

**SHORELINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DOL/ETA – High Growth Initiative Grant
Automotive Sales & Service Training Pathways Project**

Skill Panel Meeting Notes

DATE: November 15, 2005
PLACE: Korum Automotive Group – Puyallup, Washington
TIME: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Skill Panel Members
Randy Anglin, Hunter Equipment
Joel Baxter, B & B Automotive
Rob Cannon, Brotherton Cadillac
Veronica Garaycoa, Green River Community College
Rich Griffin, Korum Mitsubishi-Hyundai
Bill Haas, Automotive Service Association (ASA)
Paul Kelley, Puget Sound Fleet Maintenance
Joel Lewellen, Korum Automotive Group
Jeff Lovell, Automotive Service Association of Washington (ASA-WA)
Tim Sim, Jiffy Lube International
George Stites, King County Metro
Kirk VanGelder, Clark County Skills Center + CDX Area Representative
Yumi Vaught, Autobody Craftsman Association

Automotive Project Team
Terryll Bailey, Skill Panel Research Consultant
Cameron Hightower, Project Director
Madhuri Hosford, Skill Panel Consultant
Matt Houghton, Pilot Project Manager
Tom Mackin, Skill Panel Facilitator
Gary Main, Curricula Development Manager

NEXT SKILL PANEL MEETINGS:

Tuesday, January 24, 2006 @ Korum Ford in Puyallup
Wednesday, January 25, 2006 @ Shoreline Community College

Tom Mackin welcomed everyone to the 5th Skill Panel meeting and facilitated introductions. *Madhuri Hosford* distributed Skill Panel binders and updates.

ASA Presentation

“Automotive Service-Industry Relationships”

Tom introduced the guest speaker *Bill Haas*, Vice President of Education and Training for the Automotive Service Association (ASA), who spoke on the topic of “Automotive Service-Industry Relationships.”

Bill described how the relationships between Independents and Dealers have been changing as both realize “We’re all in this together.” As an example, he pointed out the value of the Skill Panel members working together to identify career pathways and develop the Automotive Project’s GST (General Service Technician) Program – both of which really make a lot of sense.

Bill said his experiences and observations are based on his own career of over three decades of working in the automotive industry in both education/training (teaching within the Community College system and as a contract trainer for GM) and as an employer (with both Dealers and Independents). He started out at a Lincoln Mercury Dealership, where as a service technician he was very focused on Ford Motor training. When he needed parts, he just went to parts counter and got whatever parts the dealer supplied. That’s all he understood; he never realized how huge the scope of the parts industry was.

Industry Diversity

Later when he worked for Independent shops, *Bill* learned that technicians use a really wide system of manufacturers to acquire the parts that support their automotive repair work. He also discovered the lack of any training system for the Independents.

He noticed how very different the businesses were (Independent shops vs. Dealers vs. Parts Suppliers). He learned about Community College Advisory Councils and that regional employers actually guide the creation of school curricula—a factor he appreciates because of the “real world” industry guidance.

Factory Warranty vs. Maintenance Work

In years past Dealers used to stay very busy repairing new cars under warranty. There was no gap in the flow of business through their service departments. They had great customers and a great deal of business under factory warranties, while Independent shops stayed busy fixing cars not under warranty.

Today, cars are built so much better and last longer – in fact the worst car on the road today is better than the best car 10 years ago. Broken cars don’t keep the shops open any longer. When service bays at Dealerships started standing idle, the focus changed to more maintenance work and less repair work. Dealers – who used to concentrate only on factory warranty work – had to start thinking about customer-paid maintenance work.

Customer Service Expectations

Dealers and Independents started competing for the same customers and the same amount of work. Today, customers have much greater expectations beyond repairing their cars, and both Independent shops and Dealerships must provide really good customer service as well as excellent vehicular maintenance.

When new car Dealers first started trying to recruit business that normally went to Independent shops and Independents couldn't get the same parts and information from OEMs as Dealers, the result was sour, adversarial relationships. This tension continued for a number of years. Meanwhile new car quality and engineering continued to improve.

Manufacturers to OEMs – More Free Flowing Information

Now there is more information than ever before flowing from automotive manufacturers to OEMs and Independent shops. The technology of how we address repair problems has completely evolved to pinpoint issues to be solved. The industry knows that Independent shops – not just Dealers – must be able to fix new cars well and keep owners happy or car sales will drop. For Dealers and for Independents, Service and Parts sales drive a larger percentage of profits than in the past. Aftermarket tooling equipment companies (such as Snap-On Tools) have offered incredible support.

