



CASE STUDY

Montana Limestone

On Demand Safety Training for Mining Operations



The Story

Problem

What is the cost of a poorly run safety program? Whether measured in employee injury, fatality rates, or lost labor hours and productivity, the costs for companies like Montana Limestone can be enormous. In fact, the average cost of a lost work injury in mining is approximately \$30,000 per incident, a strong incentive for mine operators to commit to injury prevention.

Keeping up with federal Mine Safety & Health Administration (MSHA) regulations is difficult, and the challenge only increases when managing a large workforce. Mining is a high-risk occupation, with workers in natural dangerous environments exposed to new safety concerns each day on the job, from heavy equipment to confined space hazards. Federal scrutiny of the mining industry has increased dramatically in recent years, with domestic energy exploration booming and mineral production diversifying.

Employee safety has always been a top priority for Montana Limestone, a mining interest producing tons of the crushed stone. Leadership had invested in expensive live instruction for its workforce. It was quality training, and it got the job done, but it also required that the mine be shut down for a full day while miners sat in a classroom. So, not only was Montana Limestone paying for live instruction, but the company was losing considerable money through lost productivity on the other side, with each live training event. And, the live training wasn't an enduring resource for the business, but a 'one off' experience that didn't do anything for promoting safety awareness—until it was time to recertify or schedule refresher training from well-paid industry safety consultants.

Because leaders in the company value the safety of the workforce, and hadn't been exposed to modern online safety training programs, they figured that whatever the expense and inconvenience of live training, it was probably worth it. These leaders knew that in the mining industry, worker injuries and accidents are more expensive than almost any investment in safety training, and can have a paralyzing effect on the workforce.



Client Focus

Given that Mine Safety & Health Administration (MSHA) regulations require mine operators to provide 24 hours of initial safety training to all new miners, and a minimum of 8 hours of refresher training each year, the time and money being spent to train new miners is just huge.

Assuming a career of 30 years, each new Montana Limestone employee would produce an estimated 95,875 tons of raw product over the lifetime of employment. The investment in worker training, for every worker, every year, is an expensive commitment to securing the chain of productivity. Also, Montana Limestone reported that 55% of its existing workforce was at retirement age or within 5 years of retirement; based on the workforce level, Montana Limestone was facing a 1.5 million ton mountain of lost production.

It was clear that Montana Limestone needed to build a more efficient safety training program. As one of the most highly regulated industries, mining companies are continuously challenged to provide employees with the most current safety training to mitigate risk and promote job safety. But, moving training out of the classroom also meant changing the overall corporate culture and the entrenched mindset Montana Limestone's veteran miners, who, since a day in the classroom meant having a day off, were more than resistant to change.

Solution

The loss in productivity from running the live training just wasn't sustainable anymore, so Montana Limestone came to Vivid to move its safety training program online.

Offering on demand Mine Safety & Health Administration (MSHA) courses that run through Vivid's easy to use Safety Training System, custom built just for safety pros, Montana Limestone began to see a better way to deliver training.

Known for the quality of its safety course content, Vivid training creates an interactive, engaging experience for miners; using short films and animations, miners work through realistic safety scenarios that are developed with instructional designers and industry experts, to be effective. Each course is a memorable experience, completed at the individual pace of the miner, not the boring, prolonged classroom exercise. On average, basic critical safety courses are completed in about 30 minutes. Most courses can be taken anytime, anywhere, and on mobile devices like tablets and smartphones, so miners can train in the field, at home, or when traveling—whichever is best for the company.



As for issues of accountability, Vivid's Safety Training System handles all of those questions for program administrators who run the software; tracking courses, scheduling training, testing for recertification, and building reports for specific regulatory requirements, isn't that difficult with the simplicity of the System interface. Much of the safety program data can be generated with the click of the mouse, or easily found. And no matter where or when training happens, the secure stream of data through Vivid's Safety Training System, the 'whose doing what' details essential for true accountability, never stop updating in real time or accruing for eventual reporting, or auditing.

Vivid is also the only company that offers a virtual live training experience to satisfy Mine Safety & Health Administration (MSHA) regulatory requirements; new miners can log in remotely and take the virtual training from anywhere. Hosted by industry safety experts, it's a great idea for companies out there competing for mining contracts and finding themselves with a need to train a group of employees quickly. With no travel and zero logistical overhead, the virtual, live MSHA training saves money, with convenience that employees and management appreciate.

Montana Limestone went with a custom program designed by Vivid, adopting the Safety Training System to run the unique mix of MSHA courses necessary to satisfy regulatory requirements, and minimize interruption to workforce productivity.

Results

Return on investment? Taking the safety training program online increased productivity by approximately 100%; Montana Limestone realized an estimated 25% revenue gain by moving out of the classroom; a day of live training used to cost the company approximately 2,600 tons of lost production, or an estimated \$20,000 of lost revenue for Montana Limestone.

The outcome for Montana Limestone, in improved employee performance, productivity, and cost savings, was more than worth the expense. Montana Limestone found an efficient online safety training experience that translated into improved performance. And, with Vivid's Safety Training System, the company was able to assess productivity gains against the cost per labor hour by using metrics generated by the software. Reporting features allowed management to easily track performance tied to business objectives, while identifying areas for improvement and standardizing best practices for safety to ensure employee compliance.



Vivid Learning Systems

Vivid is an online safety training company. Making life easier for safety professionals is what we do. With on demand courses that deliver an effective, memorable training experience, and systems designed for smart simplicity, we help clients protect the workforce and go beyond regulatory requirements. We get it. Visit www.learnatvivid.com

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