ANSWERING THE CALL

Ensure an employable workforce

Save 40 hours’ worth of labor per new hire. Eliminate new-hire turnover. Avoid recruiting costs. Sounds like savings worth pursuing? Francis Tuttle’s Business & Industry Services is, as they partner with three Oklahoma businesses in the aerospace industry to create custom, creative ways to save money and time.

Partnerships with Tinker Air Force Base, AAR Aircraft Services, and ARINC Aerospace have led to industry-based certifications, apprenticeships and formal training specific to local corporate needs, said Clark Jermain, Aerospace Training Coordinator.

These partnerships represent savings in recruiting dollars, employee turnover, and a pathway to ensure companies have a ready-to-work pool of candidates right here in Oklahoma.

Tinker AFB was in need of sheet-metal mechanics, and Business and Industry Services (BIS) was able to train local candidates.

The challenge was matching Francis Tuttle’s training programs with the federal internship requirements. The Tinker Internship Program at Francis Tuttle was a creative pathway for Francis Tuttle graduates to enter the federal internship.

Recently, BIS worked with AAR Aircraft Services to prepare entry-level job prospects for structural sheet-metal mechanics. Instructor Dennis Carter works with Van Dinh, left, and Peter Nguyen.

Francis Tuttle Business & Industry Services partners with the aerospace industry, in this case AAR Aircraft Services, to ready entry-level job prospects for structural sheet-metal mechanics.

YOU NEED TO KNOW

“General familiarization” training is a 40-hour class. Offering the course while in training at Francis Tuttle, rather than after being hired, saves 40 hours of labor cost for each employee.

More importantly, employees are productive from Day One, creating revenue more quickly.

ARINC has seen savings from less employee turnover through the skills assessment test. The skills assessment test helps ARINC, not a company avoid damage to aircraft done by employees who are not capable of completing the work correctly.

Are hired by aerospace employers and more than 60 percent are placed into the federal internship program.

Last year, AAR Aircraft Services created an opportunity for BIS to provide “general familiarization” training to AAR employees and Career Tech airframe and power-plant mechanics students.

“General familiarization” training emphasizes awareness and safety measures in a dangerous flight-line environment.

To have employees walk out and be around an aircraft and not be knowledgeable would mean we were irresponsible as an employer,” said Noel Christen, vice president of quality operations at AAR.

“Safety is paramount. If we make one mistake in the aircraft business, people don’t die one at a time.”

Jermain said many times a company has a need to train a small number of people, and that’s cost prohibitive.

“Francis Tuttle can provide the training, eliminating corporate boundaries by training across the industry and at a minimal cost.”

The savings come to AAR in many ways, said Christen. In addition to avoided workers-compensation claims and the increase in safety knowledge, the new employees are closer to productivity on Day One.

Last year, ARINC Aerospace needed to bring a significant number of employees on board. The company provides communications, engineering and integration solutions for commercial/government clients.

ARINC quickly realized résumés were not providing enough information on employees’ skills and reached out to Francis Tuttle to co-develop and administer a written and skills test to ensure employees met...
Higher-than-average passing rates and careful monitoring have led more than 400 graduates of Francis Tuttle’s Business & Industry Services Real Estate prep courses to save money and time. At the same time, they became licensed quicker to buy and sell homes in Oklahoma this last year.

Business and Industry Services (BIS) is one of the state’s licensees offering in-class or online options for real estate certification and continuing education courses for real estate licensing. Their ability to offer these courses is regulated by the Oklahoma Real Estate Commission.

While passing rates can change daily, Francis Tuttle has enjoyed a very successful pass rate for pre-licensing coursework, said Jim Comer, continuing education coordinator at Francis Tuttle. In fact, BIS offered more than 200 hours of class time, in 70 courses, to approximately 400 students last year.

“Our standards at Francis Tuttle for those individuals taking those test-prep classes are set high enough to ensure those people should be passing the state exam,” said Comer. Approximately 35 schools are licensed to offer the basic real estate licensure courses in Oklahoma, said Patricia Wheeler, education director at the Oklahoma Real Estate Commission. Schools are required to meet a passing rate of 50 percent.

“Francis Tuttle offers both the in-class on online course, which shows flexibility,” said Wheeler. In addition to options in the class-delivery method, BIS offers multimedia opportunities and monitors the progress of students to ensure they are moving toward passing. They offer the coursework four times a year in day and evening options.

“Multimedia opportunities are becoming more popular,” said Wheeler. Adults are choosing to attend online courses in order to allow flexibility and to decrease the amount of time it takes to receive their license.

“It is a profession that is never going to die or go away, but it is getting more complicated,” said Wheeler. “Licensing and getting a license is much more difficult than it’s ever been. If you are going to be good at it, you need to constantly be seeking continuing education.” Also, Francis Tuttle is working with other technology centers in Oklahoma to provide live broadcasts of courses via satellite to rural areas in lieu of traveling for agents. BIS offers home-buying courses for the general public and is working to add courses in home inspections and real-estate appraisal.

Associate Broker Bob Burn teaches the ‘Basic Course of Real Estate Test Prep,’ which prepares students to take the state test for licensing as a sales associate.

You need to know
– A person taking the real estate licensure prep course from the BIS program has a higher-than-average likelihood of passing the licensing test. This gets them to the business of buying and selling homes quicker, which is important to the state’s economy
– BIS is working to share their expertise in rural settings, via live satellite, saving travel time and money for persons in rural Oklahoma

“About 25 percent of people who take courses are not interested in licensing,” said Wheeler. “They just want to know more.”

For more information, contact: Jim Comer, Continuing Education Coordinator, 405.717.4720 or jcomer@francistuttle.edu.

