

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDIES

ECONOMIC ALLIANCE OF THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

Education and Workforce Development Initiative

1. Initiative Description

The Education and Workforce Development Initiative (EWDI) is one of the five major program initiatives of the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley. The initiative was created to engage the regional business and education communities in a continuous, collaborative process for improving basic education and workforce development.

Implementation of the initiative involves the following six strategic elements:

- Provide a forum through which the business community can communicate, collaborate, and innovate with all critical stakeholders in the educational process.
- Inventory and showcase business/education partnership models with a proven track record of success
- Create interactive systems for matching business and community resources with educational needs
- Create a mechanism to track progress and results of San Fernando Valley educational institutions and the employability of San Fernando Valley workforce
- Recognize and celebrate excellence in educational achievement in the San Fernando Valley
- Encourage collaboration and coordination of the education and training components of CalWORKS and other workforce development programs in the San Fernando Valley.

2. Why did you undertake this initiative?

The San Fernando Valley is home to a very large and diversified economy that includes more than 50,000 businesses, a labor force of over 700,000 and a population of 1.6 million people spread across nearly 300 square miles. Our traditional industrial base of defense/aerospace, entertainment, healthcare and financial services is increasingly being supplemented by a rapidly emerging new technology base, which includes some of California's fastest growing high tech and biotech firms. This reality makes our regional economy even more dependent on the availability of a well-educated, highly skilled workforce. And therein lies the rub. Our educational institutions are struggling to deliver that workforce.

Eighty percent of our Valley's 250,000 school children are enrolled in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the second largest in the nation, with more than 700,000 students. The LAUSD's failures have been well-publicized in recent years and its traditionally union-dominated board has been insufficiently motivated to address the growing crisis (though this is beginning to change).

Although widely publicized reports have documented the LAUSD's shortcomings, we commissioned our own specific research of more than 1,500 Valley businesses to determine the scope of the workforce problem. We found that more than half our respondents cited not special trade skills, but rather basic skills — including English/communication, work ethic, customer service, basic math and computer skills — as being essential skills in their requirements for new employees. Employers also frequently cited exactly those same skills lacking in today's job applicants. Combining those facts with the high number of high school graduates in our Valley requiring remedial math and English classes at their two- or four-year colleges, the implementation of this Education and Workforce Development Initiative became imperative for our Alliance. If basic education continues to fail our children, then our colleges and businesses can't even begin to provide them with the specific training they'll need to succeed in our increasingly knowledge-based economy.

3. Why did you design it the way you did?

Our design stresses the active participation of all key stakeholders from business, education, government, and the community. We believe each of us has a critical role to play in finding and implementing solutions and that traditional fingerpointing at the LAUSD has gotten us nowhere. Since constructive collaboration is at the core of each thing we do in the Economic Alliance, we started by creating a committee of all the relevant stakeholders.

Since we believe our solutions will require a true partnership between the education and business communities, we carefully selected a prominent educator, the president of LA Valley College, and a prominent business person, the president of Precision Dynamics Corporation, as co-chairs for our initiative. Both have been active participants in numerous community organizations and are widely respected as effective collaborative leaders.

4. Whom did you include and why?

We invited approximately 40 stakeholders representing each of our Valley's school districts and colleges, as well as a number of different industries, workforce development programs, private industry councils, and community-based organizations to serve on the initiative steering committee. We felt it was essential to provide a forum, support, and encouragement for these stakeholders to meet regularly to first develop a sense of mutual respect and trust, and then work together to create a strategic, continuous, and collaborative regional solution to our very serious regional challenge.

5. What have been the most important results?

First, our steering committee carefully crafted the mission statement and strategy outlined in Part 1 of this case study. Second, we decided we needed to broaden the number of engaged participants in our initiative if we were to be successful in its implementation. This led directly to the creation of our First Valley-wide Summit on Education.

What we offered to Summit participants were proven models of successful local and regional business-education partnerships, presented first-hand by the experts who manage them. We researched and carefully sought out these experts, and then flew them in from around the country. They included Dr. Willard Daggett, president of the International Center for Leadership in Education in New York, James Ketelsen, founder and chairman of Houston's dramatically successful Project Grad program, and Tim Cuneo, senior vice president of Joint Venture Silicon Valley's 21st Century Education Initiative.

