

PMPA Member Smith & Richardson Manufacturing Finds Success in Employee Training and Equipment Investment

Established in 1921, Smith & Richardson Manufacturing didn't make its mark as a global supplier of precision machined parts until it bought a small screw machine shop in 1986. The company's original intention was to use the screw machines to supply parts to its foundry operation of making chaplets, but around 1988, the company began to see more potential for growth and expansion in its precision machining operations. Today, the company is headquartered in Geneva, Illinois, with a satellite manufacturing operation in Taicang, China.

"We are always listening to our customers and doing whatever we can to meet their needs," says Renee Schroeder, office manager at Smith & Richardson. "We are dedicated to working with customers to develop customized solutions at competitive prices."

Smith & Richardson offers machining, stamping and forming services for a number of different industries, including sports and gaming, aerospace, medical, hydraulics and gas and oil. The company's 66,000-square-foot facility in Geneva uses its precision machining, precision stamping and precision slide forming technology to work with a variety of materials, including steel, stainless steel, brass, aluminum and certain plastics.

Smith & Richardson is an active participant in Manufacturing Day, an annual celebration that educates on the many career opportunities that exist in manufacturing and aims to improve public perception of modern manufacturing facilities. For this year's Manufacturing Day, Smith & Richardson opened its doors to over 250 nearby students who participated in a guided tour, presentations and giveaways.

"When the students came through, I think they were surprised at how clean the facility was and how much technology and automation is involved in manufacturing today," Mrs. Schroeder said.



In addition to Manufacturing Day, Smith & Richardson employees actively work with local high schools to expose students to future career opportunities in manufacturing. Mrs. Schroeder says Smith & Richardson is greatly focused on hiring recent high school grads and growing their careers through training and education. The company recently hired a retired high school vocational teacher as its director of education and training to develop an apprenticeship program and to promote manufacturing careers to students and parents. As part of its education initiative, the company contributes up to 90 percent of the tuition and book costs required for team members looking to continue their education and are able to maintain a certain GPA.

As a PMPA member, Smith & Richardson benefits from the organization's networking opportunities and uses listserves for solving problems. Another PMPA resource Smith & Richardson uses for its employees is the new PMPA-MFG program, which is designed to bring reliable training to member companies to better evaluate and train candidates in the best ways possible. PMPA-MFG helps members prepare for the next generation of manufacturing employees by offering a number of individual training courses, a one-year CNC operator certificate and employee screening testing.

"PMPA-MFG has been a great tool that gives some great insights, helpful ideas and is a useful resource to promote our Manufacturing Day," Mrs. Schroeder says. "The program was able to provide some great videos for us to share with students who come by our facility for tours."

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