



Temple-Inland Lumber Work Ready Testimonial

Temple-Inland Lumber in Rome, Ga., wasn't getting the quality applicants it needed to fill its entry-level positions. The company had a turnover rate of 18.6 percent in 2003, which was wasting a lot of training time and money. So Temple-Inland turned to its local technical college, Coosa Valley Technical College, to develop a new screening process that was able to quickly reduce its turnover rate to 5.5 percent and creating savings of more than \$110,000 in two years.

Together, they implemented a process to profile the entry-level position of production associate, so Temple-Inland could easily communicate the skills and tasks required for it. Then, they had job candidates take a Work Ready assessment that ranked their knowledge of those skills. As a result, the company was able to match the right people to the right job.

At the time, Temple-Inland paid for this program. Today, a similar program is free under the Georgia Work Ready initiative. And a growing number of Georgia companies are jumping on board because the initiative has resulted in assurance that employees have the right skill sets, improved hiring procedures, reduced turnover and training costs, increased productivity and higher employee morale.

The two main components of Work Ready include: 1) working with a certified job profiler from the local technical college who partners with company employees to profile job tasks and skills, and 2) requiring job candidates to earn the Work Ready Certificate, based on WorkKeys® by ACT, which analyzes three key skill areas: applied mathematics, reading for information and locating information. Temple-Inland has already had 86 job candidates earn the Work Keys Certificate. Sandy Wagers, human resources manager at Temple-Inland Lumber, said she highly recommends Work Ready to other companies.

"This is a great opportunity to take advantage of something already in place and provided by the state," said Wagers. "There are a lot of general tests out there. But this one is specific to the jobs and the skills you need. It's not general, which I think is important."

Temple-Inland is a unionized company that only hires outside the organization for entry-level jobs. Wagers said that makes it that much more important to hire the right people at ground level. "It's critical that the entry-level people we hire have the skills and potential to succeed because they become our future applicant pool," said Wagers.

The company has expanded its use of Work Ready to senior positions. As a result, it has saved tens of thousands of dollars in training costs. For example, a new saw filer, which repairs saw shop equipment, receives four months of training that can amount to \$10,000 – \$15,000 in wasted costs if he or she leaves the company.

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