

NSSB Skills Today

Summer 2001

National Skill Standards Board
Setting the standard for workforce excellence

Manufacturing Industry Skill Standards Make Their National Debut

Taking an historic step towards its goal of ensuring a skilled workforce for the manufacturing industry, the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) officially launched the nation's first industry-wide skill standards at a special two-day event in May in Washington, DC. The MSSC becomes the first NSSB Voluntary Partnership to complete the development of skill standards following intensive research.

MSSC members and leaders from the National Skill Standards Board (NSSB) gathered with representatives of leading companies, international unions, educational and training organizations and government organizations affiliated with the manufacturing industry to celebrate the release of the skill standards.



"As manufacturers continue to face the challenge of recruiting and retaining a highly skilled workforce, we can confidently look to these skill standards as a tool and a resource for that purpose," said John Rauschenberger, chair of the MSSC Steering Committee and the manager of personnel research and development at Ford Motor Company.

The MSSC kicked off the two-day event with a gala reception honoring the hundreds of business leaders and thousands of frontline workers whose efforts over the past three years made these standards possible. NSSB Chairman Jamie Houghton,

who is also Chairman Emeritus of Corning Inc., recognized the hard work of everyone in attendance and challenged the audience to develop quality assessment tools during the system's next phase of development.

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S&SVP Previews Draft Industry Standards At Its Annual Meeting

The Sales & Service Voluntary Partnership (S&SVP) made history in April by unveiling the country's first-ever voluntary sales and customer service industry skill standards in draft form at its 3rd Annual Meeting.

"Releasing our customer service and sales skill standards is an important milestone in our move to implement national assessment and certification," said Deborah Masten, S&SVP Chair and Manager of Human Resources at JC Penney, Inc. "[Our] members' investment in this initiative will lead to stronger, more committed, career-oriented sales professionals for the future."

The S&SVP's annual meeting was held April 17-18, 2001, in Baltimore, Maryland, and drew an enthusiastic audience of more than 200 members and guests.

Meeting participants represented all elements of the sales and service industry – employers, employee representatives, educators and trainers, community-based organizations, and government agencies.

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WHO WE ARE:

The NSSB is building a voluntary national system of skill standards, assessment and certification that will enhance the ability of the United States workforce to compete effectively in a global economy. These skills are being identified by industry in full partnership with education, labor, civil rights and community-based organizations. The standards will be based on high performance work and will be portable across industry sectors.

NEWSCAN

Getting Started on Assessment Now Available

The NSSB is pleased to announce the release of *Getting Started on Assessment*, a guide for Voluntary Partnerships that provides practical advice for laying the foundation of a system of assessment and certification based on NSSB-approved skill standards.

Getting Started on Assessment provides step-by-step advice for preparing the foundation for developing assessments within the guidelines of the NSSB system.

Getting Started on Assessment explains how to:

- Organize the VP structure and resources;
- Investigate the market and issues related to access and civil rights;
- Create a vision for the system; and
- Plan for and retain expert assistance to develop, administer, and maintain the system.

Getting Started on Assessment, which should be used with advice and guidance from the National Skill Standards Board, is available online via the NSSB Web site at www.nssb.org. To download the publication in PDF format, go to the Publications page and click on the *Getting Started* icon.

Message from the Executive Director



Edie West
Executive Director

The moment we've been waiting for has arrived! This past May, the NSSB and the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) publicly released the nation's first voluntary skill standards for the economically important manufacturing industry sector.

The standards' release marks the culmination of indepth research activities to complete the skill standards system's first phase of development for this industry sector. Log on to www.msscusa.org to review the standards .

But we're not done yet. The Sales & Service Voluntary Partnership, which represents the vast sales and service industry sector, is poised to release its standards later this year. By year's end, we anticipate having skill standards for nearly 40 percent of the nation's workforce. To the hundreds of businesses and educators, and thousands of workers who came together to make the development of these standards a reality, I offer my heartfelt appreciation.

The past twelve months have been full of accomplishments and steady progress for the NSSB. We've recognized the Hospitality and Tourism Voluntary Partnership, completed the education and training in

dustry sector analysis, modified and implemented our certification recognition process, and developed skill standards and certifications implementation templates for use at pilot sites. Our work for the remainder of the year will focus the development of standards by our remaining active Voluntary Partnerships.

