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## Center of Workforce Innovations' Work Ethic Certificate Gives Students a Leg Up

Sep. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018 | Kayla Belec

A thorough and well-rounded education is an asset in any workplace, but something that rarely gets covered in traditional classroom settings is the value of a good work ethic. Employers have indicated that work ethic skills are one of the top characteristics they search for in potential employees. The Center of Workforce Innovations makes it a goal to produce an emerging workforce that has skills fit for the 21st century and finetuned to face the challenges of the real global marketplace. One resource they've created to accomplish this is the ability for high school students to receive a Work Ethic Certificate.

The Northwest Indiana Workforce Board partnered with Work One, Center of Workforce Innovations, Region 1 Work Council, and Ready NWI the Youth Council as early as 2001 to develop a program schools could adopt to teach soft skills, such as work ethics, that employers coveted. The resulting effort was the Work Ethic Certificate, which reinforces students with soft skills that are needed in the workplace, such as a positive attitude, a team-oriented

mindset, punctuality, time-management, critical thinking, problem solving, and much more.

The Certificate acts as a filter for employers when hiring or selecting candidates so that they recognize the candidate's invaluable work ethic skills straightaway. The Certificate illustrates a common identifiable metric of healthy work habits and serves as a credential demonstrating knowledge of skills, abilities, and commitment to work. Just as important to the future workforce world as it is to the individual, the Certificate cultivates the development of necessary behavioral characteristics in the emerging workforce.

Employers love the Work Ethic Certificate program for the credibility it lends potential employees, and because it gives them the chance to partner with schools who utilize the program. Employers can offer students completing the program tours, internships, and shadowing opportunities, as well as participate in speaking engagements and the dedication ceremony of the Certificate itself. George

Douglas, General Manager of Indiana Beverage, is a firm advocate for the Work Ethic Certificate program.

"We support the Work Ethic Certificate program because we believe in the importance and value of it," Douglas said. "Everyone around the Region, the state, and the country is talking about the skills gap within the current workforce. This is very real, and we need to align employers, trainers and educators, and the employee to bring solutions to close these gaps."

Douglas explained why his company sees the benefit in the program, especially when it comes to potential .

"For many of our positions, we expect to teach the technical aspects of the job, but applicants must be able to demonstrate the soft skills to grow with our company. Therefore, those skills really require education, awareness, and reinforcement from home and school, and not just an employer," Douglas said.

"I believe the biggest benefit for the students is that employers recognize and value the commitment the

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student has made in earning the Work Ethic Certificate,” Douglas continued. We make a big deal out of the fact they have it by giving them priority for interviewing, and then we can talk about those skills and their importance to our company during the interview process. By doing this, it underscores the value to them, and, hopefully, they are taking it back to others at school.”

Douglas said that Indiana Beverage definitely notices a difference between those who have completed their Work Ethic Certificate and those who have not undertaken such a program.

“We have hired many Work Ethic Certificate earners, and they have proven to be some of our best employees,” Douglas said. “I don’t believe that is by accident, but rather the Certificate provides a great foundation from which we can teach the other technical responsibilities of the job.”

To learn more about how to become involved with programs such as the Work Ethic Certificate, visit [www.innovativeworkforce.com](http://www.innovativeworkforce.com) today.