


 WisPASS


WISCONSIN PERFORMANCE & ASSESSMENT OF SKILL STANDARDS

NEWSLETTER

MSSC BOARD MEETS AT MATC

On November 9, 2004 the full board of the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) held an annual meeting at the downtown campus of Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC). The Board is chaired by Mr. James McCaslin, who is the President and Chief Operating Officer of Harley-Davidson Motor Company. The MSSC brings together leaders of business, labor unions, trade associations, professional societies, education, community based organizations, civil rights groups, and government to create the blueprint for a new skills system in manufacturing—the MSSC Skill Standards System.

In 1998, the MSSC began development of a national skill standards system for manufacturing in response to industry's growing need to find skilled workers. The MSSC system—skill standards, assessments and certifications—is designed to give manufacturers a yardstick to measure, improve and profit from a workforce trained in cutting-edge manufacturing skills. Likewise, MSSC certifications will give employees a competitive edge: a certification that is recognized by current or prospective employers that they meet industry standards for excellence.

The MSSC skill standards, *A Blueprint for Workforce Excellence*, are the product of over two years of intensive field research involving over 700 companies, 3,800 workers, 300 subject matter experts and 30 facilitating organizations, as well as the large number of volunteers who serve on MSSC committees. Completion of these standards marks the first major step towards developing a nationwide system of skill standards, assessments and certification.



Top photo: Jim McCaslin, President and COO, Harley-Davidson Motor Company, and Keith Romig, PACE Union at the MSSC Board meeting. Above: Bryan Albrecht, Gateway Technical College, and LeeSa Paige, NACFAM. (photos courtesy of Sue Ruggles, MATC.)

Through an earmark budget line, administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), MATC was designated as the program manager for the pilot assessments for 600 workers and students in Wisconsin. Testing is at three separate centers across Wisconsin—in Milwaukee (MATC), in the southeast (Gateway Technical College) and the west (UW-Stout). (See remarks in the companion article on page 2 from a Milwaukee area CEO about the value of the ongoing pilot assessments.)

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MANUFACTURER FOCUSES TRAINING BUDGET WITH WISPASS

A local manufacturing CEO, whose company is based in Waukesha, recently made arrangements to have 10 production people take part in the WisPASS pilot assessments. Each person took all four of the available modules, covering Safety, Quality, Maintenance and Manufacturing Processes with the embedded core skills outlined in the MSSC standards (*A Blueprint for Workforce Excellence*) that form the basis of the tests. This CEO always stresses three things to his people—safety, quality, and productivity—so the assessments were aligned with the company culture.

Aggregate scores for all the assessments were prepared by the WisPASS office and provided to the CEO in order that he might be better able to allocate his limited training budget. Maintenance is not a high priority for this firm, since its primary manufacturing role is in assembly, and the lowest scores were in the maintenance module. The other conclusions of the CEO are a very positive indication that the assessments validly reflect the current level of proficiency of his workforce, and provide

insights for training.

He reported:

“After months of “safety first” it was good to see our best scores in this part of the assessment. Our hard work is obviously having some impact.”

“Our lowest scores were in maintenance and I can understand that. We have only a small number of machines that need PM.”

“We also scored low on “corrective action” in the quality module. This confirms my observations/remarks to our managers—our people do a very poor job of finding true ‘root causes,’ keeping them from finding good solutions and improvements to eliminate the problem. The assessment did a good job of confirming this weakness in our shop employees.”

“We can now find some very specific training to help them in their weak areas, and put our training dollars to best use.”

WISPASS DIRECTOR’S COUNCIL FORMED

In December the WisPASS Director, Joe Hurst, announced that the first members of his “advisory council” had been selected and invited to participate. Steven J. Bomba, the recently retired Chief Technical Officer of Johnson Controls, has accepted the role of chairman of the WisPASS Director’s Council. In addition to Dr. Bomba and Dr. Hurst, John Stilp, the Dean of MATC’s Division of Technology and Applied Sciences, make up the council’s Executive committee.

Other council members who have accepted the invitation at this time include: Lawrence A.

Casper, PhD, the Assistant Dean for Research and Technology Transfer at UW-Madison; Bryan D. Albrecht, Associate VP of Advanced Technology Centers at Gateway Technical College; and Elliott Erickson, President of Heale Manufacturing Company, Inc. in Waukesha.

