
Workforce Development Programs
at
Community & Technical College of Shepherd

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Community & Technical College Education

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This confidential report is the result of a study conducted during an extended visit to two of West Virginia's Community and Technical Colleges. This document is a confidential and factual assessment of the two colleges' workforce training and development efforts, as well as a snapshot of their constituents' regard for the roles and effectiveness of each institution.

COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF SHEPHERD

Years ago, back when tobacco was allowed to be advertised on television, there was a cigarette ad whose tag line went something like this: “*You’ve come a long way, baby.*” Those same words can readily be applied to Community & Technical College of Shepherd. The school that I visited back in 2001 was not yet ready for prime time. Now, it has not only resolved most of its prior deficiencies, but has also moved forward toward a new era of community service.

The school’s president is an active and highly visible participant in his school’s external programs. He has even been known to teach part of an occasional course himself. He is a tireless promoter of his school, and, therefore, is becoming more widely known within his community---especially within a business and industry community that was not terribly impressed with his school just 3 years ago.

Pete Checkovich is also a serious manager--one who wants, and indeed, expects his school to excel. To that end, he has personally seen that 16 of the 17 recommendations for improvement that I made to his school in my report of July 2001 have been either addressed or implemented. That marks a commitment to excellence that cannot be overlooked.

The school’s new workforce development director is Ann Shipway, a bright, capable woman with both the determination and dedication to move her school’s external programs forward. She is an enthusiastic person--one who seems to be completely devoted to her job, to her school, and to her president.

Ann came to Shepherd from just across the state line in Hagerstown, Md., where she managed Hagerstown Community College’s workforce training. That school is widely regarded as one of the nation’s better community colleges; therefore, I am impressed that Shepherd was able to recruit her in ’02, and believe that her arrival marked a new day for workforce development at Shepherd.

I interviewed several people during my visit to Shepherd. I offered them anonymity in exchange for candid comments, but that will not be necessary because their comments were almost all positive, but some of them did offer unsolicited, helpful suggestions, which I have included, as well:

- Checkovich, Pete (President, CTC Shepherd)
- Mathias, Penny (H.R. Manager, Polo Ralph Lauren)
- Novinger, Lynn (Training Manager, Quad Graphics)
- Reid, Wesley (Plant Manager, Ecolab)
- Shipway, Ann (CTC Shepherd Dir. Workforce Development and ConEd)

I both mailed and sent an electronic version of a Workforce Development Self Assessment instrument to Shepherd for completion. Additionally, I sent Dr. Checkovich a letter in which I asked for their responses to each of the recommendations made to his school in my July 2001 report.

They satisfactorily completed both of those documents. I have reviewed their responses, discussed certain of them with both Shipway and Checkovich, and I concur with the responses as submitted. They are attached to this report.

Ecolab

The first company that I visited was Ecolab, a significant manufacturer of chemicals and cleaning products. The manager there, Wesley Reid, is a no-nonsense kind of man—serious and quite focused. He and I had some common ground, as he was manager of a plant in Greensboro, N.C., and I had helped design and implement a training regimen for him when he was there. Fortunately, he liked what we did! It is a very small world, indeed.

Reid is a devotee (i.e., Greenbelt) of 6-Sigma management techniques, and has worked with Ann to begin implementing some 6-Sigma techniques in his plant. He says, “Ann *took over and ran with the 6-Sigma program.*” In fact, when I arrived, one of Ann’s instructors was working with some of Reid’s supervisors on better delineating / defining work and process flows.

The West Virginia workforce that Reid has frustrates him; he finds them to be “*backward*”. He requires a high school degree or a GED, and employs an extensive interviewing process. Still, he finds his workers weak in basic skills. Partly for that reason, he and Ann are working on some much needed leadership training. He wants other higher-level training at his plant, and he and Ann are working together to develop a Manufacturing Certification course, which he intends for her to keep as her own.

One reason why Reid likes Ann is that she understands industry. She should; she used to be a training manager for Citicorp. In her job, there really is no way to fake either interest or understanding. People in the business world know those who are players. That she is perceived as knowledgeable by such a seasoned manager is a compliment, and makes her work easier, as well as more valuable to her school.

Wes Reid also likes Pete Checkovich. Pete has taken time to come out to visit Ecolab’s plant, and his visit helped set a tone and standard for his college. It implied interest from the top, and equally important, it definitely exhibited support for the school’s external training efforts. Such gestures of good will are not lost on private sector managers. In fact, they are greatly appreciated.

