

Sheetz, Inc.

The Client

Sheetz, Inc., a nationally recognized leader in the convenience store industry, is based in Altoona, PA and operates more than 270 locations in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Ohio. In addition to offering numerous shelf-display items and cooler and freezer stock, Sheetz stores provide three grades of gasoline, fresh-brewed coffee, and made-to-order subs, salads, and sandwiches.

The Challenge

Sheetz was using two third-party logistics (3PL) firms to coordinate the distribution of products to its stores. Realizing that its activity level would greatly increase in the coming years, Sheetz management wanted to know whether the 3PL system would be the most efficient approach or if it should consider building its own distribution system.

Tompkins determined that Sheetz could distribute products to its stores more economically and with improved service levels by managing its own distribution process. In order to make the transition to self-distribution, Sheetz asked Tompkins to design and implement the new distribution center (DC). As part of the implementation, a Warehouse Management System (WMS) and Tompkins Control System were installed to ease the operations. Since all of the supervisors and operators worked in Sheetz convenience stores, most had little to no DC experience. Tompkins University (TU) was brought in to perform a training needs assessment to ensure that the DC go-live was successful.

The Solution

After evaluating the employees that would need to be trained, TU proposed a comprehensive training plan for all warehouse workers and the managers who would serve as trainers once Tompkins left the site. The plan included the following sessions:

- Train the Trainer
- All functional areas
- Managing on-the-job training delivery

The initial session, Train the Trainer, presented information on how to be a successful trainer, as well as an overview of all the training manuals for the different operational areas. Next, the supervisors were ready to begin the three weeks of operational training. The employees were cross-trained in all operational areas by attending a classroom-based training session and then following up with on-the-job training facilitated by Tompkins' consultants.

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As a follow up to the training, job aids—pocket-sized reference manuals—were created for all operational areas including ambient picking, bulk and container replenishment, cooler picking, loading, pick to pallet, putaway, receiving, and store returns. Job aids are ideal for when the worker is on the job and has a quick question about a function.

In addition, Tompkins worked with Penn State University and the state of Pennsylvania to obtain reimbursement for professional and technical training. For Sheetz to qualify, TU developed a Competency Based Development Matrix and detailed descriptions for each training course. TU also coordinated and reviewed all the vendor and material handling equipment training to ensure that the right people were scheduled for the right training sessions. To avoid training overload and conflicting events, TU managed the schedule.

The Results

The comprehensive plan created by Tompkins University provided training on all aspects of the WMS and material handling equipment. After successful training, all Sheetz employees were well prepared for the DC go-live. The Sheetz DC is up and running at full force with an increased, well-trained workforce.