kinetic learning
People Learn Best by Doing

WindConnect® WorkingSmart SafetyChallenge

Kinetic Learning & RMT Launch Health & Safety Program

"Simply put, the WorkingSmart safety learning program helps RMT stand out from the crowd, loud and clear."

- Frank Greb,
RMT Vice President & General Manager

RMT & Kinetic Learning Produce Leading-Edge Wind Farm Safety Learning Program

One morning at dawn on an RMT wind farm construction site in the Midwest, John P. huddles with his fellow crewmembers to discuss the Job Safety Environmental Analysis (JSEA) required before beginning each day's work. As part of completing the JSEA, the crew identifies the safety hazards that may exist for the day's work, and the procedures crewmembers must follow in order to work safely throughout the day.

John's immediate challenge is to don the correct personal protective equipment, including a personal fall arrest system and a tool lanyard, to enter a wind tower and to climb safely nearly 300 feet to the nacelle. There, he must cross the top of the nacelle and enter the tower hub to complete the wiring necessary before the turbine can begin generating electricity.

In less than 20 minutes, John's crew finishes the JSEA analysis, and he completes all of his personal tasks without incident — and without ever leaving a computer keyboard located in one of the site's construction trailers.

Work by remote control? Not at all. Rather, John's experience is part of the latest in interactive learning specifically designed for RMT, a division of Madison, Wisc.-based Alliant Energy and a leader in developing, designing and constructing renewable energy facilities.

Technology enables "learning by doing"

The challenge John successfully completed is one of many real-world interactive work simulations that make up WorkingSmart, a unique Internet-delivered, self-directed learning program for all RMT team members and contractor employees. The program launched on July 23, 2009.

Produced by Minneapolis-based Kinetic Learning, WorkingSmart combines video, animation and computer interactive technology to create worksite simulations that challenge learners to identify, diagnose and prevent or solve jobsite health and safety issues.

Kinetic Learning's proprietary interactive learning software guides learners through a series of real-world simulations, or "Challenges," grouped according to key wind farm construction phases and tasks.

To complete each Challenge and Lesson successfully, learners must determine the "most appropriate" or "best" Solution for each safety problem or issue encountered. To help learners solve Challenges (and learn by doing), they are able to access subject matter content, background and practice opportunities before selecting a solution to a Challenge.

Regardless of whether the Solution the learner chooses is —or is not— the best for a Challenge, he or she receives Feedback that either reinforces the "best" choice or provides additional information or direction for determining the best choice.

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The Challenge-Solution-Feedback approach enables "learning by doing," a powerful adult learning methodology that significantly enhances both the learner's engagement in the course and knowledge retention.

A solid business case

According to Frank Greb, RMT Vice President & General Manager, the WorkingSmart goal is to assist WC to achieve zero work injuries — a critical factor in completing wind farm projects on time at reduced cost and improved profitability.

"Safety and achieving zero injuries are our primary objectives," Greb said. "WorkingSmart is a cornerstone of our commitment to achieving those objectives. I've known from long experience that zero injuries is not only imperative, but also can be achieved while we keep projects on budget and schedule, and maintain high quality."

Jan Launder, CSP, RMT Corporate Senior Safety Manager and WorkingSmart program director, emphasized that the learning program is not a test. "It's a simple and unique learning experience that will enable all employees to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to do a better job of keeping themselves and their fellow employees healthy and safe on the job every day," Launder said.

Comprehensive learning

All RMT team members will take all WorkingSmart construction-related Lessons. These range from site preparation, foundation construction and trenching, to traffic control, tower erection and tower wiring.

In addition, all team members will take an additional lesson introducing Behavior-Based Safety, and supervisors will take a lesson to familiarize them with the RMT Health & Safety Management System (HSMS). By completing all Lessons, every learner, regardless of trade or skill set, will develop a greater understanding of the full range of wind farm construction health and safety issues.

Launder said that Phase One of WorkingSmart will involve all salaried staff in RMT, while Phase Two will reach the RMT hourly staff and all subcontractor supervisors and hourly employees.

"Phase One is scheduled for completion by December 18, 2009," Launder said. "All additional staff who are added in the future to meet construction needs will also take the course—meaning that WorkingSmart will be an ongoing program and not a one-time event." Launder added that details of the Phase Two launch and timing for completion are in the process of being finalized.

Differentiating RMT

Launder said that in addition to being a unique learning program that steps far beyond conventional classroom training to develop practical knowledge and skills, WorkingSmart significantly differentiates RMT from its competitors.

"An HSMS that effectively enables and guides employees to proactively avoid risk, accidents and injury is a key component in helping to win new wind farm construction contracts," said Launder. He added, "Wind farm developers and owners are becoming much more adamant concerning the measures that builders employ to maintain a safe construction environment. There's nothing in the wind farm construction market that comes close to WorkingSmart in scope or depth, or in its unique approach to helping employees learn how to work safely."

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