

Connector

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Tomorrow's Skilled Workers, Today

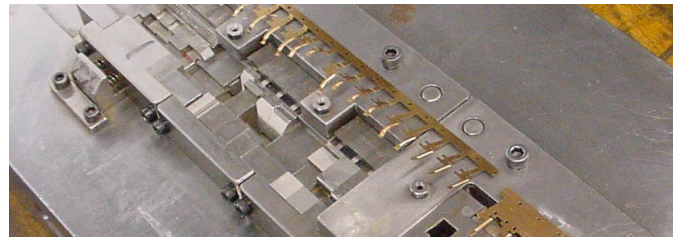
There is a harsh reality facing US manufacturers.

It is hard to convince students that they should choose a career as a precision machinist, tool and die maker, designer or other skilled manufacturing position. Not even the lure of lucrative competitive salaries seems to be persuasive.

The National Tooling and Machining Association estimates a shortage of 30,000 skilled manufacturing workers just in the U.S. - a number that's expected to increase because the average age of workers typically is 50 or older. Within the next ten years many manufacturers have the potential to lose half their staff. There are ramifications of the skilled-worker shortfall. It impairs a manufacturer's ability to satisfy their customers' requirements and to grow their business.

Richard K. Dennis, Lead Engineer, at Die-Tech has an answer. "If you can't find skilled workers, you build your own workforce," he concludes. His words are not just wishful thinking. Dennis has developed a process for training unskilled recruits in response to this escalating shortage of skilled workers. "We realize that training is an investment in our company's future as well as the future of the new recruits," he adds.

Dennis offers an example of the training process. It is customary for tool designers to learn their trade by participating in formal apprenticeship programs, which may take as long as five years. At Die-Tech, older workers with as much as 30 years of experience mentor new recruits. The recruits also have the benefit of standardized processes, which are well documented.



"We are able to convert a new recruit with a good attitude, but no manufacturing experience, into a die designer in six months," relates Dennis.

William Harmis joined Die-Tech six months ago as an engineering intern. He had no experience in stamping -- he didn't even have many standard computer skills. "But," Dennis related, "he also had no bad habits to break. He's bright and he wants to learn."

Harmis describes his training experience at Die-Tech as very satisfying. "At first, I shadowed an experienced tool designer. Then I took a course on blueprint reading followed by training on Solid Works CAD software at a community college." Harmis is proud to relate that his first die design produced parts with less than a 2% error rate in the die. It's not surprising that Harmis loves to come to work.

"It's all about customer service," admits Dennis. "We know that having well trained die designers will ensure that our customers' needs are met."

*Have questions concerning your precision metal stamping design? Call our FREE hotline at **1-888-89-STAMP** (1-888-89-7826) to speak with a metal stamping engineer.*

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