



Teck Cominco

Workplace Literacy Mini Case Study

Overview

Vancouver-based Teck Cominco Limited is a diversified mining, smelting and refining group. The company is a world leader in the production of metallurgical coal and zinc, and a major producer of copper and gold.

At its Trail Operations, in response to dynamic and challenging business conditions in the late 1990s, Teck Cominco focused resources on creating a culture of learning that would revitalize and engage the company's most important asset—the newly restructured employee group. This group was older, with an average age of 48, and very experienced, with an average service of 24.5 years. A needs assessment revealed that a significant number of employees felt that refreshing their current academic skills and acquiring new ones would allow them to participate more fully in job-related training. To strengthen the cornerstone skills of its workforce, union members and management worked together to form The Learning Centre (TLC).

Objectives

Teck Cominco aims to maintain its learning culture by:

- ⇒ providing cornerstone skills learning opportunities in explicitly academic courses and by infusing these skills into general interest courses;
- ⇒ increasing accessibility to courses by scheduling around the 15 shifts in this continuous operation environment;
- ⇒ partnering with local colleges and distance education programs; and
- ⇒ completely funding all courses taken by employees.

Activities

TLC is becoming the learning hub at Trail Operations. Among its many roles, it coordinates the design and delivery of all TLC

courses. It is beginning to provide services in employee development and training, and it fosters partnerships with organizations such as provincial universities and colleges to provide access to online learning and other continuing education courses. TLC also has strong local partners in The Greater Trail Community Skills Centre, Kootenay–Boundary School District No. 20 and Selkirk College.

Since 1999, 1,097 employees have completed 4,491 courses and workshops on subjects ranging from basic skills to all levels of Microsoft Office and wellness and stress management.

Achievements

Teck Cominco's commitment to learning has resulted in a workforce that is:

- ⇒ well-prepared and highly motivated;
- ⇒ confident in their abilities and always looking for ways to improve their skills; and
- ⇒ able to meet the challenges of a changing workplace.

Benefits

The company and employees have benefited greatly from the many activities of TLC, namely:

- ⇒ employees have experienced personal achievement and growth in a positive, learner-driven environment;
- ⇒ with highly accessible programs, 62 per cent of the current employee group have attended these free academic and general interest courses on their own time;
- ⇒ interaction among employees from different worksites has increased; and
- ⇒ union members and management continue to work together for the benefit of employees.

CONTACT

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