Congressional Lobbying

Bill wanted Skill Panel members to know that in spite of all the bridge-building and cooperation, some Parts Distributors have taken the position that Independent shops don't have the same abilities as Dealers to keep customers (consumers) satisfied. Some manufacturers/distributors are telling customers, "If you want to keep your car totally serviced you must return to Dealerships for maintenance." They're lobbying Congress with the message that the Independents' system isn't strong and that these shops don't have the repair information they need to fix the cars. Although this issue has not been resolved and things are in transition, *Bill* pointed out other measures that show relationships are improving within the industry.

Programs and Solutions in Progress

Bill stated, for example, that this Project's GST (General Service Technician) program and similar automotive programs in the works are what's needed to keep the entire industry flowing and to keep customers satisfied whether they go to an Independent or Dealer for service. If someone buys a car and takes it in for service and has a bad experience that affects the entire industry. That customer is not likely to buy the product (vehicle) again just because a technician didn't have the required level of skill to service it after the sale.

Building Strength Together

Bill reiterated that the industry is comprised of a diverse group, and that we have to continue to realize we're all in this together. Forecasts for shortages of 60,000 technicians

mean one thing to Independent shops and something else to large Dealers – but the question remains the same: “What do we need to do to bring others into the industry?”

ASA’s Role in Education and Training

As ASA’s VP of Education and Training, *Bill*’s new position requires him to do a better job of helping young people and workers in Independent shops explore automotive careers. ASA also delivers technical training on a local level to reach teachers, students, and counselors.

OEMs and car manufacturers have a stake in making sure technicians in both Dealers and Independents are well trained to service cars – in fact Dealers and Independents must share the market that services and sustains new car sales. The last thing we want today is for customers to feel they made a bad decision in purchasing a certain car because they can’t get it repaired.

15 yrs ago *Bill* would never have thought the Independents could have the relationship with OEMs that they have today. Recently at NAPEX in Las Vegas, Honda announced they’re now considering a way to make training available to Independent shops – who would have thought?

Future Trends

Where is the automotive repair business going? Higher quality vehicles mean longer cycles between repairs. That will make the good shops better while some of the other shops won’t survive if they’re not up to speed and if they don’t invest in their people and technologies to use diagnostic equipment that’s really high tech.

Shops will tend to develop some specialization working on different models or by specialty in the aspects of the vehicle they service. Autobody and Collision Shop owners have to decide whether to invest in training their people and buying the equipment and keeping up to date.

Advertising and Creative Approaches

Everyone in the industry has to advertise if they want to stick around. Today most Independent shops have a low cost advertising program called “Word of Mouth,” and Dealers advertise themselves as “One Stop Shops.” Both are trying new things to sustain a constant flow of business. Import shops offer 10% off labor for “mature” Toyotas (over 100,000 miles), yet some are still not flush with business. Up to 50% of Independent shops have closed down, and Dealers are selling tires and quick lubes to keep things moving.

The “new” alternative fuel cars are being serviced by Independents as well as Dealers. The earliest Prius cars are coming out of warranty now; it remains to be seen who will get all the business servicing them.

Success = Working Side by Side

Only by working together to service the market well can both Independents and Dealers continue to raise the bar for customer satisfaction and help build repeat sales. ASA supports both Independents and Dealers and offers a range of services to make sure both feel supported. For more information, Bill invited all to contact him at billh@asashop.org or (682) 465-4662.

GST Program

GST Graduates' Capabilities

Gary Main introduced the subject of the GST (General Service Technician) program and distributed copies of the "GST Can Do List" which includes book learning and hands-on training GST students learn in the lab. Gary has been assembling curriculum for several months and the Skill Panel has been discussing the program during the last several meetings. GST graduates will be well prepared beginners with the skills on the Can Do List ready to go to work as entry level technicians. They'll have a good foundation to move up and get more training. The GST course is intended to provide a base level of technical skills for these entry-level workers in the industry.

GST Program Definition

The GST program is a 500-hour, two college quarter program. Like the Rio Grande River – "a mile wide and an inch deep" – the GST program is intended to give participants a broad exposure to the many different subjects automotive workers would at least need to be familiar with. GST offers an introduction so that students will know something – even if not in-depth – about all parts of the car's basic systems and how they operate.

The GST is not intended to produce a fully qualified ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) technician, since the GST covers only about 20% of the eight ASE skill areas required for in-depth training of a fully certified technician.

GST Target Audience(s)

Joel Lewellen described the GST as primarily a service technician course (not directly related to sales or parts or other disciplines). The GST would be a pre-requisite before advanced training in other areas. He asked "What criteria are used to recruit people to take the GST classes?"