When the process of populating the council is complete, members will represent various constituencies, to include industry, labor, government, educational institutions, trade associations and non-profit agencies. As advisors to the Director of WisPASS, Council members

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WISPASS ASSESSMENTS AT HARLEY-DAVIDSON

On December 15 and 16, 2004, as part of the pilot testing being conducted by WisPASS, a number of production workers at Harley-Davidson began taking MSSC assessments in their own training center at the Pilgrim Road plant in Menomonee Falls. The tests taken were fairly evenly distributed among the four modules available online, and provided by the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI). As the MSSC assessment vendor, the NOCTI-Raytheon Partnership (NRP) will be refining the assessments based on the results of the WisPASS pilot testing. These online assessments, designed to help manufacturing workers document skills, receive an MSSC certification and provide feedback on their performance, will be used across the U.S.

Harley-Davidson and MATC have been partnered for over 12 years in running training centers in Milwaukee to help build a globally competitive workforce. Workers have open access to resources in pursuing new skills and career advancement. Formal programs are offered when training needs arise, or when new programs and processes are in the formative stages. Harley-Davidson's Director of Learning and Development, Jim Brolley, says, "Our challenge is to keep our workforce knowledgeable and operationally proficient with new technology in order to achieve critical increased quality, cost and production goals."

Millions of jobs have been lost; partially because of moving products or operations offshore, and partially because of shifts to more "advanced manufacturing" that has more automation and focuses on advanced technology sectors. The Department of Labor has estimated that 80% of jobs in the future will require some post-secondary education. Industries now expend 45% of investments in technology, and are striving to align their workforce to new responsibilities and proficiencies to compete with lower cost workforces elsewhere around the globe.

To remain competitive, companies will reduce costs while increasing production and quality levels. This implies that Harley-Davidson and others will continue to use resources for production training to increase employee skills. In part this will mean infrastructure upgrades and self-instruction, in order to reduce the cycle-time of learning, reduce training costs and still have a very positive impact on productivity. The WisPASS program using MSSC standards provides a training roadmap through assessment of needs.

With partners such as Harley-Davidson, MATC is committed to providing the highest quality educational opportunities, and a diverse, skilled and agile workforce. This responds to the needs of industry for "knowledge workers" who are empowered and able to put the enterprise in control. This teamwork is the way to ensure agile and adaptive enterprises, competitive in the global economy.

Finding new ways to provide personalized, relevant, focused, and just-in-time training for production employees is crucial to the future of manufacturing.

The next step in the WisPASS program is to build a Wisconsin and a nationwide MSSC assessment model. It will promote MSSC certification and make it available to knowledge workers, displaced workers and students across Wisconsin, opening up job opportunities. This Phase II program will also:

- Promote MSSC certification for Wisconsin companies and workers and establish new assessment centers across our state.
- Develop/deliver customized training for MSSC certification to partner firms on a pilot basis, while outlining training responses for workers in emerging manufacturing sectors.
- Build a constituency in Wisconsin that promotes manufacturing as a career, and bases education and proficiency on the use of MSSC standards.

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All submissions should be in Microsoft Word or RTF format and emailed to:

WisPASS on the web:
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will review program progress and effectiveness, evaluate changes and/or additions to existing plans and assess strategy.

Such advisory groups are very important. Specifically, WisPASS has determined that various functions and rationale apply to this high-level advisory group:

- To act in an advisory capacity for strategic planning and operations.
- To represent various constituencies and serve to communicate.

- To promote support for certifications based upon industry-led skill standards.
- To contribute access to business, community and state support.
- To plan for strategic deployment and educational responses.

The advisory council will cement existing industrial, civic and governmental relationships. Local leaders must agree that adoption of the MSSC standards helps meet unsatisfied manufacturers’ hiring needs, and that the assessments and certification meet the needs of both employers and employees.



Clockwise from back row: John Stilp, MATC’s Dean of Technology and Applied Sciences, MSSC Board member, Joe Hurst, WisPASS Program Director and Jim McCaslin, Harley-Davidson.

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The National Coalition for Advanced Manufacturing (NACFAM) and the AFL-CIO Working for America Institute (WAI) staff and manage the work of the MSSC and its several committees responsible for the work and research programs to develop, disseminate and document skill standards.

EMPLOYER
 Identify “*knowledge workers*” to match urgent needs in advanced manufacturing.

EMPLOYEE
 Follow a promising path to a secure, rewarding career in manufacturing.

EDUCATOR
 Develop timely, responsive programs that result in a trained, competent workforce.