Siemens Hiring Aided by Charlotte Workforce Board

Workforce leaders in Charlotte, N.C. learned in March 2010 that one of the area’s largest employers, Siemens, would invest $170 million to expand its facility and hire 825 professional, clerical and hourly workers. The company’s Charlotte facility manufactures and assembles gas and steam turbines and generators. The high-precision work would pay hourly workers an average of $25.50 an hour.

Siemens asked Charlotte Works, the federally funded workforce board, to develop a hiring process for this expansion. The organization knew that the high-paying jobs would attract applicants from the entire region and that the flood of jobseekers could easily overwhelm job counselors at its workforce offices.

Charlotte Works quickly decided to create an exclusive website to handle the Siemens hiring process. This innovative approach allowed interested workers from a 16-county area, including counties in South Carolina, to apply for the positions.

And apply they did: more than 10,000 applicants sought the Siemens positions.

The Siemens hiring process required applicants to possess a credential that would validate (continued on page 2)
Hope for Long Term Jobless

AS SEEN ON 60 MINUTES

The best network in several cities is not NBC, CBS, ABC or FOX. And this network certainly doesn’t feature “American Idol” or “The Voice.” This network projects Hope. Its audience members are the long term unemployed. American workers smacked hard by the nation’s worst recession.

This network—10 Centers of Hope—began with one program in Bridgeport, Connecticut and operated by the local workforce board and its tireless executive, Joe Carbone.

He heads up a non-profit known as The WorkPlace that relies on federal Workforce Investment Act dollars to support expenses associated with its One Stop employment and training operation.

As the recession produced more and more layoffs, Carbone realized federal funds weren’t sufficient enough to meet local need. So he approached receptive business leaders to bankroll a new program to get long term jobless citizens back to work.

This public-private partnership produced Platform to Employment, a rigorous program featuring pre-employment classroom instruction coupled with an eight-week try out job.

“P2E provided socially responsive businesses the opportunity to try out workers at no cost and no risk,” said Carbone.

The impressive program results drew the attention of 60 Minutes and newsman Scott Pelley. He found that P2E placed 80% of its participants from the classroom into the eight week work experience, and 90% of those individuals were offered regular full time work.

Carbone understood that people who find themselves unemployed for long periods of time become discouraged and depressed. Platform to Employment provided the motivation and critical job skills to successfully re-enter the job force.

Thanks to several new corporate sponsors and foundations—Citi Community Development, AARP Foundation and the Wal-Mart Foundation—the WorkPlace will open 10 Centers of Hope featuring the P2E program.

Dallas, Texas became the first facility to open in 2013. Laurie Bouillion Larrea, president, Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas is very proud to join the P2E network. “In a post recession environment, we have customized the program to combat local workforce issues. We have 24 persons in our first class, most are over the age of 50 and very long term unemployed.”

Larrea added, “We also included several younger veterans returning from war. In only three weeks, three of our job seekers have already returned to work. The program is yielding amazing results and positive feedback.”

“Government action alone is not enough,” said Carbone. “Strong corporate citizens are essential partners in leading the long term unemployed back to work.”

Platform to Employment®

A WorkPlace Opportunity.

Tacoma Manufacturing Academy Thrives on Company Involvement

The gap with the little “g” is drawing widespread attention among workforce professionals. They regularly hear from hiring managers that ask for job applicants who will measure up to their needs. In response, the workforce agency WorkForce Central in Tacoma, Washington, has devised a new approach in closing the gap between the skills jobseekers have and the skills employers need.

Tacoma’s solution: The Manufacturing Academy, a place where qualified jobseekers are selected by employers for enrollment in a 10 week pre-employment program that covers basic skills essential to the advanced manufacturing sector. But soft skills—such as teamwork, communication, honesty, dependability and customer service—are not overlooked.

The rigorous manufacturing training program offers blueprint reading, math for manufacturing, welding, basic electrical, OSHA safety, and lean manufacturing.

“It’s been a huge success,” says Linda Nguyen, CEO, Workforce Central. “Tacoma employers are driving the curriculum, which means the students graduate from the academy with essential skills they need for employment,” she continued. “The program also gives the students multiple pathways after completion – they can go straight to employment, to an apprenticeship program or continue their education at a community or technical college.”

Steve Partridge, CEO of Charlotte Works, said the partnership with Siemens has proved to be an excellent learning opportunity for his organization. The workforce board has since repeated the customized hiring and web-portal-creation process for two other companies. “These partnerships with employers help to create more jobs and the skilled workers to fill them,” he says. “Ultimately, workforce development is economic development, and our partnership with Siemens proves that.”

The online hiring process and the requirement that all applicants possess a CRC produced Siemens officials. In the end, the company hired that all applicants possess a CRC produced Siemens officials. In the end, the company hired...
Investment in Workforce Programs Yields Strong Return

American families are in constant search for a great value on family essentials such as food and clothing. And, count your blessings if your savings account yields more than a 1% interest rate.

Impressive, to say the least, is the return on investment several local workforce areas are reporting to taxpayers.

Workforce leaders in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington recently reported strong returns on federal dollars invested in worker preparation and training programs.

