



Providing competency-based, customized education and training for the manufacturing workforce... today and tomorrow

In a time when productivity and meeting the bottom line are evermore important to business success, employing a highly skilled and educated workforce can mean the difference between a good investment and a high risk. The talent on your shop floors and in your plants drives your company's productivity improvement, ability to lean and meet Six Sigma standards, and capacity for innovation.

The NAM-Endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System (Skills Certification System) validates the skills and competencies of incoming workers for meeting the demands of your business. The Skills Certification System can also be used to upgrade and hone the skills of current employees to meet the changing demands of new technologies, processes, or job descriptions.

The Skills Certification System is the benchmark standardized assessment of the critical workplace traits and occupational skills an individual needs to be successful in an entry-level advanced manufacturing job. It confirms both technical and non-technical skills, assuring that an individual has both the "book smarts" and the "street smarts" to function in a high-paced advanced manufacturing environment. When used in conjunction with other criteria, such as references, interviews, and assessment of prior work experience, the Skills Certification System credentials complete the full scope of hiring and recruiting procedures to affirm an applicant's readiness for work in advanced manufacturing.

The Skills Certification System focuses on four foundational components of a productive and adaptive advanced manufacturing workforce, including:

Personal effectiveness

Will they show up on time, ready for work, and be able to work in teams?

Essential academic skills in reading, writing, math, and using and locating information

Can they communicate effectively and interpret key instructions?

Core manufacturing competencies

Do they understand the basics of safety, quality assurance and continuous improvement, or lean?

Key technical skills for the production line, welding, machining and metalforming or CNC

Do they have high-tech skills consistent with my product line's needs and basic technology skills related to manufacturing processes?

Results

Employers will realize both short-term and long-term value in a credentialed workforce. The nationally-portable, industry-recognized certifications can ultimately make your company more innovative, more competitive, more marketable and more successful because:

- >> Employees work safely, meaning less injuries, lower costs, and good safety data for customers.
- >> Employees can follow directions, be team players, and solve problems, leading to increased productivity and waste reduction.
- >> Employees are ready to “learn it your way,” cutting costs in remedial on-the-job training.
- >> Employees are flexible and adaptable, able to respond to new technologies and changing demands of customers.
- >> Employees will see the value in remaining with the company and advancing into higher-level jobs, creating a solid legacy for your company's continued success.

Credibility

Employers can trust the Skills Certification System as a valuable tool in hiring practices and incumbent training programs because the certifications:

- >> Are validated by the Advanced Manufacturing Competency Model, a framework of universal skills and competencies developed by manufacturers as the foundation to any career in manufacturing.
- >> Are portable across all sectors in advanced manufacturing.
- >> Are third-party validated and accredited by industry-trusted organizations like ANSI and NOCA.

Taking Action

As a human resources executive, you face unprecedented challenges in locating, targeting, and recruiting qualified individuals to join your workforce. There are both quality and quantity issues when you look to your future pipeline—a workforce that must be highly skilled and educated.

- >> Nearly 30% of our nation's youth drop out of high school; 7,000 drop out every day.
- >> “Boomers” will be retiring by 2011 as the number of workers ages 65-74 will increase by 83%.
- >> Jobs in advanced manufacturing are increasingly requiring some form of postsecondary education, but only 18% of ninth graders go on to graduate from high school and receive an associates degree in 3 years or a bachelors in 6 years.

Taking Action

You also need to link your current employees to professional development and training opportunities so that they can upgrade and advance their skills to integrate new technologies, lean the operation, and drive productivity in your company. This means you must have a clear talent strategy that addresses both current and future skills requirements, and a proactive engagement with your local educators to develop your next generation manufacturing workforce. The nationally-portable, industry-recognized certifications help to standardize, simplify, and improve your human resources practices so you can realize this talent strategy. So, where do you begin? Here is a blueprint of next steps to start taking action:

Understand your talent strategy

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| 1 | Define the current and anticipated skill requirements of your company. |
| 2 | Using the profiles of each certification and the competency matrix (available at institute.nam.org), decide what certifications are right for you to meet these requirements. |

Integrate nationally-portable, industry-recognized credentials

	FOR PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES	FOR CURRENT EMPLOYEES
3	Get Your Company Onboard Brief your CEO and other key stakeholders about the value and implications of the certifications. Communicate internally about the opportunities for improving policies and procedures benchmarked by the certifications, including: >> <i>Employee Handbook and Operating Pocedures</i> >> <i>Advancement Training or Professional Development</i> >> <i>Performance Reviews</i> >> <i>Compensation or Incentive Programs</i>	
4	Adopt Policies and Procedures to Reflect the New Talent Strategy <div><i>Prefer, recommend or require the certifications in recruiting, screening, and hiring. Modify language in your job descriptions and postings to reflect the importance of a industry-recognized credential.</i></div> <div><i>(i.e. “We prefer/highly recommend an American Welding Society Certified Welder credential for all applicants to this position.”)</i></div> <div><i>Suggest, encourage, or require your current employees to pursue certifications in order to expand their skill sets, position themselves for promotion, or transition into different jobs within the company.</i></div>	

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Communicate the Need and Engage the Community

Announce that your company will integrate nationally-portable, industry-recognized certifications into its people management practices to refine hiring practices. Establish relationships with your local educators and workforce and economic development institutions so they understand the needs of local manufacturers and the benefits of a credentialed workforce.

Tell your local community colleges, technical colleges, universities, high schools, and job training and placement institutions about your talent strategy and your need for a credentialed workforce with nationally-portable, industry-recognized certifications.

Find out where nationally-portable, industry-recognized certifications are available (in local schools or job training institutions), or contact The Manufacturing Institute to learn how to implement the certifications and their curriculum through standard operating procedures.

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Help Prospective and Current Employees Earn the Certifications

Communicate to prospective employees the value and importance of certifications to working at your company. “Highly recommend” that uncertified candidates pursue a certification to supplement their application. It is helpful to provide them a list of testing and curriculum sites.

Direct individuals to local community colleges or testing centers, where they can earn academic credit while pursuing a certification. Tuition assistance or scholarships are highly recommended to incentivize current employees to continue their education and training.

Begin to grow your talent pool and develop your workforce

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Once you begin to recruit, screen, hire, and promote using the nationally-portable, industry-recognized credentials, you will see the opportunity to expand the pool of certified workers so your company can reap the full benefits of a credentialed workforce. In order to help individuals understand the benefits of certifications, you can offer incentives such as bonuses, wage increases, or tuition reimbursement.

Standardize, appraise, and sustain your talent strategy

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Every company defines success differently. After you implement the NAM-Endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System, you will want to measure and capitalize on its returns. It is important to evaluate the Skills Certification System and its potential impact on: recruiting costs; new employee relocation costs; entry-level training investments (staff and time); new hire retention; advancement of existing workers; employee engagement; workplace safety; or, other organizational outcomes. These benefits will help create a sustainable system of standards and procedures that reflect your company’s strategic people management and growth agenda.



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURERS ENDORSED

Skills Certification System

Producing a High-Performance Manufacturing Workforce

institute.nam.org