

# Quick Start's Service Industry Program Celebrates Ten Years

conomic development teams comprised of business leaders and politicians began actively courting manufacturing companies like HL-A.

"There are a lot of people who don't have time to take off a few years and go back to school. They've been laid off and they need to find work as quickly as possible. I see these certificate programs as a 'quick response' for these workers. They make it possible for them to learn new skills and find jobs in the new industries coming to the area," Ayers adds.

"West Central Technical College will be here to assist you for the long-term," Ayers promised the HL-A gathering, "and we greatly appreciate your company's decision to come to Bremen."

Joan Young, president of the Haralson County Chamber of Commerce, is equally appreciative of HL-A's presence in Bremen.

"We were one of 50 cities in six states that the company was considering when they decided to come here. We had lost almost 5,000 textile jobs and badly needed a new industry. Since HL-A came, they have not stopped expanding. They were instrumental in helping us re-establish a manufacturing base in the county," she explains.

Young believes HL-A is an especially good model for manufacturing and sees the value of its presence in terms of local employment. "These are local jobs for local people. Just what we need!" she adds enthusiastically.

Haralson County is in the process of building a second business park not far from HL-A. WestPort Business Park will have 170 acres devoted to technology, light industry and distribution center businesses. The business park will have fiber optic capabilities to provide high-speed Internet service at the same level as is available in Metro Atlanta.

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Pictured here is part of the Service Industry team at Quick Start (l-r): Nick Morning, Liette Utt, Sandra Morris and Mary Fornoff.

This year, Quick Start celebrates a decade of assisting service industries across Georgia with successful start-ups or expansions. During this time, we trained new employees of many national and international service companies.

Through Quick Start, employees are trained to positively interact with customers, operate complex computer systems, and work together effectively.

The Quick Start service industry program, like its manufacturing counterpart, provides comprehensive training services at no cost to qualified new and expanding companies. Probably the question that is most often asked about our service industry program is, "What is a service industry?" You may be surprised to learn that our definition is fairly broad.

With few exceptions, most non-manufacturing and non-retail operations that are primarily "back-office" in nature may qualify for Quick Start training assistance. In-bound customer contact centers; regional, national and international headquarters; billing and remittance centers; consolidated shared-services centers; and select e-business enterprises have all qualified for Quick Start training assistance when creating new jobs.

While qualified businesses are different — some provide banking/financial, telecommunications, insurance, or hospitality services while others provide transportation or customer service support for manufacturing companies — what they all have in common is the need for a large number of employees to have a strong balance of interpersonal and technical skills.

To provide training that meets this need, we conduct a job analysis for each service company to determine training requirements. Most service industry training programs are quite extensive — three to 10 weeks in duration. Our goal with each service company is to add training and business value, whether developing new training programs or enhancing existing programs.

Programs developed for each company may include training in a company's business and key processes; commercial and proprietary business software; communications and other interpersonal skills, telephone etiquette and call-management; problem-solving; service/product knowledge; service policies and procedures; and leadership development.

Quick Start's training program for service industries was formally initiated in 1991. Our first projects included training for Equifax's consumer information center established in Marietta (500 employees) and Holiday Inn Worldwide's international headquarters (1,000 employees).

Quick Start recently completed training projects with E\*Trade's customer support operation (650 employees) and GEICO Direct's regional operations center located in Macon (2,000 employees). Current projects include AFLAC's worldwide headquarters located in Columbus (1,000 employees).

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