

STRATEGIC Solutions

Spring/Summer 2007

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT/CEO

Greetings:

Welcome to our first Strategic Solutions newsletter of 2007! We are happy that you are taking the time to peruse some highlights about The Whitener Group. We have experienced a strong first quarter in the areas of standardized assessment and customized assessment, and our recently developed China operation has been growing as well. For those of you reading this newsletter for the first time, The Whitener Group is primarily a group of individuals dedicated to providing performance competency assessment through a rigorous job and task analysis procedure. The Whitener Group and its parent company, the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) have been working in this field for over forty years and have an extensive data bank of performance items to draw upon.

Visit The Whitener Group at ASTD (American Society for Training & Development) International Conference Exposition coming up June 3-6, 2007 in Atlanta, Georgia. The Whitener Group will be exhibiting at the Expo and the booth number is 912. NOCTI and The Whitener Group will be in Kansas City at the end of June at SkillsUSA's National Leadership and Skills Conference. Those of you who have not had the chance to witness a national competition of America's finest young craftsmen will be very impressed.

Also worth mentioning is the partnership The Whitener Group and NOCTI have formed with the Association of Career and Technical Education (ACTE) to deliver a pre-convention conference on assessment. This conference will take place in Las Vegas on December 12th of this year and though it is primarily geared to the secondary and post-secondary education market, it may be worth a visit. Find out more information at <http://www.acteonline.org/convention/nocti.cfm> ACTE can be an excellent place to search out new resources of young, competent, technical talent. If you are a trade association, apprenticeship group, or certification organization it may also be a terrific place to gain market advantage with technical practitioners as they exit their initial training programs. If this is an interest of yours, please contact us.

In this newsletter you will find brief overviews of the kind of work in which we are currently engaged such

as Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) and Pipe Trades Apprenticeship Program in San Jose, CA. Our ongoing projects include work with the American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC), the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA), the United Association (UA) and a number of new clients, to establish a certification and assessment system within their respective industries.

We believe The Whitener Group should be your partner if you are looking for legally defensible performance testing, entrance exams, screening tools for employee advancement, task analysis, training gap analysis, online delivery, testing site branding or customized curriculum development. We have a solid psychometric team and our emphasis on courteous, friendly service make us the number one resource of your human performance improvement department. Enjoy the newsletter and let us know how we can help!

Best regards,
John Foster
President/CEO
NOCTI & The Whitener Group

WHITENER GROUP ONLINE SYSTEM

September 1, 2006 was the launch of The Whitener Group's upgraded online assessment system. In addition, online reporting is now the standard method for accessing score reports. In the world of rapidly changing technology, The Whitener Group is continuously striving to improve the online systems in order to provide the most efficient services to our customers.

Online Assessment System

The Whitener Group's upgraded online assessment system will enable us to deliver secure assessments without complex precursor steps. It is our intention that the involvement by your IT staff will be significantly reduced in the setup of workstations for online assessment delivery. The improvements are geared toward a more streamlined process by removing the requirement for a separate installation of a third-party security tool.

Online Reporting Feature

The online reporting feature has scored high marks with our customers since its introduction in 2004. Based on the overwhelming positive feedback, The Whitener Group is excited to announce that our

online reporting system will now be the standard method for our customers to review, access, print and store score reports for both online and paper/pencil assessment administration. (Hard copy reports will be available for a minimal fee, if desired.) Beginning September 1, 2007, all of our customers will benefit from the following online reporting features:

- Email notification to coordinators when score reports are available in the online reporting system.
- Quicker results -- shipping time is eliminated.
- Convenient access to reports for one year after the test date.
- Print as many copies as needed without additional reprint fees.
- Copy/paste data to create custom reports.

Thank you for all you do to manage The Whitener Group testing program at your site! We would be happy to discuss the enhancements outlined above and to answer any questions or concerns you may have. If you or your colleagues are new to The Whitener Group and would like a demonstration of our online testing platform, please email Lana.ford@nocti.org to schedule the session. The Whitener Group is here to be of service to you. Please call 1-800-281-7960 for more information.

PIPE TRADES TRAINING CENTER'S APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

by Carl Cimino, Director

"We had problems. We had apprentices complaining they were subjected to the same classroom material three years in a row. We had no way of quantifying what exactly the residential plumbing apprentices were learning in their four years in the program. Some were even accusing us of impeding their success by not giving them the education they needed to compete on the jobsite. We had instructors who complained they received no support in their efforts to develop class outlines and lesson plans and they complained that our curriculum was patchwork at best. When we handed instructors materials that were created by our national union they complained that it was either too generic or that it had too great of an emphasis on the East Coast Codes and preferences.

