

STRATEGIC Solutions

Fall/Winter 2007

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT/CEO

"Attention to detail and quality, that's the difference!" I spend a good deal of time on planes these days which affords me the opportunity to have some in-depth conversations with my seat mates. Those of us with many years of experience in training and assessment know that it provides a knowledge base that allows us to communicate in the languages of many different occupations. On one particular excursion I happened to be sitting next to the national porcelain trainer for the largest dental lab in the country. In a nutshell, these are the places that make the caps and crowns that you need because of your overzealousness over a lifetime of Halloween trick or treating! Our discussion was striking to me because he viewed his company as a manufacturing industry and not so much as a health service provider. We talked about the impact of outsourcing, graying of the labor force and about the difficulty of keeping employees up to speed with current trends and technology.

The reason this recounting ended up in a newsletter is because of the opening quote. This man's firm was able to fend off the competition because they maintained a workforce that believed in attention to detail and quality. The Whitener Group is committed to those same attributes, but we aren't sure that we have fully communicated that commitment to our clients. We are tapping into sources of information that we can count on to provide us with feedback. Thanks in part to that feedback, and the feedback we regularly receive from client e-mail and phone conversations, and from conferences, we will be making some adjustments in the way we do business. We are truly excited about these additional ways of providing an even greater level of quality for our clients. Here are just a few of the improvements that we will be making:

- Additional customer service representatives
- A new catalog with a new format
- Alignment to O-NET standards
- Enhanced online tests
- An emphasis on educational research and data mining

Lately, we have been discussing backbone and branding services with a number of different associations. This involves creating websites at which association members can access assessment and certification services. We have been working

with the American Welding Society and will be attending their annual meeting in Chicago. We continue to work with the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council and have recently revised and improved their certification assessments in manufacturing. We are also in the discussion stages of some formative assessment development with a number of national labor organizations. We believe these collaborations will play an important role in preparing and strengthening our future workforce.

Speaking of labor, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the very positive feedback we recently received on our pre-screening assessment and related curriculum development for the Pipe Trades Training Center in California. Eighty-four new apprentices recently completed a series of courses developed for beginning pipe trades apprentices. Apprentices taking part in the orientation commented that they felt better equipped to work safely after having been instructed on the importance of workplace attire and PPE. In addition, students were appreciative of the information describing the history, benefits and responsibilities of apprenticeship. The courses provide an introduction to the Pipe Trades and fit nicely with the United Association's (UA) "Commitment to Excellence."

We should mention that NOCTI, our sister company, will be hosting a Pre-convention Assessment Conference at ACTE in Las Vegas this December. Although the conference focus is on educational use of technical assessment, there may be some interest for Whitener Group clients as well. You'll find a complete schedule on both the NOCTI and ACTE (Association of Career and Technical Education) web pages:
<http://www.nocti.org/PDFs/quarterly/Inaugural%20pre-convention%20assessment%20conf%20flyer.pdf>
<http://www.acteonline.org/convention/nocti.cfm>

We hope that you are enjoying the fall weather, whatever that means for your part of the country! 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 you prepare the workforce of the future.

John Foster
President/CEO
NOCTI and The Whitener Group

ORIENTATION CLASS A HIT WITH NEW APPRENTICES AT SAN JOSE!

"As we kick off a new school year at the Pipe Trades Training Center in San Jose, California, we have noticed many new faces on campus! Currently we have 84 new apprentices who are better prepared to begin their apprenticeship due to having completed a new series of courses developed just for the beginning pipe trades apprentice." stated Carl Cimino, Director.

Apprentice orientation now requires three evenings of attendance, instruction in Union Heritage and History, Construction Safety, and the Apprentice Handbook. Through the Apprentice Council, the JATC has received word of past apprentices' their desire to be better prepared to begin new careers. For many beginning apprentices the construction site is an unfamiliar, potentially dangerous work environment. This new course, the result of a collaborative effort between Training Center staff and The Whitener Group is designed to help the new apprentice get started off on the right foot.

Apprentices interviewed after completing the course indicated that they felt better equipped to work safely after having been instructed in how to select workplace attire, proper shoes and PPE. "Having the opportunity to view videos from actual job sites, and practicing the proper use of PPE was very helpful," said Joshua Moore, new commercial plumbing apprentice.

Students also enjoyed hearing first hand the history, benefits, and responsibilities of apprenticeship and appreciated the manner in which the information was presented and the willingness of staff to fully explain and answer questions. The new course is a perfect introduction to our crafts and to the UA's "Commitment to Excellence" as mandated by General President Hite.

