

Solar Powerhouse SunEdison Poises for Growth by Training in Project Management



Industry: Renewable energy vertically integrated company, comprising all steps from manufacturing to installation and service.

Services Provided: Training program development and implementation; “train the trainer”, training delivery, and performance measurement guidance.

Company: SunEdison is a global leader in transforming how energy is generated, distributed and owned. SunEdison manufactures solar technology and develops, finances, installs and operates distributed solar power plants, delivering predictably priced electricity and services to its residential, commercial, government and utility customers. SunEdison also provides 24/7 asset management, monitoring and reporting services for hundreds of solar systems worldwide via the company’s Renewable Operation Center (ROC). SunEdison has offices in North America, Europe, Latin America, Africa, India and Asia.

Challenge: In 2013, SunEdison was charting a course that promised significant growth nationally and internationally as the market for solar energy expanded. As they experienced success in developing and acquiring solar projects, the company realized they would have to establish a culture of flawless execution to keep up their pace. Their CEO’s decision that program management skills would be a key to ensuring operational excellence led them to search out project and program management training that they could tailor to their business and enable operational excellence.

Solution: SunEdison reached out to PM College for a turnkey program that could be customized to the company’s projects and programs. In addition to delivering several rounds of Project Management Essentials (PME) courses, PM College instructors delivered MS project training and a “train the trainer” course. PME courses were customized to SunEdison’s industry and corporate needs, then licensed for internal delivery by company staff. A program of internal certification was developed that included Green Belt (intermediate) and Black Belt (advanced) levels, including courses that introduce leadership, risk management, benefits realization, and agile project management concepts.

As the training program was developed, supporting documents, such as an online risk register and project workbook, were developed. In addition, according to program management senior director Susan Rosenthal, “PM College was my thought partner for developing content for our course, PMO 101, very quickly and simply.”



VALUE DELIVERED

Enterprise-wide training in program management boosted PM knowledge by 60%, saved over \$250,000 on one program alone, and allowed this company to grow on multiple fronts, including a major IPO, over the course of just one year.

results

The initial goal was to train about half the company’s employees - about 600 individuals. One year later, over 900 individuals have participated in the programs.

Pre- and post-tests have indicated a knowledge increase of 55 - 60%. Adoption of the online risk register and online project workbook has far exceeded expectations, as well as providing a unifying common language for the management of projects, which as been especially important for the company’s far-flung operations in India, Japan and South Africa.

The one division realized \$2 million in program savings directly related to improved program management. In just one new joint venture, standardized planning processes allowed the company to save over \$250,000 while establishing a process that can be applied to future joint ventures.

SunEdison has used the improved program management skills to bring a number of major initiatives on line successfully, including the IPO of a spinoff of the company’s solar construction business that has had a dramatic positive impact on the corporate bottom line.

“Investing in a systematic way to do work and organize projects, a way to capitalize on the diverse intelligence of cross-functional teams, can deliver significant business results.”

- Susan Rosenthal, Senior Director, Program Management, SunEdison