

# Workshops for Warriors Helps Fill the Skills Gap

**W**orkshops for Warriors, a San Diego nonprofit organization that is dedicated to providing job training to veterans at no cost to them, is the only accredited 501(c)(3) nonprofit that trains, certifies and places veterans and wounded warriors into manufacturing careers.

The organization was founded by Hernán Luis y Prado, currently the organization's president, who served 15 years in the U.S. Navy. Mr. Luis y Prado developed Workshops for Warriors over several years and it became an official nonprofit organization in February 2011. The overarching mission of Workshops for Warriors is to place veterans and wounded warriors into manufacturing careers by providing training, nationally recognized portable credentials, work experience and job placement.

## Addressing the Skills Gap

"The main problem in manufacturing is that there is not widespread training. In U.S. history, manufacturing has depended on the military to provide trained people, but their training has eroded with the use of independent contractors," Mr. Luis y Prado says. "For 80 years, the military had provided a hose of talent, but about 70 years ago the spigot was turned off, leaving a huge skills gap in manufacturing."

According to Mr. Luis y Prado, there are more than 2 million unfilled manufacturing positions, and more workers who are currently in the industry will retire within the next 20 years.

"Workshops for Warriors is an accredited school with a 100 percent job-placement rate," Mr. Luis y Prado explains. "These veterans are trained and credentialed through our program at no cost to them and without any state or fed-



eral funding. All of Workshops for Warriors' graduates have careers in welding, machining and manufacturing. We have companies basically waiting outside the doors to hire graduates because there is such a need for new, skilled workers."

The need for skilled workers in the San Diego area alone has companies looking to fill more than 2,500 machining, manufacturing and welding positions. The waiting list for the school has more than 500 veterans on it as well.

## Trained, Certified and Credentialed

The school is centrally located in San Diego, next to the 32nd Street Naval Base, and more than 270 veterans are being trained and certified at the 28,000-square-foot facility. The school has three classrooms and four practical skills laboratories for milling, welding, CAD/CAM and machinery repair.

The Workshops for Warriors school is a certified HAAS technical education center, a certified Mastercam training and testing facility, as well as a SolidWorks training and testing facility. Workshops for Warriors curriculum provides NIMS certifications in machining (for milling, turning, CNC machining and machinery repair) and AWS certifications in welding (for stick, mig, tig, pipe, high-pressure, silver nickel, Inconel and titanium welding). The thorough training also includes CAD/CAM Solidworks and Mastercam X7 training, marine fabrication, OSHA 10-hour marine safety certification, OSHA forklift certification, safe hand and power tool usage, blueprint reading and layout and general shop safety.

"Nothing is more expensive than an untrained or improperly trained employee. Our graduates can not only use the machinery, they can keep it maintained and running," Mr. Luis y Prado says. "They're taught that if the machine isn't running, they aren't working. Workshops for Warriors graduates are certified to maintain their equipment, reducing the need for costly maintenance."

Workshops for Warriors students clamor for time on the school's equipment, even when unassigned, to practice, display their skills and for their own enjoyment.



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## Why You Shouldn't Predict Firm Metals Pricing for the Year Ahead

### **Volatility**

Volatility is another aspect that can greatly influence price, and about which we have no clue. Just doing a "back of the envelope" calculation from the data on the Steel Benchmark Chart, the price differential (regardless of sign) for any calendar year ranges from a low of about 4.5 percent in 2012, to a high of 100 percent in 2008. For 12 of the 13 years shown, the percent of change was in the double digits range, and for 7 of those years, that double digit change was between 21 percent and 100 percent.

### **Determinants of Demand**

We really have no knowledge of the determinants of demand and neither do our customers. Yet the supply and price are determined by demand. Demand is not just local to us here in North America. Increasingly prices and supply are determined by global demand. What is your forecast for demand in China? In India? In Germany? In the U.S.? A

"safe guess" would be that demand will follow GDP growth. For the U.S. that would have been under 4 percent for most of the last decade. How well does that play out against the changes we have seen in pricing over that same term?

According to World Bank, U.S. GDP growth for 2013 was estimated at 1.6 percent; China's was estimated to be 7.5 percent and world GDP was estimated to increase 2.9 percent. How do those numbers compare to the price changes shown on the Steel Benchmark Chart?

Customers seek pricing assurances in order to eliminate their risk. By just shoving the risk onto their suppliers, they do not eliminate the risk, they just change the ownership. Conceding fixed prices for the raw material portion of your parts price is a fool's errand based on the factors discussed above. Our job as responsible, sustainable, competitive suppliers is to intelligently manage risk. Locking in future prices without any degree of control of any of the factors, can only turn out badly.

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"There are machine shops in our country with machines that are not running due to the simple fact that there is no one to operate them. Students compete for time on our equipment because they are eager to show off what they can do or check out new technology," Mr. Luis y Prado comments.

### **Looking Forward**

The school's vision includes nationwide expansion that will ultimately strengthen the manufacturing sector.

"Companies need the skilled labor, and in the next five years, more than 1 million service men and women will be transitioning back into civilian life, and looking for employment," Mr. Luis y Prado says. "They do not have transferable skills and will need training. Under the G. I. Bill, service men and women can have traditional, four-year college programs paid for. Those who are coming out of the military and want to go into machining, manufacturing or welding, can't get their training paid for under the G.I. Bill... at least not yet."

Because Workshops for Warriors receives no state or federal funding and does not charge its students tuition, the valuable training that the school provides is funded through corporate and private donations.

"We would never have been able to train, certify and place more than 90 veterans and wounded warriors without the support that we have received from the manufacturing community," Mr. Luis y Prado states. "Thanks to their efforts, Workshops for Warriors is able to not only train, but also help change the lives of these men and women who have already given so much for our country."

Expanding the program in order to accept more students is a top priority for Workshops for Warriors with funding as the forefront need. Aside from donations, Workshops for Warriors is in need of political help in order to be eligible for coverage under the G.I. Bill. Other program expansion needs include new, adaptive machinery and access to the current generations of equipment in use.

"Our program has an easily replicated structure so more skill-building programs can be established. With coverage under the G.I. Bill, the program has more opportunity to grow," Mr. Luis y Prado explains. "We need legislative help and we encourage everyone to talk to their senators and representatives as well as the media."

*To learn more about Workshops for Warriors, visit [workshopsforwarriors.org](http://workshopsforwarriors.org).*