

Building a Long Bridge Together:

Long Term Programs 'A' and 'W' Regions Enjoy a Cultural Integration Experience

The designers and builders of the newly completed Channel Tunnel witnessed the creation of a new era of cooperation between the two great nations of England and France with the first vehicle's crossing of the world's longest tunnel. Using this same philosophy of "connectedness," the Long-Term Maintenance team of O13 began building recently a symbolic "bridge" between its resources in Germany and the United States. By "linking" this ethnically and linguistically diverse group of employees, the LTP implementation team's integration of the 'OA' and 'OW' region's cultures and processes should ensure that this dynamic team thrives in our constantly changing, global marketplace. With billions of dollars (US) of multiyear, operating plant maintenance contracts and a high business growth forecasted, an effort to link the cultures and processes of the 'OA' and 'OW' regions is imperative to the group's ability to service successfully its current and future customers.

The impetus for O13 to undertake this "bridge building" effort was an overarching feeling of frustration caused by employees on each side of the ocean realizing that they were unknowingly encountering repeatedly situations that



their colleagues on the other side had experienced already. In resolving these situations, each LTP member realized that they were gathering experiences and developing procedures that could benefit the entire global team, but differences in time, location and cultures were hindering both regions' efforts to share and understand information. Instead of trying to address these issues with ineffective emails and standardized forms, the LTP team, under global director Mickey Craig and 'W' region manager Mario Azar, decided to hire intercultural expert Herbert Nestler to assist in identifying some creative solutions. An American who lives in Germany and has worked extensively with Daimler-Chrysler, as well as Siemens' other businesses and the Siemens/Westinghouse integration, Mr. Nestler worked with the LTP group to conceive a groundbreaking meeting that would build a "virtual bridge" across the Atlantic. This three-day event in Berlin was attended by LTP 'OA' and 'OW' engineers, financial and operational managers, LTP business administration partners and R&D support in both Germany

and the United States. By conducting exercises and activities directed at highlighting cultural differences, the group was able to build camaraderie, identify ways in which to communicate more effectively, renew their enthusiasm to work together and enhance personal relationships. By identifying synergies, normalizing processes where appropriate and developing strategies for overcoming other intercultural differences and barriers to information sharing, the group was able to adopt specific action items for continued collaboration, with priority placed on adopting Best Practices. The results were enhanced greatly by the willingness of local German colleagues to stay voluntarily in the hotel with their American counterparts and fully participate in all group events.

By participating in this event, LTP has embarked on a journey of building and maintaining a cultural bridge that can serve as an example of the opportunities that exist to link all colleagues in Germany and America to a single 'O' organization that is highly focused on global service.