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company standards. The first set of assessments took place in October and, of the 35 candidates who took the test, 18 passed. Since implementation of the pre-assessment, ARINC has not terminated any of those pre-tested employees due to lack of skills.

“It made our placement agencies step their game up a bit,” said Brent Stokes, Talent Acquisition Specialist with ARINC. “They realized the candidates had to pass the skills assessment.” Jermain said the pre-employment assessment is an intermediate step until a national standard for aircraft structural mechanic certifications can be adopted. “We are working to develop that national standard now.”

The need to have an employable workforce is an area in which Francis Tuttle’s BIS Team is uniquely qualified. BIS provides businesses cost savings through customized training opportunities.

For more information, contact: Clark Jermain, Aerospace Training Coordinator, 405.717.4745 or cjermain@francistuttle.edu.

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HOT TIP

Pay attention to the money to avoid being a victim

EDITOR'S NOTE: “Hot Tip” provides business tips, tools and trends from a Francis Tuttle partner, client or customer. Here, Seanlai Cochrane, owner and chief executive officer of Platinum Construction, discusses her first-hand experience with an employee’s arrest for embezzling from her company.

What are the challenges business owners face when it comes to money and trust?

As owners, there are so many issues that demand your attention, such as sales, marketing, customer service, products, certifications and expanding your knowledge. It gets very easy to let someone else handle accounts payable and receivable. The level of access you give them can open you up to great challenges. Checks and balances, policies and procedures as well as internal controls are incredibly important in order to avoid embezzlement. A business owner needs to ensure they audit continuously and have the appropriate level of control, policies and balances that will keep accounts safe.

What can a business owner do to avoid embezzlement?

Use an auditor and follow their advice. My CPA offered to come in monthly and close out our accounting books. Her advice led to the discovery of embezzlement. I had allowed levels of access to accounts to someone I trusted without spot checks to keep everyone honest. Since this occurred, I have also started using my bank’s free tools. They provide me with real-time updates whenever purchases are made. I can analyze the purchases on the go and flag them if I think I need to look into them later.

Who did you turn to when you found out this issue was occurring?

I relied on my CPA who provided me with systems that gave me the level of control that was and is needed. I talked to fellow business owners and I found I was not alone in this. A number of them talked about their experiences with similar situations and it was an opportunity for advice.

How has working with Francis Tuttle Technology Center helped?

I call Judy Robbins, Procurement Consultant at Francis Tuttle, if I don’t know where to go for something. I use the BIS team as a network for many questions, but also they have offered support throughout my experience with embezzlement. Since I am a client, I have the opportunity to use the Francis Tuttle Business & Industry team for networking with other companies, advice on new ventures, and training when my company needs it.

Much of this is at a low cost and you simply cannot put a price on what they have given me through networking and advice. Our company would not be in the same position we are today without them.

For more information, contact Judy Robbins, 405.717.4741 or jrobbins@francistuttle.edu.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM

As organizational development coordinator, Molly Scalf assists businesses in leadership and development-training initiatives. Through customized programs, Molly will assist in the creation, design and implementation of training. After a needs analysis, she will work with the client to develop training to meet their needs in team building, employee retention, effective communication, customer service, empowerment, coaching and performance management.

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Fred Green is director of the Francis Tuttle business incubator, “The Launch Pad,” located at the Francis Tuttle Business Innovation Center in Edmond. The new facility is to open in late summer. Business incubation is a process that increases the entrepreneur's probability of creating a sustainable business. The incubator staff will counsel, coach and enhance the business skills of entrepreneurs while teaching them how to overcome obstacles they will meet.

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OUR SUCCESSES THROUGH YOU

Nestle Purina honored due to Francis Tuttle training

The Oklahoma City facility of Nestle Purina was recently highlighted in the company’s national newsletter for winning an innovation award. Ken Young, a training coordinator at the company, submitted an extruder design change, which was adopted as a worldwide standard. Young received the award through Nestle Purina’s “Skills for Innovation” program. He was able to implement a design change in the extruder because of Francis Tuttle’s training in torque and tools.

Fernanda Hagen, industrial coordinator with Business & Industry Services, partnered with Young in the training and was very instrumental in the success of the project, and its subsequent award.

CONGRATULATIONS KEN AND FERNANDA!
Funds help pay wind-turbine employees

What would you advise corporate leaders about the wind energy industry in Oklahoma?

Oklahoma ranks eighth for existing wind capacity and resources, and sixth in total capacity installed, according to the American Wind Energy Association, making the state one of the top wind-energy producers in the country. There are many different jobs, contractors, and third-party providers in the wind-energy industry, and we lack Oklahoma-based companies which can provide services to the industry. The opportunities to break into wind-turbine maintenance exist for many people with electrical or mechanical backgrounds.

How great is the need for wind-turbine technicians?

A typical wind farm requires at least one technician for every 10 turbines and the turbines are maintained an average of 20 years. Our state currently has 1,610 turbines installed.

The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education offers a subsidy to Oklahoma-based companies which hire CareerTech wind-turbine technician graduates. The subsidy covers up to the first 250 hours of wages.

What’s the key to beginning work in the wind-energy industry?

Training programs at Francis Tuttle provide the specific expertise needed to transition into the industry’s many contracts, focusing on certifications. The customizable curriculum provides a level-one, National Center for Construction Education and Research registration along with a Capital Safety certification, a Hytorc certification, OSHA 30-hour training and medic, first-aid, AED training, and NFPA 70E 2012 certification for Electrical Safety. Each of these prepares technicians for work on the wind farms immediately.

For more information, contact: Darin Campbell, Technical Trainer/Coordinator, 405.717.4166 or dcampbell@francistuttle.edu.