



Royal Canadian Mint

Workplace Literacy Mini Case Study

Overview

The Royal Canadian Mint (RCM) produces the coinage for the Canadian economy as well as for many other economies around the world. To maintain its competitive advantage in the global marketplace, the RCM faced two challenges. One was the integration of new technology into the production process. The other was to meet ISO quality assurance standards. To achieve these goals, the RCM required a workforce that could continually upgrade its skills. To ensure that the workers had a solid core learning skill set, the RCM introduced the Foundation Skills Program.

Objectives

The aims of the Foundation Skills Program were to:

- ⇒ improve employees' literacy, writing and numeracy skills;
- ⇒ encourage employees to communicate more clearly; and
- ⇒ give employees the tools needed for ongoing skills acquisition.

Activities

The RCM created the Foundation Skills Program in cooperation with the union and in partnership with two local community colleges. Open communication among the stakeholders was key to the effective development of the program. Examples of this included information-sharing meetings as well as in-person recruitment "walkabouts" by educators. To further encourage participation, classes were offered in both official languages, given on company time, and scheduled to accommodate both day and evening shift workers.

The program's curriculum focused on a series of modules of the participants' choosing, which they completed at their own pace. All aspects of the program were revised as necessary to ensure that the program was continually

improving opportunities for, and providing the necessary skills development to, the employees.

After five years, the program was phased out as the employees had reached a targeted level of competency in basic skills.

Achievements

The Foundation Skills Program:

- ⇒ helped create a corporate culture of continuous learning;
- ⇒ developed a workforce that is more confident in communicating ideas and making decisions; and
- ⇒ laid the groundwork for further learning and more complex skills development.

Benefits

The program:

- ⇒ increased productivity and cost-savings;
- ⇒ increased employees' ability to work with new technologies;
- ⇒ developed workers that are ready and willing to undertake future training.

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