



Green Mountain Power, Colchester, Vermont

“The GMP Next Generation University could have never come to fruition without our partnership with KnowledgeWave Training. KnowledgeWave’s dedication to developing, implementing and administering made our vision of the university not only a reality, but a tremendous success. After years of providing customized training to GMP, KnowledgeWave understands our corporate culture, values and specific needs. The value of that understanding in developing our training has been invaluable.”

Deirdre Johnson
Manager of Human Resources
Green Mountain Power

of Employees: 195

Type of Business: Public Utilities

Background:

Green Mountain Power Corporation (GMP) sells electricity and energy services and products to about one-fourth of Vermont's retail electricity customers, serving half of the state's 14 counties. GMP also sells electric power at wholesale in New England and sells operations services to other utilities in Vermont. With operating revenues of about \$229 million, it is the state's ninth largest business in total sales volume.

GMP’s desire to be a premier employer and attract and retain the best employees is what prompted Deirdre Johnson, Human Resources Manager, to contact KnowledgeWave Training in August 2005. One way to achieve this is through employee development – training for both professional and personal growth. The challenge of offering training is the lack of extra time in an individual’s work day. GMP did not want to impede on their employee’s busy work schedules and they did not want to offer training after work and on weekends, when employees would have to spend time away from their families.

Solution

GMP partnered with KnowledgeWave Training to develop a customized training program for their employees. The program needed to fit into their busy schedules and encourage personal and professional growth. The solution became known as the on-site GMP Next Generation University.

Next Generation University is part of a “corporate university” concept. This concept revolves around a series of 44 different workshops made available to employees on-site, at no charge. Funding comes from the company’s fiscal training budget, and by offering the workshops on-site the company saves money on traveling expenses that otherwise would be incurred. The 90 minute workshops are taught by KnowledgeWave Training instructors, as well as GMP’s own staff. The brief workshops are designed to encourage more participation by taking less time out of the employee’s day. It is much easier for management to sign off on 90 minutes of training as opposed to a full day or more.



The classes/workshops are grouped into three categories: Computers and Technology, Customer Service and Management, and Self and Community Development. Specific titles include “Excel Basics”, “Yoga”, and “Fundamentals of Customer Service”, to name a few. KnowledgeWave customized many of the workshops so students are able to learn with scenarios specific to their jobs. For example, screen shots from the Outlook programs of the IT department were used in a variety of the Outlook workshops offered. KnowledgeWave also met with GMP’s PC Support group to determine what questions were most often posed by the employees. These questions were then integrated into the training to further customize and make the best use of each employee’s time.

A certificate program was put into place, so employee’s attending at least 30 credit hours of training could earn a certificate of completion. The certificates act as a training benchmark as well as incentive for employees to participate in the training.

In addition, KnowledgeWave used Microsoft Access to develop a database used to manage the training schedule and student registrations. The database allows GMP to track the learning progress of each student by downloading transcripts and keep an ongoing “wish” list of workshops for each person. As classes are added to the schedule, people who have those classes on their wish list are notified of the additions. The University database also has the capability to generate reports and create mass email distributions to confirm attendance and remind students of upcoming class registrations.

Results

The success of the university is apparent by its popularity among GMP employees. Since March of 2006 the Next Generation University has held more than 90 workshops at GMP’s campus, with more than 600 student completions having been recorded. More GMP employees are attending training than ever before and the program has proved to be an attractive feature to potential employees during the recruitment process.

Notable benefits to the company include a gratified workforce equipped with essential business skills acquired during workshops such as “Email Writing for Results” and “Effective Presentation Skills”. The company has also been able to avoid travel expenses and save a great deal of money by offering the workshops onsite.

Employees now have an opportunity to develop themselves personally and professionally as they earn certificates for their training. The certificate program provides further incentive, as they can play a role in development plans and performance evaluations.

Finally, GMP is able to successfully manage the workshop schedule, closely monitor the progress of each person, and communicate schedule information to their staff through the efficiency of the Next Generation University database.

Founded in 1990 and headquartered in South Burlington, Vermont, KnowledgeWave Training specializes in education and training, as well as custom database and software development. KnowledgeWave, Inc. is Vermont’s only Microsoft® Certified Learning Partner, a Citrix® Authorized Learning Center, and a Novell® Authorized Education Center and an authorized Cisco® Learning Solutions Partner. KnowledgeWave offers a full-range of authorized Microsoft®, Citrix®, Novell®, and CompTIA courses, plus custom-designed corporate curriculum, by qualified instructors, who rise above industry guidelines. State-of-the-art training and education centers are located in South Burlington, Montpelier and Brattleboro, Vermont, and on-site training at client facilities is available, as well.