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Alliance can help you hire workers you won't have to fire

By **JEFF ROWE**

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What if I told you there is a program that can help your business lower employee turnover, reduce training costs and increase productivity, would you be interested?

How about if I told you there is a program that serves as a common language between business and education, would you believe me?

Well, there is, and the program is called WorkKeys.

WorkKeys helps match employee skills to the skills required by a specific job. A "real world," apples-to-apples comparison is made by testing the current skills of individuals in three key areas — communications, problem solving and teamwork — against the skills employers believe are critical to job success.

Imagine having a job applicant hand you a WorkKeys "Work Readiness Certificate" that shows they have the skills needed to be successful with your company.

This program is an incredibly powerful tool for firms looking to improve their hiring process and for individuals interested in being able to prove that they have what it takes to be successful on the job. In fact, several local employers such as E.&J. Gallo Winery, Seneca Foods and Pacific Southwest Container are already using it as an integral component of their hiring process.

The best part? The benefits of WorkKeys can be realized at no cost to the employer.

We all know that the costs of employees leaving a company and hiring replacements can be dramatic. A study published by the Rainmaker Group, which specializes in employee selection, retention and coaching issues, says the costs can range from half to five times an employee's annual wages depending on the position.

WorkKeys can help companies of all sizes dramatically reduce expenses by using a better way to hire, promote and retain employees. That is why it is our goal to get more employers to recognize the Work Readiness Certificate and understand how to use it to make better hiring decisions.

Successful businesses realize that dollars saved by cost cutting impact profit as much as an increase in sales, and typically is much easier to achieve. It's not how much you make, it's how much you keep.

If a firm has a turnover rate of 25 percent — about the national average — and employs 40 employees, each earning \$25,000 annually, the cost of turning over 10 employees over the course of a year will be at least \$125,000. That's money that instead could go toward the bottom line.

A Harvard University study reports 80 percent of employee turnover can be attributed to mistakes made during the hiring process. WorkKeys can help eliminate those mistakes.

For more information on WorkKeys, contact the Stanislaus Economic Development & Workforce

Alliance at 567-4985 or www.stanalliance.com.

Rowe is director of the Stanislaus Alliance Worknet.

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Phone: (209) 578-2000.