

MISSION:

Workforce Training

The story of Quick Start, an ace in Georgia's economic development hand



Quick Start provided training for 200 employees at the new Saint-Gobain plant in Sparta.

Here's the scenario: The South is emerging from decades of living with a depressed economy. However, in the post-World War II boom, the region was recognized as being ready for prosperity. It had the people. It had the resources. The challenge: build industry and create jobs.

Here's one of the ways Georgia tackled that mission.

In 1967, as companies from around the world were looking to locate new businesses in the Sunbelt states, Georgia came up with a plan that would serve as a key economic incentive for attracting investment.

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—JACKIE ROHOSKY, DTAE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

By developing a strategy for delivering job training to new employees of qualified companies at no cost, Georgia pioneered a workforce development program that today is an internationally recognized model for its effectiveness and adaptability: Quick Start.

What distinguishes Georgia's approach from that of many other states is that while other states might provide cash incentives for workforce training, Quick Start provides the training itself. This way, companies' own training resources are expanded through direct partnership with Quick Start's industry and training professionals to achieve comprehensive

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The Quick Start mobile training lab.

and innovative performance-based training solutions.

“Overall, the main purpose of Quick Start is to help companies create jobs for Georgians,” says DTAE Assistant Commissioner Jackie Rohosky, who has led Quick Start since 1990. “The training we provide is important for both the employee and the employer, because skilled workers and cost savings help guarantee business success.” This ability to deliver efficient and effective workforce training is important because the quality of a state’s workforce is often the deciding factor in where a company chooses to invest. And, according to numerous business leaders who have worked with Quick Start in the past, Georgia knows how to do it right.

“Being new in the country, we needed a lot of input and training, in terms of safety, security and other areas,” says Kurt Berkmann, senior VP of ALPLA, a world-renowned plastic bottle manufacturer, after they opened a plant in McDonough, Ga. “Quick Start did a marvelous job of joining the technical side with other aspects in a flexible program.”

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THE COLLEGES

In 1988, the innovations continued when Quick Start became a part of the new Department of Technical and Adult Education, and for the first time, a state agency was dedicated to the full scope of workforce development services: Quick Start,

technical education and adult literacy. Since that time, this structure has proved to be the main reason Georgia is recognized as one of the best states in the nation for workforce development.

Quick Start’s relationship with Georgia’s Technical College System is a major asset for delivering workforce training. On almost all projects, Quick Start partners with the technical colleges to establish permanent relationships with companies in their areas. Thus, facilities and resources are close to any business requiring training services, particularly in the three business sectors with which Quick Start works most often: manufacturing, warehouse/distribution and service operations.

“We have worked to build a system that ensures a highly skilled workforce for Georgia’s businesses,” says Dr. Ken Breeden, DTAE commissioner. “Quick Start helps a company get up and running, and then the technical college maintains a relationship to offer ongoing training support and provide qualified employees.”

Each of the 34 technical colleges serves a defined region made up of several counties, and each college has a VP of economic development who acts as the point of contact for other college resources, including graduate placement and training space.

Pete McDonald, VP of economic development at Coosa Valley Technical College, believes this approach is one of the benefits of Quick Start. He cites as an example Coosa Valley’s partnership with Jefferson Southern Corp. (JSC), which produces components for Honda minivans at a new facility in Rockmart.

“After Quick Start does the initial training, the technical college remains a partner to the company,” he says. “JSC will still need well-trained people, and we’ll be here to help them with that.”

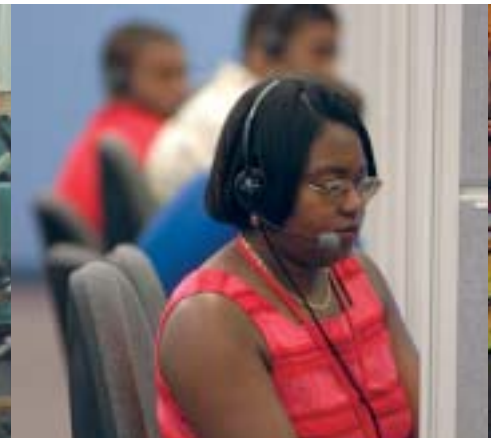
“Quick Start helps a company get up and running, and then the technical college offers ongoing training.”

– DR. KEN BREEDEN, DTAE COMMISSIONER



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QUICKSTART®



NACOM's John Olson, Quick Start's Jackie Rohosky and Griffin Tech's Bobby Arnold applaud the graduates.



Prime Example

The NACOM project

On March 29, 117 NACOM employees graduated from the Certified Manufacturing Specialist (CMS) program. The largest-ever CMS class, they exemplified NACOM's continuing commitment to training.

A subsidiary of the Yazaki Corp. of Japan, NACOM opened eight years ago in Griffin to meet the American auto industry's demand for junction blocks and body electronics. The 450,000-sq.-ft., vertically integrated facility houses plastic injection molding, electronic printed circuit board assemblies, junction box assemblies and metal stamping. Much of the plant runs around the clock; the Injection Molding section alone produces some 4 million parts per month.

