

The background of the slide is a dark blue, semi-transparent image of a Mercedes-Benz car grille. The large, three-pointed star logo is the central focus, with its points extending towards the corners. The grille's diamond-patterned texture is visible behind the star. In the top left corner, there is a smaller, faint circular logo that also features the Mercedes-Benz star.

Mercedes-Benz Case Study



Mercedes-Benz

Luxury-car maker achieves excellence in asset management

Mercedes-Benz improved equipment uptime and lowered maintenance costs with a much-improved maintenance approach supported with Inspired Blended Learning from Eruditio.

Three words are typically associated with the global Mercedes-Benz brand of automobiles: luxury, quality and reliability. Every Mercedes-Benz model is well-appointed, from front to rear, under the hood, and, most visibly, throughout the interior. Each car is built with the best materials and the highest workmanship. As for reliability, stories of the odometers of Mercedes-Benz cars turning over to a million miles are legend. But none of these attributes is by accident.

While design and engineering play big roles in the brand's success, its factories deserve lots of credit, too. One of those plants — an SUV and sedan factory, Mercedes-Benz U.S. International (MBUSI), located in Alabama — started a multiyear journey in 2014 to excellence in asset management. It focused on evolving its maintenance model to become much more proactive, not just preventative but predictive.

In 2017, the plant marked an important milestone in its journey: its plant-wide asset management efforts — called the "Maintenance Excellence and Reliability Program" — won a prestigious industry Uptime Award for the Best Leadership in Reliability category.

"We did a lot of benchmarking of other Mercedes-Benz plants and many other industries, too, and decided to pursue a reliability-centered maintenance program as a way to optimize our costs and uptime," says Ken Hayes, the plant's senior manager of Central Engineering who sparked the initiative. "We've taken an evolutionary approach instead of a revolutionary one, because we wanted this initiative to sustain itself and not be another flash in the pan for our maintenance and engineering staff, who have to carry it out."



Business Need

At its Alabama plant, Mercedes-Benz sought to improve equipment uptime and utilization while lowering costs, but needed help educating their staff.

Outcomes

Mercedes-Benz realized many benefit including these:

- Accelerated adoption of change
- Identified change leaders among staff
- Improved individual initiative and teamwork
- Raised maintenance staff morale
- More effective problem solving

Solution

The company engaged Eruditio for its award-winning Inspired Blended Learning program, which combined training and coaching, to help drive the evolution of its maintenance model and, importantly, sustain its impact for years to come.

Services Provided

- Inspired Blended Learning - 3-day reliability training and 2-day problem solving training for entire maintenance and engineering organization



“We needed a partner that could come in, understand our needs, develop custom learning experiences, and then deliver them to our people,” McCarthy says. “They would have to teach our organization, coach our people, and be outside reliability experts with a good fit for our maintenance and reliability culture and DNA. It was a tall order, but Eruditio fit the bill perfectly.”

While we accelerated our adoption of change with Eruditio’s iBL training, it also helped our engineers and technicians acquire some really good leadership skills. With these skills, they were able to help us drive the key pillars of our reliability improvement program.

After thoroughly assessing requirements and working closely with both Hayes and McCarthy, Eruditio developed a customized and multifaceted, reliability training program from its Inspired Blended Learning (iBL®) program. Selected as the 2017 Training Product of the Year Award by Plant Engineering magazine, iBL has been proven in hundreds of engagements in all kinds of industries, not just automotive.

Winning Over Skeptics

The Mercedes-Benz iBL solution incorporated diverse learning techniques like instructor-led classes, eLearning modules, real-world case studies and interactive scenarios, and skills application activities through project-based learning task.

The goal was to make the training relevant, compelling and memorable for many skeptics among the entire organization, most of whom had worked at the plant for decades. “We opened our people’s eyes to our proactive reliability vision via Eruditio’s iBL training, so they could understand exactly why we’re taking that approach versus the reactive one we’ve always taken over the last 24 years,” Hayes says.

According to McCarthy, the training had an unexpected benefit, too. “While we accelerated our adoption of change with Eruditio’s iBL training, it also helped our engineers and technicians acquire some really good leadership skills,” he says. “With these skills, they were able to help us drive the key pillars of our reliability improvement program.”

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Ken Hayes, Senior Manager, Central Engineering, Mercedes-Benz U.S. International

Eruditio’s experience with other companies in other industries helped give the plant’s initiative and training much credibility. “Just to have the expertise and experience over 160 reliability-related implementations worldwide by Eruditio helped convince doubters and fence-sitters to take notice,” Hayes says. “Having Eruditio come in and state, ‘This is what we’ve seen at other places, and this is how the program should be running based on those practices,’ was big.

Improved individual initiative and teamwork

Both Hayes and McCarthy have seen a rise in staff morale and retention. “Because we involved our staff in developing a lot of the program, they feel vested in it,” Hayes says. “We now see a lot more individual initiative and teamwork across functions, which Eruditio’s iBL training and its coaches, with their reliability engineering credentials, helped us to foster.” Importantly, the asset management program has begun taking root in the plant’s culture, a sign of its sustainability, which is one of Eruditio’s benchmarks of success. “From the start, we wanted to take an evolutionary, not revolutionary, approach to ensure lasting impact, and Eruditio’s slow and steady model is just what we needed,” McCarthy says.

In addition, the plant’s reliability improvement program has produced real business benefits. “While we’re still establishing our metrics, I can say that we are seeing greater uptime in our plant assets, while reducing our year-over-year maintenance costs significantly,” says Hayes. “Upper management is quite pleased.”

