

Don't Tell Them. Show Them.

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Precision manufacturing today is far different from the dirty factories that most people remember from the days of black and white television. We have great technology, jobs and careers available; but first we have to let people know that our shops are desirable places to work. There is a simple test that I apply when I visit a shop, a business, any place where people make a living:

“If my daughter got a job here, would I feel good for both her and her new employer?”

That's my test. On the surface, it is about win-win; but ultimately, it is about the love that a dad has for his child: we want the best for our kids. Who doesn't? I know my daughter will add value wherever she goes, whatever she does. She's my daughter, I have a lifetime of experience with her.

So the question becomes, what does your shop say about the employer side of the bargain?

Housekeeping

Is it tidy, orderly, shipshape? Paul Horn provides an example of great housekeeping in a production shop; Micron Manufacturing in Grand Rapids, Mich. presents as if they were a pharmaceutical company not a machine shop.

Safety

Safety is the true measure of a company's culture. Safety is how we demonstrate our respect for human assets. It is easy to talk about commitment to people. The way that we demonstrate that however, is by having a true commitment to safety so that employees are not hurt or injured on the job.

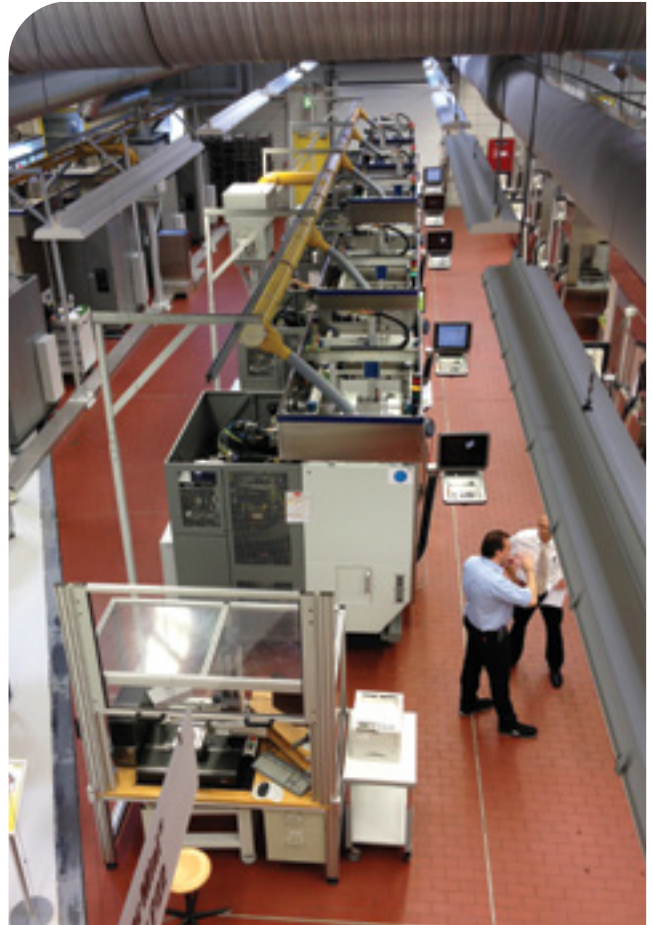


Photo by Miles Free

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Commitment to wearing personal protective equipment by management, “Do as I do,” is an observable indicator. Solid training and equipment upkeep. A culture that promotes conversations about safety and doing things better.

Improvement

A company's efforts to improve, itself, its processes and its people, are the most difficult to see, and yet their results are obvious and all around. Training efforts, records and confident employees are just some of the clues that tell me a shop is committed to improving its people. Shop processes that are solid, well defined and well documented also show that

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the people there know what is going on and are on top of their games.

For people to have a sense of value and worth, they need to be respected, and I would argue, they need to have a career. A career where they can make a difference, and see that they are making that difference. Making highly engineered safety-critical, mission-critical or medical parts in precision machining shops is a great example of a career where one can see the difference that they make.

We need to help our communities see that precision manufacturing is a great place to work. We have great careers, and we add value to our communities not only by the products that we make, but also by the fulfilling careers that we offer.

Our shops are often tidier and more organized than the local markets and food shops around, based on my visits to a number of leading PMPA members. Who knows this? Why not?

Our shops are leaders in safety. We have a strong commitment to the health and safety of our team. Who knows this in your town? Why not?

Our shops continue to lead the way to better processes, resulting in better products that make a difference in today's world. Cars that are extremely fuel efficient. Cars with anti-lock braking technology. Cars with airbag technologies. Medical devices and components. Aerospace systems components. Products for food service. These are made possible through the skill and talent and efforts of our employees in the precision machining industry. Who knows this in your town? Why not?



The precision machining industry offers more value to our communities than just the products we make and the taxes that we pay. We offer great careers, exemplary tidy and safe workplaces. And a constant effort toward improvement in our processes and people. We need to change the conversation about manufacturing in North America today. We have much to be proud of.

If my daughter got a job at your shop, would I be happy for both her and you? I'm sure the answer is yes. We need to help our communities learn that we operate our businesses based on the respect that each of our employees is somebody's son or daughter, and are valuable members of a team.

Manufacturing Day 2014 is October 3, 2014. You have an exemplary shop, and career opportunities that need to be shared with your neighbors in your community. Manufacturing Day is one way to help your neighbors see the exciting prospects available in our industry. It is a way to help you convince the talented people in your town that a great career is available. We hope that you take the opportunity to change the conversation, to change the image of precision machining in your community this year.

PMPA is proud to be a silver sponsor of Manufacturing Day 2014. Contact PMPA for information on how your shop can connect with your community at this year's Manufacturing Day 2014.