



WorkKeys® / National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) Employer Experience

Background

- Employer: Alliance CNC
- Number of employees: 17
- Location: 3987 Brockton SE, Suite A, Grand Rapids, MI 49512
- Contact: Jamie Zywicki, 616-971-4700, jzyw@alliancecnc.com
- Detail about business:

Established in 1995, Alliance CNC specializes in the manufacture and regrinding of precision tools. Their state of the art facility features eight Walter CNC Power Tool Grinders along with a full complement of manual grinding equipment.

The Need

Alliance CNC became aware of WorkKeys/NCRC after receiving an invitation to a kick-off meeting. Knowing that locating and maintaining a skilled workforce with low turnover is critical to success, Alliance CNC recognized the potential of the program as an addition to their hiring and workforce development processes. After meeting with Rachael Jungblut, the WIRED WorkKeys Innovation Program Manager, Alliance CNC made the decision to launch WorkKeys/NCRC. However, they felt participation by the high schools in their area would be critical to the long term success and support of WorkKeys/NRC. Alliance CNC further pursued meetings with the Assistant Superintendent of Kent Intermediate School District and the local school board (Cedar Springs), gaining their commitment.

The Action

After profiling their key positions, Alliance CNC determined that performance at a Bronze NCRC level would be the standard for new hires at their company. By quantifying the skills required and objectively assessing potential candidates, Alliance CNC hoped to make better recruitment decisions by selecting individuals capable of performing the required tasks. All incumbent hourly employees were also tested to inventory the current skill set and gather data which would help prepare development plans for the current staff. A commitment was made and clearly communicated that employees would not be fired based on the test results. Rather, the scores would be used to help employees understand their strengths and weaknesses. Educational opportunities would be provided to help close any skill gaps that were identified.

The Results

The test results were very positive with all incumbent employees achieving at least a Bronze NCRC. Completing the tests and reviewing the results encouraged employee discussion and has led to a commitment by several team members to pursue additional training.

Utilizing WorkKeys has also made the hiring process more effective and efficient. Employees who have tested at the Bronze level have entered the company equipped with the skills to perform the job. This has reduced training time by 10-15% and improved immediate performance levels on the job (50% fewer errors). Employees hired since the adoption of WorkKeys/NCRC have demonstrated performance levels consistent with their test scores, meaning that the NCRC has been an effective predictor of performance in the assessed skill areas. Additional tools to measure and quantify “soft skills” would be useful as Alliance CNC moves forward with plans for their human resource program.