

# STRATEGIC Solutions

Spring 2009

## FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT/CEO



Can you spell "stimulus"? We certainly hope so, because that is certainly the word of the month since the new administration has been in Washington! The new stimulus plan was signed into law on February 17th, 2009. It provides funds in a number of different areas with the majority of the funds going into

several large categories. Assistance to the unemployed, tax adjustments, and spending on infrastructure, healthcare and education are all hoped to help spur the economy. The Whitener Group hopes that your business needs can be positively affected by the new plan, but even if your firm isn't directly affected, we hope that you can capitalize on this downturn by reinforcing and strengthening the needs of your existing workforce. We know that in order for any business to stay competitive it must rely on the skills and competence of its workers. We have been helping businesses stay competitive for many years by assessing the skills of new employees, providing the backbone of industry certification programs, and providing a credible metric for employee advancement opportunities.

Let me bring you up to date on just a few things that might interest you. Recently we formed an agreement with the National Coalition of Advanced Technology Centers (NCATC) <http://www.ncatc.org/> This group represents well over 100 post secondary technical colleges around the country. Those colleges are in the process of becoming Industry Resource Centers (IRCs), meaning that these schools will be able to deliver Whitener Group end of program technical tests to your employees and that they will be able to deliver the technical training that may be needed. Another partnership formed recently is with Multi-State Academic and Vocational Curriculum Consortium (MAVCC) (<http://www.mavcc.org/>). Although MAVCC is generally known for its work with public technical centers, they are aligned to many different industry certification programs and we are now in the process of making sure that our technical assessments are coordinated with their training packages.

Another project which we are very excited about involves working with several organizations to produce a Mechatronics assessment/certification. Mechatronics involves fluid power, electrical power, mechanical power and the software that controls it. We are also actively working with a number of "green initiatives" and we hope to be able to tell you more about those in our next newsletter.

As always, if we can help in any way, please don't hesitate to contact us. The Whitener Group strives 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 country's economic future by improving the training of your employees.

John Foster  
President/CEO  
NOCTI and The Whitener Group

## SAVE 10%... PUT THE WHITENER GROUP'S EXPERIENCE TO THE TEST!

YOUR FULL SERVICE, TECHNOLOGY-  
DRIVEN TEST DEVELOPMENT AND  
DELIVERY COMPANY

The Whitener Group is offering 10% off of their customized test development process to each new client if you schedule the service no later than **Friday, May 1st, 2009!**

Training improvement, professional development, customized assessment, delivery and data analysis...The Whitener Group has been serving the accountability needs of our clients for over 45 years. Our talented professionals and skilled staff would like to manage your next project. Give us a call prior to **May 1st, 2009**, to redeem your **10% discount!** We are ready to be your key to success!!!

## MEET US IN ORLANDO!!

The Whitener Group is very excited to be participating and exhibiting at THE Performance Improvement Conference sponsored by the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) April 19-22. The ISPI's focus is on performance technology and helping organizations successfully adapt to the ever-changing business environment. The Whitener Group, as well as other expert presenters will be conducting product strategy sessions and sharing best practices to generate

discussion on how to thrive in hard times.

This conference will help participants find answers to some of the most significant problems many organizations are facing and network with the smartest minds in the industry from around the globe. Today, more than ever, your company needs you and your knowledge of performance.

For more information on THE Performance Improvement Conference, visit <http://www.ispi.org/content.aspx?id=308>. We look forward to seeing you there!!

## NCATC AND NOCTI/THE WHITENER GROUP COLLABORATION MEETS TODAY'S WORKFORCE NEEDS

A common theme for remaining competitive in today's global economy is a highly skilled workforce. Along with valuable technical skills, it is critical that employees are able to demonstrate strong employability skills. These 21st century workplace skills require employees to have basic reading, writing and math skills. Employers are seeking employees with the ability to problem solve, make decisions, and work in teams while demonstrating a strong work ethic and positive attitude. NOCTI/The Whitener Group and NCATC (National Coalition of Advanced Technology Centers) are pleased to announce the "21st Century Skills for Workplace Success" assessment and industry recognized certificate. Intended for the post secondary market as well as a tool for Workforce Investment Agencies, this collaboration will offer a best-practice, industry recognized assessment option for the clients these organizations serve.

"This relationship will be beneficial for individuals that are entering today's workforce or transitioning to another position," stated Dr. John C. Foster, President/CEO of NOCTI and The Whitener Group. "The 21st Century Skills for Workplace Success assessment is designed to validate the skills and knowledge demanded by our nation's business and industries." J. Craig McAtee, Executive Director of NCATC added, "We look forward to working with NOCTI and The Whitener Group and combining our two organizations' expertise and resources to better serve our constituents and to provide them with a value added credential."

As part of this new collaboration, NOCTI and The Whitener Group will provide NCATC members the

*Continued on other side*

same benefits as an Industry Resource Center (IRC). IRCs are a national network of institutions that provide education and training opportunities to local and area business and industry. An IRC has access to over 170 occupational specific assessment titles. The assessments can be used with business and industry clientele to identify training or educational needs and/or validate knowledge and skill sets – both crucial for offering efficient and effective training for today's workforce.

## About NOCTI and The Whitener Group

NOCTI provides instructional improvement tools for secondary and post secondary institutions. In addition to over 75 standardized assessments, NOCTI also works with customers to create customized solutions. Services include job and task analysis, assessment construction, assessment delivery, score reporting, score interpretation and professional development workshops. The Whitener Group, a subsidiary of NOCTI, addresses the needs of business/industry by offering customized solutions to enhance workplace productivity.

