



Lighting the Creative Spark: How Ingersoll Rand is Driving Sustainability in its Innovation Pipeline

Ingersoll Rand's investment in sustainability certification for its employees expected to spark innovation, ignite sustainable product design

The Challenge

With the acquisition of Trane, a brand with a broad portfolio of energy efficient heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, building and contracting services, parts support and advanced controls, in 2008 Ingersoll Rand became a \$17 billion giant in the climate solutions industry. Garnering a huge product portfolio and significant market share, the company realized its pivotal role in leading the industry as well as commercial and residential consumers toward improved energy efficiency.

In April 2010, Ingersoll Rand formed the Center for Energy Efficiency and Sustainability (CEES) focused on integrating sustainability into every facet of the business. This included a vision for a development program empowering design engineers to make sustainability a priority in the product design process.

In many cases, those involved in the product development process had only basic exposure to sustainability concepts. The in-depth considerations required a foundation in sustainability: what it meant, why it was important, and how it could be factored into different aspects of the business.

“As the program progressed, we came to realize the value of this kind of thinking – not just for our design engineers and broader product development teams - but across the board. Our goal was to engrain sustainability into everyone’s thinking, and to embed it in our culture,” said Gretchen Digby, Director, Global Sustainability Programs at Ingersoll Rand.

The Process

It was then that the CEES team at Ingersoll Rand decided to build a comprehensive sustainability training and certification program, to be made available to *all* Ingersoll Rand employees.

“We recognized the importance of third-party validation of the program and wanted employees to receive certification for the training. We knew that UL was a respected leader in sustainability certifications for products. We approached them about developing training and certification for people. They were extremely receptive to the idea,” said Digby.

Together, UL and Ingersoll Rand embarked on an initiative to develop the Design for Sustainability (DfS) program, a comprehensive sustainability training and certification program for Ingersoll Rand.





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DfS training educates Ingersoll Rand employees about the fundamentals of sustainability, aspects to consider, and methods for incorporating “green thinking” into every facet of the business. The training empowers employees to consider the impact of a product or process over its entire life cycle, from raw material extraction to disposal or reuse. It also emphasizes the importance of sustainability in the product development process, and seeks to improve products’ environmental impact, usability, and socially responsible use.

The Results

Since launching the program 13 months ago, the fall course program is already completely full, with approximately 150 employees enrolled. “We’ve seen an overwhelmingly favorable response to the program,” said Digby. “Employees are interested. It becomes a feather in their own personal career development cap as well as a tool for leveraging sustainability in their everyday work.”

DfS training is incorporating sustainability thinking into everything Ingersoll Rand does – from product design to manufacturing, sourcing, customer service and everyday in-office operations. Sustainability is now factored into business decisions just like customer feedback, cost, regulatory requirements, and sourcing considerations.

The Future

Ingersoll Rand hopes that all of its employees will receive the DfS certification. “We are increasing competency and building a talent pool of employees who are ready to meet future sustainability challenges that we don’t even know about right now,” said Gretchen Digby, Director, Global Sustainability Programs.

As the company continues to make sustainability a part of the fabric of its culture, the results will be reflected in the bottom line in the form of higher revenue, increased market share, reduced costs, and product innovation.

Thanks to UL’s flexibility and innovation, Ingersoll Rand is setting a new standard for ensuring that people, not just products, are certified for sustainability. Continually striving to meet the next environmental challenge, UL’s training and certification is ensuring that Ingersoll Rand employees have access to cutting-edge sustainability training that will build their capabilities and spark creativity.

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