CURTISS-WRIGHT

Best Practices in In-Processing and Access Authorization

A READY2WORK SUCCESS STORY

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— Application Development Specialist

Organization
A Utility in the Midwestern United States

Challenge
Streamline slow in-processing

Solution
Reduce man hours and wait times while improving accuracy in outage in-processing by implementing Curtiss-Wright's IPAA suite

Results
In-processing activities for contract and full-time workers are streamlined, reducing cost and time spent

It's a familiar scenario: When a nuclear reactor goes down for refueling, hundreds of temporary and contract workers are brought in to help with maintenance, testing, refueling, repairs, and other essential tasks. Depending on how long these workers have been in the industry and what jobs they need to perform during the outage, they must first complete a series of activities before they are ready to begin work, ranging from instructor-led training courses, to job certifications, to drug screenings. Commonly known as in-processing, access authorization, and fitness for duty requirements, these processes can entail an immense amount of time and effort as the utility coordinates tasks and validates each worker's credentials.

"When you have an outage, hundreds of people suddenly need to know where to go and what to do for site access," says an application development specialist at a large midwestern utility, who preferred to remain nameless due to corporate policy. "It can be quite a challenge to keep track of it all, schedule the activities correctly, and get in touch with people as needed."

As a key member of this utility's Access

Authorization and Training team, the application development specialist has spent the better part of her career establishing and refining technical processes to get workers on the job fast. During an average outage at the nuclear power plant where she works, 800 to 900 new workers must ramp up in a short period of time for site access. She and other members of the Access Authorization and Training staff need accurate information about which training courses each worker has completed in the past, and whether they were recent enough to satisfy regulatory requirements. The team manages and prioritizes these workers' schedules, efficiently routing people to the right locations as they arrive at the site and complete necessary activities.

Fortunately, these tasks have become a much easier since this utility acquired Curtiss-Wright's Ready2Work software to automate in-processing and scheduling activities. A central component of the In-Processing and Access Authorization (IPAA) suite, Ready2Work helps her team determine which activities, trainings, and screenings each worker needs to get on the

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job quickly.

ON THE PATH TO AUTOMATION

The utility was initially attracted to Ready2Work for its automated requirements analysis and scheduling capabilities. The Access Authorization and Training team also liked its ability to include work contracts and worker requests, which assist in planning and identifying in-processing costs. The plant already had the Security Screening Information System (SSIS) and ePHQ components of the IPAA suite, and the application development specialist thought that integrating Ready2Work would complement and extend the plant's in-processing and access authorization solutions.

"The IPAA software interfaces with PADS and NANTeL, and it assists with training and scheduling," the specialist says. "We saw the potential to be able to replace our aging training applications, which we were using for the requalification process."

NANTeL training courses reduce costs by enabling workers to complete required training before arriving for work at nuclear power plants. Ready2Work integrates directly with the NANTeL system, as well as with Vision, which the plant continues to use for Job Task Analysis, course content, and objectives. "The robust scheduling and the integration with NANTeL, PADS, and Vision is what set Ready2Work apart from other solutions," she confirms.

Implementing Ready2Work involved a learning curve, but the Access Authorization and Training team has successfully integrated existing data. The project was complicated by the decision to replace several other software applications; the team had to recreate existing processes and procedures within these former software solutions. As a result, they decided to rollout Ready2Work in phases, with phase 1 involving installing the software and loading data to manage in-processing activities and schedule workers for a pending outage.

INCREASED EFFICIENCY DURING REFUELING OUTAGE

As an industry veteran, the application development specialist admits that she was initially skeptical about achieving substantial

time-savings for worker processing, but she has been pleasantly surprised with the efficiency gains—which she estimates to be about 30 percent since going live with Ready2Work. These in-processing efficiencies are partly a result of careful scheduling, which reduces worker wait time.

