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The Need For Standardized Project Management

ESI Helps Henkels & McCoy, Inc. Improve Bottom Line

Edited by Matthew Phair -- Constructioneer, 4/7/2008

Henkels & McCoy, Inc. is one of the largest privately held engineering, network development and construction firms serving the communications, information technology and utility industries in the United States. Additional offerings have traditionally included installation, maintenance and training services. Several years ago, the company, which boasts 4,600 employees in 80 permanent offices and operations facilities across the U.S., identified the need to establish consistent project management throughout its organization.

However, as the company executed these large-scope projects — and set their sites on many more — senior executives began recognizing a need for standardized project management methodology throughout their organization. The benefits to improved project management practices, they determined, would be numerous, including increased efficiency internally and seamless communication with their many large general contracting partners.

"Our industry has become increasingly more sophisticated over the years as people look for enhanced productivity and safety," said Kathy Mills, director of Human Resources. "The complex projects we were winning required that our staff keep pace with industry knowledge."

Henkels & McCoy sought a project management training provider with the global infrastructure required to easily and consistently deliver high-impact training to its employees. Additionally, the company was looking for a partner that not only understood Henkels & McCoy's complex industry, but would be attentive and mindful of staff workloads and differing styles. Henkels & McCoy chose ESI International.

"We interviewed a number of project management improvement providers from around the country and selected ESI for a number of reasons," Mills explained. "One of the primary reasons was that our people could take courses on their own schedule. Our team is spread across a number of time zones, so we needed a provider that was as geographically diverse as we were."

From the beginning of its partnership with ESI in 2003, Henkels & McCoy's executives were committed to providing training to staff members across a variety of internal levels, ranging from project team members to senior executives. Executive involvement, which included participation from the CEO/president, COO and CFO, helped staff members understand that creating a project management culture was a significant initiative supported at the highest organizational levels.

"We strongly believed all along that, regardless of whether an employee is running projects or running operations, project management skills are important to have," said Mills. "So, we added everybody to the training program, not just project managers. Skills such as team management, motivation, resource management and planning were competencies we wanted all members of our staff to exhibit. ESI's training program brought a formalized approach to these skills."

In 2004, after one year of training with ESI, the executive team at Henkels & McCoy issued an internal "Project Management Challenge." The initiative challenged employees to establish and implement a methodology based on the Project Management Body of Knowledge, which was customized to Henkels & McCoy's industry and internal procedures.

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