



*Conferences that Inspire Solutions*

## **Training and Educating the Workforce of Today**

### **Key Takeaways from John Thurman's Session**

Taiwanese electronics powerhouse Foxconn will soon be setting up shop in Racine County. With a client list that includes such iconic brands as Sony, Apple, and Microsoft, you'd be hard-pressed to find someone who doesn't own multiple products manufactured by the company. Foxconn's Mount Pleasant-based manufacturing campus is projected to bring thousands of new jobs, facilitate renewed interest in the area, and help Racine foster a reputation as a hub for advanced manufacturing.

With Foxconn slated to bring an abundance of career opportunities to the area, many local jobseekers will need to undergo specialized training in order to fill these roles. For the community to foster a workforce of the future, a comprehensive workforce development system must be put in place. This entails local placement services and staffing agencies working together to pair qualified individuals with the right jobs. They can also direct jobseekers to federal agencies that provide career-training components, such as HUD and HHS. By pooling their efforts, making efficient use of their respective budgets, and regularly communicating with one another, these organizations can effectively match qualified applicants with sustainable careers and get people the training they need to succeed in the current job market.

In communities with high employment, matching unemployed and underemployed jobseekers with suitable careers often presents a challenge, as these individuals typically have much greater needs than those who are working. With Racine nearly at full employment, finding jobs for residents who have been out of work for long periods can be an uphill battle without a workforce development system in place. Conversely, when local employment specialists, training providers, and government agencies engage in active communication, they can bring these individuals back into the fold in a timely and efficient manner.

Education providers also have a role to play in shaping workforce development systems. By partnering with local employers and staffing agencies, schools can zero in on the

needs of the job market and adjust certain curriculums accordingly. In working towards full employment, it's imperative to provide middle school, high school, and college students with career pathways. This means making them aware of in-demand careers and providing them with the tools needed to succeed in technical fields. Students who graduate with industry certification credentials are highly desirable to employers and are often able to find work right out of school. Although advanced manufacturing certifications will be a boon to students who wish to work for Foxconn, the company's presence will also create a greater need for workers in other technical fields, such as nursing, construction, and law enforcement.

Even in high-employment communities like Racine, some individuals inevitably fall through the cracks, while others are unaware of more lucrative opportunities in their respective fields. In addition, many students complete their compulsory educations without any marketable skills. A functional workforce development system is crucial to tackling these issues head-on and helping our community achieve full employment.