Reid's comments were not devoid of suggestions for improvement, however. I had observed on my own that Ann seems to be trying to be a one-person-band, i.e., that she is taking on too much, and that will ultimately become a detriment, if not a downright failure. Wes Reid made an unsolicited comment to that same effect: *"For what they are trying to do, they're too thin. They have a huge opportunity, but there are not enough hours and time to do it all alone."* Ann dealt with 14 companies and trained 300+ people last year; her goal is 50 / 2,000. But she must concentrate on "making money not numbers." There is no partial FTE reimbursement for OE.

He also offered another bit of advice, or perhaps a suggestion for possible improvement. He said that Shepherd is *"...good at pulling in West Virginia resources, but they should consider using some of the nearby Virginia and Maryland resources Vs Charleston and Morgantown. Use the Virginia and Maryland MEP's; the MEP's don't care where they work."* Whether or not his assessment of the MEP's is accurate, his message is clear; broaden the resources on which the school relies.

Ralph Lauren

I next met with Penny Mathias, Human Resources Director for Ralph Lauren. Just the day before, however, they were bought out by Polo, and uncertainty was in the air. All are hoping for continuity, if not improvement, but one can never be certain what will happen under takeover circumstances. Penny met Ann and Pete through Rumsey's material handling program. Penny is on their advisory board. They also have some ties through Achieve Global training circles.

Shepherd did some gratis training for her company in supervision and management. It was good enough that Penny and some of the participants recommended that Shepherd take its show on the road. As a result, Ann and Pete delivered corporate-level training at Ralph Lauren's New York City offices.

Penny was complimentary of Pete's efforts to find grants to support training for her company. Now, no one is certain what might happen in a post-takeover world. She is just not certain what Polo's training philosophy might be. But if they are receptive, then Penny has some plans and some needs.

She needs hourly training badly. She wants personal financial planning and budgeting; her workers are going to weekly checks immediately. She wants basic computer training. She wants her hourly people trained in "working with differences". She is desperate to find some means of slowing her 30+% turnover.

Her comments about Ann included: *"She makes me feel like I'm one of her top customers; she is versatile; she stays in touch. But I am afraid that she's at the point of becoming overwhelmed. She's spread thin, but she's still meeting my needs."*

Quad Graphics

My final interview was with Lynn Novinger, training manager at Quad Graphics. This is a huge, privately held concern. When I got home from this trip, my *National Geographic* magazine was in my mail. It had just been printed at this plant. This is a “big-time” client. In fact, it is the nation’s largest privately held printing company with plants in Georgia, Oklahoma, Minnesota, and W. VA.

He and his colleagues have been working with Ann Shipway, and Shepherd is helping run an in-house program to provide a degree in Printing Technology. The work is part credit courses taught in classes, and part OJT, taught on the floor as a practicum. Ann is coordinating that degree program, and lines up its instructional staff. Lynn says that he thinks Ann is *“doing a great job; she is helpful.”* He also complimented both Pete and Ann for helping them articulate some credit for a small portion of their in-house training.

I also learned that Ann is doing some diversity training based on a model that she developed. Next, she will add leadership training to her repertoire. According to Lynn, this work earns her *“high marks with no complaints.”*

Although the company does most of its own technical training, Lynn wants to consider implementing some more lean manufacturing training. He is talking with the 6-Sigma folks, and he *may* use Shepherd, but has not yet made a final decision. With a workforce of 1000+, Shepherd would do well to cultivate this company.

Lynn had some ideas, comments and advice for Shepherd before I left him. Among his comments were: *“They need to do more marketing and advertising; they are just not visible enough in the community.”* He is also not a proponent of online training, and sees it as *“an interesting tool, but don’t depend on it.”* He did issue one challenge to the college, and that was: *“Work with companies around here to help us find ways to help stem the workforce turnover.”* I assured him that I’d pass that on.

To say that Shepherd has “turned around” in the past 3 years is an understatement. This is simply not the same school that I visited and found so many deficiencies in during my visit of July 2001. Not only have they addressed almost every one of my concerns at that time, they have also proceeded in a very professional manner to design printed materials, courses, and new programs with which to meet the needs of the business and industries in their area.

I, too, am impressed with what I saw and learned there. However, I would echo the words and concerns of many when they observe that Ann Shipway is good, even very good, at what she does. But Ann needs someone competent to whom she can delegate routine matters. Without help, both she and her programs may suffer.

William “Bill” Shore