More than 250 business and education leaders attended our April '99 Summit (a complete sellout). It was hosted by Universal Studios and featured a keynote speech by California's Secretary of Education, Gary Hart. Mr. Hart clearly took note of and applauded our emerging regional commitments to a renaissance in public education.

Since that time, we have received highly positive feedback from our Summit attendees. We have increased participation in our ongoing initiative committee and increased interest from Valley businesses in establishing more strategic, outcome-based partnerships with local schools. Word-of-mouth and positive press coverage of our Summit also spread through our community and is creating a growing sense of regional commitment to improving our schools and holding them to higher standards.

6. What have you learned about how to do this right?

- Initiatives created to address real regional problems will draw volunteer participation
- Initiatives need their own mission statements and strategic plans, in addition to the organization's overall strategic plan
- Have your act together before you invite the broader business community to the table. Unfocused meetings are a turnoff to business people and once turned off, business people are hard to turn back on
- Educators do want help and are easier to attract to meetings than business people. Therefore, your business outreach must be more creative and consistent

- Public education’s problems can be overwhelming, so we must break down the problems into manageable pieces
- Search extensively for proven programs which may exist to address your problems rather than trying to start from scratch to develop your solutions. Recruiting volunteers to help implement a program that has already proven successful is easier than asking them to get involved purely on faith. You can still tailor proven programs to meet your specific needs
- Embrace all stakeholders. Don’t allow the blame game to alienate anyone. Everyone has a role to play in the solution.

7. What are the most relevant implications for other regions?

Don’t accept the status quo. Programs that you can implement and that will measurably help improve education in your local schools do exist.

Businesses in your region have considerable resources to contribute to improving education, yet most of them are not doing so strategically. Most businesses do “something” to support local education — give money, offer volunteers, make facility tours available, etc. But very few have developed a strategy to guide their involvement with education. You can help them do so. It need not even cost them more to be more strategic. They simply have to focus on desired outcomes for improvement, share those outcomes with their local schools and their own employees and design partnerships between the two to achieve measurable results.

SACRAMENTO REGIONAL ACTION PARTNERSHIP

Business Education Partnership

1. Initiative Description

The Capitol Region Business Education Partnership is one of seven initiatives of the Sacramento Region Action Network.

The mission of the Partnership is to create an industry/education partnership for K-16 education as a model in the Sacramento region to support the needs of both business and education. The purpose of the Partnership is to:

- Support schools and educators in achieving their strategic plan and mission in the following areas:
 - Student attendance: By 2001, student attendance will average at least 95 percent in every Sacramento school.
 - Proficiency standards: By 2001, nine out of 10 Sacramento students will meet or exceed proficiency standards in reading, mathematics and English language.
 - Graduation rate: By 2001, at least nine out of 10 students in every class that starts high school as ninth-graders will meet rigorous academic standards and graduate on time, prepared for productive and responsible citizenship.
 - Success beyond school: By 2001, at least nine out of 10 high school graduates within a year of graduation will be engaged in a productive activity, such as higher education; the workforce; or military.
- What Business will do:
 - Provide opportunities for students and teachers to work in our businesses and for our employees to spend time in the classroom.
- What Business wants:
 - Increase the pool of qualified job applicants by 15% to meet our employer needs and interest other companies to locate in our region.

2. Why did you undertake this initiative?

We need the schools and businesses to work together for the long-term health of our community. We cannot have a healthy, productive, and safe community without a solid educational and business base. The time and attention we pay to our students today will affect all of our lives and also have an effect on our future generations.

3. Why did you design it the way you did?

Improving the K-16 system is a big issue and an overwhelming one when you think of the challenges faced by all the schools and businesses in our four-county region. We are beginning with a model as a pilot with a specific school district (the Sacramento Unified School District). We chose this approach for this pilot because this large school district needs our help and has an aligned school board, administration, teaching and support staff that knows what needs to improve and realizes they are accountable.

In the next month, we will begin marketing our plan to hundreds of companies asking for their commitment in providing opportunities for student interns, mentors from their staffs, speakers for the classrooms, and opportunities for teachers to see what we need in our work sites.

