



Emerson Work Ready Testimonial

Emerson is a global manufacturing and technology company with over 140,000 employees and 265 manufacturing locations worldwide. The company's manufacturing facility in LaGrange uses Georgia's Work Ready initiative to match the right people to its jobs — and after implementing the initiative, along with training programs provided by West Georgia Technical College, Emerson has seen a threefold reduction in scrap waste.

"Using Work Ready allows us to bring employees in the door that we know have the basic skills to hit the floor running," said Eddie Mabe, Emerson's human resource manager.

It's easy to take for granted the infrastructure that brings us phone, Internet, television and wireless services. But at Emerson's facility in LaGrange, which makes metal cabinet enclosures for the telecommunications industry, employees think about those basics every day.

The plant employs more than 200 workers, a number that can double with the addition of 150 to 200 temporary workers each summer during peak production season, plus another 50 managers and engineers. Assemblers who specialize in either configuration or fabrication form the bulk of Emerson's workforce, and the company usually hires between 30 and 40 permanent workers each year.

Mabe said hiring workers in the past had been "hit or miss," with high turnover and production delays due to new employees having to learn the equipment. So the company turned to Work Ready to profile its jobs and improve its selection process. A job profiler from West Georgia Technical College worked with Emerson's current employees to understand the skills required for success.

"Our employees loved the job profiling process because they had input into what was going on," Mabe said. "They know that what they said matters — and that they are setting the bar for who can join them on the floor. They know a new hire will have the baseline requirements to do the job."

Job profiles are free for companies who meet minimum hiring criteria; the only investment is the time it takes for workers to meet with the job profiler. But the dividends can be quite large thanks to a better understanding of the skills employees need in order to be most effective.

"The process itself I would recommend to anyone — it's easy and pain-free," Mabe said. "The profiler comes in and spends a few days on the floor and interviewing current employees. And when you finish, you know exactly what the minimum requirements are for the position being profiled."

The shop averaged \$60,000 a month in scrap prior to implementing Work Ready and skills training programs; now the plant averages \$20,000 a month. "You are always going to have some scrap as part of normal business," Mabe said. "But we've been thrilled at the reduction, which I attribute to better trained and more qualified employees."