

PMPA Member Buell Automatics Finds Success Through Employee Longevity and Creative Internal Solutions

In July 1966, two engineers, Richard Lawton and Ernie Corts, with over 50 years combined experience working in the screw machine industry, partnered to start Buell Automatics Inc.

They opened this location starting with a handful of machines, a few key people and a lot of know-how at 381 Buell Road in Rochester, New York. Almost a half century later, the family-owned company is still headquartered at this location, only now it's staffed with 50 employees. Buell's 44 Davenport automatics and five CNC screw machines produce millions of different high-precision parts serving the automotive, manufacturing, defense, consumer products, electrical and a number of other industries. Recently, Buell received its ISO/TS 16949 registration to support its presence in the automotive industry and installed an ERP system to manage their growth.

"We have family members and friends of family working here," executive vice president, Don Corwin, says. "We offer great benefits, 401K match and flex time, so we don't have a high turnover rate."

In addition to its multi-generational personnel, Mr. Corwin credits the company's internal solutions as a significant factor in Buell Automatics' success. Buell's custom interface, Sensi-Buell, is a short part/broken tool detection and dashboard monitor that interfaces with its multi-spindle screw machines. It provides operators and management the real-time ability to track productivity parameters, quality metrics, tooling/machine maintenance, part counts and uptime, to name a few. The tooling interface tells the operators what tools require maintenance and when they require maintenance. This allows its employees the ability to strategically

plan their tool changes and their day. The system automatically shuts down the process so tool trips aren't exceeded, re-directs short parts and those missing internal features as an added bonus. According to Mr. Corwin, one of the biggest benefits is having Buell's owner, Gary Lawton, allow the company to be as creative as it needs to be in order to resolve issues.

"As with any successful company, it's the people who are committed every day to giving their best and being empowered to do their jobs," Mr. Lawton adds. "Without that dedication, we wouldn't be proudly celebrating our 50th year."

Mr. Corwin adds that another boost to Buell Automatics' employee productivity and satisfaction is the addition of a flexible work schedule. Rather than a rigid set of hours to complete tasks, Buell employees may choose the flex time alternative and do so routinely.

"It allows us the ability to put more resources on jobs with greater urgency than others, and our employees and management love it," Mr. Corwin says. "Instead of watching the clock, they're working on hitting their goals for the week, supporting the customers' needs and having the flexible work schedule to support their personal lives."

Since 1999, Buell Automatics has used PMPA as a key resource for information on tips, trends and insights into the shop floor of other members. Mr. Corwin says the company's participation with PMPA allows it to use other company's stories as benchmarks for its own success and "lessons learned" for not repeating mistakes on its own shop floor.

"I'm a big fan of saying we don't know everything," Mr. Corwin says. "Being part of the association provides the opportunity to learn from others through being active and participating in sponsored events. Giving back to the association in any way possible is such an important part of our membership."

For companies on the fence about joining PMPA, Mr. Corwin assures that the wealth of resources, including the Listserve and networking, far exceed the cost of a membership.

"It's a small investment to take a test drive with PMPA," Mr. Corwin says. "Everyone is willing to share what worked and what didn't work, and that itself is worth the price of admission."

Buell Automatics is located at 381 Buell Road, Rochester, New York. Phone: 800-435-0330. Website: buellautomatics.com

Position	Tool Name	On Order	Tooling Missing	Tool Cost	Inventory	Tool Trip	Parts on Tool
A-End	Face		●			30000	30000
A-Side	Drumroll	●	●	247.50	2	31000	146
B-End			●				
B-Side	Slot Tool End	●	●	186.25	5	31000	146
C-End	Roll Support		●			30000	30000
C-Side	Gen Form Tool	●	●	187.25	5	31000	174
D-End			●				
D-Side	Slot Tool and End	●	●	186.25	5	31000	146
E-End			●				
E-Side	Gen. Cut-off Tool	●	●	186.25	5	30000	19433
Trip						629d	

Sensi-Buell is a short part/broken tool detection and dashboard monitor.