



PT WORK Force

2023 PT WORK Force Blog Posts

Finding the Right Fit Candidate: Change the Conversation, Change the Perception

Posted On January 20, 2023

It can be difficult for job seekers to understand how their skill set may translate into a career in the PT/MC industry. This is compounded by the age-old stigma that skilled labor jobs at a plant or factory are dirty or dangerous, and therefore lack the appeal of other careers that many, particularly Millennials and Generation Z, consider ideal.

What's often overlooked or perhaps not known among the younger generations is that jobs in manufacturing and distribution require the same skills you'd find in pretty much any business. Employers need to consider how the skills required in other jobs are easily transferable to their warehouse or factory and learn how to communicate that to potential talent.

People Skills

If you are a business with an inside sales function or customer service desk, consider what skills you want those employees to demonstrate.

When a customer enters your business, your counter reps are likely the people who first greet them. You want people who can not only quickly become knowledgeable on your catalog and products, but who have a friendly, welcoming demeanor, are active listeners, can patiently manage customer complaints and creatively problem solve—what many term “soft skills.”

“Aside from experience and technical skills, there are three basic things I look for through a variety of questions and/or scenarios when hiring for customer facing roles: honesty, reliability and dependability,” says Cameron DeBorde, Bearing Distributors, Inc. “Typically, if a person possesses these qualities, they make a great candidate as someone understanding of customers’ needs and dedicated to promoting themselves as well as the company in the right manner.”

The PT WORK Force publication, “Cultivate Soft Skills to Build Loyalty with Your Customers,” offers this great insight: “... when you look at what keeps your customers

happy, it's not always your technical expertise. Often, they'll tell you (and you tout in your value proposition) that it's the people assisting them and working for you that drive customer loyalty."

While it may seem obvious to those in the PT/MC industry that these traits are similar to what you'd expect from pretty much any sales job—from a Starbucks barista to a retail cashier—job seekers may not understand how they correlate. Bottom line: Don't pass up the opportunity to approach your neighborhood barista or store cashier when you see them exemplifying the skills your company seeks in employees.

Need more ideas? Check out these [one-minute conversation starters](#) provided through PT WORK Force to help you explain what you do to four key audiences: [high school students](#), [technical/community college students](#), [parents](#) and [career changers](#).

Touting the Need for Technical Skills

Posted On January 20, 2023

The demand for automation and AI continues to drive the development of Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) solutions. Software skills have become highly prized by employers, and smart, technologically proficient candidates are in demand more than ever. In the manufacturing sector, software developers are now second only to sales positions in terms of the total number of jobs posted.

With the IIoT in the manufacturing market expected to reach \$87.9 billion by 2026, there's growing opportunity for people with skills and/or interest in coding and software development or programming to find great career reward as an engineer in the PT/MC industry.

One thing that might appeal to someone with computer skills or software design experience is "the ability to introduce new technology and be part of building something new," says Leanne Fuller, senior HR business partner, Dodge Industrial, Inc. "It's an opportunity for them to learn our business and apply their expertise, to make for a better widget, customer experience, output, etc."

While designing and operating integrated systems like networks, robots, machine tools and materials handling equipment is the work of a manufacturing engineer, so is identifying opportunities or implementing changes to improve manufacturing processes and troubleshooting problems with designs, materials or processes.

"Most engineers like to be 'hands on,' so the opportunity to assist with product testing usually excites them," says Fuller. "Figuring out how things work, or why things don't work as they should, also requires hands-on problem solving, which many people in these roles find attractive."

Maybe you know a teen or college student who enjoys computers or dreams of developing the next program or great gaming trend. Talk with them about how that interest can translate into becoming involved in cutting edge solutions that drive industry, allow for great ingenuity and job perks.

“Discuss the opportunities to continuously learn, create and problem solve; the possible career paths and when appropriate, the workplace flexibility that is available,” says Fuller. “Not all jobs can provide this, but engineering and IT certainly can.”

The Pivotal Hiring Step You May Be Missing

Posted On February 21, 2023

If you think hiring assessments are too complicated or a waste of time, think again. In a recent LinkedIn poll conducted by the PTDA Foundation, 58% of respondents indicate they use hiring assessments.

Likewise, a survey of 1,688 Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) members shows more than half of employers—56 percent—use pre-employment assessments to measure job applicants’ knowledge, skills and abilities.

A small investment in a solid assessment tool like the PXT Select™ by Profiles International, a Wiley product, can provide tremendous ROI when it comes to finding the right fit candidate.

“We have utilized the PXT Select™ for nine years,” says Tammy Balogh, chief people office, Flexco. “Our internal and external candidates complete the assessment early in the recruitment process so we can gather quantitative data on their fit with role and culture. The assessment report provides a profile on the whole person including thinking style, behavioral traits and interests. We also leverage other valuable outputs of the PXT Select™ including interview questions and manager, individual, and leadership reports.”

Imagine sitting across the table from a job candidate who says the right thing, asks the proper questions, provides concrete examples of job success. Sounds like a winning candidate. But what aren’t they telling you? Skills assessments are designed to uncover traits that aren’t readily communicated or apparent during an interview or by reading a resume or LinkedIn profile.

“When we are close to making an offer, we have the candidate(s) we feel are best suited for the job take the 45-minute online PXT Select™ assessment,” says John Masek, Bearing Service, Inc. “This tool has been scientifically validated over many years. Our jobs have been benchmarked by Wiley, so that a known profile of the ideal candidate is determined for each key job position. When the candidate finishes the

assessment, their results are sent to us instantly. And, along with interview results, you will now have a more reliable idea of the 'fit' of that candidate within your organization."

If you're uncertain where to start, [learn more](#) about the PTDA Foundation sanctioned program with Profiles International to offer the PXT Select™ to PT/MC employers. You also can download *Hiring Successfully For Dummies, PXT Select™ Special Edition* for information on how the assessments provide data-driven hiring decisions that deliver results.

What's the Secret to Employee Engagement?

