

Summary Profile of a WoodLINKS USA Partnership – The Benchmark

The theory behind WoodLINKS is that the wood industry and a public education system – a high school or a technical school – work together to deliver a wood manufacturing education program that meets the direct – entry skilled worker needs of a local wood industry profile. This way, our supporting companies can assist in the development of the local program and can recruit the skilled workers they need to become more competitive.

WoodLINKS is a program that certifies students to a National Industry Standard for the wood industry. In addition to producing our own entry level skilled workers, many of these students go on to College or University wood manufacturing courses and will become the managers and leaders of our industry in the future.

It is vital to the success of the program that the supporting local industries play a *“big brother”* leadership role in helping schools, teachers and students understand and appreciate the career opportunities that we offer and the technologies that we use in producing our products. Our doors must be wide-open to support the program in any way that we can. And we must do it smartly without too much added cost and time.

The Attributes of a Functional Partnership – The Benchmark

The characteristics of a WoodLINKS industry - education partnership are as follows:

- The partnership **MUST** have strong leadership from a local industry leader or concerned citizen. This is vital to the success of the program.
- The partnership **MUST** have strong ongoing support from local wood industries.
- The teacher and school system **MUST** agree to do things outside the box of traditional shop classes and be willing to accept the new, forward-thinking challenges of the program.
- The partnership **MUST** respect the role that public education can play in resolving a major industry need or problem.
- The partnership **MUST** form an effective working group (industry support committee) that will lead and guide the program.
- The partnership **MUST** meet as often as necessary to make certain that all the needs of the teacher and industries are being met.
- The partnership **MUST** agree on a local WoodLINKS curriculum that will meet the needs of the local wood industries.
- All members of the partnership **MUST** trust and respect the roles that each other play. Our doors must be wide – open.

It is important to understand that WoodLINKS can play a key role in developing the future skilled worker needs of our industry and also encourage more students to look at the wood industry as a career opportunity. We can also start filling the empty seats in our college and university wood manufacturing programs.

With an **EFFECTIVE and ACTIVE partnership** between local industries and the local WoodLINKS high school program, the program will succeed beyond anyone’s expectation and your key problem of finding skilled workers will be greatly reduced.