Gary Main and *Matt Houghton* described the typical/ideal GST candidate as follows:

- 1) Probably right out of High School or perhaps didn't finish High School
- 2) Might be from another country with ESL or LEP language skill levels (Some who enter the U.S. have great automotive skills but no English, so this GST pilot program with ESL instruction can help these individuals become saleable/employable in the general job market.)

- 3) Must pass pre-testing for an 8th grade reading level
- 4) Interested in learning about basic systems of operation in cars and trucks

Recruiting for students for GST courses is now underway through a number of agencies and other resources. Referrals from Dealers and Independent Shop owners are welcome.

Job Corps and Non Traditional GST Audiences

After a two-year study of all of the Job Corps automotive training programs around the country most of them were scrapped in favor of adopting the GST course. GST is also targeted toward audiences that include refugees, evacuees, and non traditional populations such as women and girls.

GST Class Composition

Gary Main stated that the GST average class size will be 10-12 students per session. The 500 hours of technical training usually take two terms to complete. Pilot programs are being offered at Renton Technical College, Fort Simcoe Job Corps Center in White Swan, Washington; Yakima Valley Community College; and Shoreline Community College (SCC).

SCC will also offer a special version of the GST that includes ESL instruction in addition to the 500 hours of technical training. The program is spread over three quarters instead of two because of the extra time required for the ESL training.

NATEF Support for GST

Cameron Hightower stated that NATEF (the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation) created the GST program as an option for secondary schools that did not want to participate in AYES (Automotive Youth Educational Systems). Now High Schools can give students a choice of automotive courses -- either the AYES or GST program. NATEF changed their requirements so that post secondary schools can now offer the GST course for credit. If completed in a secondary school the GST can be articulated into a post secondary school.

GST Graduates vs. AYES Outcomes

Joel Lewellen stated that the GST program should recruit a better potential employee than the students that employers get from AYES. GST should produce students that aren't just looking for a place to hang out because it's a more comprehensive program than AYES. More GST graduates would tend to know whether they're interested in automotive work after taking this more comprehensive course.

GST Includes SCANS Skills and Competencies

Matt Houghton announced that in addition to technical training another GST course component will be the soft skills (How to communicate well, etc., embedded in the GST course, not separate classes) applied as students learn the automotive piece. This addition of SCANS skills (the Secretary[of Labor]'s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) includes eight (industry-driven) areas of skills and competencies which will help GST

graduates be more valuable as entry-level employees than those not exposed to such workplace skills.

GST Opens Career Pathways for Various Audiences

Joel Baxter said his impression is that we're benefiting kids who don't fit the traditional workforce model and also establishing a set of standards that High Schools in the State can achieve. Today High School programs are getting lost in baby sitting instead of sticking to a program. The best thing about the GST is that it provides a career pathway that's good for a variety of audiences. From AYES students, to Community College students, to High School dropouts, etc. – all can make the GST program work for them.

GST Entry Job Levels and Pay Scales

Terryll asked the group "Would you be more likely to hire the GST graduate over someone else off the street?" The unanimous reply was "Yes!"

Terryll also asked "Where would you place GST graduates and what would be their pay scale?" The pay scale would be between \$8.50 to \$10 or \$11 if the person can communicate well with customers.

Skill Panel members named the following types of businesses that probably can hire GST graduates:

- Basic Service Stations
- Dealerships
- Independent Shops
- Specialty Focus Shops (e.g., Automatic Transmission Shops)

Tim Sim stated he'd find a place to hire the GST grad at Jiffy Lube International by virtue of the fact that the individual took the GST course and was motivated to complete it. Jiffy Lube doesn't hire mechanics – instead they sell customer service and oil changes. Their jobs are in the realm of customer service advisors and this broad GST training would be perfect.

Joel Lewellen added that Korum Automotive Group's situation is the same as Jiffy Lube's – Tim's story is "right on the money." The broad-based GST entry-level program would at least provide a well trained beginner with whom employers can build a working relationship. In contrast, when Korum grooms someone for two years in the GM's off site ASEP manufacturing apprenticeship program, the person being trained off site develops no loyalty and often leaves to work elsewhere for more money after being trained.

Rob Cannon recently hired entry level workers for mid-level technician roles because he couldn't find journeymen technicians. The two he hired have a lot of book smarts; however, he would rather have been able to find and hire people with more practical training – such as GST graduates.