Posted On February 21, 2023

Industrial manufacturing and distribution companies continue to face several engagement challenges: labor shortages, skills gaps, misperceptions and more. "Employee retention can be exceedingly difficult in an industry like ours (PT/MC) where the learning curve for many job positions is much longer due to the technical knowledge required to feel confident in the role," says Madeline Hickey, marketing and HR coordinator, **Lafert North America**.

To combat obstacles, more and more company leaders are making employee engagement a top priority. "In today's competitive market, the longer it takes for an employee to get comfortable, the more likely they are to look for a better fit somewhere else," says Hickey.

First and foremost, conducting individual coaching conversations between managers and/or HR and employees is essential. Inquire about their growth goals and skills they'd like to cultivate. Ask about their career objectives. Responses can help narrow in on training and development programs along with coaching or mentoring that your company needs to support. Equally important is creating opportunities for employees to participate in and/or lead projects that require them to stretch. An engaged employee is a loyal employee.

"A company is only as successful as the people that keep it running," says Hickey, "This is why it has never been more important to review and enhance training and development programs, not only during the onboarding process but throughout an employee's career."

Turn An Exodus Into Opportunity

Posted On February 22, 2023

As Baby Boomers make their exit from the PT/MC industry, a reservoir of knowledge goes with them, while a lack of interest among the younger talent remains. Changing the negative perception of manufacturing among Millennials and Gen Z is an integral part of closing the skills gap for PT/MC employers.

Pew Research reports 3.2 million more baby boomers retired in Q3 2020 than in 2019, and the manufacturing industry is on track to reach 2.1 million unfilled jobs by 2030. This recent CBS News story featuring Mike Rowe paints a picture of what challenges the industry faces.

Now is the time to embrace and empower a new generation. Employers need to keep up with workforce culture and employee expectations, so they keep pace with changing ideals.

- Be flexible. A standard 40-hour work week might not be realistic for many. Perhaps offering a four-to-six-hour shift a few evenings a week is more realistic and ideal for someone seeking non-traditional hours or supplemental income.
- Look to schools, especially trade schools and those with industrial distribution programs, to build a pipeline of talent. Attend career fairs and offer to speak to classes. This panel discussion during the PTDA 2022 Industry Summit offers takeaways from career services directors at schools and technical programs.
- Younger generations find everything from news to shopping trends to job information on social media. Build or refresh your current talent acquisition strategy to use or maximize channels like LinkedIn. And don't overlook your website as a place to list job openings. Link any social posts to your site.
- Look for ways to differentiate yourself. Develop or hone your internship program to illustrate a dynamic vision of what a career in your company and industry can truly look like. Put your best younger employees in front of your potential talent, and likewise ask your seasoned talent to share what's made their career so rewarding.

Simple Steps to Benchmark Salary

Posted On March 21, 2023

It's no surprise that compensation and benefits remain a top challenge for employers in the PT/MC industry looking to recruit new talent. To remain competitive, you need accurate data relevant not just to the industry but other demographics, including location and generations. As many Boomers prepare to exit the industry, Millennials and Gen-Z talent are more likely to job-hop than older generations—a trend prompted and exacerbated by salary and other benefits. This can not only make it difficult to attract new employees, but also can prompt concerns about adequate compensation for

current and longstanding employees. What tools do you need to make sure you're on track with your offerings?

Michelle Jacobs, director of human resources, IBT Industrial Solutions, and Michael D. Lulofs, senior director, human resources, Sumitomo Machinery Corporation of America share some quick insight on their processes.

How do you find current salary trends and what is considered a competitive wage? Do you look at other job postings? Do you benchmark?

Michelle: We stay abreast of salary trends by benchmarking positions regularly—at least once per year for all positions, but more frequently for some.

Michael: To get information regarding salary adjustment budgets within manufacturing, we look to survey data through professional organizations such as the Society for Human Resource Management and World at Work. We also complete benchmarking study every other year using an outside consultant (Mercer).

Where do you look to find localized compensation data for current positions?

Michelle: We currently use two tools for benchmarking: Salary.com CompAnalyst and Payscale Benchmark. Each of those allow us to get very specific data based on things like industry, company size, regional/state/major metro areas, etc.)

Michael: We will look at job postings for similar positions in the areas where we have operating facilities (Ill., Calif., Texas and Va.) to get a sense of competitive starting rates of pay. We have also had some success in obtaining information from local Workforce Development Councils.

How do you handle current salary demands when current employees don't receive similar compensation?

Michelle: This is an issue we've worked on for a while, especially since the pandemic began and the labor market changed. It's been a gradual process, but there are a few things we did that helped (and are still helping). We implemented a company minimum wage to better align with more current market standards. We also use our annual merit cycle as an opportunity to ensure employees are being compensated fairly based on market standards and their performance. Aside from those two things, we have many employees who are promoted throughout the year, thus granting pay increases."

Michael: "To ensure we are meeting current salary demands, we have made several adjustments to our starting rates of pay in the past 2-3 years (particularly in warehouse, assembly and machining functions) to ensure that we are offering competitive pay rates to current and prospective staff members."

One PT/MC Company's Path to Building DEI

Posted On April 21, 2023

Rapid growth thanks to several acquisitions over the past few years spawned a great opportunity for Solve Industrial Motion Group to focus on growing its team and DEI initiatives in tandem. In the past 15 months Solve grew from 40 employees to 240. That included adding two new HR staff members with plans to hire another team member by the end of year. Vice President of Human Resources, Kris Eldridge shares how the company constructed and is implementing a DEI program that underpins its culture.

"Growth prompted the need for several new positions to support our infrastructure, which gave us the opportunity to shift how we thought about identifying talent to fill those roles. says Eldridge.

Solve embraced the opportunity to be more thoughtful about how it approached recruiting and interviewing. The strategy worked.

"I've always been a proponent of not needing someone from the industry to work a core function," says Eldridge. "While it's certainly helpful to have industry experience, it's also limiting, for example, initially, the belief was that good candidates had to have some mechanical aptitude, however you can fill a sales role by interviewing candidates that have relevant skills and core competencies that match the job description, and you can teach the product knowledge over time. We have filled several positions with this philosophy in mind and they have been successful in their roles."

Solve filled engineering and sales roles with diverse hires who although didn't have specific product knowledge, had demonstrated success in their previous roles and could learn about the product line as they acclimated to the company and industry.