Other efficiencies stem from better disbursement of workers based on the logical ordering of activities and tasks. Previously, all workers reported to Access Authorization first thing in the morning, which led to long lines of people waiting to complete various parts of the process. Today, the plant is able to prioritize activities and distribute workers to the appropriate areas.

"Ready2Work allows us to balance out the workers—a few to one station, a few more to another, and so forth—based on careful prioritization of what they should do first," she explains. "Each worker has a set time and place to be."

Furthermore, Ready2Work allows the in-processing team to include specific instructions with each worker's schedule, such as no eating or drinking 15 minutes prior to an FFD test, or a reminder to bring protective gear for certain types of training. "They especially like the automated worker-scheduling features, since it helps them to know when and where to be on any given day," she adds. "Feedback from workers during our refueling outages has been positive. People say, 'When you come to our plant, you know exactly where you need to be, what to bring, and when to arrive.'"

During one recent outage, several managers commented on how unusual it was "to see the hallways so empty"—something that is not typical during these busy in-processing periods. "By properly distributing workers, we minimized the lines and the wait times," she adds. "The workers were where they were supposed to be: in rooms, getting things done! Ready2Work made things smoother and more efficient."

Behind the scenes, the in-processing team no longer has to manually complete the NANTeL roster, enroll workers, or import worker information as they complete their training—all thanks to direct interfaces with the Ready2Work environment. When it comes

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to scheduling, they don't have to enter students into instances, formally known as sessions, saving additional time.

Ready2Work also helps answer many of the questions that challenge the plant's Access Authorization and Training team. "For example, do we have enough instructors and facility space for the number of worker qualifications needed?" asks the application development specialist. "In the past we lacked automation for this type of planning. Now, Ready2Work helps the instructors know where, when, and how many people they will be teaching. The team has a much better sense of how to prioritize activities and gauge class sizes. We will see a recurring savings for every outage in the future."

USING READY2WORK YEAR-ROUND

Since this utility went live with Ready2Work, the Access Authorization and Training team has used the software to manage two plant outages. In the near future, they plan to use Ready2Work to re-qualify their employees as well.

"Whether we are in outage mode or fully operational, one of our goals is to make the in-processing experience transparent to the worker," the specialist says. "Internally, it's different during an outage because the number of workers is higher. But externally it should look and feel the same."

The utility plans to use Ready2Work as a planning tool as well. This entails defining categories and total numbers of resources before the in-processing team even knows which workers will be filling those positions. For example, they might enter 40 welders, 40 electricians, and so forth. Then, as actual resources are hired, they can be assigned to particular contracts, categories, and arrival dates. "The category determines the list of activities they need to complete to work at the plant," she explains.

Using the Security Screening Information System (SSIS) software, an in-processing staff member can create an unescorted access request for each worker, including name, social security number, and other personal contact details. This type of advance planning will help the staff coordinate instructors and facilities. "Knowing there are 80 workers arriving on a given date doesn't provide much information, but knowing that 40 of them are welders identifies a facility problem if we only have 10 weld-testing bays available for in-processing activities," she adds.

The team also plans to deploy Phase 2 of Ready2Work to take advantage of its activity tracking features for existing personnel. This will be particularly useful whenever these workers must undergo training to stay up-to-date with the latest regulations. As part of this deployment, the Access Authorization and Training team is planning to phase out an aging training software suite and replace it with Ready2Work's Maintain Worker function. This capability will track and manage the requalification and training needs of all temporary and permanent workers as they complete courses in NANTeL.

It's all part of a larger technology roadmap that upholds a directive espoused by the IT department: Having fewer software applications simplifies administration and reduces costs. The application development specialist is driven by another objective as well: consolidating multiple user processes into a few standard applications ensures a more consistent in-processing experience for workers. She gives high marks to Curtiss-Wright for their assistance throughout the evaluation, deployment, and learning processes. "We received excellent support for our go-live period with Ready2Work, and Curtiss-Wright's assistance after we went live has also been exceptional," she concludes. "They have always been there when we need them, and they help us resolve problems quickly and efficiently."