



Case Study



12 month
program



21 sections to
complete



Employer-Funded
Program

Pre-Apprenticeship Program Boosts Bottom Line



AEROSPACE MACHINE SHOP

This small, Georgia-based custom precision machine shop provides parts to the aerospace industry per customer specifications.



CHALLENGE

Like many manufacturers, this aerospace machine shop was struggling to train employees and fill the skills gap. As a small business with limited resources, the company was looking for a proven workforce training program that would cover not only the fundamental basics of manufacturing, but also training on topics such as foreign object debris (FOD), safety, cybersecurity and specific machine operations.



The company implemented a pre-apprenticeship program through the National Tooling and Machining Association (NTMA) and its workforce training partner, Tooling U-SME. Tooling U-SME offers 600 specialty online classes that are fully aligned to industry standards and industry-backed certifications.

Before enrolling in the program, employees must complete an aptitude test and get the approval of their managers.

From the date employees begin the employer-funded program, they have 12 months to complete it on their own time. If necessary, they can use company computers before or after their work shifts. The program consists of 21 sections that take approximately two hours each to complete. Each quarter, the company checks in with employees enrolled in the program to answer their questions and ensure they are staying on track.

In addition to the online training, and dependent upon their roles, employees may be paired up with a department lead for in-depth, hands-on training.

A file server houses all employee training records, as well as a training matrix, so that managers can easily see which courses employees have already taken and which courses they still need to take — including refresher courses on topics such as forklift training and cybersecurity.

Three to six months after completing the pre-apprenticeship program, employees are evaluated. At this time, at their managers' discretion, they may receive a pay raise.

Additional Training

Employees have ongoing opportunities to cross-train and serve as project leads, helping to manage work such as assembly jobs from start to finish. This gives younger and newer employees an opportunity to shine in a temporary leadership position, express interest in additional leadership opportunities or train for higher-level positions — for example, a CNC operator might train to become a CNC programmer.

Each year, employees and their managers set training goals during employee reviews. They also check in throughout the year to keep the conversation fluid, and to keep training needs front and center.

In 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the company developed an Advanced Manufacturing Virtual Internship (AMVI) program. The AMVI exposes students to manufacturing concepts and themes, and connects them with industry professionals.



Employees must complete an aptitude test and get manager's approval to participate in the program.



After completing the program, employees are evaluated and may receive a pay raise.

Training has provided employees with skills and competencies to be more productive, engaged and successful.



The company's pre-apprenticeship program, including Tooling U-SME courses, has provided employees with the skills and competencies they need to be more productive, engaged and successful — benefits that have positively impacted the company's bottom line.

To find out how Tooling U-SME can help your company train people faster and better, call 866.706.8665 or email info@toolingu.com.



The pre-apprenticeship program has provided employees with benefits that have positively impacted the company's bottom line.

To find out how Tooling U-SME can help your company create a world-class training program, call 866.706.8665 or email info@toolingu.com



Tooling U-SME delivers versatile, competency-based learning and development solutions to the manufacturing community, working with more than half of all Fortune 500® manufacturing companies, as well as 800 educational institutions across the country. Tooling U-SME partners with customers to build high performers who help their companies drive quality, profitability, productivity, innovation and employee satisfaction. Working directly with hundreds of high schools, community colleges and universities, Tooling U-SME is able to help prepare the next-generation workforce by providing industry-driven curriculum. A division of SME, a nonprofit that connects all those who are passionate about making things that improve our world, Tooling U-SME can be found at toolingu.com or on Facebook and Twitter.



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