4. Whom did you include and why?

Members of the **local schools districts** are core partners. Not only do they have accountability for system improvement, but the Partnership Chair also wanted to understand first-hand what hopes and fears they had and to learn from their past experiences. **Local business representatives** are included, with the desire to see if the Partnership could count on their cooperation and gain their commitment. **Local community support groups** are involved, because the Partnership did not want to compete with them, but to work with them in supporting the needs of the schools and the students.

5. What have been the most important results?

There have been several:

- We took more time on the front-end to discuss our options, to debate our possible actions, and to build support and understanding
- We created a board comprising 50% business leaders and 50% school and community support representatives
- We are now finalizing our marketing plan and building a web site to facilitate communications.

6. What have you learned about how to do this right?

I don't know if we have done things right; that will take a couple of years to evaluate. I've learned that when you are working with diverse groups, it takes more time to let people state their positions and build consensus. Also, a few dedicated people are ten times more effective than a lot of interested people. You need long-distance runners to make this successful, not sprinters. This involvement requires long-term commitment and faith.

7. What are the most relevant implications for other regions?

- Learn from others' successes and failures
- Be prepared for turf battles, frustrations, setbacks, and doubts
- The problems, or challenges, can appear very big, so you must establish short-term goals to build momentum and help people see that together we can make a difference
- If you had to walk for 2,000 miles you may be overwhelmed and never start, but you start with your first step. Before long, you will know and feel the progress you are making and hopefully your children, and their children, will benefit from the efforts we are undertaking today.

GATEWAY CITIES PARTNERSHIP

Workforce Initiative

1. Initiative Description

The Gateway Cities Partnership Workforce Initiative is intended to bring 15,000 non-college bound youth into high-paying manufacturing employment over the next ten years. A secondary aim is to expand the region's precision machining sector and create a technological and training edge for the region's industry in North America.

The initiative has four components:

- Resource Development: financial, classrooms and training equipment
- Curriculum Development: community colleges and industry partners
- Industry Outreach: manufacturers and the business community
- Marketing: promoting employment opportunities to youth, parents, educators and administrators.

2. Why did you undertake this initiative?

The manufacturing industry, particularly the aerospace-related machining industry, has been and continues to be the economic backbone of the Gateway Cities region. The region is home to thousands of small- and medium-sized manufacturers who provide precision-machined tools, parts, and finished products for a variety of industries. One of the crucial issues confronting the machining industry is a shortage of skilled machinists and tool and dye makers.

The shortage of tool and die makers is severe and long term. *"A U.S. Department of Labor study in 1993 showed that, of all job categories, the tool and die/precision machinist job category has one of the greatest forecast shortages of workers of all job categories because so few machinists are being trained. The forecast net unfilled job openings for 1990-2005 as a percent of job openings shows a 71% deficit for precision machinists vs. surpluses of 58% for lawyers; 16% for executives; and 189% for marketing/PR."*

At the same time, less than 30% of the young people who complete high school in the Gateway Cities Region will go on to a four-year college. Many of these young people leave school with the belief that their only option is "flipping hamburgers" when this is really not the case, especially if they have received a good high school education and possess the desire to work and learn. The opportunity exists to bring these two constituencies together and match the need of the employers for skilled workers with the need of our youth for family-wage jobs.

Because the machining industry is such a significant source of employment in the region, paying a skilled machinist \$55,000 to \$70,000 per year, it can offer family-wage employment to high school graduates and others who do not, for the present, aspire to a college education.

3. Why did you design it the way you did?

This initiative grew from discussions between the Partnership and the metals industry in the region. There was an identified need for workforce development in the region, but no one had identified either specific industries or skill sets. The initiative is designed to leverage existing resources to meet an existing and future need. The design knits together the partners who will be involved in solving the problem, i.e., the community, business, and the educational institutions. The crucial role of the Partnership was to identify and quantify the specific need and facilitate the bridge between the three entities.

