



2008 Michigan WorkKeys Conference

Employer Engagement: The Key to Sustaining the NCRC

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Employer Engagement: The Key to Sustaining the NCRC

- No one questions the importance associated with employer adoption of the NCRC.
- All recognize that the NCRC exists in a traditional supply and demand market.
- So the questions include: how do we engage employers; how can the NCRC be used by employers; and why should employers want to be engaged—how does the NCRC fit to their priorities?



To answer questions of “why” and “how”, it is helpful to consider the postsecondary talent identification and development system (admissions system).



A strength for which higher education in the U.S. has been lauded and applauded is its diversity including colleges and universities that range in:

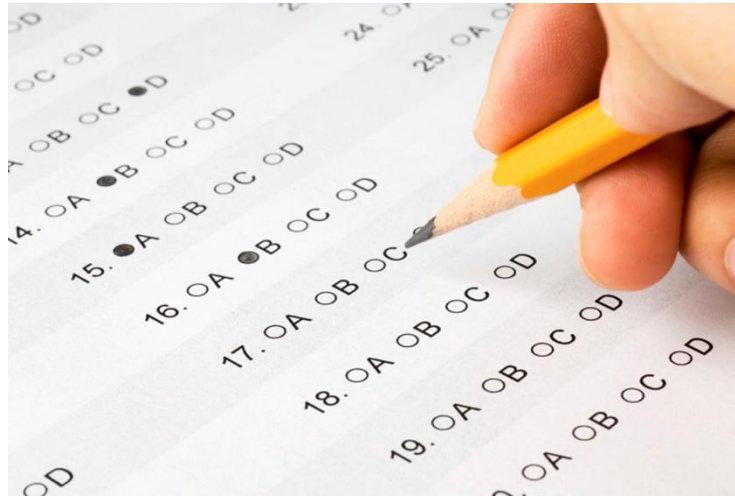
- Size
- Philosophy
- Make-up of the student population
- Range of offers
- Areas of specialization
- Funding sources, annual budgets, endowments

Within this great diversification of offerings, all of the two- and four-year colleges/universities shared a common goal of admitting individuals to their respective institutions with the skills necessary to benefit from and contribute to the institution's offerings: **Individuals who are “college ready.”**

How does the admissions model work?

Assessment results are used in a compensatory model as one of several criteria in making the admission decision along with:

- High school G.P.A.
- Rank in class
- Course taking pattern
- Recommendation
- Candidate essay



Results also inform course placement decisions.

The colleges know from experience that ACT research and local studies (if conducted) document the predictability of student performance based on ACT results. The relationship between performance on the ACT assessment and performance in college courses is well documented.



What are the outcomes that result from the admissions model?

1. Individuals pay \$45 to take an assessment.
2. Schools review and teach skills pertinent to performance on the ACT assessment.
3. Parents lobby schools to prepare their son/daughter with the skills necessary to take the ACT assessment.
4. Students seek ACT assessment preparation experiences.
5. Third party organizations offer test preparation opportunities.
6. Key publics are interested in regional/state performance on the ACT assessment as one indicator of school performance.
7. Realtors use ACT results by school district to position property for sale.
8. A set of common college readiness skills become the focus for a cross-section of stakeholders.

What is the role of employers in advancing the NCRC?

- Endorse the NCRC and its use within the employer community.
- Require the NCRC for hiring purposes.
- Advocate for expanded use of the NCRC through documenting successful practices.



Recommended use of the certificate:

- Require the NCRC for all or a subset of jobs.
- Do not specify level of certificate—use performance to inform hiring decision.
- Use NCRC as one of several criteria for selection/hiring.



Qualified applicants

1. Foundational skills (NCRC)

- Reading for Information, Applied Math, Locating Information

2. Occupational skills

- Certificate; degree; license

3. Experience

- Years of specific experience; years of related experience

4. Soft skills

- Performance—behavioral concerns; Talent—personality indicators; Fit—job fit, interests and values

5. Other

- Reference checks; validation of job performance, experiences, responsibility and contributions; drug screen; negative history search



How does the college admissions model fit to the employer use model?

1. Employers aggregate their demand by requiring the NCRC from job applicants (for all or a number of their jobs).
2. Individuals acquire the NCRC through the services of the workforce or educational development systems or independently.
3. Employers use the NCRC as one of several criteria for hiring into their workforce (compensatory model). ACT research reports that individuals earning an NCRC are more likely to perform and/or learn in the workplace. Employer case studies support ACT's findings as well.
4. Workforce development systems and schools focus their attention on preparing individuals with essential employability skills.

What does this mean for the corporate community?

Potentially plenty!

Corporations have objectives not dissimilar to those of colleges and universities. Within all of the corporate diversity, corporations—as with colleges and universities—seek to admit (hire) employees with the core essential skills necessary to benefit from and contribute to the work of the corporation. They seek to have employees **“work ready”** just as postsecondary institutions seek college ready individuals.

The lesson corporate America can learn from higher education is the power of acting in common to address a common need—better job applicants. The problem in the past was not having an easily implemented common standard to which individuals could be held. That has changed.

College Admissions Analogy:

The colleges speak to thousands of high schools and millions of individuals via the ACT

The NCRC provides the same opportunity to employers.





Questions/Dialogue

Certificate Adoption and Use Model

Significant benefit to employer and employer's workforce performance with commensurate cost

Full Deployment of WorkKeys System

Focus on WorkKeys System

Major benefit to employer with modest costs

Pre-Selection Using Certificate Levels and Assessment Results

Focus Shifting to WorkKeys System

Training/Development

Low cost to employer, no out-of-pocket expense. Significant benefit to community and substantial benefit to employer

National Career Readiness Certificate Adoption

Focus on Credential

Projected NCRC benefits for employers

Employers have reported several benefits associated with their use of the WorkKeys system. These benefits are listed below:

1. A reduction in: training time due to a more targeted overtime approach; overtime; turnover; scrap expenditures.
2. Improved quality of new hires.
3. Increased productivity.
4. Cash flow improvements.
5. Improved efficiency of operational procedures.
6. Documentation to meet ODHA requirements.
7. Improved employee morale.
8. Accelerated training given new hires readiness to learn.

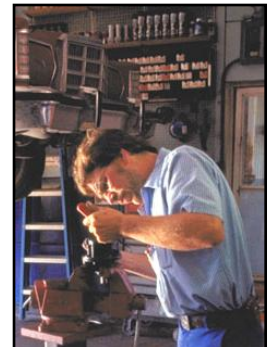
Projected NCRC benefits for employers

9. Better fit of employee to work.
10. Boost in quality of work.
11. Increased job satisfaction; skill levels; participation in further education.
12. Greater diversity in the employee pool.
13. Improved ROI.



What workforce characteristics attract economic development?

- Availability
- Affordability
- Capability





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Thank You

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