

Building a relationship business

The Flowserve RES program ensures world-class service in every location.

Imagine that every seal system sales engineer around the world is a qualified rotating equipment professional, with the knowledge and skills to deliver consistent, high-quality support. No matter where a piece of equipment, process or facility is located, a company can be sure it will have the most reliable, cost-effective sealing solutions.

Such is the vision behind the Rotating Equipment Specialist (RES) Program at Flow Solutions Division of Flowserve Corporation. The RES program, a structured, comprehensive training initiative for Flow Solutions sales engineers and application engineers, emphasizes training in mechanical seal technology as used on pumps, mixers and compressors.

“Many Flowserve customers are multinational companies,” says Andy Beall, president, Flow Solutions division. “They demand the same level of service everywhere. This requires us to have op-



Flowserve employees participate in hands-on training courses for RES Level 1.

erational excellence in terms of technical service, application engineering and quick response on repairs. The RES program is a big part of accomplishing that goal.”

A Common Core

Every calendar quarter, Flowserve invests thousands of hours in the RES program, which includes four levels of qualification — RES-1 through RES-4. Each has a defined number of courses, some of which are delivered by qualified instructors, and some are e-learning. Advancing to the next qualification level requires proof of competency, either by testing out of the course or completing it.

The curriculum was developed by consulting two sources. “First, it represents what a broad cross section of customers say they expect from our representatives,” says Paul McMahan, RES program director. “Secondly, it was compared to the competencies and learning map for the job descriptions covered in the program.”

The program starts with degreed engineers, usually Mechanical, who are placed as Application Engineers reporting to the company’s sales group. “They work inside, supporting field sales, for one to two years,” says Mark Fallek, vice president, marketing, Flow Solutions Division. “Then they usually move up to a field sales position working directly with customers.”

The individual’s training performance is an input for the annual performance appraisal process. Career direction depends on progress through the four levels, specifically, completion of RES-1 (eight courses totaling 14-15 days). Classroom sessions

are backed up by laboratory sections with industrial equipment. “Our people learn to be hands-on,” says Fallek, “knowledgeable and confident enough to go and replace a seal in a pump in the field.”

Technology Plus People Skills

“The Rotating Equipment Specialist program is about more than just technical training,” says Beall. “A lot of time is spent making sure interpersonal communication and sales presentation skills are intertwined with technical training to develop the most comprehensive program possible. The RES program is a big investment in Flowserve sales engineers and their career development.”

RES-2 includes courses on selling, such as time and territory management, effective presentations and consultative selling, all customized to reflect applying seals for industrial applications.

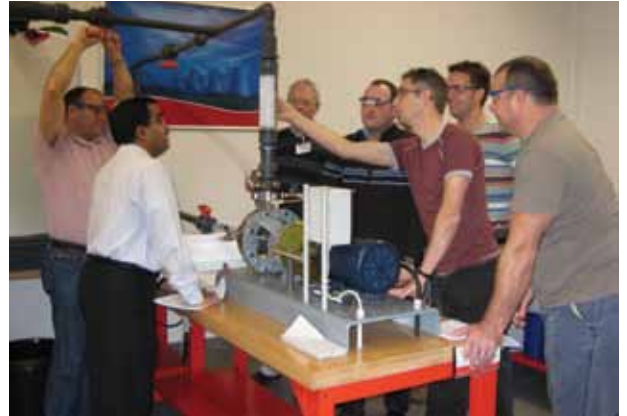
“Our business model emphasizes working directly with the customer, bringing value by solving pump and seal problems right at the site with the maintenance crew,” Fallek adds. “Our representatives know how to troubleshoot and recommend the right product to provide the best sealing solution — the best value to the customer.”

Sales engineers also learn about finance to help clients with cost justification by developing and presenting a financial case. “Improving reliability not only can avoid a \$10,000 repair,” McMahan says, “it can prevent production losses that might, for example, add up to \$150,000 per hour for an alkylation unit in a refinery producing gasoline during the summer. Or a \$10,000 single seal with a flush might be reducing pump capacity enough to pay back a \$50,000 dual seal in a month.”

Completing RES-3 and RES-4 represents having high technical competence. The total number of training hours and amount of in-field experience required to achieve the RES-4 qualification is 101 days, comparable to a Ph.D. in rotating equipment operation. “Only the best and most dedicated people will reach RES-4 status,” says McMahan.

Hands-On is a Core Competence

Seal and pump fundamentals are taught in static



Seal and pump fundamentals are taught in static and dynamic laboratory settings at Flowserve Learning Resource Centers.

and dynamic laboratory settings at Flowserve Learning Resource Centers located near the company’s corporate headquarters in Irving, Texas; the Changi Chemical Processing Technology Center in Singapore; and facilities in Essen, Germany; Macae, Brazil; Tlaxcala, Mexico and Suzhou, China.

In the static lab, the equipment is not connected. “Trainees practice taking measurements, doing inspections, installing seals, performing equipment checks, making adjustments — anything we expect them to do in the field,” says McMahan. The powered lab has running equipment where trainees can take readings, do calculations and evaluate performance.

Advanced courses include diagnosing problems with the equipment, recognizing when something isn’t correct and analyzing what’s wrong with it. “We show them failed parts and quiz them about causes based on the coursework,” McMahan says. “We can’t run equipment to failure in the lab, but we are acquiring different pieces of used equipment, and we don’t overhaul it. Bent shafts, cracked impellers — they see what failures really look like.”

Changing With the Times

While the RES program is expected to produce uniform results around the globe, it also must adapt to changing priorities. For example, increased emphasis on environmental concerns is raising the importance of seal technology and expertise. “The fluids and gases

On a Mission

The mission of the Rotating Equipment Specialist (RES) program is to design, implement and deliver comprehensive training for Flow Solutions sales associates, so that each is equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to consistently deliver world-class service and support that satisfies our customers' requirements regardless of location.

we seal aren't benign," says Fallek. "Leakage is hazardous to groundwater or to the atmosphere. You don't want natural gas, light or heavy hydrocarbons affecting the planet.

"Flow Solutions was on the cutting edge in the 1990s when the first emission regulations were issued, and now there are even more," Fallek continues. "New refinery regulations are classifying flaring as part of refinery emissions, when it used to be considered outside the range. Customers will need new solutions as regulations change."

The RES classes are redeveloped to include new technologies and new materials, to be sure field sales engineers understand the latest sealing solutions to pump, compressor and mixer problems.

"We view this as one of the most important programs in our organization," Fallek adds. "We're only as good as our ability to fill customer needs, and mechanical seals aren't taught in engineering courses. We want our sales engineers to be the best in the world, so our customers will have the highest level of confidence in our sales reps and in Flowserve.

"The knowledge of how to apply our technology in an effective fashion with the best people possible is what the marketplace really wants. Now, when a Flow Solutions engineer walks through the gate and says he or she is an RES-level professional, the customer knows that person possesses a significant amount of knowledge and skill and can be relied upon for quality and commitment to service.

"Most importantly, the RES Program is about investing in our people and their career paths," continues Fallek. "Our customer surveys continue to highlight that the biggest single reason our customers buy from a mechanical seal manufacturer is because of their confidence in the sales person."

The Flowserve educational services group also offers a series of classes (some of which are used in the RES program) to its customers. For more information, visit www.flowserve.com/eim/EducationalServices.