

Addition of DVD Technology Fuels Growth of Workforce Development Program

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In response to the demands of the healthcare industry, Catalyst Learning is expanding its School at Work® (SAW) system nationally through the addition of DVD technology. The new version of its blended learning system makes SAW more flexible, cost-effective and able to reach a greater number of adult learners. SAW's new package is available to customers beginning December 15th, which means that starting in January 2005 SAW sessions will be offered monthly throughout the year.

The SAW system helps the healthcare industry combat staffing shortages and high turnover rates through on-site delivery of industry specific curriculum developed for entry-level healthcare employees. This progressive and cost-effective workforce development system effectively unlocks the potential of these often overlooked sources of talent.

The SAW "Building a Career Ladder in Healthcare" program is constructed on a distance-learning foundation. The SAW delivery method blends traditional learning (classroom, workbooks) with more progressive E-learning technologies (Internet-based course work and classroom instruction using DVD technology). Through the addition of DVD technology, the SAW system has gained additional flexibility and positioned itself for continued growth.

Lynn Fischer, president of Catalyst Learning, explains "In response to customer requests for more implementation flexibility, we have increased the number of session start dates from 1 to 9 during 2005. We're able to do this by converting the "classroom sessions" from the current satellite delivery method to DVD technology. Each organization can choose the day of week and time of day that works best for their facility."

The flexibility of SAW's enhanced delivery method benefits employers by providing them more control over scheduling and administering the program to their employees. Healthcare organizations can now offer employees from off-shifts, and those that otherwise were not able to attend scheduled live broadcasts, an opportunity to participate in the SAW program.

"I believe that this will make the program more attractive to a larger audience enabling greater participation. I am just thrilled with having the opportunity to start a new group in January and to be able to control the pace of the classroom for each session will help us create a better learning experience for all," says Jenny Skinner, Director of Corporate Education of Tri-Health in

Cincinnati, Ohio.

As a large and growing industry, healthcare is one of the 12 sectors in the President's High-Growth Job Training Initiative. In fact, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the healthcare industry will add 3.5 million new jobs between 2002 and 2012, an increase of 30%.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics also predicts that from 2002-2012, 10 of the 20 fastest growing occupations are concentrated in health services.

To meet the needs of the growing healthcare industry, SAW is designed as a feeder system for medical training programs offered by hospitals, local community colleges and technical schools. SAW aligns students with career planning resources and tuition assistance needed to support their pursuit of higher education while continuing employment at the hospital. After completing SAW, students shoot for job advancement at their respective facility and enroll in formal education programs. By building a more skilled, motivated and loyal workforce within the hospital, SAW benefits the employer through increased employee retention, job performance, and patient satisfaction.

According to Lynn Fischer, "Many hospitals face severe staffing shortages, yet loyal entry-level workers are overlooked because they lack needed education. For organizations committed to 'growing their own', School at Work® is the solution."