Each of the cities named above receive federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds from the Department of Labor. The dollars are then invested in a variety of programs targeted for adults, youth and laid off workers in pursuit of regular, full-time employment.

Worksystems, Inc. is the non-profit that manages the federal training dollars in Portland. The agency’s CEO—Andrew McGough—says their agency returned more than $5 for every federal dollar it received. And the return on youth programs alone was even better, producing a return of $8 for every dollar initially invested.

McGough hired a third party, the well-regarded Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI) to conduct a similar study and found that its programs generated benefits similar to the investment return experienced by Portland.

The results of the above studies are valuable to Members of Congress as they ponder reductions to domestic spending especially if elected officials reject across the board cuts but focus on programs where the impact of federal cannot be measured.

Of course, program performance measures that track job placement, wage at placement, and worker skill gains have long been a part of activities funded under the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Many view return on investment studies as additional data that workforce programs are indeed a solid investment in rebuilding America’s economy where the impact of federal spending cannot be measured.

and local partners in meeting the needs of our customers, reduce cost and continuously improve our services.”

The workforce system for Seattle, Washington also hired EMSI to conduct a similar study and found that its programs generated benefits similar to the investment return experienced by Portland.

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That focus created READY NWI. The vision is to have a talent pool of workers by 2025 with at least 60% of them having a post-secondary degree and the skills to match employer needs.

The organization that is the driving force behind this partnership—the Center of Workforce Innovations (CWI)—also manages the federally funded One Stop Workforce offices, known as WorkOne in Indiana.

Remedial college classes are a waste of time and money. Those students not prepared for the academic rigor posed by our nation’s colleges must first enroll in classes that do not count toward their degree. Frustrated, many students never complete such coursework and become a new statistic. College dropout.

Nowhere are workforce leaders more determined to reverse this trend than in northwest Indiana. Belching smokestacks give evidence that the area is still regarded as the steel capital of the nation. More than 18,000 workers are employed at Arcelor Mittal, U.S. Steel and other facilities. But the area, known as “The Region” within Indiana, also boasts of other career opportunities in healthcare and financial services. The challenge, then, became an issue of encouraging those now in local high schools—the next generation of workers—to prepare for college and careers.

The READY message—to increase the number of students attending college and to reduce the time it takes to acquire a college diploma—is being heard by students in high schools committed to READY.

““Our educators and business leaders are in full support of READY”, says Linda Woloshansky, the president and CEO for CWI. More than a dozen school corporations serving students in grades k-12 are involved in READY. Initial READY activities include teacher training and adoption of a single set of student assessment instruments within the seven county area.

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“I’m very proud of the leadership role the workforce board has taken in our area,” said Woloshansky. “This is challenging work but they welcome the opportunity to improve the local economy.”

Woloshansky’s organization provides staff support to the Northwest Indiana Workforce Board, one of more than 500 local, policy-making entities created by the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA). That law urged such boards—commonly known as WIBs—to take a leadership role in the economic well being of their communities. Clearly, the workforce board in northwest Indiana has embraced that responsibility as evidenced by its role in the READY initiative.

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I am disappointed that our political leaders were not able to find an acceptable resolution to sequestration; I am certain that my sentiment is shared by my colleagues who direct workforce programs across the country. I meet with them several times a year and I return to Seattle energized, knowing that in spite of a tough economy and tight budgets, my peers are making a difference.

We're creating community partnerships, utilizing technology to help us in our work, and committed to continuously improving our services. We're making a difference. We're helping people find jobs. Last year, the nation's One Stop system served more than 8 million jobseekers. 8 million. Sequestration will reduce our funding base by 5.1%. Fewer people will be served. Our calculations predict the following impact: More than 12,000 fewer youth won't be served. Neither will 30,000 laid off workers looking for a chance to get back to work. And, we'll be forced to turn away more than 25,000 adults.

The nation's employers tell us every day they need job seekers who lack the right skills to be offered a job. Our workforce system knows what works to address this problem: investing in skills training and education, partnering with employers and training programs, and mixing public and private support. Public investment in skills training should be considered part of our public education system.

Employers praise the Manufacturing Academy because it has been a timesaver for them. “Our interview to hire ratio improves when we choose candidates from the Manufacturing Academy,” said Eric Hahn, Vice President of Organizational Development, General Plastics Manufacturing. “We are able to hire employees that come aboard with the necessary skills, knowledge, and abilities for our manufacturing positions. We attribute most of this success to the applicant screening that is done upfront. We have been waiting for a workforce program tailored to the growing manufacturing industry,” continued Hahn, “and we are glad to be a part of it.”

To date, more than 85% of the Academy’s graduates are hired by local manufacturers. Workforce Central has been serving the city of Tacoma and Pierce County since 1982. It is the workforce investment board for Pierce County and receives federal Workforce Investment Act funds.
LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS WORK!

We create a thriving economy by ensuring that our workforce has the skills that match employer needs and lead to self-sufficiency. Our employer-led board invests public resources effectively by linking the voice of industry to the job training and education systems. We give adults and youth the knowledge to make informed career decisions and help them gain skills, find work and move up in their careers. We create taxpayers.