

# WHAT'S THE RIGHT STRATEGY?

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# PMPA

What's the right strategy? What is Strategy anyway?

Consider this very simple definition of strategy:

"Strategy is how a company actually competes" (*Stanley C. Abraham, Strategic Planning 2006*). Given this view, strategy shows us what a company does, as well as what it would like to do based on its plans.

When you are asked, "What's the right strategy?" you are actually being asked two questions: "What is it that you are doing?" and "What is it that you intend to do?"

PMPA's strategic planning team recently set a new goal to "Promote Industry Opportunities, Training Initiatives and Career Paths." While we set this goal for PMPA, it might be better to ask, "Wouldn't this be an awesome goal for your company?" Especially when you realize that strategy is *how* your company or organization can actually compete.

How does your company compete? The latest technology? Yes, technology deployed can be a competitive advantage. As our markets have shifted, so too have the technologies deployed in our shops been adjusted. High quality? Without quality, you will not be a viable supplier to today's demanding customers.

Cost advantage? You probably do not have an advantage in materials. You might have an advantage in the cost of labor or labor productivity. But you probably pay prices that are similar to your competitors' for raw materials, cost of energy, taxes and supplies.

This brings us to the real reason the PMPA committee chose "Promote Industry Opportunities, Training Initiatives and Career Paths." *We recognize the value of people.*

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Who operates that latest technology equipment that is manufacturing components in your shop? Your people. Who is assuring quality and developing control plans to assure conformance of product to requirements? Your people.

Who is able to give you a productivity advantage by reducing set-up and other non-productive time? Your people. Your people are key to the strategy of "how we actually compete."

The genius of PMPA's new goal to "Promote Industry Opportunities, Training Initiatives and Career Paths" is that it is aligned with the needs of our companies, our industry and our national interest. What's more, it is aligned with helping unemployed workers find their highest and best use as skilled production hands. Your shops need people with skills.

Our industry knows of ways and means that people can get those skills. In fact, PMPA member Darlene Miller, CEO of Permac Industries, helped launch Right Skills Now, a program that partners local machining companies with community colleges. (Visit <http://rightskillsnow.org>.) The purpose of that program is to give math-qualified candidates an opportunity to learn critical shop skills and procedures so they can add value in CNC machining shops after completing the program.

Right Skills Now also provides candidates with NAM- and NIMS-recognized credentials that are stackable, as well as college credit that can help them further their careers.

PMPA is going to be a lot more active in the area of promoting Industry Opportunity. According to news reports, more than 10,000 baby boomers are retiring each day. That

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is a lot of experience leaving the workplace. Promoting opportunities just makes sense given the demographics.

PMPA is going to be actively supporting Training Initiatives, too. Our Educational Foundation has been the primary way that PMPA has supported training in our industry. As our new goal is showing us, there is more we can do. Helping members connect with local community colleges that can offer relevant programming is time well spent.

As for Career Paths, we are going to take the initiative to develop materials that show people just what's in it for them: wages, benefits, interesting work and quality of work life. There's also satisfaction in knowing that because of you, airplanes fly and cars go (and stop). Because of you, people can resume normal lives with medical parts that make a difference.

PMPA has a new goal: "Promote Industry Opportunities, Training Initiatives and Career Paths." We think that goal makes perfect sense for our organization. We also think that if Strategy is how a company actually operates, maybe our goal should be your goal as well.

After all, isn't it your people who operate your technology? Isn't it your people who are responsible for your quality and productivity? If Strategy is how we compete, people are our competitive advantage.

What is the right strategy for your shop? What does your current strategy say about finding and developing your future workforce? I can tell you what ours says.

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## AMERICAN TURNED PRODUCTS

"There are so many benefits in being a PMPA member," Harry Eighmy notes. "The networking is probably the biggest benefit. Being able to network with our peers.

"Sharing information is another big benefit," he adds. "The information we get through the association, from a bench-marking point-of-view, has been very valuable to our company."

Mr. Eighmy points to the various PMPA conferences as tremendous opportunities for networking with fellow members. "We attend the Technical Conference, Management Update and the PMPA National Conference," he says. "We are also very active at our local district meetings."

Advocacy is another major reason for belonging to PMPA. "ATP has been a part of the association's lobbying efforts," Mr. Eighmy continues. "We've sent our people to Washington, D.C. with other PMPA members. We're very much involved on the national level. We're also involved at the state and local levels, talking to our representatives to encourage them to help small businesses and manufacturers like ATP"

In summing up, Mr. Eighmy says, "PMPA has been a terrific organization for ATP. The association has really helped transform us into the company we are today."

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Think of PMPA as an extension of your engineering and marketing departments. We help you focus on excellence and intelligently manage risk to sustain your success. We are also continually working to protect our industry by working to change government regulations that are unfair or too restrictive. We help walk you through the steps required when an OSHA representative shows up at your door. And, we lobby on behalf of the industry to protect the interests of precision machined products manufacturers. It is our goal to help you and other members calibrate your businesses so you can add value and compete globally. The tools we offer are designed to help you better understand your company's performance. That way, you can continue to not merely survive, but to thrive in today's competitive environment.

# SUSTAIN!



## Why Join PMPA?