

IGNORANCE IS EXPENSIVE: INVEST IN EMPLOYEES AND EDUCATION

IN FLORIDA, COMMUNITIES, COMPANIES AND BUSINESS LEADERS ARE JOINING FORCES TO PROVIDE A BETTER WORK-LIFE MIX FOR THE STATE'S WORKFORCE. Employers in it for the long haul realize that investing in their own workforce pays off right away and opens new avenues to growth.

That's why JAXUSA, a division of the JAX Chamber, is expanding the nucleus of talent development in the Jacksonville area. Employees and companies can plateau when they don't have the right mix of technical, problem-solving and business skills to make the most of new opportunities. JAXUSA aligns local high schools, colleges, municipalities and businesses to equip today's workers with skills they, and their employers, need for long-term growth.

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Baptist Health System, for instance, is a leading example of an organization that empowers and develops their internal team members to fill open positions. Partnering with local colleges, Baptist Health offers educational opportunities at no cost to selected team members from various entry-level positions, such as environmental services and food and nutrition. This win-win opportunity helps to develop dedicated team members who have a passion for patient care, while also reducing an identified shortage of qualified staffing needs. Similar programs are blooming around Florida as community colleges collaborate with employers.



The whole spectrum is designed to open new growth for the staff while solving a chronic staffing challenge for the hospital, explains Tina Wirth, vice president of Workforce Development with JAXUSA Partnership.

Community colleges are also helping employers meet workforce demands by providing better information around high-growth occupations.

The Career Pathways program at Indian River State College helps new high school graduates and midlife adults zero in on the exact blend of classes and work experiences that qualify them to win high-growth positions in industries ranging from construction to digital arts.

Adults who want to shift career direction midstream can gain traction in their new lanes through programs that let them earn college equivalency credit for what they already know.