

People excellence

Always room for improvement

SE&A ISD sets new standards in personnel development

When it comes to personnel development, Siemens Energy & Automation's Industry Solutions Division is giving its all. A program that was initiated last year has employees taking an honest look at their capabilities and career development. The results today: satisfied employees and skilled leaders for tomorrow.

Business leaders like to say that "people are our greatest asset," but they often neglect the strategic investments required to develop that asset to its fullest potential. "Those words can sound like a bit of a cliché," says Reiner Pallmann, vice president of Siemens Energy & Automation's Industry Solutions Division/ISD (formerly Process Solutions Division/PSD – see p. 4). "Consequently we wanted to do something that showed our commitment – something that inspired employees to become even more passionate about the business."

A team of senior managers was tasked with defining a forward-looking process that would reinforce the division's focus on workforce development while providing new opportunities for retaining valuable top talent and promoting business success. The result was the FLD (Focused Leadership Development) program, which was launched at the end of 2007 as part of the company's commitment to the Siemens top*2010 People Excellence initiative. "The FLD program is more than just a way for participants to close a skill gap," Pallmann notes. "It allows top talent to stretch beyond their comfort zone and prepare for future opportunities. It motivates them to spend time every week thinking about where they are headed in their careers."

Not just for superstars

The program's first workshop in March included 30 employees drawn from each of the division's core groups. Participants were selected based on potential statements from their yearly performance reviews, personal interviews, and recommendations from their supervisors. But the program wasn't limited to "superstar" employees. "We want to create a strong pool of workforce talent with a variety of qualifications," says Jeff Eder, SE&A ISD vice president and controller. That goal means looking deep within the organization for suitable candidates who are open to new experiences and motivated to succeed. "We have a lot of talent at Siemens," continues Eder and adds, "With a little support and encouragement, they will become the stand-out performers we need to sustain the business over the long term."

Guidelines for the FLD program require participants to map out their career goals over a three- to five-year timeline. A long-range

development plan (LRDP) helps them identify activities that will support their goals and enable them to develop their career toward more challenging roles within the organization. New and updated LRDPs are submitted as part of each employee's annual performance review.

The LRDP template is based on the top+ Business Optimization Process (t-BOP) (see in: magazine 4/2008). Since many participants use t-BOP to drive initiatives on a daily basis, working with the LRDP is fairly intuitive for them. "The LRDP drives my annual development activities," says Lee Greene, PEP principal project manager and FLD member. "The long-range development plan forces me to acknowledge where I am with my career and to define further steps and dates for accomplishing goals that will help me professionally."

Development activities range from presenting at staff meetings, contributing to high-profile projects, attending problem-solving and customer-focused meetings to working with international counterparts and colleagues. The LRDPs also define, on an individual basis, additional opportunities for training, on-the-job mentoring, and cross-functional and cross-divisional assignments. "My LRDP includes traditional development activities," Greene says. "But it also requires me to do

things like read a business book or volunteer in the community. The goal is more than just making me a more skilled employee – it's about becoming a more well-rounded person."

Skill influences career outcomes

Lucie Shiff, human resources director, is convinced that the FLD program provides valuable impulses for all division employees. "The program helps everyone understand that career development is a continuous process," she says. "This means that you can't be personally defensive anymore when things become complicated. Instead, you need to figure out how to negotiate career challenges and take calculated risks so you can influence the outcome." Additionally, the goal of the program is to develop the next generation of leaders by establishing a deeper bench strength* for critical positions in the division.

This kind of agile thinking is essential as the division continues to cope with the challenges of providing superior value in a rapidly changing global marketplace. Todd Gardner, general manager for Process Instrumentation and Analytics (PIA), notes that the FLD program stresses candid self-assessment as much as external ratings. "We ask hard questions," Gardner says. "Do you really have desire and motivation to go above and beyond? Do you know what



Support from (l. to r.) PIA general manager Todd Gardner, ISD Business Optimization director Gail Norris, ISD human resources director Lucie Shiff and PI controller Tim Hazelrig was crucial to the launch of the new FLD program.

you want to become? If the answer is 'yes,' then we're here to support and motivate you."

In July, the FLD program participants attended the second FLD workshop, which focused on soft skills and included three breakout sessions. The workshop further enhanced the employees' understanding of possible career bands and various types of progression activities. As a result, whether an employee is currently in a position to move upwards or to continue to grow within a present position, he or she knows what

paths are open. The initial feedback on the FLD program is very positive. Pallmann sees this not only as a welcome confirmation of the concept, but also as an obligation and motivation for continually enhancing the program in a dynamic process in line with the motto: "There is always room for improvement." ■

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In a workshop, Reiner Pallmann, VP of SE&A ISD, helps FLD participants prepare for future career opportunities.

