

Improving Skills for Manufacturing Workers

By: **Frederick Keating - Interim President Gloucester County College**



International Paper employees engaging in training at the company's Gloucester County facility.

Companies like **International Paper**, with locations in Barrington, Bellmawr and Thorofare, are finding that improving their employees' computer skills becomes an ever important component of professional and personal development. They see a direct connection to improved productivity.

Recently, International Paper engaged in a process aimed at determining the computer skill level of their employees from across its plants.

Production personnel, administrative staff and sales teams all participated. It was quickly determined that attention was needed to upgrade their skills. When Natalia Hanan and Esther Gigante-Harvey, HR managers at the company, learned about the NJBIA Basic Skills Workforce Training Program, they saw a no cost solution and quickly called Dean Patricia Claghorn and Allen Magid at Gloucester County College. The college was able to design customized PC Skills classes that enabled the employees to better use the computers that were driving its plants' production equipment. It was especially important to the company that employees from all three locations were able to participate and receive identical training.

Now that the initial round of training has been concluded, improvements in both productivity and morale have been observed. Workers who participated are better able to handle the increasingly complex work tasks that are computer driven. At the same time, they find that managing many of their personnel needs is a secondary benefit. The company sees this as a winning combination.

Operating under a partnership with the New Jersey Business & Industry Association, the NJ Department of Labor, and the NJCCC Consortium on Workforce and Economic Development, New Jersey community colleges have trained approximately 27,000 employees at more than 1,800 companies in the last four years.

Commissioner Hal Wirths of the Department of Labor has crafted a program that meets the needs of businesses across the state. One of the attractive aspects of enrolling employees in the Workforce Training Program has to do with the simplicity of the application process. Companies are not required to fill out complicated paperwork or make financial disclosures in order to enroll employees. Training is available at business sites anywhere in New Jersey.

The training designed by Gloucester County College with funds from the NJBIA Basic Skills Workforce Training Program has allowed International Paper to meet one of its principles of excellence which says: "We believe helping people grow is everyone's responsibility," according to Hanan and Gignate-Harvey.

To schedule a class, contact Bob Rosa at NJCCC Consortium on Economic and Workforce Development at rrosa@njworkforce.org or (609) 393-9000.

Sponsored by the NJ Community College Consortium



Get Training for Your Employees At No Charge to Your Company!

The NJBIA Basic Skills Workforce Training Program is brought to you by the New Jersey Business & Industry Association, NJ Community College Consortium, and NJ Department of Labor & Workforce Development.

At your work site or at any one of 65 college campuses closest to you, and at no extra charge to your company, your employees can get training in:

- Computer applications
- Communications
- Math and measurement
- English as a second language

To get started call
609-393-9000

NJBIA
Basic Skills
Workforce
Training Program

www.njbja.org/resources/training

To participate in the program, you must be a registered NJ business and in compliance with NJ tax law.