

Case Study



17
Manufacturing
Locations



8,000
Employees



Training for a New and
Incumbent Workforce

Midwest Manufacturer Retains Employees With Workforce Training



WINDOW AND DOOR MANUFACTURER

This longtime manufacturer of windows and doors has been in business for more than 90 years. With that kind of longevity, it's no surprise the company is deeply committed to developing and retaining its employees, who numbered more than 8,000 in 2022 and were spread out across 17 manufacturing locations.



CHALLENGES

Faced with an aging workforce and rapidly advancing technologies — and hampered by the absence of a new-hire pipeline — the company needed to implement a workforce training program that would groom new employees, upskill existing employees and enhance the organization's worker progression program.



In partnership with Tooling U-SME, the manufacturer conducted a workforce performance assessment to analyze its knowledge gaps and determine its ability to support a comprehensive training program. The company then worked with Tooling U-SME to develop job titles and descriptions, place workers into appropriate roles, and set up a systematic training process featuring accountability and pay incentives.

Progression Program

Team members enter a structured training and development plan that is specific to their roles. A robust and consistent process is utilized to determine roles that will be handled as stand-alone positions and those that will be part of the progression program. At the center of this determination is whether the depth and breadth of knowledge, skills and abilities required for a particular position fit within the expectations of one pay band or stretch beyond.

Each training approach is customized to meet the goals and objectives of each course, and to meet the competencies of the targeted audience and roles. This is accomplished with online instruction, traditional classroom instruction, a hybrid approach featuring 50% online and 50% in-person instruction, and hands-on labs. Surveys are conducted after each course to gauge course effectiveness and strategize areas of improvement.

Training Center

Program participants are assigned to capstone projects focused on lean At corporate headquarters, technical trade team members practice hands-on applications, mechanical skills and electrical skills in a recently upgraded 2,400-square-foot technical training center, aided by designated mentors and instructors. Equipment includes electrical simulators, robotic trainers, and all the tools and components needed to further mechanical knowledge and applications. Most training materials and equipment are easily transportable to the company's other manufacturing facilities to facilitate on-site training.

Employees are certified as qualified and competent to perform specific tasks and duties after passing job-specific examinations administered by internal subject matter experts. These examinations and certifications reflect actual work that will be assigned and performed in the role. Specific job-based knowledge, skills and abilities are aligned using a systematic and consistent approach.



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The company has garnered strong leadership support for its workforce training programs, allowing it to develop strong relationships with local community colleges and high schools. Not only has this helped the company launch formal onboarding and developmental programs, it has allowed it to ramp up its technical trades recruiting — tying it to key performance indicators — and ultimately to fill its workforce pipeline.

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.



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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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