

Workforce Development

Helping You To Meet Your Workforce Challenges

Training the Next Generation: What a Difference a Student Day Can Make

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Recruiting the future workforce is at the forefront of the minds leading our shops today. Previously, I talked about how shops can open their doors to people within their communities. Another avenue is to provide specific activities and events that focus on students. How do we help our shops connect with students? How do we give our shops the necessary tools to recruit? How do we gain and maintain an interest in the precision machining industry with the next generation? The answer to these questions is to create events that target our future workforce. Recently, I was able to participate in two events that provided career focus for students.

The first event was at the Precision Machining Technology Show (PMTS 2017) on April 27 in Columbus, Ohio, and the second event was at Thaddeus Stevens College on April 29 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. These two events focused on activities and sessions that highlighted careers in the precision machining industry. Career pathways were identified and shared with students at each event. There were also machining demonstrations for participants, so they could see the power of our technology to create products using computer-aided designs and by precision machining. Our industry is high tech!

At PMTS 2017, more than 300 students from Ohio and surrounding areas came to learn about precision machining and the careers available in our shops. Community colleges, tech schools, career centers and vocational schools brought their students to see firsthand the breadth of our industry. Students began their day with an orientation to get a brief overview of career pathways, learn about educational training opportunities and receive basic industry statistics



to better understand the possibilities they have to make a difference in our industry. Students then toured the show floor, where more than 300 industry suppliers provided demonstrations that allowed students to see different types of machines, tooling, materials and software packages. The students were able to participate in knowledge centers where they could see for themselves how the different types of machines worked through videos and hands-on activities.

Similarly, Thaddeus Stevens College provided a day titled, "Transforming Today's Students in Tomorrow's Workforce." At this event, more than 150 students learned more about the machining industry. Participants came together from community and area schools and precision machining shops to show students and educators the great career opportunities within the precision machining industry. Sessions at this event included "Recruiting and Retaining Women in STEM," "Preparing the Next Generation of Leaders" and "Getting Hired with the Right Skills." Students were able to handpick which sessions they attended according to their individual interests and needs. This maximized the effectiveness of the day. These sessions gave attendees a firsthand look at the opportunities available for them to land great careers within this industry.

The importance of hosting a Student Day is that it changes the perception of the precision machining industry held by our guests and potential future employees. They get to see the career in its positive aspects of high technology, creativity and importance of the products we make. How do we create enough awareness for students and their parents about the positive aspects of their career impact in precision machining? The one thing I was more pleased to see than the multitude of students attending the events was the support systems available to these students—teachers, parents and companies present—who provided information to help students think critically about their future career options. These Student Day events create a platform for interaction. Through this interaction we can change the perception of manufacturing. For too long, manufacturing has been characterized by the three "Ds" (dark, dangerous and dirty.) These Student Day events help everyone learn there is a new "D" that best describes manufacturing today and that is "desirable."

A career in precision machining is desirable. The talents of our employees are challenged daily as they use modern technologies to make products that make a difference in everyone's lives. Student Day events provide one more means to communicate that students have a clear path to training and education that leads to a rewarding career. Students develop skills in this industry that will help them in other areas of their lives. Our employees take pride in the fact that the products they have made have a positive impact on people's lives. At Student Day events, students and their parents can see the possibilities of a rewarding career in precision machining.