Entering our seventh year, the NSSB moves boldly forward with our mission to develop and implement a voluntary national skill standards system for the United States. With your continued support, we will deliver on our promise.

Manufacturing

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Also in attendance was Edie West, NSSB Executive Director, who presented a plaque to MSSC representatives and expressed pride in the accomplishments of the MSSC:

"The NSSB is pleased that the MSSC has reached this milestone in the development of a skill standards system for the manufacturing industry sector," West stated. "With this achievement, the MSSC has set a precedent for quality in the development of skill standards now and in the future."

The following day's events included a number of workshops that informed attendees about real-world skill standards applications. Through these sessions, attendees learned how to: develop skill standards-based curricula; use skill standards in the workplace through pilot projects; align MSSC skill standards with existing industry certifications; and use skill standards to address access, diversity, and civil rights issues in the workplace.

More than 4,000 front-line workers, 700 companies, 300 experts and 30 facilitating organizations participated in the development of the MSSC skill standards. These standards aim to ensure that workers are able to perform their jobs in today's dynamic and increasingly high performance workplace.

MSSC standards span six broad concentrations, or areas of work, in the manufacturing industry sector: Production; Quality Assurance; Logistics & Inventory Control; Health, Safety & Environmental Assurance; Maintenance, Installation & Repair; and Manufacturing Production Process Development.

With a skill standards system in place, companies will be able to more easily recruit new employees, while helping to promote current workers and reduce turnover.

"These standards will enable workers to have their existing skills recognized," said Bob Stander, director of the manufacturing department of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and member of the MSSC steering committee. "They can also use the standards to pinpoint training needs to help them advance in their careers."

The MSSC's skill standards are available on their Web site, www.msscusa.org, for viewing. Hard copies of the skill standards may be obtained from the MSSC, subject to availability. For pricing information contact Emily Brennan, MSSC Communications Assistant, at 202-216-2753 or email at brennane@nacfam.org.

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In addition to viewing the standards, attendees took part in a number of informative sessions. During the first day, the S&SVP's Outreach and Marketing, Education and Training, and Standards and Assessment committees met to review the Partnership's activities and plans for next steps. Invited members also participated in a High Performance Forum where company representatives reviewed the proposed standards from a high performance perspective.

A number of workshops hosted by Partnership members were held on the meeting's second day. "Skill Standards 101" and a customer service workshop were the early morning offerings. Later on, members attended several concurrent sessions to learn more about skill standards-based curricula, technology-based skill standards programs, and the use of skill standards in developing certification programs.

Following a luncheon featuring keynote speaker Gerri Fiala, Administrator of the Office of Policy Research at the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, S&SVP members celebrated the unveiling of the partnership's draft skill standards. The standards represent nearly

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three years of research and development, made possible through the participation of hundreds of business representatives, thousands of workers, and a host of technical experts who helped ensure that the standards meet business demands.

The next step for the S&SVP will be to submit the results of survey research and the proposed skill standards to the NSSB's

Endorsement Review Panel (ERP) for review to establish compliance with the NSSB's technical criteria. As the Partnership finishes the standards development phase, it is moving forward with a plan for



a national assessment and certification system for the sales and service industries.

The S&SVP's draft skill standards are available online for comment only. To obtain your copy, log on to the Partnership's Web site at www.salesandservice.org and click on "Hot News."

Update: E&TVP Makes Progress With Skill Standards Development

Representing an industry sector with an estimated workforce of 12 million, the Education and Training Voluntary Partnership (E&TVP) is on a fast track towards developing draft industry skill standards by the end of this year.

With identification of the critical work functions completed, the Voluntary Partnership engaged in rigorous research that yielded new findings that will impact its future work. From December 2000 through April of this year, the E&TVP convened 14 focus groups across the country and heard descriptions of work and best practices from workers in the following initial concentrations:

- Infant/Toddler
- Early Childhood
- Middle Childhood
- Adolescence
- Special Education

After analyzing the focus group data, a revised set of education concentrations emerged. The E&TVP found significant commonality between the work in the Infant/Toddler and Early Childhood concentrations. Significant commonality between the Middle Childhood and Adolescence concentrations also became apparent. The special education concentration remained distinct. As a result, the E&TVP will move forward with three revised concentrations:

- Early Care and Education
- General Education Support
- Special Education Support

The new concentrations are directly based on work functions and clearly reflect the appropriate front-line work in the education and training sector.

