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# Berner Foods stops turnover from eating up profits

A leading private label supplier of food and beverage products, Berner reduced employee turnover by putting the right people in the right job, the first time.

Scan to watch Berner success story video!



## TASTY RESULTS:



**95%**  
reduction  
in workers' compensation  
expense over two years



**92%**  
reduction  
in number of terminations  
from 13 to one over two years



**80%**  
reduction  
in nonconforming product  
expense over two years



**Best  
safety run**  
without lost-time injury in the  
company's 70-year history

## WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS USED:



## The right people in the right roles

### BERNER'S BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Food and beverage processing is a rapidly changing field. Computerized equipment and automation is essential to ensure product safety and competitiveness.

As a result, the skills needed to operate technical equipment have evolved, and the effects of ineffective hiring were painfully clear to Berner:

- » High turnover
- » Significant training time and cost
- » Product waste
- » Profit-draining workers' compensation claims

“

We wanted to spot those 'diamonds in the rough.' We were surprised at how many of our people had the skills to succeed in higher positions at higher pay, and we set out to challenge them to achieve more, earn more, and create a career path for their future.”

**Paul Calvagna**  
Human Resources Director

# Assess new hires and old pros

## THE SOLUTION

In exploring solutions to reduce turnover, president and CEO Stephen Kneubuehl was introduced to WorkKeys® and the National Career Readiness Certificate™ (NCRC®).

“I remember thinking at the time that this was just so logical. It made so much sense that I wondered why this was the first I'd heard of it,” Kneubuehl recalls.

He was intrigued by the idea of using a standardized workplace skills assessment tool and credential with Berner's current employees and applicants.

“

We asked employees and our leadership to take assessments. Overall, our intention was to gain a sense of the skills our people really have and how we can help them grow.”

### Jody Gowin

Human Resources Manager  
and now an ACT-authorized Job Profiler

## COMPANY OVERVIEW

Located in Dakota, Illinois, Berner Foods is a 70-year-old, family-owned company with a 230-employee production facility. Berner is a leading private label supplier of quality food and beverage products for major retailers like Walmart, Target, ALDI, Kroger, Safeway, and Albertsons.

# So many Berner benefits

## OUTCOMES

### LOWERED WORKERS' COMPENSATION COSTS

“Over the course of two years, Berner was able to reduce workers' compensation by \$285,000. That's a 95% improvement and is largely the result of having the right individual in the right position.”

### Paul Calvagna

Human Resources Director

### RETURN ON INVESTMENT

“It costs Berner around \$5,000 just to train a new employee, and if he/she is not the right fit, we've lost that investment and still have to find someone. When you implement WorkKeys testing and the NCRC, the cost is extremely minimal.”

### Stephen Kneubuehl

President and CEO

### HIGHER MORALE

“One positive outcome that we hadn't anticipated is that the process really raised morale among our employees. They felt like they had a piece of paper that meant something.”

### Jody Gowin

Human Resources Manager  
and now an ACT-authorized Job Profiler

### REDUCED TURNOVER

“Our turnover numbers were essentially out of control; by turning to ACT, we were able to bring turnover down to slightly over 2%.”

### Stephen Kneubuehl

President and CEO

### STRONGER CAREER AND SUCCESS PLANNING

“WorkKeys and the NCRC provide a foundation for building a career. It's also a foundation on which Berner Food & Beverage can build a succession plan.”

### Stephen Kneubuehl

President and CEO

### DECREASE IN NONCONFORMING PRODUCT

Rework or product that must be scrapped is a drag on any company's bottom line. Berner reports an 80% reduction over the last two years.

## CASE IN POINT

One dramatic example involved a department where there were 13 terminations at an estimated cost of \$215,000; the next year, 12 terminations cost \$188,000.

And after full implementation, only one termination occurred the year after that—a 92% reduction, which resulted in cost savings of nearly \$200,000.

## CLOSING WORDS

“

There is no downside to this.”

### Paul Calvagna

Human Resources Director