Solve also created a diversity roadmap that expands their efforts beyond recruiting.

"We've been slow to approach and unveil it because it's a new yet needed venture for us," shared Eldridge. "We have taken strides to market externally as a company that wants to be proactive, while internally still nurturing a slow conscious culture change around diversity."

As part of Solve's roadmap, they adopted a diversity policy and began marketing on their website as well as other channels.

“We built out a Glassdoor company website that features our diversity statement, diversity policy and fun event photos so candidates using the platform can learn what kind of company we are and see how we are committed to our DEI efforts.”

Much of Solve’s work includes maximizing tools and systems already in place and investing in areas where they hadn’t before, including those to help establish DEI metrics.

“One of the critical investments we made was adding a dedicated HR function that would include implementing an HRIS system allowing us to expand our employee data and drive metrics. An example of the initiatives put in place was a Self ID campaign stating the importance of diversity to the company and encouraging people to help Solve track its goals by self-reporting their gender, race, ethnicity, veteran status, etc. We were able to decrease the number of unidentified associates by 70%. Now we can more closely monitor and report accurately on our true metrics.”

Eldridge says there’s more to come as Solve integrates more DEI initiatives that create a truly diverse company culture. Already it’s paying off.

“We just completed an engagement survey and featured some diversity questions. I was pleased to see that DEI was one of our highest scoring dimensions. Looking ahead we want to introduce training on DEI topics and continue the conversation about diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.”

Why Recognition Matters

Posted On April 21, 2023

Insight From a PTDA Foundation Award Recipient

In October 2021, the first ever Robert K. Advancing Leaders Callahan Award was presented to Chris Gumas of Ruland Manufacturing Company. The award recognizes those who demonstrate leadership and growth within their position.

Chris Gumas shares his thoughts on the importance of nominating people for this award.

What did receiving the Callahan Award mean to you?

Bob Callahan championed getting the younger generation involved and that wasn’t something that was shared by every person at PTDA Industry Summit when I started going in 2011. It was always nice to reach out to Bob; he’d be receptive and willing to share. For any of us who knew him, it was quite the honor.

How has the recognition inspired you to become more of a leader?

It refocused me; being a leader is something I need to do on a day-to-day basis here at Ruland. I have responsibilities as a leader here and at PTDA. So, it's important to remember that I have to lead here like I lead there.

What would you tell your new-to-the industry self?

I would tell myself that deep connections are important; that's something PTDA really allows you to do, getting to know people. The earlier that you get started, the more long-lasting relationships you will be able to form.

Why should people nominate their colleagues or business partners for this award?

I think it's important to continue the recognition of the next generation of PTDA members, especially those that may not even attend events. There are a lot of younger people making tremendous impacts on their company and industry.

Nominate someone who inspires you. Nominations for the 2023 Callahan Award are being accepted through June 9.

Job Ads Are Marketing—Are Yours Working?

Posted On April 21, 2023

An online job posting plays a crucial role when hiring new employees. A well-written job posting—truly marketing the position to the potential candidate rather than listing tasks and job responsibilities—can be the difference between dozens of qualified applicants—or radio silence.

"We review our job descriptions each time a position opens, or job responsibilities change," says Kelly Mallmann of Kurz Industrial Solutions, "As for the job postings, I usually refresh every couple of weeks to ensure they are still active and at the top of openings on the job boards."

With a poorly written job posting, one could be bombarded with resumes of unqualified candidates. Here's how human resource manager Amanda Fraser, **Daemar Inc.**, manages updating job descriptions.

How often do you refresh or update job descriptions and postings?

At a minimum, job posting templates are evaluated and updated annually; however, they may be updated more frequently depending on the circumstances. Reasons for updating the job posting templates might include significant changes to the role, difficulties attracting qualified candidates, legislative changes, or even labor market changes.

How do you write a description that is attractive to candidates?

When writing a job posting, we have found that transparency is the most important aspect. While this might not attract the largest number of candidates, it will attract more quality candidates who already have a clear expectation of the role. Transparency in areas such as hours or work, location, job requirements, and compensation help generate a strong pool of applicants and save valuable time during the pre-screening process.

What have you found resonates best with job seekers?

The pandemic has created a shift in the labor market. As a result, one component that job seekers resonate most with is work from home options, but for companies such as us, where that is not possible, we attract candidates by addressing other shifts in the labor market. Job seekers are also looking for workplaces that provide stability, are purpose-driven, and where they can grow. We have found that highlighting these aspects of our company creates a compelling job posting.

Hiring? Here's What One Recent Graduate Says You Need to Know

Posted On May 22, 2023

Karlie Kornegay graduated from Stephen F. Austin University in May 2022 with a degree in mechanical engineering and originally worked with the Texas Department of Transportation as a transportation engineer tech. Before long, she considered a job change.

"I spoke with a couple of experienced mechanical engineers who were both already in the gearing world," says Kornegay . "They were able to tell me a little bit about what they do, locally here in Lufkin, Texas. It was enough to pique my interest."

Kornegay now works for LUFTEX Gears, a division of Sumitomo Drive Technologies, as an applications engineer in Lufkin. She discovered her current position the old school way: she went to the LUFTEX plant and asked what job positions were open.

"Scott Franks, the general manager of international aftermarket engineering, was very encouraging and showed me around and let me know he would contact me if something opened up for an applications engineer. Sure enough, a couple of weeks later, a position became available. I applied and here I am today. I was happy it worked out the old school way. It was super unconventional, however," Kornegay says.

Now one year into her role, Kornegay is interested in helping recruit more young talent to LUFTEX. She's working with her alma mater to share her story and convince young engineers, especially women, to work in the PT/MC field. She'd like to collaborate with her former professors to speak with soon-to-be graduates about her work . She also sees LinkedIn and social media networking as the new way to attract younger

engineers and suggests employers make use of it to make themselves accessible to job seekers. "These social media platforms provide a perfect professional platform to share about what we do and how we do it," says Kornegay.