On the training side, the E&TVP convened a meeting of trainers representing diverse perspectives from the corporate, non-profit, and military sectors. The participants debated the value of skill standards for the training workforce and developed preliminary concentrations. The E&TVP intends to present a Work Analysis Plan and a sampling plan to the NSSB Endorsement Review Panel (ERP) and proceed with focus groups of trainers throughout the summer.



Additionally this summer, the E&TVP will conduct Round Two of its focus groups on performance indicators for the education concentrations. The E&TVP plans to present the education Critical Work Functions and Performance Indicators to the ERP in the fall. The Partnership hopes to have draft skill standards available by the end of 2001.

For more information on the E&TVP's progress, log on to the organization's Web site at www.etvp.org or contact Konyka Dunson, Project Coordinator, at kdunson@aft.org or 202-879-4734.

NSSB Partners with Georgia Technical Educators to Meet Manufacturing Workplace Training Needs

Aiming to strengthen Georgia's technical education program and deliver national skill standards statewide, the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE) has formed a partnership with the National Skill Standards Board (NSSB) as a first step toward implementing industry-recognized, nationally validated skill standards throughout the state's technical college system.

Representatives from the NSSB and DTAE signed a Memorandum of Understanding on April 19, 2001, during Georgia Manufacturing Appreciation Week.

The agreement calls on the organizations to develop a process for exchanging information and to prepare for the implementation of nationally recognized skill standards, assessments, and certification. Implementation will begin with the manufacturing skill standards that have been identified by the NSSB's partner, the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC – www.msscusa.org), and DTAE's Quick Start Certified Manufacturing Specialist (CMS) program.

"DTAE and Quick Start, working in collaboration with the Georgia Technical College system, provide an ideal delivery system for the standards and certification tools provided by the NSSB voluntary national skill standards system," said NSSB

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Georgia MOU

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Executive Director Edie West. "DTAE has a proven track record for meeting local employers' needs and for designing state-of-the-art curriculum and program delivery."

In her remarks to the audience of manufacturers from throughout the state, West acknowledged DTAE Commissioner Dr. Ken Breeden, Jackie Rohosky of Quick Start, college presidents, and other DTAE

Staff for their leadership in bringing quality adult education and training opportunities to the citizens of Georgia through the state's nationally recognized system of technical colleges. She also praised Quick Start's Certified Manufacturing Specialist training program as a model for the nation.

Enhancing workforce technical education to meet the demands of local business was the catalyst that brought representatives from the NSSB and DTAE together more than a year ago to devise ways of cooperating to achieve their common objective.

These contacts gained momentum throughout the year and led to a visit to Georgia by NSSB representatives this past October (see "The NSSB Visits with the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education," *Skills Today*, Winter 2000/2001).

At the conclusion of that visit, both sides agreed to work together to discuss possible ways of integrating the national skill standards system into Georgia's Technical College programs.

The NSSB Welcomes Sherry A. Swirsky, Esq. as its Newest Board Member

The National Skill Standards Board (NSSB) welcomed its newest member to the Board on May 11, 2001, as Sherry A. Swirsky, Esq. took the oath of office.

An experienced jurist and partner in the Philadelphia law firm of Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis LLP, Ms. Swirsky was sworn in during the NSSB's quarterly Board meeting in Washington, DC, which coincided with the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council's launch of its industry skill standards (see cover story).

Following her swearing-in, Ms. Swirsky expressed her appreciation on becoming the NSSB's newest Board Member:



"It is a privilege and honor to join the National Skill Standards Board, particularly at a time when it is celebrating the first fruits of its very hard labor. I am awestruck by the amount of work the Board has done over its brief period of existence [and] I hope that I am equal to the task of keeping up with such a productive and dedicated group."

Sherry A. Swirsky, Esq. is a member of the Litigation Services Department and co-chair of the Securities Litigation Group at Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis. She is also a member of the Health Law and Antitrust and Trade Regulation practice groups.

Ms. Swirsky graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Colgate University and received a law degree from the New York University School of Law. She is admitted to practice in the State of Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia.



National Skill Standards Board

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