

APPRENTICE TRAINING UPDATES JOURNEYMAN SKILLS

The use of apprentices has been the means of perpetuating the knowledge and skills of artisans and craftsmen for centuries. Ancient records reveal that they were used as early as 2100 B.C. by the Babylonian Emperors to see that the arts of various trades were transferred from one generation to the next. There were also apprentices used in Egypt, Greece and Rome when they were dominant examples of society. The first recorded rules for apprenticeships were established in 1562 by Queen Elizabeth of England.

Throughout the course of history, the means of transferring the arts of a particular craft to the next generation has undergone great change. In the days of the guilds, apprentices were bound out to a master and all training was on the job. They worked under a contract which provided only for board and room, and lived under the rules set down by the master--which usually called for working from day light until dark. When his contract had been fulfilled, the apprentice was turned out to become a journeyman.

The terms "journeyman" and "apprentice" were very descriptive of the functions they performed. "Apprehendere", Latin, meaning to comprehend, became apprentice or a learner. "Jour", meaning day, and to go from place to place for a day, became a journey. A journeyman was a traveling day worker until he acquired enough worldly goods to become a master and could open his own shop. This, of course, changed with the Industrial Revolution as the cottage factory was replaced by the use of more complicated and costly machinery and tools. We still find the use of journeyman in the sense of traveling day worker prevalent in the building trades work.

The old means of selecting apprentices was to force people into a trade through the will of a master, and the parent, guardian or the law. The laws of the past had provided for apprenticeships as a means of punishment for debt, idleness or relief for the poor.

The training processes and the selectivity of those entering a trade today have of necessity become more complicated. Changing technology has made academic knowledge more important. The natural talents of people to become more proficient in one craft over another as well as the need to provide job satisfaction and motivation, called for greater selectivity of placement in a craft.

Today's apprenticeship can be more likened to an internship such as those used in the professions--as a junior partner in a law firm. The apprentice earns while he learns. As he becomes more proficient he progresses up the wage ladder until he has qualified himself by training, education and experience to carry on the functions of a full-fledged mechanic in his particular field.

Local 1245 [of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, AFL-CIO], under the leadership of Business Manager Ronald T. Weakley, made its first contract proposals on formalized apprenticeship in 1952. These proposals called for fully indentured joint programs with tripartite participation by the Union, Company, and the State Division of Apprenticeship Standards.

Prior agreements involving apprentice classifications had been worked out shortly after World War II to determine apprenticeable classifications under which certain veterans became entitled to assistance from the Federal Government in the purchases of tools which were needed to practice the arts of each craft. These subsidies have long since run out but a new program has evolved providing a stipulated monetary allowance for training periods of one month for each month of active duty in the Armed Forces with a maximum of 36 months. The allowance is graduated and diminishes as progression through the program is made and allowances are greater for those with dependents. To be eligible the veteran must have been discharged after January 31, 1955, and must be enrolled in a Government-approved program.

The principal objectives of the Union proposals were intended to provide known and understandable qualifications for entry into an apprentice program; defined and realistic standards of achievement for each stipulated period of the progression; the schedule and limit of duties to be performed during each period; the means and methods of record keeping and checking the attainment of the prescribed standards; and finally, once having achieved the required time and proficiency set for attaining the knowledge and skill, the apprentice would attain journeyman status and pay without having to wait for a posted job opening.

These basic objectives, in one form or another, were contained in each set of the Union's bargaining proposals until 1957. In 1957 agreement was reached to establish a Joint Apprenticeship Committee under the provisions of the Agreement (Title 109). The functions were limited to matters of entrance requirements of applicants into an apprenticeship. Recommendations of this Committee were to be submitted to the proper officials of each of the parties for their adoption, modification, and joint formalization into legal agreements. The Apprenticeship Committee was composed of three Company members and three Union members. The first Committee was: Company--W. L. Murray (Personnel--now Colgate Division Manager); E. F. Sibley (Manager, Gas Control); and Percy Oldershaw, now retired. Union--L. L. Mitchell, Senior Assistant Business Manager; "Nick" Matulich, Light Crew Foreman, Gas Department, East Bay Division; and Jerry Woerner, Electrician, North Bay Division. (Both now in Supervision)

The first screening program was developed for Gas Servicemen and the Company set up a school with both academic and laboratory training to be provided in a centralized school. The school was not approved

jointly as a qualification by the parties, although under Section 205.11 (Section on qualifications), it did form the basis of a case for disqualification in certain instances. The agreed screening requirements included the use of a manual dexterity test, an educational level test (Wonderlic), and a spelling test in the form of an essay, and a writing test for legibility. Later, pre-entry screening schools for lineman apprentice (climbing) and fitter apprentice (welding) were agreed for those classifications with the pre-testing the same for these classifications except that no spelling or writing tests were required. A math test was added, however (Madden-Peak).

General problems related to placement of people within an apprenticeship who could not meet the expected future standards of achievement, and to separate training from production needs for duties less demanding than needed for full journeyman status, were handled in general negotiations by establishment of production jobs or holding jobs such as meter shopman, shopman, garage, and fieldman. Jobs where true journeyman programs were unable to be established because of lack of need for an adequate number of journeymen or because of special geographic limitations in duties of a universal need, were established as progressive wage rate jobs with only on-the-job training being used to develop the replacement of the experienced and trained people-- automatic progression being provided through the progressive wage rate.

Bidding and seniority systems developed during the period when an informal training system existed, also posed problems. Changing technologies eliminated jobs as well as duties and created the need for combining duties from one job to another when the major portion of a job was eliminated. These also were handled by general negotiations and the establishment of new jobs to meet the needs. The most significant of these changes was the establishment of a test and control or measurement group in the gas department.

