



Knowledge Management and Workforce Replenishment at Pennsylvania American Water

EDSI was already at work with Pennsylvania American Water, engaged in job task analysis, skill gap analysis as well as curriculum and courseware development, when Jodi Wadel first connected with the company.

Wadel, recently promoted to Director of Journey Management from Organization Development Consultant, explains, “EDSI was doing some work with a particular individual who had key, critical knowledge about the business and was getting ready to retire. When I came on board, there was not an infrastructure to support this work across PA, and I partnered with EDSI to help at all levels. They helped to give guidance around how to develop the infrastructure, how to identify and assess individuals with critical knowledge, and how to effectively capture the knowledge.”

The relationship between Wadel and EDSI quickly developed into a partnership that would help to shape Pennsylvania American Water’s knowledge management strategies. Wadel explains, “The strength that we had was a partnership: being able to brainstorm and create something based off of knowledge and experience EDSI brought to the table from past work. I found that I could depend on EDSI, not only to do great work, but also to give input into the building of the project. That is something that is different than with other consultants that I’ve worked with in the past.”

One of the key deliverables from the process was the development of an Operations Manual for Business Continuity – a tool to ensure that a water treatment plant’s operations could seamlessly continue in the event of a failure of the automated systems. Wadel expands, “The work began at one of our plant locations, but EDSI built the infrastructure and outline that we are using across the company.”

In speaking about the process, Wadel shares, “I appreciated all of the *aha* moments I had from working with EDSI. Knowledge management is a relatively new concept, there aren’t a lot of companies focusing on it. We developed a program together and we executed, and now it is standard operation in PA. The senior managers have seen the results, they know what workforce replenishment is, they know that every year we are going to be looking at who has the critical knowledge, who has the critical positions, and the best ways to manage these knowledge and skills moving forward.”

Engaging employees in the right way is key to the success of any knowledge management program. Wadel explains, “My experience is that those we worked with were honored and they appreciated the opportunity to share their stories and pass along knowledge and skills. We were sensitive to the work that they do, and how we could best capture critical information without interrupting operations.”

Wadel had the opportunity to share the work done by EDSI and Pennsylvania American Water in the area of knowledge management at a utility management conference last year. “Over half of the attendees approached me after the presentation asking for more information. I was taken aback by the response. So many people were saying ‘this is wonderful, we really need to do this.’ They related to the issues and felt that their company wasn’t doing anything to solve them.”

Jodi Wadel: “I strongly recommend EDSI as a partner for all workforce knowledge retention needs.”



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