

Sector Council Case Study

Building on Investment - the Power in Partnerships

Introduction



Development often means taking great products to new heights with new people.

Newcomers entering Alberta's construction sector bring a multitude of skills, experience and knowledge. However, they may not possess the English skills required to be as safe and productive in the workplace as they could be. Enhancing the English skills of new Albertans has become a key human resource development strategy. The BOI project drew upon a strong English language safety training model that was developed for the manufacturing sector and transferred this model to the construction industry. AWES partnered with the Alberta Construction Safety Association (ACSA) and Alberta Employment & Immigration (AEI) to achieve this initiative.

Step-by-Step Approach

"From our previous work with the manufacturing sector" says Emil Tarka, "AWES was able to take a solid training resource to new heights to close a critical training gap in the construction sector." Working with the ACSA, AWES customized a plain language safety program that had been very successful for working with newcomers and low literacy employees in the manufacturing sector. The training model was comprised of safety training for non-native speakers, and a train-the-trainer package for supervisors to deliver the safety training based on highly visual representations of safety issues and plain language scripted teaching notes.

"BOI is about not re-inventing the wheel - it's about customizing one of AWES' best plain language safety training programs to the construction industry."

- Emil Tarka, AWES consultant

AWES approached trainers, leads and supervisors from construction companies located in northern, central and southern Alberta. They answered a questionnaire on specific training needs. Their input informed the project in two ways: first, it indicated how to structure training delivery in the construction sector; and second, it ensured the content was specific to the construction sector. Topics varied from eye protection and housekeeping to confined space entry and employee rights and responsibilities. Building on this investment, AWES then signed a partnership agreement with the Construction Sector Council to share assets and knowledge. CSC provided the BOI project with poster images, acted as a content reviewer, and disseminated the BOI resources nationwide through their online training program. BOI's posters and training manual compliment CSC's online program which is based on Alberta's CSTS training system.

Results

The partnership with ACSA was vital to making sure the resources were accurate and sector-specific, without "reinventing the wheel". CSC redefined the project scope, enabling the dissemination of our deliverables nationwide. The BOI project showcases how partnerships with the right stakeholders can transform a local initiative into a nationwide opportunity to equip Canadians with the Essential Skills tools to succeed in the workplace.