Continuation Training for GST Graduates

Joel Baxter stated that generally there is a place in the market for GST graduates, although personally he won't hire anyone unless they're ASE certified. Even so, he'd like for students in the GST program who show more aptitude to be encouraged to continue their training. Ideally, those students would receive some follow up guidance to make sure they take advantage of higher education if they have the abilities. They could be pointed toward ASE certifications if they have the aptitude. Teachers of the GST program can help spot students with potential to advance (the first sign they exhibit is that they want to do the work).

Mentorships and Internships

Kirk VanGelder suggested that GST program students would benefit tremendously if they apprentice under a Master Technician in all kinds of shops to build their skills. The Mentoring process pairs a seasoned Technician with a new student to enhance the training beyond the basic foundation and get the most out of the new employee.

Matt asked if the Panel wants to explore the criteria for building Internships at the January Skill Panel meeting. The group agreed to do so.

Puget Sound Region to Absorb 75 GST Graduates in 2006

Terryll asked the Panel, "Can the Puget Sound market absorb 75 GST graduates between January and June 2006?"

Tom Sim said with 80 Jiffy Lubes in the Puget Sound Region + 20 stores in the Tri-Cities + other areas he could see managers bidding against each other (not all at one time) to hire these graduates. He believes there will be no problem getting the GST graduates hired in Western Washington. The GST program will produce "...a bunch of intelligent people looking for work."

Rob Cannon is VP of the Washington GM Service Manager's Club whose members are constantly looking to hire candidates such as GST graduates.

Joel Baxter said ASA will post on their website the list of GST graduates looking for work to help get them hired. He also supports the GST program developing articulation agreements with other educational institutions to encourage additional training. *Matt* responded that the GST program will create as many articulation agreements as possible.

Skill Panel Endorses GST

Gary stated that the Skill Panel needs to approve the GST program before it's really rolled out and taught widely. GST Pilot Programs are now underway, but in January 2006 the first full-fledged offering of the course will occur.

Terryll asked if the group would approve the GST curriculum. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to endorse the GST program.

Matt added that this is not the end of the discussion and invited all to keep feedback coming. The GST curriculum exists; it's being piloted and will be ready for more input as the pilot course is concluded and the full-fledged course is launched.

Career Ladders and Lattices

Terryll reviewed the Career Ladders and Lattices chart from past meetings. She also stated that she's working with Doug Angell to incorporate Joel Baxter's aging information to the charts to show progressions along the various pathways.

Ongoing Training for Employees

Prioritizing Specific Trainings

Terryll reviewed the list of Ongoing Training for Employees from the September Skill Panel meeting. The list includes three categories of training – Automotive Technical Topics, Business Topics and Workplace Skills – for which Panel members had previously indicated a need. She led the group through the process of naming the courses to which they would actually send employees.

This Automotive Training and Career Opportunities Project has Federal grant funds to dedicate toward supporting local industry by offering trainings for existing employees. The funding covers “subbing” out training for existing vendors to conduct courses anywhere from an hour to two-days in length. The Panel simply needs to identify which topics are most needed so that trainers can be hired and training sessions scheduled.

Sources of Trainers

Bill Haas stated that through ASA he has a nationwide network of excellent training resources. When we know exactly which trainings are needed, he can tap into his network and provide names of trainers from all around the country for almost every topic.

Types of Training Needed

Skill Panel members named the following topics as most important to pursue for existing employees:

Soft Skills

Dealing with difficult people (*Tim Sim* could send 40 people or more from Jiffy Lube to complete such training which he would incorporate into a larger management training)

Technical Topics

High Skill Specialty (Advanced) Technical Training
Managing Trainers for Worker Readiness
Drivability Conditions
Raising and Lowering Vehicles
Vibration and Alignment Analysis

Scholarships vs. Partially Paid Courses

Jeff Lovell inquired about setting up a scholarship for students to participate in whatever training we offer. *Cameron* will get together with him to discuss the possibilities.

Randy Anglin suggested offering partial scholarships for incumbent worker trainings so the students will have more ownership if they have to pay some amount.

Bill Haas agreed, saying that in the past ASA has scheduled classes with plenty of advance notice, but the workers tend not to show up when the trainings are free.

Ongoing Training Next Steps

Terryll asked if there were any additional trainings, but Panel members seemed to be in agreement with the areas already identified. *Gary Main* will follow up with specific members to clarify and get details for types of trainings to pursue offering through this Project.

Next Steps for the Skill Panel

Marketing Outreach Activities

The GST program is being rolled out soon, and the basic Career Ladders and Lattices are nearing completion. Now the Skill Panel is in a position to work on additional topics. Panel members brainstormed in small groups to identify the action items listed below. These action items reflect a theme of “Marketing Outreach” to help accomplish the Project’s goal of bringing more people into the industry.