Kornegay believes while younger engineers are attracted to AI and the high-tech side of engineering there is still an ability to make a difference with mechanical power transmission advances and applications. "As young people, we gravitate toward the newer and constantly changing things in the industry," Kornegay says. "I think it's far from the truth power transmission industries are outdated. We have just been supplying solutions for a long amount of time. The more we can do that, the more we can incorporate things like AI and machine learning."

Benefits Beyond the Paycheck: What Job Seekers Want

Posted On May 22, 2023

Like every other industry, the PT/MC workforce is rapidly adapting to the ever-growing demands of today's job seekers. It's not just about money anymore. To attract and retain top talent, your company must offer non-compensation benefits that can improve the overall work experience.

"The perks that have been most popular with our team are identity theft insurance, gym memberships/discounts, tuition reimbursement and professional development courses," says Carin Sampson of IBT Industrial Solutions, "We recently implemented 28-days of parental leave, changed our sick time to 'wellness time,' giving additional time and expanded reasons to use it to care for aging parents or other loved ones, or as mental health days."

Here are other non-compensation benefits that job seekers want:

- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Many workers in the industry work in shifts or have long hours. Offering flexible work arrangements such flexible schedules or job-sharing to help your employees achieve a better work-life balance.
- **Company Culture:** Employees want to work for a company that has a positive culture. Foster a positive company culture through team-building activities, employee recognition programs and open communication to attract and retain top talent.
- **Employee Perks:** Show employees you value them and appreciate their work by offering employee perks such as free snacks, company events and This improves overall morale and job satisfaction.
- **Professional Development Opportunities:** Employees are looking for you to invest in them by encouraging their career growth. Offer professional

development opportunities such as training, workshops and conferences to help your employees enhance their skills and advance their careers.

Trying to Triple Your Workforce? This Member Company Did!

Posted On June 21, 2023

The war to find good talent wages and the companies that are winning it are the ones building a hiring and retention program that really speaks to what job seekers want in a career, not just a job.

U.S.A. Roller Chain & Sprockets implemented a program to help train new sales employees. It has been a tremendous success thus far with the company growing from nine to 29 employees in under five years. They attribute their success to the growth through their company culture and family-owned businesses.

Angel Benitez, senior sales consultant at U.S.A. Roller Chain & Sprockets, shares how he designed a sales training program to help find candidates who are a perfect fit for the company.

What are important skills you look for in new hires, particularly recent graduates?

We don't necessarily look for someone who is out of college. We're looking for candidates who have a willingness to learn. We want more than just candidates who are looking for a job, we want candidates who want to build a career. We decide they're a good fit based on how they behave on the phone and interact with the customer. Tonality and willingness to help is about 80% of it. 20% is product knowledge.

What do your employees tell you attracted them to your company?

The first thing they tell us is our environment and how we treat each other stood out, as well as our capacity to work with others and willingness to provide help and guidance when needed. They also tell us our culture is extremely diverse. Something candidates also tell us they also look at very closely is compensation, retirement, and insurance.

How are you recruiting new employees?/Are you using social networking sites such as LinkedIn or Indeed?

Many of our current employees refer new candidates; they already know someone who would be a good fit. We've made this work to our advantage. If you're already working here and you bring in new talent, you will be rewarded financially. We have tried LinkedIn, Indeed, ZipRecruiter but we don't want 100 candidates. Our financial incentive program nets us better results.

The bottom line? Benitez says for other distributors who are looking for candidates, they need to look for someone who wants a career and will put in the dedication. "Hire slow and fire quickly."

Get Front and Center With Next Gen Talent

Posted On June 21, 2023

It's not news that getting college graduates to come work for your company can be a challenge. You often hear how job fairs can be a conduit to getting on the radar of ready and willing candidates.

Tom Kralovic of BDI shares how his college's job fair helped set him on a career path in the PT/MC industry. He also shares what employers need to consider enticing candidates.

What made you decide to pursue this career? / Tell us about your journey to this field.

I first learned about BDI as a student at Bowling Green State University when representatives from the company attended the University's job fair. I was hired right out of college and began working in the Cincinnati office in sales. Eventually I moved to Cleveland for a new position with the logistics and supply chain team. It was a great opportunity and I've found that with hard work advancement in my role and the company was possible.

What do you think are some obstacles in convincing younger generation employees to work in the PT/MC field and how do you think employers can attract more candidates?

Industries like ours are not glamorous. It is a lot of hard work and there's intensive training that must be completed, but it's extremely rewarding if you're willing to put in the effort. It's also key that employers supply flexibility and mentorship throughout one's career. As an employee, I found it beneficial to have mentors both within BDI as well as outside. Life will continue to throw curveballs at you so it can be useful to have someone for you to bounce ideas off each other.

Kralovic says, "It's crucial to be honest about what you're willing to pay. Employers should remain competitive with pay and benefits when looking to attract top talent. It's helpful to analyze job positions at similar companies and see what the competition is paying. They must understand that it is not always all about salary."

Unlocking the Power of Sign-On Bonuses

Posted On July 21, 2023

Sign-on bonuses are becoming a common practice in today's job market and are often a deciding factor for a job candidate weighing an offer from your company or the competition. Typical sign-on bonuses range from a few thousand dollars to tens of thousands of dollars and can help offset the costs of recruiting new employees and improve employee morale and engagement. What better way to demonstrate your organization's willingness to invest in its employees' success?

A recent [Industry Pulse survey](#), conducted by Sikich, reveals that a mere **28%** of manufacturing and distribution businesses currently offer sign-on bonuses for shift workers. It's clear there is an opportunity for companies to leverage this incentive to stand out from competitors.

Angela Calkins, human resource manager at **ErieTec**, discusses how her company has benefited from implementing sign-on bonuses.

What is the benefit of companies offering signing bonuses?

We have found that one of the benefits of giving a sign-on bonus is it's a way to draw more attention to the job. It helps us find more qualified candidates who will fit the position.

Are signing bonuses typically paid-up front?

Currently, we pay half of the signing bonus in the employee's first paycheck. When they have stayed with the company for six months, they receive the other half of the bonus.

Do you feel that signing bonuses are effective for retention?

Yes. Employees will then decide to work harder because they want to prove themselves so that they can receive a second payment.