Company leaders believe that education is key to keeping the facility running efficiently. "It brings many more benefits than just trained employees," said John Olson, VP and general manager, at the CMS graduation ceremony. "It increases morale, pride and loyalty, plus the added benefit to the community."

Quick Start has worked extensively with the company, providing workforce training during the facility's startup and its two expansion projects. A three-tiered training system based on Quick Start programs and the company's partnership with Griffin Technical College is now in place.

"The partnership between Quick Start, Griffin Technical College and NACOM has been an orchestrated relationship of continuous events serving our

most important resource, the associate," says Brian Burk, manager of training for NACOM.

In 2002, NACOM employees completed more than 7,500 hours of on-site training and more than 4,500 hours of off-site training. Thirty-two associates completed the Supervisory Management Specialist course, and 10 completed the Industrial Maintenance Technician program. This year, the company expects to graduate 20 employees from the Industrial Programmable Control Systems program, as well as more associates from CMS, Manufacturing Team Supervisor and Certified Customer Service Specialist programs.

Providing incentives for learning, NACOM supports educational efforts even after company-sponsored classes are completed. At the CMS graduation in March, each graduate was awarded a personal computer by the company.

For employees who further their education outside the company, even in areas not directly job related, NACOM provides tuition reimbursement, flex time and the opportunity to continue to the associate or bachelor's degree level.

"This partnership is a classic example," says Wayne Brown, VP of economic development at Griffin Tech. "NACOM saw the initial training as fundamental to its operation. Now they continue to work with us on job training, and they encourage employees to attend our other classes as well. Says Burk, "The [partnership] has given associates access to new skills and higher education. It's a win-win for everyone." 



Top: Carolyn Dawson applies her skills to circuit board assembly at NACOM's state-of-the-art plant. Bottom: Azeeza Muhammad receives a computer after graduating from the CMS program.



HOW

They Do It

► **Project Study** A team of industry and training professionals reviews the company's business operations, equipment and technologies, and the duties for each new job classification. This ensures Quick Start's understanding of the knowledge and skills required for the job, the best training methodologies, and the optimum training schedule to meet the company's hiring schedule.

► **Training Plan** The results of the project study are documented in a training plan that specifies training topics, training methodologies and materials, and a timeline. The training plan, which identifies both pre- and post-employment training programs, can adapt to changes in the company's training needs or timeline.

► **Training Development** Under the leadership of a Quick Start training coordinator, instructional designers, selected for their industry experience, develop the training. The company reviews and approves all materials developed, which may include training guides, performance support tools, videos and multimedia training applications.

► **Instruction** Highly skilled trainers deliver interactive, performance-based training for new employees as a part of both pre- and post-employment training programs. Prior to project completion, Quick Start also trains company instructors to provide both classroom and on-the-job instruction.

► **Evaluation** Quick Start and company representatives evaluate all aspects of training to ensure accuracy and effectiveness. Trainees also individually evaluate each training session completed. When the project concludes, a Quick Start program improvement specialist conducts a face-to-face interview with the company to evaluate overall project effectiveness.

Not only does the innovative model for this program contribute to Quick Start's reputation, but also Quick Start's staff continually garners praise. "What impressed me was the professional documentation of the process," says Guy Ball, plant manager of a Keebler manufacturing facility in Macon that received Quick Start training on a new production line.

THE TRAINING PROS

In the course of working with more than 4,000 companies, Quick Start's staff of training coordinators, instructional designers and instructors have honed their expertise by employing the latest in instructional technologies. These training professionals identify, develop and deliver performance-based training, realistic job simulations and performance-assessment strategies to equip workers with the right knowledge base, skills and interpersonal effectiveness to achieve high productivity and quality levels required in today's business world.

The Quick Start team also includes media technology specialists, who produce high-end videos to orient new employees to the company and its production processes. The media group's recent work has won more than 10 awards for outstanding achievement, including a Silver Telly Award, the highest honor in international video competition, for a video produced for Riverside Manufacturing.

"Quick Start's professional staff accommodated our needs and produced a polished video that will stand the test of time," says Will Vereen, corporate VP of the Moultrie-based uniform manufacturer.

Multimedia is a large component in all Quick Start training, from interactive presentations to e-learning applications. At Rockwell Automation, for example, Quick Start studied the manufacturing processes at its Dublin plant, and developed a Web-based system where computer terminals located right on the production lines made instruction and information available to employees at the tips of their fingers.

"The Quick Start team developed acumen quickly on how we do what we do," says Robert Murphy, the company's director of operations. "They were extremely flexible, and I really appreciated their sense of urgency."

Thus, in true partnership style, the colleges, the companies and the Quick Start pros join forces to provide the most comprehensive, advanced training in the nation, working to keep Georgia's economy rolling.

Last year alone, Quick Start clients created 8,778 new jobs, and 42,145 employees received Quick Start training.

Mission accomplished. **R**