The Initiative's heavy focus on reaching out to the minority communities is guided by the fact that many of the parents in the region are non-English speaking, hourly-paid workers who do not have experience with skilled career paths. Even with English-speaking families, multi-generational unemployment is often an issue. Attracting young people into manufacturing employment requires an outreach/marketing program that will inform them about their career choices, attract them into the manufacturing field, and encourage them to focus on completing their basic education with a strong emphasis on English, science, and math. This strong emphasis will also serve as a foundation to further career opportunities should these young people choose to continue their education. For example, a youth who enters the machining industry as a first career step may pursue a career in engineering.

4. Whom did you include and why?

The original concept came from the Partnership Board. However, in designing the Initiative itself, we established separate committees to work on various aspects of the Initiative. The groups included representatives of the minority communities in the region, small- and medium-sized businesses, high school teachers and administrators, and the community colleges in the region.

5. What have been the most important results?

There has been an immediate increase in training opportunities in the region. The four Community Colleges responded by placing a greater emphasis on training for the precision machining industry. New fast track curricula have been developed. Probably the most significant result for the region, since we are not home to many large corporations, is that we have engaged the small- and medium-sized companies, albeit with great difficulty.

6. What have you learned about how to do this right?

The turning point in this issue came when we were able to identify and articulate the problem and put hard numbers together for individuals and organizations to consider. For many people the term “Workforce Development” is too nebulous, and it is difficult to get organizations to focus unless the “need” is quantified. The other learning point that keeps coming up is that a constant flow of information is required to provide context for what is being done and to infuse continuing excitement and commitment.

7. What are the most relevant implications for other regions?

The growing shortage of skilled workers offers opportunity for high school graduates who will not, for now at least, be going on to college. These are family-wage jobs that can stabilize communities and offer hope to people who are often told there is no hope because they did not go to a four-year college. It is vital to quantify the workforce development issues in a community and use this information to galvanize organizations, public and private, into action.

Humboldt County Workforce Development Partnership**1. Initiative Description**

The primary purpose of this initiative was to create a workforce development system in Humboldt County that is both coordinated and responsive to the needs of its customers, businesses, and those seeking work. The newly structured system will be capable of playing a more vital role in the economic development of the region by developing a workforce that enhances the global competitiveness of local industry clusters.

2. Why did you undertake this initiative?

Due to our remoteness from markets and transportation difficulties inherent in our location, the diversification of our economy from one dominated by resources extraction is challenging. Our primary strategy lies in the retention and growth of existing businesses and the expansion of several small business “clusters.” In the past, millions of dollars have been spent in education, training, and economic development that has not resulted in increased success of local businesses. Creating a greater level of collaboration between economic development efforts and systems that can enhance the global competitiveness of those industries is critical.

3. Why did you design it the way you did?

The Workforce Development Partnership is a collaboration of diverse organizations and agencies involved in economic development, education, and workforce preparation with the common goal of meeting the challenge of developing an economy capable of sustaining the residents of the North Coast. The Partnership has been working to develop a shared vision for the delivery of workforce preparation, education, and training services that links with economic development efforts for the region. The Partnership acknowledged that the new Workforce Development system for Humboldt County could not be created while we were still focused on the needs of existing programs and began with a simple question, “Given a blank slate, what kind of system would we create to meet our workforce needs?”

4. Whom did you include and why?

The envisioned workforce development system consists of three networks: North Coast School-to-Career Consortium (education/training), Industry Development Network (Economic development, business/industry and labor), and One-Stop Delivery system (labor support services). The role of the networks was once likened to a three-legged stool. For the stool to be stable, all legs have to have structural integrity and contribute support. If one or more of the legs are weak, the stool is worthless. Hence, the networks are frequently referred to as the “legs” of the workforce development system.

Each individual network has specific goals in regard to the new system:

School to Career Consortium:

- Increase the integration of academic subjects at all grade levels and create new opportunities for students in grades 9-12 to apply their classroom learning to real life and workplace situations
- Create a transparent system of skills development and upgrading for key industry clusters in the region. This will include local high schools, the Community College and Humboldt State University jointly developing common marketing materials, additional short-term, skill-based training opportunities and articulated curriculum where appropriate.

Industry Cluster Network

- Development of a broadly adopted economic development strategy, using as its core the industry cluster model. The strategy will include an analysis of current workforce and infrastructure needs as well as opportunities for the growth of those industries
- Create more formalized linkages within industry clusters as well as between industry clusters and education and training.

