Opportunity

There was a need in Plant Maintenance for a large volume of tasks to be performed in a short span of time. In March 1994, Plant Human Resources, after reviewing the Union contracts, introduced the idea to use Plant Building Services staff during the summer months to meet this need.

In June 1994, after lengthy discussions, Plant Human Resources, Building Services and Plant Maintenance established the EWOC program in Plant Operations Division at the University of Michigan.

The EWOC program is a career development program designed to provide training and experience to qualified custodial employees who desire upward mobility into maintenance mechanic and grounds positions. Employees in this program go through a rigorous training schedule that combines on-the-job training with classroom work.

The EWOC participant goes through 40 hours on-the-job training per week from May through September for up to three years.

See process flow chart.

Planning between Plant Operations Directors and Managers resulted in the following decisions:

- An administrative committee for the program was formed.
- Participating units would decide on number of participants, time, duties to be performed and rotation schedules.
- A curriculum was developed with Washtenaw Community College Technical Department.
- Criteria for selecting custodial employees was developed.
- The program was presented to management and staff of the participating departments.
- Custodial sign up sheets were distributed to all Building Services supervisors for staff to sign up.
- The custodians were selected for interview by seniority.
- Participant selection was voted on by committee.

The objectives of the EWOC program were to:

- Provide training to make custodial staff more marketable.
- Use human resources of one Plant department to augment the needs of another.
- Boost moral in Plant Building Services where historically, promotion within Plant Operations was limited.

Statistics

The program expanded each year:

- 1994 Plant Zone Maintenance - 6 participants
- 1995 Grounds and Waste Mgmt. - 3 participants
- 1996 - 9 participants
- 1997 UMS Mechanical Room - 8 participants
- 1998 Elevator Shop - 4 participants
- In 1999, $197,000 was allocated to the EWOC program.

EWOC Distribution: (Based on 59 Total Participants to Date)
Key Results of EWOC Program

- Provided the custodians skills needed to bid on positions in higher classifications.
- Built morale in Building Services.
- Provided the needed personnel, at peak times, in other departments.
- Improved relations between the departments within Plant Operations.
- Participants developed an appreciation for the importance of other departments’ activities and how those activities affected them as custodians.
- Approximately 50% of the participants were permanently promoted.
- Encouraged improvement in performance by Building Services staff in order to meet criteria for EWOC participation.
- Developed and institutionalized evaluation process.

Best Practices Documentation Team

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James Vibbart, Work Control
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Ronald Sweeny, Zone Maintenance
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New Goals

1. Develop comprehensive tracking of cost/savings for this program.
2. Improve on completion of evaluation procedure to meet the goals of the program.
3. Expand the program to Parking and other Departments.
4. Introduce the concept to other parts of the University.
5. Modify the program to create a direct tie to the Plant Apprenticeship Program.

Skills Development

Plant Operations Zone Maintenance:

- Diagnosis of mechanical problems: How to route problem for correction, follow-up on routed problem, customer contact and preventative maintenance.
- Mechanical Room: Crew cleaning, identification of pipes and wires and labeling same, safety corrections, preventative maintenance on machinery located within the mechanical rooms.
- Elevator Shop: Cleaning the elevator, electrical and mechanical skills as they relate to elevators.
- Grounds and Waste Management: Trash control, weed-whipping, mowing.

The EWOC program is a career development program designed to provide training and experience to qualified custodial employees who desire upward mobility into maintenance mechanic and grounds positions.

From the Editor

Plant Academy documents and disseminates best work practices in Facilities and Operations

The Goals

- Share workplace solutions to problems from lessons learned
- Serve as a benchmark for assessing trends and conditions
- Identify who is doing what to implement commitment to business objectives
- Provide insight to policy options and capacity-building opportunities to improve service to customers
- Promote interdepartmental communication and collaboration

What are Best Practices?

Best Practices describe the optimum ways to perform a business process; they are a component or combination of component practices determined to be the most effective, practicable action steps in performing work; they make lasting contributions to improving quality of work life and services to customers. They are the means by which leading organizations have achieved top performance. They also serve as goals for other organizations striving for excellence.

Source: Anderson Consulting; Best Practices and Local Leadership Program, UNCHS (Habitat); Cooperative Extension, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, U of Nebraska, Lincoln3-5-99.

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