



# Make the Call

## ProCore Solutions meets challenges with Quick Start training

In a Chattahoochee Technical College classroom, students bound around the room waving sheets of paper.

“Three P in a HG? Anyone got three P in a HG?” someone calls out. “Who knows 26 M in a M?” asks someone else.

Sounds like a bingo game gone awry, but it’s actually a puzzle-solving exercise that helps newly hired, front-line call-center employees for ProCore Solutions learn the value of teamwork. The students are among the more than 100 employees hired recently after the company won a contract to handle inbound sales and customer-

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care calls for utility provider Gas South.

“We can already see results in quality thanks to the Quick Start training,” says Lauren Slaughter, ProCore’s director of training and development. “Quick Start spends a lot of time talking about handling the customer, being customer-focused.

We’ve seen direct, solid, positive results in that customer experience area. I attribute that to the training.”

Greg Steele (far right), president and COO of ProCore Solutions, praises a successful training partnership. Front row (from left): Sandra Morris, Quick Start director of performance technology; Alex Ferdinand, Chattahoochee Technical College vice president of economic development; Jackie Rohosky, DTAE assistant commissioner of economic development programs; and Mary Fornoff, Quick Start training coordinator. Back row: Lauren Slaughter, ProCore director of training and development, and Derrick Williams, ProCore training specialist.



## Training at work

At ProCore's state-of-the-art Marietta call center one week later, the situation is similar to that in the classroom — only no pseudo-bingo. This time it's for real. As the new employees take calls from customers and potential customers of Gas South, they find themselves occasionally putting their heads together to solve problems handling everything from billing to how to sign up for Gas South service.

"If your people are confident, they'll take on any challenge you give them; and when this group sat down, they were confident," says Tyndall Chapman, ProCore director of client services. "They had good



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training and they knew that if anything came up, they could handle it."

And they did. According to Greg Steele, company president and chief operating officer, ProCore Solutions almost immediately began outperforming Gas South's previous call center on both percentage of sales made per call and amount of time spent on each call.

"A shorter time per call tells us our employees went through training and know how to handle a customer," says Steele. "On their first day, we went from eight minutes per call to six and a half. With 3000 calls per day on average, what Quick Start did in designing and delivering a training program has literally saved hundreds of thousands of dollars."

## Tradition of training

Chattahoochee Tech and Quick Start have been partners with ProCore Solutions ever since it began and grew from about 11 to nearly 300 employees.

"The company was formed in 2000, and almost immediately they began sending their




Members of the ProCore Solutions team participate in a Quick Start class in "Managing Difficult Situations."

employees through Certified Customer Service Specialist courses," says Alex Ferdinand, Chattahoochee Tech vice president of economic development. "In fact, ProCore was the first time we offered CCSS classes specifically for one company — something we do all the time now."

At one time, more than 60 percent of ProCore employees were trained through the CCSS program. Attesting to its value as a retention tool, many of them are still with the company.

"You can definitely see the results of the CCSS training in lowered attrition; many of our customer service representatives who went through the program are still here," says Slaughter. "Many of them went on to take leadership roles because they have solid quality metrics attributable to that program."

Ferdinand agrees that investments in training pay off. "Retention is largely based on how employees perceive the investment of a company back into its employees," he says.

At a luncheon the company held to show appreciation to the Quick Start team, Steele summed up what the relationship has meant to him. "We're proud that our employees were trained through Quick Start. It's a sense of pride for me that we have this relationship," he said. "What Quick Start has delivered was above our level of expectation. It worked." 



ProCore's Marietta, Ga., facility.