

Technically Speaking – Positive Outlook



PMPA's YouTube channel offers training videos.

PMPA's 54th annual National Technical Conference held in Columbus, Ohio, this past April was one of the highest rated events the association has ever conducted. A combination of professional speakers and leading experts in the precision machining industry spoke about topics and issues manufacturing shops face every day. The conference offered positive reaffirmation that our industry is strong, and there are passionate people committed to continual improvement within their trade.

More than 335 people from 135 companies attended the conference to hear more than 30 positive speakers share their best practice approaches in technical, quality and management topics. Besides the attending machinists, engineers, quality professionals, plant managers and owners, 90 "first-timers" were present, indicating that the industry is alive and strong. Never before had our learning, or "mentor" tables been as full as they were this year. People are searching for knowledge and education, and the number of new people to the industry and this conference show that they understand where the best industry-focused technical information can be found.

"...optimum value for the time and money investment. Implementing just one idea from the conference pays back the time/fee investment many times over."

A major input into the success of this show was the number of shop personnel who openly shared the processes they implemented in their shop. When contract manufacturing shops share the best practices they implemented on the floor and in the office, attendees tend to become more attentive and appreciative of the effort. It is this type of sharing that is unique about PMPA membership, and it is why member shops will continue to outpace those who choose not to embrace this sharing philosophy.

Some of the best practices reviewed at this conference included:

- Optimizing our mini personal computers (phones) on the shop floor
- Using QR codes on the floor for immediate reference to work instructions and training videos. From setup, to safety, brief videos are quick visuals to immediate compliance
- Workforce development ideas, including local engagement from the schools to the parents
- Demonstrated GD&T tips and tricks to enhance understanding of this art
- Milling and turning workshop complete with videos and access to apps that can be used on the shop floor
- Cam/CNC crossover potential for shared efficiencies
- Problem-solving techniques, both formal and informal
- Embracing the unique offerings that the millennial generation brings to the workforce

A key thought the PMPA Technical Program Committee conveyed at the conference is the concept that attendees should focus on ideas they can take back to the shop and implement. A document provided to all conference attendees prior to the event identified steps that can be taken before, during and after the conference to achieve optimum value for the time and money investment. Implementing only one idea from the conference pays back the time/fee investment many times over.

Keeping with the philosophy of not using good stuff only once, PMPA recorded a group of these highly rated sessions and have posted a variety of short videos to the PMPA YouTube channel at [youtube.com/user/SpeakingofPrecision](https://www.youtube.com/user/SpeakingofPrecision). This information will be a growing source of training information for our members to access in order to enhance their training and awareness programs. It is another example of the association staying true to the mission of providing information that advances and sustains our member companies.