Some companies may take a different approach in how they incentivize new hires and reduce turnover. In this previous [PT WORK Force blog post](#), Don Markham, vice president, Conveyors, Inc. shared that, "every quarter, 25% of the profits of the company are donated to the bonus program. Employees qualify for the bonus after one year of employment. Employees earn shares based on position and seniority."

Overall, sign-on bonuses and other salary incentives can be a valuable tool for organizations looking to attract and retain top talent. By investing in their employees' success, organizations can improve morale, engagement, and ultimately, the bottom line.

"Our program has been very successful in keeping employees motivated and caring about their craftsmanship," says Markham. "We have seen less than two percent

turnover companywide in the last five years. In fact, most of our employees retire from our company.”

Time is Money! Stop Wasting Both with Weak Job Postings

Posted On July 21, 2023

Crafting a Desirable Job Ad

To attract the best talent, employers need to do more than list the basic qualifications. Prospective employees want to know their efforts and contributions make a difference, and they will be valued and compensated with more than just a good salary. Companies must go above and beyond to provide an attractive picture of the advantages and possibilities offered by their organization.

When creating or analyzing job postings, employers should take the following into consideration:

- Emphasize how every member of the team is important, from warehouse workers to inventory managers to drivers. Show candidates the impact of their work with carefully chosen phrases.
- If possible, offer a vivid description of the building or facility. Is it new or renovated? Are there any remarkable features? Curb appeal can be a key selling point to prospective employees.
- Has your company been lauded by the local community or industry for any awards or achievements? Employees, especially younger generations, are often seeking positions with companies that are making a difference and making a lasting impact with others.
- Hybrid work and wellness perks are no longer optional but required for many job seekers. Let candidates know if you provide remote or hybrid work for front office, insides sales and other teams or if you have wellness initiatives in place.
- Do you offer mentoring or professional development programs? Describe any opportunities for advancement and explain how the company supports employee growth and success.
- Is the company family-owned? How long has it been in business? Potential employees may find a company with a long history of success to be more attractive.

To get more tips on writing compelling job posting during the July 31 webinar, “Entice a Broader Candidate Pool with Job Posting Tips from Indeed.” [Learn more and register.](#)

Four Tips for Improving Your Talent Strategy

By Alex Chausovsky, Miller Resource Group

In this article, Chausovsky explores the first two ways companies can improve their talent strategy. The last two components will be addressed in a follow-up article in August's What's Trending.

The war for talent rages on. Some organizations are ill-prepared to manage the challenges of an increasingly complex economic and workforce landscape, shackled by the "we've always done it this way" mentality. Others are thriving, armed with insights and surrounded by allies, allowing them to attract, hire and retain highly performing impact players and supercharge their growth.

1. Talent Attraction: Target the Right Kind of Candidate

The first step in improving your attractiveness to job seekers is to understand that not all candidates are created equal. If you are struggling to understand why no one is responding to the job ads your business is running on online portals such as LinkedIn.com or indeed.com, in local advertising or on your website, you are not alone. Millions of businesses around the country are failing to attract workers because they are not targeting the right individuals. Few companies understand the difference between *active* and *passive* talent, yet it is a key element in increasing the impact of your talent attraction efforts.

Active candidates:

- Are currently unemployed
- Are proactively searching for work
- Set up job alerts
- Are actively applying to all positions that meet their keyword search criteria

Passive Candidates:

- Are currently employed
- Are not searching but open
- Are casually browsing
- Would not apply unless personally engaged to do so

If your organization purposefully targets passive candidates, the improvements in attractiveness efficacy can be significant, with some companies realizing 70% gains in talent attraction versus those that exclusively target active candidates with job postings.

1. Talent Attraction: Treat Recruiting as a Sales and Marketing Function

Are you treating talent attraction as a sales and marketing function within your organization? If not, you should be. There are four pillars of talent attraction that, according to research, have the biggest impact on drawing the top candidates to your company:

1. The **market** in which you operate. It is important to tell the story of why your industry is an exciting one that people want to build their careers in.
2. The **products** and **services** that your organization serves the market with. You must be able to explain how your offering can help the candidate win.
3. The **team** the candidate will be joining. People want to surround themselves with success, so you must talk about the key players in your organization and what they have accomplished.
4. The company's **mission**. What does your firm do beyond make money? What is the company trying to accomplish and what service does it provide for society? This is particularly important for attracting younger talent.

If you can eloquently “sell” why your company is an attractive one using the elements described above, you will see a significant improvement in the number of people that want to come work for you.

The second part of this series will address *Hiring: Understand What Motivates Candidates* and *Talent Retention: Use Reliable Compensation Data to Keep Your Workforce from Leaving*.

Master the Art of Talent Attraction

Posted On August 22, 2023

Four Tips for Improving Your Organization’s Talent Strategy

In this second half of this series from Alex Chausovsky of Miller Resource Group—who will present the PT WORK Force® keynote presentation at the PTDA Industry Summit—explores the final two steps companies can take to improve their talent strategy. You can read the first article, which appeared in the July 2023 issue of What’s Trending, here.

1. Hiring – Understand What Motivates Candidates

When you interview candidates, do you know where their priorities lie? It is incredibly valuable to understand what motivates people who will be working for you. Do they care more about money, remote work possibilities, advancement opportunities or something else?

If you know what they care about, you can structure the conversation to focus on those topics, increasing the likelihood the candidate will accept an offer if you were to make them one. For this reason, every candidate you plan to interview should have a CLAMPS profile. What is CLAMPS? See below for a detailed breakdown.

C – Challenge: The work itself, technology, market.

L – Location: Geography, ability to live & work where candidates want.

A – Advancement: Career growth, increasing responsibility.

M – Money: Overall compensation associated with the position.

P – People: The manager and coworkers related to the position.

S – Security: Likelihood of long-term employment or physical safety.

Simply ask prospective candidates to rank the above categories in terms of priority, and then share that information with the interviewer so they can tailor the conversation to the topics the candidate cares most about. This will make for more effective interviews than the generic ones most companies conduct repeatedly.

