

# STRATEGIC Solutions

*Spring/Summer 2008*

## FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT/CEO

Occasionally I find myself starting out these messages with an impression of something I had just read, seen or experienced, and this quarter is no exception. It seems that even in the face of turbulent markets and housing construction declines, innovations abound. Recently in a USA Today article I noted the innovations regarding interactive services for children relating to the internet. There was a focus on the development of educational games that helped students improve performance in the areas of reading and math and there was mention of an online tutoring system. The difference is that the tutoring system was available for your avatar (your virtual self) on Second Life (your virtual world) so that the real you can improve in the real world. You probably know that the electronic gaming industry has recently overtaken profits made by the Hollywood filmmaking industry, so it's certainly a very large market. Why do I start with a story like this? Because we want you to know that we monitor the trends and evaluate the possibilities. The Whitener Group is a relatively small company which makes us both agile and aggressive when it comes to serving the customer. Though we currently don't offer services for your avatar, we are offering a number of innovations and improvements that will better serve our clients!

First, we continue to have a strong partnership with our friends at ACTE (Association of Career and Technical Education). Through this partnership we'll be offering our second Pre-Convention Assessment Conference. This conference will incorporate presentations on industry certifications, apprenticeship and technical training. The conference will take place in Charlotte, NC on December 3, 2008. More information will be available later, but for now, please mark your calendar!

We have made a number of advancements on the technical side; text to speech, a new Client Services Site, newly formatted reports, and of course, greatly increased online testing capacity. With the majority of our clients relying on the speed and accuracy of our online systems and software we felt we had to give this proprietary system a name. The name we've chosen is QuadNet. QuadNet provides Quality User-friendly Assessment Development and Delivery services. It contains four primary services for our clients; management, development, report delivery, and resource availability. Both Whitener Group and its holding company, NOCTI, are powered by QuadNet!

In an effort to increase your efficiency, we are proud to say that your phone calls to The Whitener Group will be answered by a "live" person. You'll have the pleasure of talking to Julie, Laura, Anne, or Lana when you call our 800 number. Our customer service specialists will determine the person best suited to answer your question when you call. They have also been trained to recognize technical support questions and to connect you immediately to one of the Quad Squad: Andrea, Mandy, Helen, or Eric. Quad Squad experts are available to assist you with technical issues during our regular business hours, however, after hours support may be arranged if requested.

The Whitener Group's real value is in helping you improve your workforce. We offer professional development programs and workshops designed to help your staff understand assessment, accountability, training gap analysis, using data to improve programs and much, much more. These sessions can be delivered in person or through web-conferencing tools. You'll also discover that we have listened to your requests and have begun offering Spanish translations of some of our tests.

This year we will begin to roll out our new assessment blueprints. They will offer updated information on what your technical training should include using charts, graphs, and graphics. For a preview of the new format, please take a look at <http://www.nocti.org/Jobready.cfm>.

Lastly, a new Director, Bruce Hopkins, has joined The Whitener Group Board. Bruce is Vice President of Standards & Education at RVIA (Recreational Vehicle Industry Association). He replaces Jerry Balda, also from RVIA. Although Jerry will be missed, we certainly appreciate his leadership during his tenure on the Board and his assistance in nominating Bruce Hopkins.

As always, if we can help in any way, please don't hesitate to contact us. We consider ourselves to be an important partner in helping prepare the workforce of the future. On behalf of the entire Whitener Group staff, thank you for the good things you are doing to improve the training of your employees and our economic future.

John Foster  
President/CEO  
NOCTI and The Whitener Group

## THE WHITENER GROUP INTRODUCES QUADNET: A COMPLETE ONLINE SYSTEM FOR ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT, DELIVERY AND REPORTING.

The Whitener Group recently unveiled QuadNet bringing together all of its online systems under one common infrastructure. QuadNet allows customers to easily manage a localized and/or statewide testing program.

Comprised of both a secure online delivery and management system, QuadNet offers customers many easy-to-navigate features with the protection of advanced encryption technology. QuadNet's test delivery engine has been enhanced with a new look and the option to provide text-to-speech capability for special need students. Site coordinators will benefit from enhancements to the Client Services Center including additional resources, intuitive navigation and options to export scoring data that can be formatted in a variety of different programs.

"What a difference the new Client Services Center has made! With nearly 400 students testing online each spring, I appreciate being able to go to the Client Services Center, and with a few clicks, set the test up, generate scores for instructors, and provide our administrators with the information they need," says veteran Site Coordinator and Tech Center principal Ed Stanton, New Jersey. "I also appreciate that if I have questions, I can call a talk to a 'real' person."

The Whitener Group continues to provide exemplary customer service with real-time response and personal technical support via a toll-free dedicated support line. A team of professionals are available to assist and expedite solutions for your online testing experience.

The Whitener Group, a subsidiary of NOCTI, addresses the needs of business/industry by offering customized solutions to enhance workplace productivity. Services include job and task analysis, assessment construction, assessment delivery, score reporting, score interpretation and professional development workshops.

