



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

Background

- Employer: Spectrum Industries
- Number of employees: 350
- Locations: 700 Wealthy Street SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504;
13 McConnell Street SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 and
226 Crawford Street, Belding MI 48809
- Contact: Julianne Jones, Human Resources Manager,
616-451-4599, jjones@specind.com
- Detail about business:

Spectrum Industries is a world-class metal and plastics finisher specializing in electro-deposition (e-coating) and hydro-graphic services as well as value-added assembly and packaging.

The Need

Spectrum Industries was first introduced to WorkKeys/NCRC due to their participation in the SOURCE. They viewed the program as a way to better quantify the skills required in key positions and thus improve their recruitment process. They believed that understanding what kind of person would be most successful prior to placing them in the position would lead to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover. Historically, when openings occurred, supervisors would informally determine that certain internal candidates showing interest were “not qualified.” Armed with specific details about the skills required, it would become possible to objectively evaluate both internal and external candidates and insure that skilled employees were hired.

Spectrum Industries was attracted to WorkKeys/NCRC as a solution due in part to its national reputation and proven track record. They also saw their participation as a way to draw more qualified employees to Michigan and also improve their own employees’ lives through training and support.

The Action

Spectrum decided to start by using the WorkKeys Estimator job analysis tool to estimate skills required for their “SQ5” operator position. Employees were then introduced to the WorkKeys/NCRC program as part of their weekly staff meetings. Testing was made mandatory for employees currently in the targeted positions. For these 7 employees, 4 earned Silver and 3 earned Gold certificates. Other employees were invited to participate as volunteers, resulting in 8 additional assessments and 3 Bronze, 2 Silver and 2 Gold certificates. While there was the predictable anxiety associated with test

taking, leadership worked hard to reassure employees and help them understand the connection between test results, skill development and future success.

The Results

Spectrum Industries targeted the “SQ5” operator position as a test case hoping to find a correlation between the required skill description and the assessment process. Discovering that all employees currently performing the role were able to achieve a Silver or Gold certificate confirmed that it was appropriate to include a Silver NCRC as a requirement in the job description going forward. It also verified that appropriately skilled employees were currently performing the job and well positioned to contribute in the short and long term. In addition, four other employees who volunteered for the testing were identified with a skill level that would qualify them for a future opening in this area.

Spectrum Industries considers their WorkKeys/NCRC experience a success. It provided valuable insight regarding a key position which can be used as a foundation for future job analysis and assessments. Equally as important, it had a positive impact on existing employees, helping them to see the importance of continuous learning and training in the quickly changing world of manufacturing. By quantifying both the skills required and an employee’s current level, individuals were given concrete evidence that created the courage to improve and in some cases, seek opportunities in more challenging positions.

In 2008, any job openings for the “SQ5” operator’s position will include a requirement to have a Silver NCRC. Planned future activities for Spectrum Industries will include expanding WorkKeys/NCRC to other positions and integrating the new requirements into their core human resources processes.