

Workforce Development

Helping You To Meet Your Workforce Challenges

Training the Next Generation:

Boston Centerless and Micron Present New Ways to Integrate Millennials into the Workforce

At this year's PMPA National Technical Conference, members Micron and Boston Centerless gave insight into their new and innovative hiring and training processes aimed to appeal to millennials entering the workforce. With millennials quickly taking over the job market, values and expectations between employers and employees have shifted from those of past generations. The new generation now craves a work environment that not only stimulates and challenges, but also gives opportunities to learn from and be mentored by upper management. Both Micron and Boston Centerless adapted to these desires and expectations and have already yielded impressive results.



Boston Centerless
Precise in everything we do.

For more than half a century, family-owned Boston Centerless has become a leading supplier of precision materials in the aerospace, automotive, dental, defense and other sectors and currently has a market presence in 45 states and 24 countries. The company has grown to 110 employees working in its 47,000-square-foot headquarters. To maximize its efficiency, Boston Centerless puts heavy emphasis on its hiring and training programs through high levels of investment in its new hires. Some of these practices include up to 6 months of basic skill set training, at least 2 weeks of training with a buddy operator and cross training at the employee's request to increase salary opportunities. The employees' live testing is heavily based on repetition that builds toward proficiency, not just competency. Rather than penalization or termination, employees who hold them-

selves accountable for mistakes are retrained or transferred to another task.

"In our line of work where precision and consistency are required from job to job, part to part and customer to customer, we can't have variation between operators," says David Mersereau, senior vice president and general manager at Boston Centerless. "It was critical that we achieved the flexibility to place work with any employee and achieve the same quality and precision."

During the presentation, Boston Centerless revealed its massive master board, which shows its employees and all 174 possible certifications offered by the company that can be obtained to boost experience and earning potential. When an employee becomes certified in a field, a dot is added to the master board. The board serves many purposes for the staff, such as encouraging cross training, allowing the company to quickly see its most skilled operators, its strongest and weakest areas of skill sets, each employee's experience level and opportunities for capacity expansion. Most of all, the master board serves as a transparent and stimulating reminder of the growth potential for young employees who seek a diverse skill set and wish for upward mobility within a company. And their patient efforts in employee training have already paid off. Today, Boston Centerless holds an impressive 99 percent employee retention rate.

"Having a database in some computer and only reviewing where folks stand once a year at a performance review just doesn't work," Mr. Mersereau says. "As a 'process guy,' it's all about knowing where you are, being able to measure progress and then recognize the contribution of the individual and the team as improvements are made."



Micron is another company dedicated to a strong retention rate. Most of its workers stay with the company for an average of 17 years. Since 1952, Micron has become a leader in precision metal manufacturing. Today, the company reaches out to its younger employees by integrating smartphone and video technology into its work safety practices. Rather than giving its employees expansive manuals and complicated instructions in crucial situations, Micron's Business Interruption and Recovery Team generated QR codes that can be scanned with a smartphone and lead the employee to a short, concise training video that can solve the issue in a safe and timely manner without the damages of a total emergency shutdown on the shop floor. The concept was very well received amongst the company's machinists, and they plan to make many more of these videos and codes.

"It makes it very easy to capture the tribal knowledge that the baby boomers have, and it delivers the knowledge at the point of use and in an intuitive manner, such as watching videos, that allows the millennials to utilize tools like mobile devices that they are already familiar with," says Dave Seabrook, who works in tech support at Micron. "When using traditional work instructions that consist of words and pictures to describe a process that has critical and potentially dangerous steps, it is likely that some details will be lost in the translation. They get to hear inflections in the expert's voice and see exactly the motions that are necessary to achieve success."