One-Stop Delivery System

- Development of a “no wrong door” delivery system that services both job seekers, those looking to upgrade their skills, and employers looking for employees.

5. What have been the most important results?

- There has been a significant increase in communication between the networks
- There has been a significant amount of information garnered from the clusters about their needs
- There is demonstrated support of the economic development process and the industry cluster model by the private sector, the networks, and the Board of Supervisors
- The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors has acknowledged the Workforce Development Partnership as an integral partner in transitioning Humboldt County to compliance with the Workforce Investment Act
- The North Coast Textile Design Center was created. The Center provides commercial sewing machine operation and repair training in support of our specialized sportswear industry, assists

entrepreneurs in developing marketable products, and provides linkages within the textile industry cluster

- Industry clusters have had the opportunity to come together, many for the first time, to discuss their needs as a group
- As one of six pilot regions funded under the Regional Workforce Preparation and Economic Development Act, we have had the opportunity to provide input to the state about potential issues for rural regions
- As a participant in the Civic Entrepreneurship Network, we have had the opportunity to expand the State Economic Strategy Panel's vision of the economies of rural areas.

6. What have you learned about how to do this right?

- The private sector has little patience for the amount of process it takes to move the bureaucracy. Private sector individuals who have had past experience with public sector boards and commissions are reluctant to participate.
- We find ourselves acting as translators between the public and private sectors.
- It is important to undergo a significant amount of process before the engagement of the private sector; private sector time needs to be utilized strategically.
- The private sector has the influence to change the system; however, due to their lack of interest in the process, opportunities for them to speak out for change need to be designed separately from the initial board development processes.

7. What are the most relevant implications for other regions?

It is difficult to create real change in bureaucratic systems that have, according to performance standards determined by their funding source, been successes and yet do not contribute to the vitality of our economy. The vision of success needs to be changed at the State and Federal levels.

The overlay of the Workforce Investment Act has resulted in a board size beyond our wildest dreams (30-50 members). Creating a framework for getting anything done will be challenging. We are interested in exploring alternatives to the typical executive committee and sub-committee structure, since it often results in alienating board members, discouraging consensus, and minimizing an understanding of the "big picture" by individual board members. Instead, we are working on holding board meetings a

minimum number of times per year in a “summit” setting, where there is a focus on reviewing progress and identifying current needs.

It will be very easy to slip into a business-as-usual mode. Whether the new governance structure actually results in positive economic change for both businesses and residents depends on the level of private-sector involvement and the ability of these groups to identify and articulate their needs. All regions in California are facing this challenge, and our approach may increase the ability to create a more responsive workforce development system.

Closing the Achievement Gap in San Diego's Public Schools**1. Initiative Description**

San Diego Dialogue has formed a research and civic education initiative on K-12 school reform in San Diego County. The focus of this initiative is to close the achievement gap between low-income and minority students and their more affluent peers in the region's public schools. The Dialogue is conducting applied research to measure the nature and scope of the achievement gap and is analyzing the distribution of educational resources between different schools and school districts. This analysis includes examining the relationship between school site socio-economic characteristics, teaching capacity, and student achievement. We have also formed the Partnership for School Reform, a council of civic leaders that is dedicated to defining constructive ways for the community to support aggressive, standards-based reform in the region's public schools.

2. Why did you undertake this initiative?

Our diverse member base concluded that the sustainable economic development of our metropolitan region is dependent on offering high-quality educational opportunities to all of San Diego's students. Moreover, the unsustainable, "sprawl"-oriented pattern of our urban development may be arrested by closing the performance gap between the region's central city schools and their suburban counterparts and therefore attracting housing to the urban core.

3. Why did you design it the way you did?

As with all of the Dialogue's initiatives, we have found that applied research, which uses good data to enlighten citizens, is a useful tool for organizing community leadership around school reform issues. The focus of our work is to prepare and present data on school performance and K-12 reform issues that is transparent and accessible to the public.

