



Client Profile: SAFE Boats International

Marine Manufacturing and Welding Supervision Certification Funded by WA State Job Skills Program Grant

The Need:

Established in 1997, SAFE (Secure All-Around Flotation Equipped) Boats International is a prominent boat manufacturing company based out of Bremerton, Washington. This company specializes in assembling marine vessels for various U.S. Federal and Government agencies, such as the military, fire and rescue, and law enforcement. Since 1997, SAFE Boats has expanded to include three manufacturing locations, all in close proximity to the Seattle-Tacoma area. Detailed organizational analysis determined that the client was in dire need of an upgrade in industry skill and knowledge base within the naval manufacturing field in order to encourage the growth and longevity of the organization.

Rigging and integration are the first installation steps within each system in the marine vessel production process. The assembly process also involves the installation of HVAC, refrigeration, electrical, and proprietary army and navy electronics.

Employee participants expressed interest in integrating with Customer Service teams and moving into Supervisory-Management positions. Customer Service teams travel internationally to address warranty defects such as electrical or engine malfunction. If not handled efficiently and with precision, these warranty defects can become very costly for SAFE Boats. Issues associated with manufacturing processes on the production floor are resolved by modifying construction practices and implementing new solutions for producing quality products.

The client emphasized the need for the following: a.) development in maritime work standards specific to employee participant role/skill levels and, b.) reduction in the amount of defective quality products provided to SAFE Boats clients. Further knowledge and skill development was necessary in the areas of marine standards, marine electrical, marine corrosion and welding supervision.

The Invista Solution:

Invista crafted a training program tailored to SAFE Boats needs and applied for a JSP (Job Skills Program) matching grant through the State of Washington to offset the organization's training expenses. Invista was awarded a grant in the amount of \$104,930.00 to provide training to SAFE Boats. [Washington's Job Skills Program \(JSP\)](#) funds training customized to meet employers' specific needs; the employer commits to matching the grant with wages and benefits paid during the training program. Training is delivered to new or current employees at the work site or in an offsite classroom. The SAFE Boats JSP slated five

professional certification courses in the following areas: Marine Standards, Marine Electrical, Marine Corrosion and Certified Welding Supervision (offered twice). Invista forecasted that these customized training opportunities would be optimal in promoting the future success of the organization as the client continually develops and expands their product and client base; SAFE Boats would benefit from significant cost reductions, while simultaneously enhancing the employee population's maritime and welding supervision knowledge base.

Results:

There were 123 employee participants who were trained over the length of 126 classroom hours and a six month period, increasing the number of cross-trained employees by 1.76% and accounting for nearly one third of the current employee population. The trainees included leads, supervisors, managers, technicians, riggers and architects. Vessel defects ultimately decreased 52.63% as employees learned new skills and applied them to the manufacturing process.

SAFE Boats reflected on the positive impact of the Job Skills Training Program on the organization:

- The number of cross-trained employees increased, accounting for nearly a third of the current employee population;
- Marine vessel defects were reduced significantly as training progressed within the program;
- Wasted manufacturing process time was decreased as a direct result of increased skill;
- The number of Supervisor and Management employees increased;
- Employee participants were professionally certified in marine skills subject areas, increasing skill and, consequently, the quality of the client's product improved.

Feedback from the Human Resources Manager at SAFE Boats, Tiffany Grant, at the conclusion of the Job Skills Program stated:

"The opportunity for SAFE Boats International to offer ABYC (American Boat and Yacht Council) as well as CWS (Certified Welding Supervisor) trainings to employees has greatly enhanced their knowledge and experience. Team Members have returned back to work excited to use their new skills and has increased the interest in fellow Team Members to attend future classes. Team Members are more engaged, which creates a more positive work environment and ultimately a better product to provide to our customers."

Anonymous employee participants also provided feedback on post-training surveys evaluating the course and the instructor:

"Scott was one of the best teachers/class I have attended. I learned a lot in a short period."

"Lots of valuable information, clear throughout the presentation, he kept the presentation engaging."

"Kevin is an amazing instructor, the knowledge will help me at my job by building better boats. He also helped me find issues I may not have known about."

“What I learned can be used in real world situations.”

“Great course, wonderful instructor.”

“This was a great course. Kevin was an amazing teacher, he knows everything and more to be able to help anyone pass.”

“Instructor has so much real world knowledge. Presentation of materials were relevant to my job.”

“Very specific course that provides good working knowledge of standards for boat inspections/building/surveying.”

“Teacher was able to communicate very well. Also able to simplify complex information like math problems and make them understandable. Made me aware of the many improvements (through the course materials and his explanations) that can be made at my job. Not because he was criticizing but because he provided relevant information.”

“Very informative kept you interested through all subjects. Scott having real world experience in the field was great, he could relate to us.”