

# STRATEGIC Solutions

Fall/Winter 2008

## FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT/CEO

It has been an extremely busy summer for The Whitener Group. We have attended numerous conferences in many of your states, as well as a few national conferences on training and development. Even in an environment where employment seems to be down, workers with technical skill sets are still in high demand. The trick is how to find those workers and how to verify their skills. At conferences we hear about the same need; that of a competent technical workforce. We have been helping to fill that void for many years by assessing the skills of new employees, providing the backbone of industry certification programs, and providing a credible metric for advancement opportunities.

In the last message, we announced advancements on the technical side; text to speech, a new Client Services Center, and of course, greatly increased online testing capacity. We continue to move forward on even more quality enhancements including moving our experienced worker tests to online versions and releasing early beta versions of an e-commerce system through Whitener's sister company NOCTI!

We would like to remind you of our upcoming Pre-Convention Assessment Conference on December 3, 2008, in conjunction with the ACTE Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. That conference will feature a number of sessions related to apprenticeship, industry certifications and industry education partnerships. Click on the following link for the registration form: [http://www.acteonline.org/convention/upload/C08\\_Regformweb.pdf](http://www.acteonline.org/convention/upload/C08_Regformweb.pdf) or view the Assessment Conference schedule at <http://www.nocti.org/PDFs/Assmt%20Conference%20Schedule.pdf>



The Whitener Group representatives attended the National Association of State Directors of Community Colleges (NASDCC) summer conference. We are in discussion with a number of post secondary entities and institutions across the country regarding potential accountability solutions and technical assessment options. We know that many of you rely on community colleges for updated training and new plant start up assistance and want you to know that we work closely with them as well.

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

## MANUFACTURING SKILLS STANDARDS COUNCIL (MSSC) CELEBRATES ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

The Whitener Group extends its congratulations to the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC) on celebrating its 10th anniversary!

State governors are stepping up in support of the MSSC program. Governor Jim Doyle from Wisconsin said, "I have set a goal, as part of my Grow Wisconsin - The Next Steps plan for workforce and economic development, to have 40 percent of Wisconsin's manufacturing workers certified through MSSC by 2016." Governor Mitchell Daniels from Indiana is also embracing the MSSC program and commented, "The manufacturing sector and MSSC-certified workers can help Indiana to be more competitive in attracting high-wage/high-skill jobs." Wisconsin and Indiana are front-runners in the administration of the MSSC assessments.

States are not the only ones recognizing the importance of the MSSC certification. Associations are also honoring individuals completing the MSSC program. The Sarasota

Manatee Manufacturers Association (SAMA) in Florida recently honored four Manatee Technical Institute (MTI) students at SAMA's monthly meeting. The students were the first in the state to earn the full MSSC Production Technician Certification.

And, finally, the companies employing the individuals completing the MSSC program recognize the value of the certification. A recent agreement was formed between MasterLock Corporation and UAW Local 469 in Wisconsin whereby employees successfully completing each MSSC module receive a fifty cent increase in their hourly pay. This agreement will provide more than 100 MasterLock production workers an opportunity to enhance their skills and also add up to \$4,000 annually to their paychecks.

To learn more about the MSSC Certification program or how to become a certified Assessment Center, please visit the MSSC website at [www.msscusa.org](http://www.msscusa.org).  
--Source: September 2008, MSSC Community Update

## WELCOME NEW WHITENER GROUP "TECH GUYS"

Scott Lis, Programmer, joined The Whitener Group in April. Scott brings his talents and background to The Whitener Group in his work with computer applications, database analysis, design, and programming.

What makes Scott tick? Here's what he has to say:

My wife and I live in Grand Rapids [an hour's drive from Big Rapids, where The Whitener Group is located]. My hobbies are: playing sports, playing music, travel, and reading. In addition to an ongoing study of computer science, I am interested in patent and copyright reform, and jurisprudence -- especially as it relates to intellectual property. My wife and I have been traveling lately; with recent trips to the Czech Republic, and St. Petersburg, Russia. Our favorite city, so far, is Austin, Texas, with Prague and Chicago as close seconds. My favorite coffee drink is the Americano.

We're glad to have Scott on The Whitener Group team!

Marty Reyes, Programmer, has been with The Whitener Group for a year now, since August 2007. Marty works in areas including computer applications and database analysis, design, and programming at The Whitener Group.

Marty shares some information about himself:

I grew up in Holland, Michigan and lived here for most of my life. I ventured to Austin, Texas for a few years and then returned to Michigan because I missed the change of seasons. My wife, Sue, and I have three boys ages 14, 16 and 23. We enjoy the West Michigan area very much and take opportunities to walk the beach, ride bikes and go on family excursions all across Michigan whenever possible. Sue and I are both actively involved in our local church teaching 5th & 6th grade kids on the weekends. Aside from a passion for computer technology, I'm interested in video and multimedia productions, electronics, and magnetism. I like to bowl, in fact, our whole family bowls, and also enjoys volleyball, grilling out, camping, and fishing. There's nothing like a fishing pole and a quiet lake in the early morning coolness---aaah. My favorites in books span a wide spectrum. You can always find me brewing up a new pot of fresh roasted coffee (my favorite!) at The Whitener Group. What have I not done that I would like to do? I'd like to go on a mission trip to somewhere in South America.

Thanks, Marty, for all you do at The Whitener Group!

## OPERATIONS TEAM - FOCUS ON EFFICIENCY

Summer is the time when the Operations team reviews their internal processes as well as the documentation and instructional materials we provide for our customers. This annual review enables the Operations team to focus on areas for improvement and to more efficiently serve our customers.

Some of the updated documents to look for this Fall include:

- Site Coordinator Guide
- Written and Performance Test Administration Guides
- Online Systems Guide
- Coordinator Cover Sheets
- Answer Sheets

Please check the Client Services Center or The Whitener Group Website to download the most recent version of the guides.

In addition to reviewing processes and documentation, the Operations team reviews work flow and makes adjustments accordingly. Some of the improvements accomplished this summer include increased shelving to accommodate expanding product line and improve flow within distribution area, shrink wrap capability to improve handling and storage of paper supplies, and dedicated space for scanning equipment and operation.

The Operations Team, as well as all NOCTI/Whitener Group staff, are dedicated to continuous improvement and to always providing efficient customer service.

## THE WHITENER GROUP BOOTH DRAWS CROWD AT ASTD CONVENTION IN SAN DIEGO

Companies including Sunoco, Boeing, Caterpillar, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the American Red Cross, and State Farm Insurance visited The Whitener Group booth at the 2008 ASTD convention in San Diego this summer. More and more, companies need third party assessment services to assist with their human resource needs. The Whitener Group assessment products provide tools for pre-employment screening, promotion determination, and to assess training needs.

Over 300 visitors to the booth registered for a drawing to win a Wii gaming system. The winner, Ric Sterzer, from the BEA company in Rigby, Idaho was thrilled.

## 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. This training is designed to walk you through the process of using our assessments so that you feel better prepared and confident in your responsibilities.

Sessions are offered on a variety of dates 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).

### The Whitener Group Site Coordinator Training Schedule:

Wednesday, October 22 - 2 pm  
Wednesday, November 19 - 2 pm  
Wednesday, December 17 - 2 pm



## THE WHITENER GROUP BOOTH AT 2008 ASTD CONFERENCE IN SAN DIEGO

### 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.