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Modern Machine Shop

PREPARING THE WORKFORCE OF TOMORROW



Tools To Help You Build A Skilled Workforce

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Last April, in a column I wrote for this page, I proposed actions that shop owners, skilled machinists and government leaders could take to help assure a strong U.S. manufacturing workforce. But preaching is one thing, and practicing is another. This month, I'm providing a list of support materials and services that Charmilles Technologies has developed to strengthen the U.S. manufacturing workforce. The point is to encourage readers to respond by choosing from the list those items that will aid in their own efforts to bolster our workforce.

Promotional Materials:

1. We have distributed 50,000 copies of the "Career Opportunities Chart," which shows that the income of precision machinists is equal to that of workers with 4 or more years of college. Many machining instructors say that the chart is their single best recruiting tool.

2. A 48-page PowerPoint presentation, "A Career in Toolmaking: The Right Choice for Students, Community and Country," provides sourced arguments showing the importance of the metalworking industry and its income and entrepreneurial opportunities. For example, one table compares the lifetime cash flow for an apprentice to that of an English major. If the machinist invests at 7 percent per year half of the difference in their annual incomes, he will have \$1 million more in net worth than the English major will have by the age of 49.

Charmilles also provides the "Career in Toolmaking" presentations live to appropriate audiences throughout the United States and Canada. The presentations last up to an hour and are most effective with regional groups of guidance counselors, educators, politicians,

instructors or parents. Call us for a list of upcoming presentations or to schedule one locally.

3. For 10 years, Charmilles has provided the grand prize for the shop whose apprentice wins the Annual National Tooling & Machining Association (NTMA) Apprentice Contest. This prize is an EDM machine, worth as much as \$100,000. This year's contest will be held at Lake Michigan College in Niles, Michigan, May 8-11, 2001. To contact NTMA, call (301) 248-6200 for details about the contest or about joining this organization.

Equipment and Training Materials:

1. Charmilles provides schools and training centers with EDMs at the lowest possible prices. In the United States and Canada, 109 schools have 160 machines, most of which are newer models.

2. The Directory of EDM Courses lists schools and colleges teaching EDM, die making, moldmaking and so on. This directory helps schools exchange curricula.

3. In addition to learning how to EDM, it is important that trainees learn when to EDM. A "When to EDM" course compares EDM and conventional machining processes and identifies the workpiece geometries and materials for which EDM is the optimal process.

Charmilles has supported NIMS (National Institute for Metalworking Skills) credentialing standards by helping develop the EDM standards, performing all of the EDM test verifications during company-sponsored operator classes and serving on the NIMS Board. For information on NIMS certifying your training program call (703) 352-4971 or visit www.nims-skills.org.

Legislative Efforts:

Charmilles also supports HR877, the Skilled Workforce Enhancement Act, which will provide a maximum \$60,000 tax credit for a shop for each 4-year apprenticeship. We make postcards available so that citizens can express their support to their local U.S. Representatives.

The single most effective way to assure a sufficient quality and quantity of skilled manufacturing professionals is to pass the Act. Rational self-interest will motivate thousands of shops across the country to start or expand apprentice programs. I believe this Act is entirely justified because the benefits will flow not just to the employer of the apprentice, but also to the entire U.S. manufacturing industry and economy.

All items and support mentioned in this column, except the EDM machines, are free. Please call us at (800) 282-1336 ext. 170 or e-mail harry.moser@charmillesus.com. The future success of our companies, of manufacturing in the United States and of the U.S. economy depends upon convincing America's youth to pursue a career in manufacturing and upon providing them the necessary training. Let's do it together! ■



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