For more information regarding the Pipe Trades program, please contact Carl Cimino,
carl@pptc393.org

NOCTI AND THE WHITENER GROUP CONGRATULATES DON VINCENT

Donald A. Vincent, who has headed the Robotic Industries Association (RIA) since 1983 and was active in its founding in 1974 retired this past June 30, 2007. He is succeeded by Jeffrey A. Burnstein, who has served as the organization's number two executive for more than two decades. Don has also been a valuable asset to the NOCTI and The Whitener Group Board since 1993. "Don has provided great guidance and leadership for both organizations and we congratulate Don on his well deserved retirement," commented Dr. John C. Foster, President/CEO of NOCTI and The Whitener Group Boards. "We are appreciative that Don will still serve on The Whitener Group Board and provide continued leadership to our company."

Trevor Jones, current RIA President and Director, OEM Development, Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc., said that under Vincent's leadership, RIA has become the leading source for industrial robot statistics in North America; developed the American National Robot Safety Standard; launched Robotics Online, the world's leading website for robotics information; created a series of successful educational workshops focused on the use of robots in major application areas, and established the International Robots & Vision Show and Conference as North America's leading event for these technologies.

"These are just some of the highlights of Don's career, and don't even begin to touch upon the networking links he has established for the industry or the role he has played in establishing the robotics industry as one of the critical technologies of the 21st century," Jones said.

"RIA's development is an amazing success story, and Don Vincent has been its primary architect," said Joseph F. Engelberger, known throughout the world as the "father of robotics" and one of the industry pioneers who helped launch RIA in 1974.

In recognition of Don's outstanding accomplishments, he received the prestigious Engelberger Robotics Award for Industry Leadership in 2002, the industry's highest honor.

"I'm thrilled that my last show as head of RIA included participation of the International Symposium on Robotics (ISR)," explained Vincent. "My wife, Kelley, and I have immensely enjoyed our involvement in the ISR and it has become the world's leading annual robotics conference. I'm happy to have played a key role in helping create the International Federation of Robotics (IFR) back in 1987. Bringing together so many industry leaders from around the world, the IFR has been a catalyst in the global growth of the robotics industry."

"Don and Kelley Vincent have been tremendous ambassadors for the robotics industry," said Stefan Mueller of Kuka Robotics, and current President of the IFR. "All of us involved in the international

robotics community will miss Don's day to day involvement as head of RIA, but we know he will remain a key force in promoting the robotics industry throughout the world."

"Don has assembled a great staff of people here in Ann Arbor, Michigan and we are all dedicated to continue the commitment to excellence that he fostered," Burnstein said. "Don cannot be replaced - that is an impossible goal - but I am looking forward to building upon his legacy in helping our member companies find new business opportunities as the market for robotics, machine vision, and motion control continues to expand." Congratulations to Don and his family for the legacy they have provided to the international robotics industry!

CPYB CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Under the leadership of the Yacht Brokers Association of America's (YBAA) Professional Development Committee and with the support of partner associations, FYBA, NYBA, CYBA and OYBA, The Whitener Group assisted in the development of the assessment component of the National Yacht Broker Certification Program. This program was designed to raise the professional capabilities of yacht brokers, while addressing the needs of boat buyers and sellers who are demanding more service and support from the industry. Yacht brokers across the nation now have a new benchmark for measuring their skills, abilities, and performance. Since its inception, nearly 400 qualified yacht brokers have earned their Certified Professional Yacht Broker (CPYB) designation.

Joseph Thompson, CEO of Thompson Management Associates, LLC of Annapolis, Maryland serves as Executive Director of YBAA. His organization first learned of The Whitener Group's work through a conversation with the American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC) who had worked with The Whitener Group in the development of several marine-related assessments. Thompson, who is also the director of the Association for Hose and Accessories Distribution (NAHAD) and the International Sealing Distribution Association (ISD), has coordinated additional work with The Whitener Group for the development of assessments for related organizations.

"Our alliance with The Whitener Group has proven to be an essential element of the success of these various programs, which provide valuable services to our client members," commented Thompson. "The CPYB program became reality thanks to the professional efforts of The Whitener Group team, working in concert with our industry volunteers and association staff. The ongoing management and processing of CPYB exams has enabled the program to run smoothly and efficiently, making our jobs far easier and more effective," continued Thompson.

Complete details on YBAA's CPYB program can be found at www.cpyb.net.

Announcing...

THE WHITENER GROUP'S "HERE'S HOW" WEB SEMINARS

DATE	TOPIC
January 16, 2008	At what performance level does the employee need to perform in order to do the job? Methods To Determine The 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.