



## Business Impact

Training days  
**reduced** from  
**603** to **111**

Pre- to Post-test  
scores **increased**  
**40%** to **90%**

# CASE STUDY

## Workforce Training and Qualification Through a Holistic Co-Sourcing Program

### Situation

An alternative energy company owns and operates 19 power plants across the US, as well as several others in Europe and China. GP Strategies® has supported various workforce development projects for the company since 1985. This support has involved all categories of power plant job positions (for example, senior leadership, plant managers, operators, mechanics, I&C technicians, chemists, etc.). Previous GP Strategies support involved instructor-led training, training material development, online courseware, and others.

- Create a co-sourcing program that **reduced training days** from 603 to 111 while **improving the quality** and breadth of training.

### The Challenge

Based on a strong desire to improve its competitive advantage, the company initiated a comprehensive review of its workforce training and qualification programs in 2011. Their goal was to transition from a project-by-project approach to a more holistic solution that better aligned to desired business outcomes and key performance indicators (KPIs). Based on this goal, a team of senior personnel met with GP Strategies to outline a three-phase approach that would significantly improve performance. The phases in the approach were as follows:

- Phase 1 – Administer a learning enterprise assessment (at corporate level).
- Phase 2 – Conduct on-site investigations (at power plant level).
- Phase 3 – Roll out improved programs in a co-sourcing partnership.

## GP Strategies Solution

Phase 1 work involved meeting with senior leadership at the company's corporate offices for detailed on-one-one interviews. Leaders from Operations, Maintenance, Environmental, Safety, Human Resources, and other areas were all included. The purpose of these structured interviews was to identify the KPI improvements and business results that leadership wanted to achieve over time. In each interview, the GP Strategies team evaluated the current state of organizational performance and helped leadership to envision the desired future state.

Phase 2 work involved taking data from the learning enterprise assessment and then visiting five specific power plants for additional data gathering. The GP Strategies team selected one plant from each of the five regions to account for regulatory and geographical differences. Over several months, the GP Strategies team interviewed over 235 employees in more than 20 job positions.

The GP Strategies interviewers worked on all shifts to gain a wide perspective on employee perceptions. In most cases, the investigations included visiting with workers inside the plant or at their specific working area (for example, in the Control Room or within the Mechanical Shop). The purpose of these structured interviews was to independently evaluate the workforce development needs and solicit worker opinions regarding the best possible solutions to implement. Following the Phase 2 investigations, the GP Strategies team provided a detailed and prioritized roadmap to close the gaps between current and future states in a logical and cost-effective manner.

Phase 3 work for this project began in February 2013. Selected resources from both the company and GP Strategies are currently performing many interrelated tasks under a true partnership agreement. The guiding principle of this partnership is to deliver top-quality services and deliverables that drive business outcomes in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible. In the early stages of this partnership, more robust support is being provided by GP Strategies as the company capability increases over time.

All workforce development initiatives in the Operations, Mechanical, Electrical, Safety, Environmental, and other areas are performed under the company's academy branding. The types of deliverables being provided include the following:

- **Instructor-Led Training Courses.** These courses range from 2 hours to 5 days based upon needs. Internal, external, and third party resources are used in both lecture and hands-on formats. Pre- and post-testing and virtual classrooms are used whenever appropriate.
- **Self-Study Requirements.** These exercises require learners to perform specific assignments on their own, over time. The support of a qualified coach or mentor is included as needed.
- **Web-Based Training Courses.** These courses can be standard off-the-shelf assignments based on needs identified during screening exams or based on post-testing results. When required (and economically viable), custom web-based courses are created for various targeted needs.
- **Training Materials (Lesson Plans, Student Texts, Job Aids, etc.).** These traditional materials are developed when needed to support classroom sessions or specific learner requirements.
- **Knowledge Assessments.** These customized assessments (ranging from 10–135 questions) are created to measure the learner's ability to comprehend information presented in the various training interventions.
- **Qualification Standards.** These progression path requirements document the specific tasks that a learner must demonstrate (along with the associated success criteria) for successful progression to the next level.
- **Behavioral Courses.** The academy includes several behavioral classes that were identified as a need during the Phase 2 work (for example, leadership, communication, employee engagement, and others). The sessions have been highly customized to specific job roles, and the results have been very positive.
- **Administration with a Learning Management System (LMS).** All academy training and qualification interventions are being managed, tracked, and reported on using their existing Cornerstone LMS. A rigorous monthly and quarterly reporting process sends detailed updates to senior leadership and all 19 power plants served by the system.

## Business Impact

As a result, GP Strategies implemented multiple solutions to improve workforce development while lowering overall cost to the company:

- GP Strategies provided access to over 3,000 online courses and exams for 2,000 personnel. GP Strategies also teaches 40–50 sessions per year complete with hands-on learning components in Operations, Maintenance, I&C, Environmental, Safety, and other areas.
  - The workforce development program positively impacted over 1,000 personnel.
  - Training days were successfully reduced from 603 to 111.
  - Pre- to post-test scores increased from an average of 40% to 90%.
  - The average cost of training per employee was significantly reduced to below the Association for Talent Development (ATD) average of \$1,229 per year to \$958.
  - The cost per learning hour delivered was reduced to \$67 per hour.
  - GP Strategies serves as the LMS administrator for the entire fleet for scheduling, tracking, and reporting to all stakeholders while also providing quarterly benchmarking.
- For more information about CO-SOURCING and PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT programs, visit [www.gpstrategies.com](http://www.gpstrategies.com).

## About GP Strategies

GP Strategies is a leading workforce transformation partner—one of the few truly dedicated global providers in the marketplace providing custom solutions. We believe our transformation focus, when paired with deep listening, a customer-centric approach, and innovative expertise, enables our clients to routinely achieve superior business and operational results from our evidence-driven and technology agnostic recommendations.

Whether your business success requires a change in employee performance and mindsets, learning technologies, or critical processes, GP Strategies is the transformation partner you can trust.

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