4. Whom did you include and why?

At the core of the initiative is a group of San Diego Dialogue members with a particular interest in school reform. The Partners for School Reform is composed of leading regional employers, community-based organizations, institutions of higher education, and regional elected officials. All the major institutional players in the region's central school district (the School Board, the Superintendent, the President of the teachers' union, the administrators' association and parent groups) have equal representation on the Partners council.

5. What have been the most important results?

The Dialogue released a study on the K-12 achievement gap in San Diego Unified School District in January of 1999. This study revealed the significant gaps in educational performance and the distribution of education resources (particularly the distribution of qualified and experienced teachers) between high-poverty and low-poverty schools. The study served to focus attention on K-12 education and highlighted the achievement gap as an organizing tool for engaging in K-12 reform issues.

Since the release of the study, the Dialogue has begun to convene the K-12 Partners on a regular basis to focus on major reform issues confronting the region's school districts. The Partners have provided a forum for working through the tough issues associated with standards-based reform. For example, the Co-Chair of the Partners (the President of San Diego State University) and the Executive Director of San Diego Dialogue played a critical role in breaking a deadlock between new leadership of San Diego Unified School District and the San Diego Education Association (the local teacher's union). Through their efforts, over 100 outstanding teachers were deployed throughout the District to serve as peer coaches on standards-based instruction to fellow faculty members.

Currently, the Partners are focused on defining "a system that works" by identifying the critical elements that characterize high-performing schools, regardless of their socio-economic status. These elements, as well as further data on the achievement gap in San Diego County, will be published in a second report to be released in the fall of 1999.

6. What have you learned about how to do this right?

Simultaneously engage all institutional stakeholders in these types of efforts. Don't allow yourself to be painted as "the business community" or "the reform leadership" that is positioned against teachers unions or other stakeholders.

Spend time understanding data – both its strengths and its limitations. For example, we have devoted significant efforts to understand and educate the public about the relative value of the Stanford 9 standardized test. We don't use the Stanford 9 as our sole measure of school performance, but we recognize its value in comparing schools with similar socio-economic and demographic characteristics.

Seek out and publicize examples of success. We have spent significant time researching and presenting data from school systems in other parts of the country (e.g. New York's District 2, El Paso) where standards-based reform has helped to substantially close the gap.

Don't try to get civic entrepreneurs to spend a lot of time on educational policy questions. The relative merits of specific curricula or teaching strategies don't matter to community stakeholders. Get them to deeply understand the basic principles, such as:

- All children can learn at relatively high levels
- Assessments must be aligned with academic standards
- High-quality teachers make the biggest difference in increasing student performance
- Instructional time should be extended to help those students who need additional assistance to “get over the bar”
- Accountability means real consequences for adults in the schools.

Then get them to think of creative ways to get involved with implementing standards-based instruction (e.g. upgrading technology, stocking classroom libraries with books, etc.).

7. What are the most relevant implications for other regions?

The San Diego City Schools are a demographic preview for the state of California. All of California’s schools will need to face the challenge of ensuring that low-income and minority (but soon to be majority) kids can meet rigorous, world-class academic standards.

JOINT VENTURE: SILICON VALLEY NETWORK

Workforce Partnership Initiative

1. Initiative Description

Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network's Workforce Partnership Initiative addresses the Valley's need to develop the region's workforce, assuring that the supply of skilled workers matches the available opportunities. Research sponsored by the Partnership has identified a critical skilled workforce gap which has an enormous cost for employers and residents, and which threatens the sustainability of the region. Analysis of underlying causes and identification of potential strategies for a collaborative, integrated approach are the focus of next steps. Workforce development is a high priority for Joint Venture, as the people and the economy of Silicon Valley are inextricably linked, and the people are the key to a successful economy and sustainable prosperity for the region.

2. Why did you undertake this initiative?

The Joint Venture Silicon Valley Network Council of CoChairs cited access to a diverse and skilled talent pool as being an important part of their decision-making process on site location for business attraction and retention. With their human resources staff reporting workforce shortages, the business high-tech executives believed that this was a growing problem that needed to be defined. The driving force of the Silicon Valley economy is technology – specifically, specialized clusters of technology firms and talent, the “knowledge worker.” Nearly 40% of Silicon Valley's workforce is employed in technology-related industries and many more jobs are tied to the health of these industries. These clusters are dynamic, constantly innovating and changing as evidenced by the recent explosion of Internet companies in the Valley. While the Valley's economy has considerable strengths, the question for the future is whether this dynamic economy is sustainable, given critical workforce shortages.