- Develop a presentation (run time disk) for car shows (in shopping malls, etc.)
- Develop a one-minute spot for Klick and Klack’s Car Talk radio show to promote Automotive Training + Career opportunities
- Reach out to specific communities to get the word out
- Go into High Schools and educate students (catch them before they decide to quit school), counselors, teachers
 - Develop a brochure plus a CD or DVD to show and leave behind
 - Give testimonials such as a woman speaking about making \$75K working on trucks
- Develop a dissemination strategy for each important audience

- Include materials targeted to employers (with messaging about automotive careers for their children) to hear/see when they bring in vehicles for service
- Network (and present) at Automotive Clubs to reach multi-generational audiences interested in cars
- Use video games/interactive CDs to attract the next generation (Jiffy Lube spent \$4 mil – money extremely well spent – on interactive training tools to help young people grasp what is being offered)
- Develop a CD covering the full range of automotive career opportunities
- Look at Career Corner TV (2-3 minute videos on automotive and other fields) for ideas
- Create summer internships for teachers to get real training out in the field (Create a system for them to get comp time or paid training time)
- Send the WA State Teachers' organization and the State Workforce Board letters and ask for their commitment to support and fund automotive teachers and their career development time in the field (*Terryll* encouraged all to write Ellen O'Brien Saunders, Executive Director of the Washington Training and Education Coordinating Board, to alert her to the fact that the Automotive industry is a high wage, high skill industry that requires continuous updated training for instructors). Ellen's contact information is below:

Ellen O'Brien Saunders, Executive Director
 Washington Training and Education Coordinating Board
 128 10th Avenue SW
 P.O. Box 43105
 Olympia, WA 98504-3105
 Phone: (360) 753-5660
 FAX: (360) 586-5862
 Email: eosaunders@wtb.wa.gov

South Sound (Korum Ford) Skill Panel Working Groups and Action Items

Terryll defined the need for **Working Groups** (two or more people): Panel members willing to do some work at Skill Panel meetings and some outside the meetings to create a flow into this industry from key sources.

A Working Group comprised of *Tim Sim* + *Joel Baxter* (Point Person) + *Veronica Garaycoa* was formed to explore the following areas and report to the Skill Panel at the January Skill Panel meeting:

Materials Planning

- Explore costs and requirements to develop a Video or CD Video and begin naming the content required.
- Begin the process of creating a pamphlet/brochure about automotive training and career opportunities.

Finance/Leveraging Sponsorships

- See if Shoreline Community College or other CC or Technical College with a printing department will donate the printing for the brochure.
- Explore other types of sponsorship or financial support for developing a CD.

Madhuri will check in with *Joel Baxter* on or before December 16 and January 14 to support the group's activities and incorporate updates into the January Skill Panel meeting agenda.

Training Advisory Council Formation

Cameron announced that the Project is putting together an Automotive Industry Training Advisory Council to become a state-wide clearinghouse for automotive training. This Council will serve as a source of information about all automotive secondary education and post secondary education in the region and will coordinate with the Workforce Development Council and the State Workforce Board to ensure that the services provided are aligned with WDC and Workforce Board guidelines.

Hispanic Outreach Events

Cameron also reported on recent Automotive Project outreach activities. In October five counties invited high school boys and girls to an empowerment session hosted in Olympia and conducted in Spanish. Over 300 students attended the event which had exhibitors and sessions designed to help the students take charge of their lives. The Automotive Project sponsored and staffed a table, met with students, and distributed literature about the GST, AYES and other automotive training programs.

ASE has received a federal "Hispanic Outreach Grant" and is partnering with Statewide Chambers of Commerce to sponsor educational events in various U.S. cities. These events will be conducted entirely in Spanish to attract interested workers. Within the Hispanic-Latino community there are estimates that 85,000 linguistically-isolated individuals work in the automotive industry today.

ASE – Washington State Chamber of Commerce Hispanic Outreach Event

Saturday, December 10, 2005 - 4:30 pm to 7:30pm

Location: The Salvation Army Seattle White Center

9050 16th Ave. SW - Seattle, WA 98106

Contacts: Dan Flanagan at (206) 325-2100 flanadm@msn.com or

J.D. Sampedro at (703) 669-6621 jd@asecert.org.

Cameron asked for help in reaching and inviting Spanish-speaking automotive service technicians to this event. Anyone who speaks Spanish and who already is working in the automotive industry would be the target audience.

Adjournment

Tom thanked everyone for their contributions to the meeting and the Panel adjourned at 1:30 pm.