



STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2018

EDUCATE. SUSTAIN. COMMUNICATE.

GULF STATES SHIPBUILDERS CONSORTIUM

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Organizational Background

In 2006, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), through its Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program, awarded a \$750,000 grant to the Alabama Technology Network (ATN) to assist shipbuilders affected by Hurricane Katrina along the Gulf Coast.

While the overall purpose of the grant was to address the critical shortage of technically skilled workers available to Gulf Coast shipbuilders and other industry issues, one of the major goals was to establish a membership-based, regional cooperative group of shipbuilding companies, vendors, educational institutions, and economic developers as a non-profit consortium.

On December 14, 2006, members of the Gulf States Shipbuilders Consortium (GSSC) celebrated the official formation of the association at its charter meeting at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College in Gautier, Mississippi.

On September 3, 2015, the GSSC Board of Directors met to review and update the GSSC strategic plan.

Start with the **W h y** ?

To help guide GSSC in its planning process, GSSC retained the services of Rick Miller, president and CEO of Pro356 Consulting LLC, who introduced the concept of “**Start with Why?**” or according to author Simon Sinek, “**the purpose, cause, or belief that inspires you to do what you do.**”

The group focused on two key questions:

Why would someone want to work in the shipbuilding and repair industry?

- Income potential and the speed of realization when compared to college
- Potential to grow and learn new skills and earn certifications
- Ability to avoid going into debt to begin a career
- Security of providing for a family
- Gulf Coast lifestyle

Why would someone join GSSC?

- Raise awareness regarding benefits of Shipbuilding and Repair
- Shared advocacy for the industry – stand in the gap
- Support standardization of training
- Shared knowledge

The group concluded that for GSSC, the “**Why**” had not been effectively communicated.

Review of Strategic Plan

The Board reviewed the successes and challenges of the 2012-2015 Strategic Plan as well as the opportunities it presented followed by a brainstorming session focused on the future of GSSC.

Successes

- Worlds of Opportunity
- Boot Camp Started – 100% hires
- NCCER maritime curricula developed (Maritime Core, Structural Fitter, and Pipefitting) and available
- Shipbuilder Career Tech program is under development
- NMEC established and and running

Challenges

- Image of industry is still lagging reality
- Limited focus of training (boot camps/NCCER) compared to job needs in industry
- Funding Sources
- Inadequate skill levels attracted to industry
- Membership potential not realized
 - Smaller companies
 - Texas gulf coast
- Board engagement lacking
- Industry perception caught in the past
- Aging Workforce
- Other Industry competition for funds – *Go Build* Alabama
- State-to-State workforce development coordination
- No full-time staff to support mission
- Funding plan not clear
- Upper management support
- Measuring success

Opportunities

- Develop a funding plan to add full-time staff
- Continue to support the job standardization – credentialing process underway
- Create a compelling vision of what could be done with industry support
- Develop a plan to educate marketplace of the benefits of the industry

Areas of **F o c u s**

Finally, the group updated the current Strategic Plan and identified “next steps” or action items. The group focused on three key areas—Workforce Development, GSSC Sustainability, and Communications/Industry Awareness—which translated into strategic priorities.

Three Strategic Priorities



Strategic Priority 1 | E d u c a t e

GSSC is committed to developing a stream of workers of high quality and increased baseline education.

Strategic Priority 1

- Continue to develop a Gulf States training infrastructure by expanding Boot Camp model and promoting the use of the NCCER workforce development system in the shipbuilding and repair industry.
 - Consult with members on how to use the NCCER system to their advantage to insure standardized instruction and credentialing is taking place.
- Expand the Boot Camp program to not only include industry standards but to add variability for each member segment. This could be accomplished through the 10 week boot camp program by adding two week add-ons for company or sector specific training.
- Cross walk Boot Camp Training Plans, mapping NCCER curricula modules to Boot Camp schedule.
- Develop a *Boot Camp Handbook* to insure boot camps are of high quality and meet standards.
- Develop a matrix of additional NCCER modules required for NCCER credentialed construction workers to become shipyard ready.
- Work with secondary educational systems to promote shipbuilding and repair career paths.

Strategic Priority 2 | S u s t a i n

GSSC is committed to increasing membership and sustainability by providing values to members.

Strategic Priority 2

- Promote the Gulf Coast as the leader in bringing manufacturing excellence and pride back to the United States.
- Position the Gulf Coast Shipbuilding and Repair industry as the leading industry and provider of premier career opportunities for the talent pipeline.
 - Develop an outstanding marketing and communication plan that will transform the image of shipbuilding and repair, focusing on how the shipbuilding and repair industry is the best vehicle on the Gulf Coast to realize the American Dream.
 - Includes “Gulf Coast Pride” branding.
- Continue to be the leading advocate for the industry with governments, agencies and other stakeholders to insure close and profitable relationships are developed and maintained.
- Continue to improve training and GSSC, through support of the NMEC and NCCER, will continue to improve training and dissemination of best practices for training to the industry and thus reduce the in-house cost of training new workers in the industry.
- Lead and promote the movement to professionalize the shipbuilding and repair craft workers’ image.
- GSSC will apply for grants to help fund initiatives.

Strategic Priority 3 | Communicate

GSSC is committed to develop and implement a communication plan supporting Strategic Priorities 1 and 2.

Strategic Priority 3

- Develop and promote an image transformation campaign – Gulf Coast Pride
- Develop strong onboarding program for new members to introduce the value of membership.
- Target
 - Parents,
 - Future and Existing Craft Professionals,
 - Training Providers and
 - Educational Institution

Final Thoughts

GSSC achieved considerable success with its previous *Strategic Plan*. During the process, however, GSSC has determined that the workforce development issue is larger and more complex than the training, standardization and industry communication focus of the previous plan.

The opportunity exists to solve the problem by setting loftier goals and becoming a leader in recruiting individuals who currently perceive the industry as beneath their career aspirations or not in line with career opportunities for their families. GSSC is uniquely qualified to become the industry vehicle for expanding the talent pool that seeks to join the industry. This “Blue Ocean” strategy will provide higher quality workers while reducing increasing training costs for the membership.

The strategy is long term and will require support from the industry to develop staffing and programs to support this mission. The return will not be short term and require some additional work to measure. The upside on successfully transforming the image of shipbuilding and repairs is enormous.