1. *Talent Retention – Use Reliable Compensation Data to Keep Your Workforce from Leaving*

One of the top reasons workers are leaving their positions in 2023 centers around compensation. To be successful in retaining employees, companies must be aware of the current compensation levels, benefits and flexible working opportunities across industries available in the market today.

The ongoing drive to retain talent is not surprising. In a labor market with over ten million job openings and just over six million unemployed people looking for work, there are 1.8 open positions for every candidate. Furthermore, the unemployment rate is hovering near pre-pandemic lows. Even with the economy expected to slow further in late 2023 and into 2024, companies will continue to struggle with workforce-related challenges.

One way to overcome these challenges is to have access to dependable, credible and timely compensation data for all your positions.

First, you can get a good sense of the compensation levels various positions are commanding across the country to attract new candidates. By presenting the salary recommendations for all major and minor metropolitan areas, as well as the national average, organizations will know what kind of financial incentive it takes to attract new talent in this candidate-driven market.

Second, you can conduct a retention risk assessment of the talent your company already employs. If the recommended salaries are above the level of compensation that you are currently paying your employees, it is a clear red flag that your talent is looking for opportunities elsewhere.

If your organization employs the four tips outlined above and strives to lead when it comes to talent strategy, rather than follow the herd, your business will thrive in this candidate-driven labor market.

Staying on Top of Salary Expectations

Posted On August 22, 2023

Employers should know that setting and managing salary expectations is crucial in the workplace. It is important to establish them early and communicate with new hires regularly to ensure clarity and alignment. Many people often research the industry to see the typical pay range, especially college students.

Lisa Fletcher, career services specialist at Nashville State Community College, shares what she's hearing from students as they look at salaries for positions.

What are job seekers telling you about their salary expectations? What do employers need to know about how to address and manage expectations?

Job seekers want their salaries to be market competitive and match the cost-of-living expenses for the area in which they reside. Also, employers should be setting salary expectations, which are reasonable and attainable, early, and often. You can create goals that prospective employees can see for themselves. This will help them better connect with the job and see if it's the right fit for them. It's important to conduct performance reviews regularly so that you can collaborate and track how the employee is meeting these goals.

What can employers do to sell the "whole package" (training, development, career growth, etc.) to candidates?

The first thing to do is share current employees' experience. Tell them why employees love working for your company. After reviewing the candidate's previous experience and skills, share how their skillset and experience aligns with company culture. Explain what growth and learning opportunities are available in the company. You want to sell a career, not a job.

The final thing to do is highlight benefits and perks. Job seekers today are looking for work-life balance, ways to be healthy and professional development opportunities. If your company offers health club memberships, extensive PTO, special events for staff or company sponsored volunteer opportunities in the community, share those details.

Degree Requirements—Are They Worth It?

Posted On September 21, 2023

As student debt continues to pile up, many are finding themselves debating whether a degree is worth the investment. Contemplating the necessity of an advanced education often begins with "Does my career path require it?"

Degree requirements for jobs have evolved significantly over the years, reflecting the changing demands of industries. While some professions require specialized degrees, others prefer transferable skills and experience over the knowledge gained at an educational institution.

“For our traditional MRO side of the business, a college degree is not required. While it is preferred, job seekers have the opportunity to join the organization without it. Experience and matched competencies greatly contribute to determining a candidate’s overall qualifications,” says Matt Pavlinsky of **Applied Industrial Technologies**. In recent years, many companies have decided to mandate a post-secondary or other degree. In fact, a study conducted by Harvard University has shown a 10% increase since 2010 in jobs now requiring degrees.

Degree requirements should not overshadow the significance of experience. While a degree can often serve as a foundation, practical experience provides hands-on knowledge and familiarity with real-world challenges. Many employers will often seek out candidates who have the combination of academic qualifications and practical experience.

Pavlinsky adds, “When considering careers in fluid power, flow control and automation, a degree is more likely required when we think about the technical competencies needed to meet the requirements of the work. However, higher education for these roles are not always bachelor’s degree programs. They include vocational degrees as well as associate degrees in STEM majors.” Depending on what you’re looking for in a position, a degree may be worth it. For others, the experience is worth more

Becoming Empathetic Leaders

Posted On September 21, 2023

Empathy may not be a novel skill, but its level of importance as a leadership competency has evolved, and PT/MC employers are taking note. At the PTDA 2023 Canadian Conference, more than 30 top PT/MC executives gathered to discuss key issues facing the industry, including being an empathetic and situational leader.

Collectively, they acknowledged the pressure on company leaders—from ownership, management and even themselves—to run a profitable and stable business is much higher than they have been. They’re also getting pressure from the bottom up, as employees are not only more vocal in their demands for flexibility and rewards but are using this as leverage to retain them.

“Leaders must see empathy as a vulnerable choice ,and what can help is not just a verbal response, but building a connection,” said Canadian Conference closing keynote

speaker Amie Archibald-Varley. “Whatever you need from me, I am here for you.’ Ask workers what they want, what they need.”

Recent data support this. According to the 2023 Ernst & Young LLP Empathy in Business Survey, in a study of more than 1,000 U.S. workers:

- Mutual empathy between company leaders and employees leads to increased efficiency (88%), creativity (87%), job satisfaction (87%), idea sharing (86%), innovation (85%) and company revenue (83%).
- Empathy is essential to fostering an inclusive environment (87%)
- Empathetic leadership boosts morale (86%)

So, what are tactical ways to fuel an empathetic work environment? According to PT/MC leaders, demonstrating flexibility and recognizing that one policy or one strategy may not work for all is the first step. Consider what you can do to personalize or customize a solution as problems arise. This may include:

- Trusting your employees to get the work done when it needs to get done. Set core hours when people need to be available to support customers or each other but allow them to set the schedule that works best for them.
- Taking a fresh look at your onboarding process. Are you immersing them in your company so they understand where they fit in? Are you sharing stories of employees who have made careers at your company? Are you listening to the questions they ask to see if there are ways to improve?
- Supporting employees outside interests. Offer paid time off for volunteer work or organize volunteer activities on company time. Support professional development beyond job-related training—prepare them for what they want to do, not what they currently do.
- Listening, listening, listening—and then acting. People want to help create. It’s not enough to ask—you also have to execute on their ideas so they can be proud of their involvement.
- Being realistic and transparent in the expectations for travel and work outside of core hours. For outside salespeople, they are working independently and their income is related to their performance. How can you help ease that stress? What do you really expect them to achieve? How do you encourage them and support them so they can take the time off they need to recharge?
- Encouraging staff to stay away from social media—especially your remote workforce which may turn to outside resources for their news, rather than their colleagues. There is too much added mental stress on people when they rely on unverified, unsupported social media as their source of information.