All of these moves took time. The first change in the expansion of the Apprentice Committee functions was made by amendments in 1962 to the working Agreement, Title 109, Section 109.2, in which the Apprentice Committee was to study and discuss methods of grading, related training, means of progression, etc.

Shortly after this change, because of the expanded need for committee work, the use of representatives of the Local Union as committee members was established as we had experienced constant change of committee members because of promotions, etc. This created problems on continuity of the Union program. The Committee was then composed of L. L. Mitchell, Senior Assistant Business Manager, and Business Representatives L. N. Foss and F. A. Quadros, for Union and Daryl G. Collins (Industrial Relations), Ralph C. Dodge (Gas Distribution), and Richard Lindsay (Electric Operations) for Company.

Under this enabling clause special schools were agreed upon to provide accelerated training for electrical technicians, a provisional lineman training school, fitter pre-testing school, and a secondary training school after 6 months of apprenticeship. Testing requirements for transfers from electrician to electrical technician, and certain agreements on nuclear training schools for operators and radiation monitors for the Humboldt Bay Unit #3, were established.

By 1966, many of the problems faced in 1957 had been answered. Most of the pre-entrance testing requirements had been agreed on apprenticeships which were intended to remain. After field testing and application, some of these requirements were altered or modified to meet changing needs. In 1966, automatic progression to journeyman status was agreed for those currently in apprentice programs and a definite commitment reached to provide a Master Apprenticeship Agreement with sub-agreements for duties and progression in each classification.

Preparation of the Master Agreement was started by amalgamating the separate pre-testing agreements and other pertinent documents relative to training and progression requirements. These were fitted into the pre-bid promotional scheme as well as the principle of automatic movement to journeyman status.

Sub-committees were set up to study and discuss the individual apprenticeship programs as follows:

Apprentice Electrician (Steam, Maintenance and Material Control):

Allen Graves
Joseph Eisele
David H. Reese

Gerald Beitzell
Bobby G. Robinson

Apprentice Meterman

Keith Thickstun

Lawrence N. Foss

Apprentice Fitter

John Tucker
Frank A. Quadros

Harold Easley

Apprentice Equipment Mechanic

Ray Edwards
Paul DuMont
M. D. Harrington

John Adams
Peter R. Dutton

Apprentice Electrical Machinist

Mark Burns
Henry B. Lucas

Joe Means
Frank S. Anderson

Apprentice Welder, Rigger,
Instrument Repairman, and
Machinist (Steam and Material Control)

Art Delgado
Don McNeill
Earl Storkson
Peter R. Dutton

Roy Bondiatt
Paul Gilbreath
Lawrence N. Foss

Apprentice Plant Mechanic

James Soden

Wayne Weaver

Apprentice Gas Control Mechanic

Rodney Trowbridge
Darrell Champlin

Richard Hollister
John J. Wilder

Apprentice Communication Technician

Lawrence H. Tindall
Harley A. Brendal
David H. Reese

David Domes
Lawrence N. Foss

Apprentice Electrical Technician

Claude Graham

Bobby G. Robinson

Apprentice Lineman

Warren H. Burr
Edward A. Seekamp
L. L. Mitchell

Robert A. Goerlitz
Leland Thomas Jr.

Apprentice Gas Measurementman

Robert Burkell
Frank A. Quadros

Larry Noceti

The first separate training agreement worked on was that of Lineman, which was thought to be the easiest to resolve because of the background of other programs and our own experiences with the accelerated school. This proved to be more difficult than we had supposed for we became entangled in basic disagreements over principles which had long been bones of contention in the grievance procedure, such as the degree of direction needed, the use of apprentices working alone, and the use of apprentices in production work as opposed to training needs.

These were eventually resolved and the basic work done on the lineman program did advance the schedule of time needed to resolve the other programs.

Fundamentally, the Master Agreement controls the general requirements for entry into all apprenticeships, establishes the principles to be used in the testing programs and the progression of the apprentice, provides the general procedure for filling of journeyman vacancies from unassigned status, and regulates the procedures for handling complaints or grievances of the apprentices.

The individual guidelines for each apprenticeship cover the specific requirements to be made for each six-month period, the record keeping and the training hours to be provided.

It is the belief of your Apprenticeship Committee that the program, as finally agreed upon, is a major step forward in providing qualified personnel for the Pacific Gas and Electric Company and will provide the employee who successfully fulfills the requirements of the program with a greater pride in his workmanship, greater skill in a shorter period of time and, most important of all, the knowledge of his own competency which no one can take from him.

What better way to put it than Benjamin Franklin's words: "He that hath a trade hath an estate."

- Article from April 1969 issue of
"Utility Reporter" written by
L. L. Mitchell

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20 DOLLARS

REWARD

Ran Away From the
Subscriber, on Thurs. Morning Last,

JOHN WHITAKER,

an indented Apprentice to the Brass Casting and Finishing Trade. Had on when he left his boarding house, a new hat and a blue round-about. The said John Whitaker has a brother in New Orleans, and is supposed to want to make his way thither. He is about sixteen years of age, straight short hair, rather sharpe gray eye, acquiline nose and sallow complexion. All persons are forbid harbouring the said lad, under the penalty of the law.

Should the said John Whitaker wish to return to his employer, and will give information respecting brass castings, etc. that are missing, that will prove his innocence, every thing that has occurred will be forgiven, and he will be treated as heretofore....which is strongly recommended to him, as every step will be taken and no expense spared to recover the said Lad. The above reward will be paid to any person who may give a clue to him, so that he is recovered.

L. LEWIS, 53 White St.

NEW YORK, Aug. 17, 1835.