3. Why did you design it the way you did?

Joint Venture: Silicon Valley is known to be a convenor of business and industry, government, and education to identify and act on issues related to building a sustainable community. Since 1995, employment has been growing much faster than the local labor force, causing a tightening in the regional labor market and creating a workforce gap between skilled labor resources required and the region's ability to meet that demand. Employers indicated three key drivers of the workforce shortage: limited supply of qualified candidates, high housing costs in Silicon Valley which affect attraction and retention of talent, and high wages which hinder small- to mid-size companies' ability to hire.

In the early stages of the Workforce Partnership Initiative, the loudest collective voice on the workforce shortage was coming from an industry cluster that had developed a nationwide model for workforce development: the semiconductor manufacturing industry. An industry cluster advisory team was formed

to guide and direct the development of the strategies related to this need based on this national model. It also was necessary to begin with data that could quantify the incremental cost of the workforce gap to the high-tech industry in the Valley. It was felt that employers needed to understand the total employment lifecycle cost perspective in order to recognize the need for cultural change to “grow the pie” of Silicon Valley labor. From that first partnership initiative, other industry clusters were formed around information technology, education and biotechnology.

4. Whom did you include and why?

A major accomplishment was the clear identification of the magnitude and cost of skilled worker gap, the underlying causes, and the “call-to-action” to secure the sustainability of the region over the long term. According to research conducted by Joint Venture and A.T. Kearney, the incremental cost of the workforce gap to the high-tech industry in the Valley is \$3-4 billion annually, and significantly higher when we consider the impact on community and quality of life. As employers, educators, trainers, government and other partners understand this challenge, they can collaboratively and holistically allocate the appropriate level of resources to address this workforce shortage.

The findings of the workforce gap study also indicated that student familiarity with high-tech careers does not necessarily lead to their pursuit of majors related to high tech in college. The potential for jeopardizing the pipeline of future skilled workers has been a call-to-action for community groups in regionalizing efforts related to career awareness, career planning and business/education linkages to “excite” our youth about knowledge worker and manufacturing industry careers.

While there are many individual efforts underway by local educational institutions, community groups, industry associations and employers, none of these have affected a regional, systemic or lasting improvement on the workforce gap. Creating a process which results in collaboration and participation among all stakeholders to address the workforce gap issue is an important step. Defining the key success factors to decrease the gap is being discussed. An example is the current look at a curriculum linkage between work competency behaviors and tasks and educational skills and standards. Another is reviewing the success factors with various types of initiatives for raising student awareness and excitement in high tech careers. Expanding the focus and scope of these efforts and creating the linkage of subject matter fundamentals with prospective job opportunities at an early enough stage in a student’s educational development is the current challenge.

5. What have been the most important results?

As indicated above, high-tech firms, industry associations, educators from the K-12 and community college systems, representatives of employment and training organizations and other community-based organizations, and government are all involved in the Workforce Partnership Initiative because they are all key stakeholders and they all have resources to address the needs.

6. What have you learned about how to do this right?

It is very important to define the problem with clarity and select strategies that have measurable outcomes so that progress toward solving the problem can be illustrated. It is also important to involve the appropriate stakeholders, including business and not just the service providers, so that the complexity of the problem can be addressed with multi-layered approaches regardless of geopolitical boundaries. Finally, it is important to define the problem in simple terms. Our call-to-action is “to close the workforce gap.”

7. What are the most relevant implications for other regions?

Other regions are dealing with such common goals as promoting an innovative economy, sustaining a livable environment, or creating an inclusive society for all; utilizing a baseline index of data to measure progress and focus on the goals will be important. Starting with data or evaluation measures to quantify and validate the problem definition will rally the key leadership and provide a call-to-action for stakeholders. How our communities will be affected by the cultural change that occurs around these new emerging industries and how we can influence the outcome for positive, sustainable economic growth are both questions for dialogue, now that business and industry are not placebound.