Celebrating Sylvia Silveira, 2023 Wendy B. McDonald Woman of the Year Award

Recipient

Posted On September 21, 2023

Silveira Shares Insights on the PT/MC Industry Employment Landscape

The Wendy B. McDonald Woman of the Year Award recognizes a woman who in the last year established herself as a critical contributor to her company's success and affected positive change on the power transmission/motion control industry at any level in her career.

PTDA Foundation Senior Director Tracy Weber spoke with this year's recipient, Sylvia Silveira, VP of Human Resources & Operations at NTN Bearing Corp. of Canada, about the human resources landscape in the PT/MC industry and her experience as a woman in a male-dominated industry.

In your position at NTN, you've been instrumental in implementing a range of employee engagement strategies that played a pivotal role in improving the overall success of NTN's business. Tell us a bit about these strategies.

I attribute our ability to achieve 95% of our recruitment goals to the development of hybrid remote roles. With this approach, NTN embarked on virtual transformation of its business model, evolving from "in-person relationship selling" and "delivering value" to "project sales management." Employees were also offered supplementary training ranging from Project Management Professional Certification to learning French as a second language.

I truly enjoy helping our employees succeed—from advance from customer service to director or from sales to manager. Career development and company culture are incredibly important not only for those who have been with NTN for a while but also as a recruitment tool.

With so many companies having to deal with the baby boomers retiring, what have you been doing to help NTN avoid the skills gap that happens when experienced employees leave?

We've been focusing heavily on succession planning. In collaboration with the leadership team, I worked with them to identify high potential successors and skills/knowledge gaps within the organization. As a result, NTN has been able to provide internal growth opportunities for our internal employees and support them with training to fill the gaps.

It's not easy to bring new people into an existing culture and set them up for success. You helped NTN in a Senpai/Kohia mentorship for all new hires. Describe that program.

The Senpai/Kohia mentorship allows experienced executives to offer advice to mentees to achieve personal and professional growth. This initiative supports new employees' integration within the NTN culture as it allows new hires to collaborate with a senior employee as their mentor. These programs have contributed to building a positive working environment where all employees feel valued.

Let's talk a bit about your experience in the industry. What lessons have you learned from being a woman in this male-dominated industry?

My previous career in the printing industry, which is also male dominated, so early on I learned to have a voice. Be strong, be fair and be consistent. And make sure what you are communicating to employees and leadership is accurate—your integrity and authenticity carry you a long way.

I also benefited from having a mentor in Paul Meo. Paul's been in the PT/MC industry for over 40 years, so he helped me understand what the industry is about, not just bearings but the power transmission side of business as well.

How do you hope to recruit, influence and support other women in the PT/MC industry?

This industry is here to stay for a long time, and more women will be joining from different industries because there are plenty of opportunities. PTDA member companies should support more woman in sales and marketing to volunteer within the industry and attend PTDA events. The benefits you get from networking are tremendous, not only from a business development perspective but also from your own professional development. Having a community of women who are facing what you face—and can provide you with stories on how they preserved—is so motivating.

Companies have come a long way in recruiting females, even in sales. Give them a chance to show that they can do the job just as good or better than others. Mentor and support them in developing

Adjusting to the Post-Pandemic Workforce

Posted On October 18, 2023

The pandemic taught us that there are different ways of working. Employers today are challenged to offer flexibility to meet the demands of a changing workforce.

According to a study done by [Zippia](#), over 74 percent of companies are or plan to use a hybrid remote work model. Before the pandemic, only 47 percent of the companies had a similar plan and 27 percent offered it during lockdowns with plans to make it permanent. Still, some positions often make it more difficult to work entirely remotely.

PTM industries has implemented a strategy for hybrid remote work to meet the expectations of today's workforce. Craig Bobbie, president, shares more on what they have done with implementing a hybrid, remote work plan.

What changes have you made?

In a logistics environment like we have in our Toronto and Calgary facilities you can't really warehouse and ship thousands of items we stock and sell, from your place of residence. We needed to make some technical upgrades to allow us to be able to have a remote work environment for certain positions. For us, it was a two-prong implementation to make sure both our ERP and our telecommunications systems were capable of allowing members of our customer service team to work remotely.

How do you respond when someone asks you to work remotely?

In general, we're very open to remote work discussions with our employees. We look very closely at each job role and how much can be done from home. Working remotely does make certain daily communications a little harder when it comes to staying in touch – particularly in the fast paced, high volume, customer service environment in which we operate. It does take more effort from the entire team to keep in touch with one another and to make sure everyone feels connected not only to each other, but to the company and our. It's a challenge but I think the option of remote working is something many employees want these days, and companies need to be able to adapt and offer these opportunities to employees, in certain roles, in order to stay progressive and competitive in the job market.

Have you found other places to advertise for potential new employees?

We often offer incentives to current employees for referrals for new hires and prefer to promote or refer from within when positions become available. When we do look externally, we often use Indeed and have also used recruiters for more critical positions. So, we have a variety of avenues to explore when we have a need, which gives us a very nice canvas of potential employees to choose from.

What are the reasons people give you for wanting to work remotely?

It can be for a variety of reasons. It could be due to an employee health challenge or that of a family member. It could be due to the schedule of their school-aged children, or long commute times that come from living in a populated urban center like Toronto. We have found that providing the option of remote working for certain positions typically allows those employees to be more productive during working hours while giving them greater flexibility and work-life balance, which then translates to less stress and more work satisfaction.

Emerging Leader Alex Vitou Shares Why He's Passionate About the PT/MC

Industry

Posted On October 18, 2023

The Robert K. Callahan Advancing Leaders Award was established to recognize young leaders who exhibit a true passion for and desire to grow within the industry.