Go green with QuadNet 

*Continued on other side*

## WHITENER GROUP SERVES PARTNERS IN BUSINESS THROUGH INDUSTRY RESOURCE CENTERS

The Whitener Group's Industry Resource Centers (IRCs) are charged with creating strategic workforce solutions for their service community. Their mission is made more challenging by the complexity of the public workforce system and the need to build partnerships among the many different entities they serve.

Currently The Whitener Group has over 38 IRCs throughout the country. Although the majority of the IRCs are located at community colleges, there are several organizations involved in workforce development that have been approved to serve as IRCs. The IRCs utilize a wide variety of occupational assessments to provide solutions for their constituents. Assessments are available online or in paper/ pencil format. The assessments are used for various purposes such as a pre-screening tool for hiring employees or as a leveling tool to re-position current employees. Many of the IRCs use the assessments to identify training gaps and provide the remediation necessary for employee success.

Joe Peschel from Owens Community College's Industry Resource Center (IRC) in Ohio provides an opportunity for individuals to take a Whitener Group assessment at his school's testing facility. These individuals, job applicants referred to Owens by a local business specializing in automotive supplies for the Detroit Three, are evaluated for hire based on their test scores and other qualifications. "The partnership we have with business works well for both of us-we can provide assessment services using The Whitener Group products to assist them in their human resource needs, they can get the information easily to make decisions on personnel," said Joe Peschel. "It is critical to these companies that the tests are nationally validated, reliable instruments, which is exactly what The Whitener Group offers."

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF REVISED MSSC ASSESSMENT

The Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) recently announced the release of revised assessments needed to qualify for MSSC Certificates in the four critical functions of production: Safety; Quality Practices & Measurement; Manufacturing Processes & Production; and Maintenance Awareness.

The MSSC assessment revisions are the result of the work of The Whitener Group and countless subject matter experts who met last fall and again this March to establish the cut scores. The tests were piloted across the country in January and February, during which 745 assessments were administered.

The revised assessments:

- Align with the MSSC Production Standards, updated in 2007, to reflect current best practices in advanced, high-performance manufacturing.
- Align with current MSSC-authorized courses

that help individuals enhance their skills and achieve higher scores on the assessments for each critical work function (i.e., modules).

- Eliminate redundancies between the various assessments.
- Are 30% shorter, with a total of 444 questions for all four of the revised modules (vs. 631 questions for all four of the original modules).
- Reduce the average time needed to take each assessment from about two and a half hours to under two hours.

As an individual passes a module, the MSSC issues a certificate and blue-and-white MSSC arm patch. After passing all four modules, the MSSC issues a full "MSSC-Certified Production Technician (CPT) Certification" which includes a personalized wallet card, a diploma-style certification, and a blue-and-gold arm patch.

The MSSC is a nationwide, industry-led organization that focuses on the core knowledge and skills needed by production workers in the nation's advanced manufacturing sector. The MSSC Training, Assessment and Credentialing System offers workers and students the opportunity to demonstrate that they have mastered the skills increasingly needed in the high-growth, technical jobs of the 21st century.

The Whitener Group is a proud partner of the MSSC CPT program. The organizations worked together to develop and revise the assessments that are key components to the certification program. The Whitener Group also provides the delivery, scoring and reporting services for the CPT assessments.

For further information about the MSSC assessments and credentialing process, go to [www.whitenergroup.com](http://www.whitenergroup.com), or contact Neil Reddy at the MSSC at [reddyn@msscusa.org](mailto:reddyn@msscusa.org).

## RELEASING ONLINE TEST RESULTS FOR SCORING

Site Coordinators are responsible for releasing participant online assessment information for scoring. The online assessment system (QuadNet) 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
- Participant 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 1-800-334-6283, extension 215 or 226.

## Important Reminders

Implementing the procedures listed below will ensure that your scores are processed as quickly as possible. Answer sheets sent to The Whitener Group with missing and/or with 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.

Please contact The Whitener Group at 1-800-334-6283 if you have any questions.

## WEB SEMINAR TRAINING - FOR NEW AND "SEASONED" SITE COORDINATORS

Whether you are brand new to your position as a Whitener Group Site Coordinator, or you have been a Site Coordinator for a while, you are encouraged to participate in one of our web based "Site Coordinator Training" seminars. As the busy, year-end testing season approaches, take time to refresh your knowledge so that you feel better prepared and confident in your responsibilities.

Sessions are offered at a variety of times to match your busy schedule. There is no cost for the training. All you need is access to the Internet, a phone line, and approximately 90 minutes of time. This includes ample time for your individual questions.

To register, call 1-800-334-6283 or email [Anne.Gielczyk@nocti.org](mailto:Anne.Gielczyk@nocti.org).

## Whitener Group Site Coordinator Trainings:

Wednesday, April 23 - 2 pm  
Wednesday, May 21 - 2 pm  
Wednesday, June 18 - 2 pm  
Wednesday, July 23 - 2 pm  
Wednesday, August 20 - 2 pm  
Wednesday, September 24 - 2 pm  
Wednesday, October 22 - 2 pm  
Wednesday, November 19 - 2 pm  
Wednesday, December 17 - 2 pm

## 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](mailto:Lana.Ford@nocti.org) with your feedback.