



GAME TIME

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VOLVO BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN CUSTOMER CARE

Ambitious, driven and qualified Volvo Car Corporation personnel have found their match in the VISTA Competition. As the bi-annual International Customer Service training competition from Volvo Cars, VISTA has been challenging technicians for over 30 years and is billed as the only competition of its kind in the industry. With a focus on learning, development, professional skills training and customer service, VISTA attracts approximately 16,000 employees worldwide and produces around 200 winners every competition cycle.

"The VISTA Competition is an important tradition here at Volvo," said Bill Ryan, Manager of Technician Recruitment and Retention. "The program showcases just how Volvo stands behind its technicians and in this day and age, that's important. We want to keep this tradition going because it builds a lot of camaraderie with technicians and inspires them to do even better work."

The goals of the VISTA Competition are to:

- Develop and maintain a high level of competency among Volvo Dealer Service Personnel.
- Increase knowledge of Volvo information technology and methods from concept to sales to service.
- Reinforce awareness of the significance of customer satisfaction.

"As important as these ambitions are, VISTA is really all about bringing out Volvo's core value of fixing it right the first time," said Bill.

As with most competitions, the 2008 VISTA Competition had several stages: testing rounds, hands on semi-finals round and the market finals competition. More than 1,000 Master & Expert technicians qualified for the semi-finals round and 72 finalists competed at the Arizona Proving Grounds in April 2008. After this final stage, 22 grand prize winners were selected to attend the

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Bill Ryan // Manager of Technician Recruitment and Retention

Winner's Global Conference in Sweden in May. This week-long celebration provides the perfect opportunity for technicians to meet their colleagues from around the world, exchange knowledge and passions and, most importantly, experience the trip of a lifetime!

One technician who attended the Winner's Global Conference in Gothenburg, Sweden,

PLAYER PROFILE

was Juan Rodriguez, a 2005 graduate of CTG's Volvo Service Automotive Factory Education (SAFE) program. Juan represented Bill Kidd's Volvo near Baltimore in the competition and was proud to make it all the way to the finals the first time he participated.

"I feel I did so well in this competition because I tried the very best I could on every task," said Juan. "My training with CTG and SAFE, as well as my work experience, all prepared me for the competition. I really just put information from school into practice."

"The trip to Sweden really opened my eyes to the Swedish culture and the history behind the Volvo brand," continued Juan. "I was able to learn about their lifestyle, what luxury means to them and why they design vehicles the way they do. Not only was it my first trip to Europe and a great week, but I think I came back a better technician because I have a greater awareness of the brand now."

Bill believes the SAFE program is a valuable investment because it provides trained technicians, like Juan, to dealerships. "Otherwise, it would be a greater expense. To have a source of new technicians with this type of training is a big plus. I know several retailers who always go back to SAFE to hire and that says a lot about the excellent quality of these graduates. SAFE trains them right and the program has been a big success for Volvo." he said. ●



NAVISTAR INTERNATIONAL

NAVISTAR-INTERNATIONAL AND CTG – THE VALUE OF A GOOD PARTNERSHIP

The trucking industry is full of powerful vehicles that keep the global transportation industry moving along. And the leader behind several of the most notable powerhouse brands is Navistar International Corporation, the parent company of International® brand commercial trucks, mid-range diesel engines, IC brand school buses, and Workhorse brand chassis for motor homes and step vans. Navistar-International also provides truck and diesel engine parts and service and operates a financing services subsidiary.

“We are a family of innovative companies providing integrated, world-class solutions for the transportation industry,” said Etienne VanNiekerk, Service Education Manager at Navistar-International. “Even in the face of a very difficult economic environment and amidst the weakest North America truck market in nearly 35 years, we remain strong and poised for future growth. We truly are a global transportation company.”

One place where the strength of the transportation industry is seen every day is the ever-increasing demand for qualified technicians. To keep up with the demand for qualified service technicians to work on these complex vehicles, CTG and Navistar-International created ITEP – the International Technician Education Program in 2002. ITEP is a 14-week program offered at three facilities that provide major manufacturers with high-caliber, exceptionally skilled technician candidates.

“Since the beginning of the ITEP program, we’ve placed nearly 600 graduates into our dealer network,” said Etienne. “It’s very important for us to keep the program going because we are growing when compared to the automobile industry. This year alone, we predict 140 ITEP graduates and guarantee a 98% placement rate.

We have a network of more than 1,000 dealers, and everyone gets a job. Right now, we have 60 open positions. This is very good news during these times.”

Etienne continues to explain the value of the ITEP program for manufacturers and dealers.

“In the diesel industry, even though we have a plethora of job opportunities, it can be hard to find good people. The ITEP program gives us a strategic advantage. It’s already a well-oiled program and our dealers believe and trust the graduates it produces. We know there is a lot of competition for qualified technicians, so it’s important for us to have this grass roots training program in place. Our ultimate goal is to keep talented people at our dealerships. We know the end result will be better service, happier customers and increased sales.”

There are many additional things that make Navistar-International a unique company. Navistar-International’s history traces back a whopping 175 years, when in 1831, Cyrus McCormick invented the mechanical reaper. In 1902, McCormick’s company merged with four others and was incorporated as International Harvester Company. International brand trucks first hit the road to deliver farmers’ goods to market in 1907. Today, Navistar-International is a \$15 billion a year company with more than 17,000 employees worldwide.

“We are a great company to work for and have great products, plus we make good looking trucks,” said Etienne. “With our long heritage, we’ve always felt we’re a part of the American culture. We’re so happy to have CTG and ITEP technicians feeding our dealer network. The value to our business positions us strategically well for the future.” ●

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GOT GAME?

If you’re interested in being accepted into an MSAT program, then remember GAME – the four key areas for students to focus on:

- GRADES OR GRADE POINT AVERAGE
- ATTENDANCE
- MOTOR VEHICLE RECORD
- EXAM

In addition to good GAME scores, dealers want to hire graduates who are willing to commit to employment, have a positive attitude, some industry/related experience, and a strong work ethic. Remember, only students who “Got GAME” get to play. By following the GAME play-book, you can be on the fast-track to success.

FOR MORE INFO: www.ISCTG.com

If you are interested in learning more about manufacturer specific advanced training programs, please visit our website at www.isctg.com.

GAME Time is a publication for students and instructors interested in programs offered by the Custom Training Group, a division of UTI, Inc. If you have a news item, question or comment, please contact us:

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