



## **Best Buy Work Ready Testimonial**

Consumer electronics retail giant Best Buy depends on hard-working middle Georgians every day at its distribution center located in Dublin, Ga., one of seven across the U.S. that support the retail store network. And to ensure its current employees and new hires have the skills necessary for success, Best Buy uses Georgia's Work Ready initiative to profile its warehousing jobs and to assess the skill level of current employees, resulting in better performance all around. Best Buy's competitive edge is based on employees, who are the center of focus for the management team at the distribution center in Dublin.

General warehouse workers represent about 90 percent of the employee population at the Dublin distribution center. The facility receives inbound freight from several different carriers and origins, then combines outbound freight into full truckloads destined for individual stores. The center saves costs by combining merchandise into full truckloads to send to stores while still meeting inventory needs.

"Our system requires that we be able to fulfill store needs with very little lead time," said human resource manager Karen Sikes. "Today what we are selecting for each store will be delivered tomorrow. The employees are responsible for and involved with this daily process, and they have to understand how their role impacts meeting the end customers' needs."

Best Buy's warehousing jobs require employees to be able to locate freight and merchandise, understand and process paperwork, operate radio frequency guns to identify containers and efficiently move products out the door to retail locations. "Half of what people do here every day is locating," Sikes said. "The other 50 percent is bringing product in from our vendors and directing it to the location where it will be later selected to replenish inventory at our retail stores."

The company developed a baseline understanding of the skills required by profiling its warehousing job, using an expert job profiler from Heart of Georgia Technical College. Then, to encourage employees to determine their own skill level by taking the Work Ready assessment, Best Buy offered cash incentives for gold and platinum certifications.

"We're investing in our employees, using Work Ready as a development tool and providing opportunities for them to develop current skills to get ahead," Sikes said. "We've encouraged our employees to become a part of this initiative. And if they elect to participate and take the assessment, we are giving a \$200 bonus for platinum-level certification and \$100 for gold-level certification as incentives."

Employees choose whether or not to reveal their assessment results. "We didn't want the employees in any way to think that a low assessment would be used against them," she said. And employees and job seekers alike can boost their certification levels thanks to free gap training available at Heart of Georgia Technical College.

As a major retailer, Best Buy hires seasonal temporary workers in all its operations, including distribution centers, often with the help of a temporary staffing agency. The Dublin facility will require all season