



Ron Beaufort Training, LLC

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Hands-On Technical Workshops

by Ron Beaufort

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Finally - the PLC training your plant's maintenance technicians need to get the job done right

Two things make our PLC Boot Camp classes the most **effective** training you can get for your maintenance crew:

- (1) the course material that we cover, and
- (2) the training methods that we use.

Our **course material** - 100% of it - is totally concentrated on the skills needed to systematically troubleshoot a PLC-controlled system whenever a malfunction occurs. Rather than wasting time on seminar-type subjects such as "Model-A and Model-B" comparisons, our students cover useful technician-level skills instead. From I/O wiring for field devices - all the way through interpreting the ladder logic program. We cover it all - and we tie everything together as one complete PLC-controlled system.

Our **training methods** are specifically designed for the "learn-by-doing" approach that maintenance technicians prefer. All of the course material is presented through challenging hands-on projects - instead of through dull "let's read the book together" lectures and boring PowerPoint slide shows. It's amazing how much material can be covered - and fully mastered - when you teach the way that the students prefer to learn.

Goes far beyond the usual "basic training" for PLCs

Just because they call us the "PLC Boot Camp" doesn't mean that we only offer "basic" PLC training. In fact, our classes cover much more material - at a far greater depth - in five days than most college courses cover in a full semester.

Before we leave each day, we always ask the students the same question: "Did we cover anything today which was trivial, useless, and not worth our time?" The answer is always: "No. It was all good stuff."

All the way from digital bits through analog signals in one seamless five-day class

With most training vendors, covering both digital I/O and analog signals requires two separate training courses. For most plants, the extra scheduling is usually an even bigger headache than the obvious added expense. Our PLC Boot Camp courses are designed to go all the way from digital through analog in one week. You save money - and avoid an extra hassle with scheduling. And your technicians get all of the skills they need at one time - without having to "warm up" again between classes.

Incidentally, this is one area where trying to shave the training budget can end up costing a lot of extra money. When you compare prices, keep a close eye on how many separate sessions you'll need from our competitors to cover all of the material that we provide in one week. In most cases you'll have to buy two or three of their oranges to equal one of our apples.

Straightforward enough for "raw recruits"

Here's one question that comes up quite often: "How much experience do I need in order to get the most out of your class?" Beyond very basic computer skills - none. We start each PLC Boot Camp class right at the very beginning - so even students with zero experience can fit right in. In fact, it's extremely common for our beginner students to catch on more quickly than some of the "old hands" in the class. The reason is that the new guys have fewer misconceptions and mistakes already stuck in their heads.

So previous experience isn't a requirement - but motivation is absolutely essential. Bring plenty of that with you and you'll do just fine.

Challenging enough for "beyond beginners"

Most experienced students expect to be bored for the first day or two - while we bring the beginners up to speed. That "boredom" thing never happens. We've got something for everybody. Even "top guns" are often surprised by some of the nuts-and-bolts material that we cover before lunchtime on Monday morning.

Even students with years of experience start learning new skills right from the very first hands-on exercises. When Fast Fred finishes his project in record time, he doesn't have to wait around for Slow Sam to catch up. We just assign him another one.

No PowerPoint slide shows and no boring lectures

Choose your favorite way to learn new skills:

- (a) watch a PowerPoint slide show
- (b) listen to a nice long lecture
- (c) tackle a hands-on project

If you chose (c) then you'll really appreciate our PLC Boot Camp classes.

Most other instructors give a long lecture first - and then follow that up with a short lab session. We reverse that order - and the time allotment too. Our students tackle the hands-on project first - and then we have a lively classroom discussion to wrap up what we've just seen. And we hate PowerPoint slide shows as much as you do. We never use those at all.

Dives right into the first "learn-by-doing" exercise just minutes after the class begins

Forget the traditional "getting to know you" introduction session on Monday morning. We can socialize at lunchtime. Basically "the restrooms are down the hall" and then we get right to work. The first hands-on project is entering a sample program. Never done it before? That's OK - we'll coach you along if you need it. Already know how to enter a program? That's fine too - we'll have an extra project to keep you working (and learning) while Beginner Bob catches up.

None of our students ever complain when we skip the preliminary lecture. Experienced Ed doesn't need it. Beginner Bob wouldn't understand it. Everybody knows that the hands-on projects are where the real learning takes place.

Concentrates on the critical troubleshooting and problem-solving skills needed by plant maintenance technicians

Most other training programs cover only how PLC-controlled systems are **supposed to work** when everything is running smoothly. Our courses are different. From start to finish we concentrate on the procedures required to troubleshoot a system **when it doesn't work**. Our students are constantly drilled on a step-by-step approach to solving the same types of problems that they'll run into back at the plant. In fact, this constant drilling is how we originally got the "PLC Boot Camp" name.

Unlike most other instructors, we don't "over-teach" with giveaway hints such as: "Change that to an XIC or you're going to have a problem." Instead we'll let our students make their mistakes - and then coach them through a systematic approach to recognizing and correcting their problems.

Learning troubleshooting and problem-solving skills requires troubles and problems to practice on. Learning and practicing in our lab is better - and safer - than on your plant floor.

Scraps the confusing "switches and coils" analogies and nails down what really goes on "under the hood" of the PLC

Ever since PLCs were first introduced, instructors have been using analogies such as "switches" and "coils" to explain the operation of the ladder logic program. The good news is that these types of explanations tend to work quite well in the vast majority of situations. The bad news is that they do NOT work all of the time. Worst of all, the times when they fail to work are precisely when they are needed most - while troubleshooting or debugging a malfunctioning system.

The explanations that we use in our PLC Boot Camp classes are actually simpler to learn - and easier to remember - than any of the "switches and coils" analogies. More importantly, our methods always work. They're based on what actually happens "under the hood" during the PLC processor's scan cycle. As complicated as that sounds, it only takes a few minutes to explain - and many students have it totally mastered before lunchtime on the first day of our classes.

Then throughout the rest of the week the students practice applying their new skills in solving one troubleshooting problem after another. Quite often an experienced student will stubbornly insist on using his complicated "old school" analogies - and get the wrong answer to a problem. Meanwhile, a beginner student will apply his new skills - and come up with the correct answer to the same problem. Besides being fun and entertaining, exercises like this can conclusively prove that our simple step-by-step analysis always works - and that other methods often fail.

Fully covered by our 100% money-back guarantee - You'll be satisfied with our training or you won't have to pay for it - Period

There's not much more to say about that. Just a friendly reminder to ask our competitors about their guarantee.

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