assigned tasks, but did not fully understand how some equipment worked or why some actions were performed. This knowledge gap was particularly noted in the operator cohort with 10-15 years of experience. This group fell between the more experienced worker who had been there when the previous training program existed and the newer employees who were studying information on their own.

The plant manager and production supervisor suspected an issue in this group and the assessment provided documentation to support their suspicions.

With the completed assessments, HSI and the utility identified a broad scope to move forward with the goal of ensuring operators understood how their tasks and actions impacted plant operations. HSI worked with managers to identify needs. Recommendations included:

- Train and evaluate employees using system descriptions
- Develop and assess additional job performance measures
- Use a training and growth plan for all operators

HSI could now identify the utility-specific training needs to complement the online training. Online and classroom training was developed for several topics:

- Reciprocating engine maintenance for contractors
- Switchgear
- Train-the-trainer
- Motivation
- Leadership and Mentoring

Finally, HSI created evaluation guides to certify operators. These evaluations start with an oral exam, then move to a plant walk through to identify and operate equipment. HSI also trained plant personnel on how to perform these operator certifications.

## Results:

The progression plans are tied into the online training library and other training employees need to complete to demonstrate knowledge about plant systems and how to operate equipment. HSI travels to the utility as needed to assist with implementing and maintaining their training program.

During the process, HSI became part of the utility training team supporting management and the workers. Work on the training programs is ongoing, but the utility is experiencing a more professional environment as operators move through the certification program.

HSI continues to provide utility-specific on-site training.

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