## About NCATC

The National Coalition of Advanced Technology Centers is a network of higher education resources that advocates and promotes the use of technology applications that enhance economic and workforce development programs and services. In fulfilling its mission, NCATC is guided by specific goals that include:

- Increasing the national awareness of ATCs and their positive impact on America's competitive ability and economic growth.
- Developing and facilitating the exchange of workforce development programs among NCATC members.
- Providing a forum for new and emerging technologies to allow ATCs to develop programs and services that reflect the technological landscape.
- Providing a conduit that allows ATCs to access information to optimally assist in the economic business development of their communities.
- Ensuring that each member is provided support in its development and evolution as an agent of change within its community.

Advanced Technology Centers (ATCs) are located in all regions of the United States and are normally associated with community colleges and universities. Over 160 college-based ATCs are members of NCATC currently and some private corporations and school districts also have established ATCs. An ATC is a commitment of persons and resources in the effort to reach, enhance, and add value to business. An ATC is not necessarily a physical facility, but is often thought of and referred to as a structure. Beyond bricks and mortar, an ATC operation is a

conscious effort to bring together the resources of the college in business and industry outreach, and it can be an organizational model that encompasses many functions of the college. While there is no single definition, an ATC can be described as a locus of economic development with substantial and concerted business and industry outreach products and services. The National Coalition of Advanced Technology Centers supports and enhances the best practice products and services its ATC members provide.

## HEATHKIT'S PC FUNDAMENTALS ASSESSMENT NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH NOCTI!

NOCTI and Heathkit Educational Systems have joined together to offer Heathkit's PC Fundamentals assessment through QuadNet™, NOCTI's web-based assessment delivery engine. The PC Fundamentals assessment was recently added to NOCTI's product offerings and provides customers with the added convenience of ordering multiple assessments from one central location.

The PC Fundamentals assessment is a valuable tool to accompany the PC Fundamentals program which consists of curriculum designed to develop the technical skills measured by the new CompTia A+® Certification exam. The program includes 60 plus hands-on exercises leading a student through the construction, upgrading, troubleshooting and repairing of common problems found in a contemporary Windows PC. Instructors can use the PC Fundamentals assessment to determine gap areas allowing for additional instruction prior to a student taking the A+ certification exam.

An assessment blueprint which includes the competencies covered on the assessment as well as other details pertaining to the PC Fundamentals assessment is available on NOCTI's website by visiting [www.nocti.org/heathkit.cfm](http://www.nocti.org/heathkit.cfm)

NOCTI's CEO, Dr. John Foster said, "This assessment and the exercises provided are the perfect complements for those students wishing to improve their computer troubleshooting skills, we are proud to be collaborating with Heathkit to help improve instruction."

## About Heathkit

Heathkit Educational Systems, created in 1974, develops and distributes technical education curriculum, courseware and hardware to assist academic institutions, corporations, training centers and 'self-study' users worldwide. Heathkit offers educational programs for PC Technology, Telecom Technology, Core Technology, Life Science, Robotics Technology and Language Lab. To learn more visit the website at <http://www.heathkit.com/>

## TESTIMONIAL SINGS PRAISES TO THE WHITENER GROUP

**The Whitener Group is proud to share this letter from our client in Virginia. It provides a first hand, inside look at the process of customizing an assessment.**

October 28, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

*The Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors - National Association Educational Foundation (PHCC Educational Foundation) is currently working with NOCTI/The Whitener Group to develop a series of four assessment tests tied to a plumbing apprenticeship curriculum. The four-year curriculum was developed from a job and task analysis prepared in partnership with NOCTI/The Whitener Group.*

*From the initial discussions with NOCTI and through the contract phase of our work, we found that NOCTI/The Whitener Group has been forthcoming about its services and its expectations from us as their client. Contracts were accurately prepared and reflected our negotiations, and we believe the contracts benefit both parties fairly.*

*Our initial in-person session for the job and task analysis was conducted by NOCTI/The Whitener Group's facilitator, Dr. Katherine Manley, in August 2007. Dr. Manley's expertise and enthusiasm for the project resulted in a productive session for our subject matter experts and ultimately resulted in a high quality job and task analysis that now forms the basis for our curriculum and textbook series.*

*As we prepared to develop the assessment tests, we consulted with Dr. Manley and determined that it was in our mutual best interest to complete the assessment tests at the same time versus developing them one at a time. Again, Dr. Manley's recommendation was a good one, saving our organization more than \$38,000 over the next three years. Our subsequent assessment test development session was held in August 2008. Subject matter experts have reviewed the pilot test drafts and we anticipate beginning pilot testing in November 2008.*

*Our partnership with NOCTI/The Whitener Group has helped us to develop assessment tests that are desperately needed in our industry at a reasonable cost for the services provided. NOCTI/The Whitener group brings credibility to the table, and without their services, we could not have completed these projects at a level of quality acceptable to our customers. In particular, Dr. Manley's work on the project has been critical to our success.*

*If you have any questions about our experience with NOCTI/The Whitener Group, please do not hesitate to contact me.*

*Merry Beth Hall  
Director of Apprentice & Journeyperson Training*

**Thank you, Merry Beth and colleagues at The Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors - Educational Foundation.**

## 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.