The Whitener Group to the rescue! After taking the

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time to listen to our needs and understand our issues, they developed a plan that would address all of our problems. Any concerns we had that they were "patting us on the head" by handing us an "off-the-shelf" product they thought we wanted, was thrown out the window when they initiated the Turbo DACUM process. By bringing together a cadre of our own craftsmen working in the trade and in the field along with experienced instructors from our staff, and other journeymen, foremen and contractor representatives, The Whitener Group simultaneously gleaned the information needed to begin building the curriculum and cemented the buy-in that was needed to create genuine enthusiasm for the finished product. The Job and Task Analysis was exactly what the doctor ordered to reinforce our confidence that this curriculum was going to be OUR curriculum and that our new partners were aiding us in creating something very special.

Since completing that process, The Whitener Group has continued to work with our staff to create something very special. What we now have is a fully articulated curriculum detailed right down to the Power Point slides for the daily lesson plans. We have quizzes and tests which measure achievement. We also have a tool for assessing our instructors' skills. In fact, it was so impressive that our national union gave us a significant grant and put their own label on the curriculum and adopted it as their own throughout North America.

And we're not done. We still have three other apprenticeship tracks to go. But we are comfortable in the knowledge that our partners at The Whitener Group will guide us through the obstacles and provide even more of the wonderful, customized service we have grown to expect. I believe the most pleasant surprise for us is that we have developed more than just a curriculum. Throughout the development of the curriculum, we have become very good friends."

For more information regarding the Pipe Trades program, please contact Carl Cimino, carl@pttc393.org.

RELEASING ONLINE TEST RESULTS FOR SCORING

Site Coordinators are responsible for releasing participant online assessment information to The Whitener Group for scoring. The Online Assessment System will provide preliminary immediate individual results for written assessments. Official score reports (Coordinator, Comparative and Individual) will be provided in the standard turn around time for scoring. Prior to releasing online assessment information for scoring, be sure that the information below has been completed:

- Participant Name and ID have been entered correctly
- Social security or alternate ID numbers are unique for each participant
- Participant Demographics have been completed
- Performance Ratings have been entered (if applicable)

If you have any user codes listed as "in process," please contact the Scoring Department at 1-800-281-7960, extension 15 or 26.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

When using the paper/pencil version of The Whitener Group's assessment system, implementing the procedures listed below will ensure that your scores are processed as quickly as possible. Answer sheets sent to The Whitener Group missing and/or incorrect information may be returned to the site coordinator for corrections and a fee may be incurred.

- An original coordinator cover sheet is required when sending back answer sheets for scoring.
- Answer sheets should be sorted by test code.
- The site coordinator should look over the answer sheets before shipping to ensure all the required information has been filled out and bubbled in. Please refer to the Proctor Guide for a list of the required information and instructions for completing answer sheets.
- If participants are using alternate ID numbers, the alternate ID numbers must be unique for each participant.

Please contact The Whitener Group at 1-800-281-7960 if you have any questions.

MSSC CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

The MSSC Production Technician Certification Program is gaining momentum with the support from both national and state-level leadership. The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) has praised the nationally-recognized certification program. "This is a breakthrough with great implications for the future of manufacturing in the United States," NAM President John Engler said. "Introduction of this certification program underscores growing recognition that America must do a better job of training and educating our workforce to remain competitive in the global economy."

State leaders are also recognizing the importance of addressing the shortage of skilled manufacturing workers within their economic regions. Most recently, the governor of Wisconsin allocated \$250,000 in existing federal funds to increase the number of MSSC assessment centers and assessments available to workers. A statewide program is also underway in California.

For further information about the MSSC program, visit www.whitenergroup.com/MSSC.cfm. To locate an MSSC Assessment Center near you, or to establish your own center, please visit the MSSC website at www.msscusa.org.

Announcing...

THE WHITENER GROUP'S "STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS" WEB SEMINARS

DATE	TOPIC
September 12, 2007	The Whitener Group's Customized Assessment Development Process
November 16, 2007	Customized Assessments & Personnel Decisions: Legal Defensibility
January 16, 2008	At What Performance Level Does the Employee Need to Perform in Order to Do the Job?...Methods to Determine a Cut Score
March 12, 2008	Coaching Employees to Success...Using the Data!

To register, email Lana Ford and sign up for one or all of the seminars. You will need to provide your email address as well as a telephone number.

lana.ford@nocti.org

Share your thoughts...

We want to know what you think about the articles in this issue of The Whitener Group's Strategic Solutions.

Please send an email message to Lana.Ford@nocti.org with your feedback.