AMERICAN ELECTRIC POWER PRESERVES INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE WHILE ASSURING COMPLIANCE

AEP wanted a system to better manage processes, tasks, deadlines and record-keeping related to their compliance efforts.

Owning and operating tens of thousands of megawatts of generation capacity in the United States, AEP is the largest electricity generator and one of the largest electric utilities in the U.S. with millions of customers linked to its transmission and distribution grid.

As a power generator and coal consumer, they have long recognized their special responsibility with respect to environmental protection. That's why the company makes significant investments in programs and policies that go beyond mere compliance.

That commitment has helped the company build a positive and open relationship with regulatory agencies and trust from shareholders. Maintaining its compliance track

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> By implementing the Enviance System, we have allowed our engineers and plant workers to focus on analyzing data and taken a lot of pressure off of our IT staff. We have saved time, even while growing.
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> Senior Environmental Engineer
> **AMERICAN ELECTRIC POWER**
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record and hard-earned credibility is a top priority for the company – which is one reason that about ten years ago, they began to look for an Environmental Management Information System (EMIS). They wanted a system to better manage processes, tasks, deadlines and record-keeping related to their compliance efforts, but systems available at the time didn't quite fit the bill.

"We looked at a number of the leading systems and even did a site visit to another utility, but the infrastructure complexity really put us off. Our IT organization needed fewer burdens, not more," said Greg McCall, Senior Engineer, AEP.

After acquiring a company in 2000, AEP had a greatly expanded system to manage. The added workload was complicated by each worker having their own process and method; therefore there was no uniform process for collecting and storing data. While the company is proud of the low turnover among its plant staff, that stability means they are full of experts who have been with the company for many years and have a lot of valuable knowledge in their heads.

That presented a risky situation for AEP in terms of compliance. Much of its compliance information was stored in the minds and hard drives of plant staff. They needed a way to harvest that institutional knowledge and make it easily available to new staff and to the company as a whole.

"Our plant people shouldn't be focused on spreadsheets and remembering deadlines, they should be focused on operating in compliance."

The Enviance System addressed not only AEP's need for IT simplicity; it also provided the tools the company needed to support its lean staff, quality efforts and institutional knowledge concerns. The Enviance System was an ideal way to preserve and protect the compliance expertise of its staff. It enabled AEP to keep and share historical data and detailed descriptions of many compliance tasks, events and actions at the plants where the System had been implemented.

Internet-based and externally hosted, the Enviance System offered them the easy-to-deploy, low-maintenance software solution they wanted—even the simple subscription-based fee structure appealed to the utility.

"We knew that with Enviance we wouldn't have to worry about things like servers or disk space. That was welcome news to our frustrated IT department. And with more of our workforce computer-literate than ever, the timing was good."

Not only does the Enviance solution free up staff for analytical activities, but the company can look to the future knowing that institutional knowledge is being preserved.

ENVIANCE