

TRAINING for Every Employee

By Trenton Hightower

From information technology courses to leadership training seminars, tremendous educational resources are available to Frederick businesses—any time and any place, both credit and noncredit. State-of-the-art technology and world-class programs at Frederick Community College (FCC) can increase the productivity and professionalism of the region's employees.

Frederick Community College/JTA (Job Training Agency) Customized Training is dedicated to providing superior workforce development programs tailored to the needs of each company and its employees. More than 3,000 people annually take advantage of FCC's experienced staff and technological capabilities to plan and conduct effective learning opportunities either at their work sites or at new facilities on Frederick Community College's campus. Programs are offered at participants' convenience and are available during regular business hours, in the evening, and on weekends.

FCC's advanced technology training is provided in partnership with the I/Tech Center on Buckeystown Pike, a satellite site for high end computer training. Offerings include basic and advanced technician, network engineer and application developer certifications programs, such as MCSE, CISCO, Novell and Oracle.

Highly qualified instructors can conduct employee, organizational and program

assessments to prepare individual training plans for staff teams and even each employee. FCC programs often cover job-specific skills, such as the Concrete Academy for Morgan and Keller; and computer and technology skills, such as MCSE certification training for Bechtel. Leadership and management topics are also available, such as a series on conflict resolution, diversity training and presentation skills for the YMCA. A long-term planning program, which included individual training plans for each of the 500 hospitality industry employees at Plamondon Enterprises, was a customized staff development program.

All of these examples were specifically designed for each company and conducted at the work site. One new program is the Accelerated Associate degree in Business Management, which is offered on-site at State Farm and First Nationwide. This program will help a working individual complete his or her degree part-time in four years.

Individuals and companies also choose FCC as an excellent retraining option for those who are recently unemployed. Top vocational training requests currently include information technology, nursing assistant, and truck driving programs.

The American Society of Training and Development has recognized community colleges as premier training sites (from Training and Development, Fall 2000). In

2000, FCC opened a state-of-the-art, 14,000 square-foot conference center, which is equipped for training, workshop, seminar, and meeting needs. Facilities include a corporate boardroom and distance learning lab with V-Tel compressed video and live full-motion video for quick, cost-effective communication between two or more sites—via the best fiber-optic cable used in the state. Homecall recently used the center to create a statewide training program for its managers.

Multiple high-end computer labs are also available for training and demonstration. Other center resources include: LCD video projectors and desktop monitors, high-speed Internet access, cable TV and satellite links, and conference accommodations and catering for groups of up to 200.


For added flexibility, computer-based training uses educational software to bring self-paced programs directly to participants. This allows employees to work according to their own schedules and ability levels at the work site or at FCC's computer labs.

Web-based training at TrainingSafari.com also offers online courses designed to accommodate individual schedules. Classes begin when one logs on. Available courses include: computer software programs, small business development, and finance and banking, among others. Specific topics can be addressed through custom-designed classes, such as a banking reg-

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ulation course created by FCNB Corp (presently BB&T) employees at branches throughout the mid-Atlantic region.

In addition, Fort Detrick has established partnerships with National Technology University and the Public Broadcasting System to bring the best nationally recognized business programs directly to employers via satellite and Web-based technology. Offerings include motivational speakers, certified courses from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and other timely topics.

To address emerging workforce training needs, programs under development include, Health and Safety Institute, Frederick Leadership, Not-for-Profit Institute, Customer Service Day, and Web-based Training Day.

Trenton Hightower is director of customized training at Frederick Community College, which provides training and education to all the 190,000 Frederick County citizens and businesses. For more information, visit www.fcc.cc.md.us/customized_training or contact FCC/JTA Customized Training at thightower@fcc.cc.md.us or 1-888-719-9496, ext. 2687.

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thought the issues would primarily be environmental. However, it has expanded tremendously over the years and now includes a big educational and social services component.

Eastalco builds a strong relationship with its neighbors, according to Robbins, through location events, plant visits, environmental open houses and "LIFE!" (An employee activities program). Eastalco maintains commitment to the community with charitable contributions such as an ambulance being presented to the Red Cross and sponsoring the Jingle Bell Run to benefit the Arthritis Foundation. Employees are encouraged to give the gift of life by inviting the Red Cross Bloodmobile to Eastalco every 56 days.

There are also plans in the works for Eastalco building an arboretum for the community. "We have the land, and this is something totally for the community," says Robbins. A formal announcement will be made soon giving details about the project.

Basically, this all boils down to a partnership. "If we have a partnership all along, then it's easier to solve any challenges," says Robbins.