

Gilchrist Construction Company improves retention and employee safety



Facing employee turnover as high as 100%, Gilchrist Construction Company used ACT WorkKeys® solutions to improve hiring, retention, training, safety, and productivity at their Louisiana-based facility.

RESULTS:



75%
improvement
in employee retention



59%
decrease
in safety incidents



68%
increase
in employee tenure from 2011–17
leading to savings in cost of new hires

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS USED:



Overcoming obstacles, setting goals

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Gilchrist Construction Company is a Central Louisiana-based contractor specializing in heavy highway and industrial work throughout the state. Their 375 workers strive to live up to the company’s stated vision to be a leader in safety, quality, innovation, and efficiency.

However, in 2007–2008, Gilchrist was seeing 100% turnover in their workforce. The company set goals for employee hiring, retention, training, safety, and productivity.

Owner Randy Gilchrist found the solution for attaining these goals as a board member of the Rapides Foundation, a philanthropic organization dedicated to the health of Central Louisiana.

“Our goal is to attract the best and brightest, and we want to retain them and help them develop their skills. We need to know they can handle the advanced training we provide so they are equipped to master the technology that is part of today’s equipment and tools.”

Valerie Aymond, SPHR
Chief Resource Officer
Gilchrist Construction Company

A credentialing-focused employment process

THE SOLUTION

With the assistance of the Central Louisiana [CENLA] Work Ready Network and the Rapides Foundation, Gilchrist Construction Company began using ACT WorkKeys® assessments and the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™ (NCRC) to address training, safety, and turnover issues.

In 2011, they began testing applicants. Building on this foundation, they invited ACT-authorized job profilers to visit their facilities to perform detailed task and skill analyses of two key positions — heavy truck drivers and transportation dispatchers. The job profiles are used in selecting new candidates.

Gilchrist Construction now advertises itself as an “ACT NCRC Employer Advocate.”

“

It’s well known that if you want to work for Gilchrist Construction Company, taking the assessments and earning the credential is part of the employment process.”

Valerie Aymond, SPHR

Chief Resource Officer
Gilchrist Construction Company

Improving retention, safety & ROI

OUTCOMES

Retention

Among the individuals hired who took the assessments, 75% of new hires at Gilchrist Construction Company were retained within the first 12 months. This is significant as the company recently had a turnover rate of 100%.

Safety

The company also considers the implementation of ACT WorkKeys to be a significant factor in improving safety statistics.

- 59% decrease in safety incidents
- 55% reduction in recordable incidents
- 41% drop in incident rate per working hour
- 35% decrease in recordable incident rate per working hour

ROI

Using the NCRC credential to identify trainees for specific training programs that enable them to become more proficient at more than one craft. The company has seen an improvement of 68% in employee tenure over a six-year period attributed to more successful training outcomes. As employee retention increases, training time and expenditures go down as well.

“

Employee retention is of the utmost importance to our company. The combined costs of recruiting, onboarding, training, and mentoring are just some of the factors for which we can calculate savings. Plus, the longer people work for us, the more training they receive and the better they are able to work safely and more efficiently.”

Christina Goodrich, PHR

HR Generalist
Gilchrist Construction Company

SEGMENT OVERVIEW

The Rapides Foundation is a philanthropic organization that develops initiatives and provides grants to organizations that share the Foundation’s mission to improve the health status of Central Louisiana. The Foundation’s service area consists of Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon, and Winn parishes.

ACT WORK READY COMMUNITIES



Gilchrist Construction Company was one of the first employers on board when the CENLA Work Ready Network was launched. Today, nearly 270 area employers publically recognize with 52 of these employers recommending the national ACT NCRC from job applicants and employees.

See what other parishes are work ready at www.workreadycommunities.org.