



Deliver an excellent TA: Be prepared, engage people

T.A. Cook Consultants

Turnarounds are huge undertakings. If one looks at the level of effort involved, the man-hours alone are staggering. Industry leaders begin preparations up to three years in advance, with the actual execution only making up 20-30 percent of the overall duration. From the planning process to every minute of the actual execution, the project is high-intensity. After so much effort, the thousands of hours spent during preparation will go to waste if the event is unsuccessful in terms of safety, environmental incidents, duration or cost. This article will focus on preparing staff for an upcoming turnaround (TA) event.

1. Take your marks. Preparation is the “rehearsal” an organization goes through to perform an impeccable “ballet.” Just like a ballet, a TA requires the execution staff to know their “marks” and perform flawlessly. Considering how infrequently large TAs are performed, having a practice run will help the execution go smoothly. Preparation should extend to training the personnel who will later be responsible for resource management during execu-

tion. The team needs to possess key skills and be qualified to participate in the processes before the TA takes place.

2. Fulfill your role and work the schedule. For such a massive project, all team members need to be aware of their roles, responsibilities and how project progress will be tracked and managed. As the leader, the execution team supervisor will play a special role in site-wide coordination. The daily schedule must align with the work plans of all departments to best communicate daily goals and expectations to the crew and share reports and key information. To do this, supervisors must be aware of the shift details for everyone working on the project. Then supervisors can identify the key times of day to follow up on their crews’ activities and provide appropriate support and feedback.

3. Track delays and avoid lost time. Supervisors are crucial for recording the daily activities, progress and setbacks staff may encounter in the form of a delay tracker. This information and summarization will help resolve problems and realign with the original plan. To stay on

track, the data should include whether or not the crews are working at the expected times throughout the day and — if not — when, who and for how long, as well as any and all delays, including the location, type of delay, crew size affected and the duration. By doing this, the site can quantify the delays and focus its energies on minimizing those that have the greatest impact in the field and reduce future lost time and wastes of resources.

4. Meet, coordinate and act. Circulating and analyzing these reports frequently takes place in formal meetings. Meeting details — such as where, when, with whom and what information — should be determined and communicated with the team beforehand. Key decision makers need to organize report planning, such as who provides what information, in what form and when. This coordination lays the foundation of a supervisor’s “ideal day,” which includes all the tasks the manager must do routinely to enhance execution performance.

5. Support and make a difference. To support the TA properly, the team must be

prepared and proactive across the board. To do this, the “ideal day” model should be flexible enough for individuals to dictate the minute-by-minute activities to match their personal management techniques. Reviewing best-practice techniques will help supervisors make the best subjective decisions during an execution process. Basic management principles — such as making assignments, setting expectations, giving direction, following up, providing feedback, problem solving and coaching — must all be expertly utilized for a maintenance overhaul project of this size.

TA preparation extends beyond planning, scheduling and logistics. Perfecting the daily plan, providing training to both new and old personnel to reinforce active supervisory behaviors and identifying delays to reduce their impact on the event lays the project’s foundation. Armed with best-practice techniques, an execution team will be better prepared to deliver a TA safely, without environmental incident, on time and on budget.

For more information, visit www.tacook.com or call (919) 510-8142. ●