PTDA Foundation Senior Director Tracy Weber spoke with this year's recipient, Alex Vitou, Plant Manager at **Dodge Industrial, Inc.**'s Belton, SC location, about his enthusiasm for the PT/MC industry and the importance of creating awareness of the rewarding career it provides for younger generations.

In your tenure at Dodge, you've been instrumental in the company's success. Tell us a bit about your role and accomplishments.

I began working at Dodge in 2011 as an Applications Engineer in the Bearing & PT team (customer facing/plant support design engineering) before quickly moving into the Research & Development side, mostly in the coupling & mechanical drives part of the business. My claim to fame is the Dodge Raptor Coupling. I spent five years working on that product launch, testing, etc. Creating the Dodge Raptor Coupling from scratch was a defining piece. It's been a successful product. There are a lot of equations out there for designing bearings and gears, the industry developed a lot of standard procedures to create them, but couplings are different. There is no protocol, so you have to design your own math and figure it out. So that was incredibly rewarding. After that I moved into Product Design Engineering for two and a half years before becoming department head where I managed all application engineering for three years. I have been the Plant Manager at Dodge's Belton plant since October 2022, which makes standard duty gear boxes. I thoroughly enjoy the management side of business. I have also written a handful of industry standards.

You say you really enjoy the management side of the business. Tell us about that.

Setting a strategy, being transparent, communicating that strategy and really fostering the culture is what I want. Culture is top down. It's the most important piece of being successful and Dodge has an impeccable culture. I want to ensure my employees feel safe and comfortable, that they understand their roles and have the proper tools, can exist and be happy. I believe in giving them the direction and empowering them to do just about anything they want. It's rewarding For me, taking multiple groups and

consolidating into one department and getting everybody to see the same picture, developing a strategy and seeing it come to fruition was more fun than the product development side.

You mentioned that you are passionate about bringing young people into the PT/MC industry. What are your tips for recruiting, influencing and supporting other young talent?

Talent development is one of my passions. I enjoy coaching and bringing people into the industry, so I spend a lot of time developing talent pipelines. Dodge has done a great job building pipelines through colleges and universities.

I also serve on the South Carolina Coalition Math & Science Advisory Board which is essentially the STEM education lobbying arm for the state. Its purpose is to establish STEM education in schools and encourage kids to look for careers in those fields. There is a STEM festival in Greenville that draws 12,000-14,000 attendees, 50-60 companies, and the provides STEM activities for kids for free. It's important to get them interested early and Dodge has a booth at this fest every year to spread awareness about our brand. Dodge also offers internships which have proven to be successful. If we can get people to understand what we do and the impact we have on the world, people will stay.

As someone who has found success in the PT/MC industry, what advice would you give your younger self?

I would tell the younger generation not to be afraid to take risks and try something new. Networking is the key, internally and externally, so get to know as many people as you can. Build those relationships and don't be afraid to ask for help because letting people help you helps them too. Never hesitate to share ideas with others. And be kind.

Build a Strong Employer Brand to Attract Top Talent

Posted On October 18, 2023

The employer brand plays a crucial role in shaping the overall perception of a company for job seekers.

Understanding what a company does is an integral part of the candidate's decision-making process when determining if an organization is a good fit for them.

Employer branding refers to a company's strategies and tactics to position itself as a

workplace. This involves highlighting the company's core values, culture and enticing benefits. A good employer brand helps candidates and current employees understand the mission, values and goals of the organization.

The goal of employer branding is to motivate employees by instilling a sense of pride and belonging. An organization with a strong, positive brand increases employee engagement and job satisfaction by aligning employees with the company's mission and values. Employees are able to find more meaning in their work, which fosters motivation and a sense of purpose. In addition, a strong employer brand emphasizes employee well-being and development, which boosts morale.

Sara Zimmerman, Vice President of Business Development at **Sumitomo Machinery Corp. of America**, said "I am responsible for building brand awareness for the company and its products. I do this by sharing content on LinkedIn, serving on association boards and committees. I am always looking for new ways to share my passion for the power transmission industry. I believe it's essential to our modern world and I am committed to sharing its stories and insights with the world."

Consistently creating organic content on social media that speaks to what individuals care about is key. You generate awareness when you highlight products and share photos, events, emphasize your company's community involvement and personal involvement in organizations, or simply post fun facts.

Developing your employer brand can also attract high-quality applicants and help retain top talent. A robust employer brand helps reduce recruitment costs, lowering the cost per hire and decreasing the time to fill a vacancy. Additionally, it fosters employee loyalty and contributes to a positive workplace culture. As a result, you will improve your business's overall performance and productivity, creating a competitive advantage.

Companies that invest in building their employer brand are likely to experience a more direct impact on their ability to attract talent. In essence, developing a strong employer brand can level the playing field for most organizations when it comes to talent acquisition.

Avoid Online Risks: What Employers Need to Know

Posted On October 18, 2023

October is Cybersecurity Awareness month, and it is important for employers to raise awareness to reduce risks not only for your business but for your employees and online recruiting process as well.

Online platforms recruit talent. Recruiting job candidates online naturally comes with certain risks and businesses seeking new talent are potential targets for hackers. Hackers continue to pose as job candidates to plant ransomware inside business

networks. There are several steps PT/MC employers can take to protect your company and employees from online threats.

The [Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency \(CISA\)](#) and the [National Cybersecurity Alliance](#) partnered to create resources for companies to remain safe from breach of data. CISA recommends the following four simple steps to [secure your business](#) and make it much safer when using online platforms.

- Create strong passwords and update them frequently.
- Enable Multifactor Authentication (MFA) on all online accounts.
- Update software when prompted to ensure top security.
- Be wary of messages asking for personal information.

PT/MC employers should develop a robust policy for safeguarding critical data and sensitive information which includes employees personal information. In this regard, CISA established a [Cybersecurity Planning Guide](#) to help organizations remain safe cyber-attacks.

Online security is more important than ever. Cyber criminals are constantly looking for improperly secured networks to attack, so it is vital to secure servers and the infrastructure that supports them. The outcomes of a security breach can be severe for companies: damage to company credibility, loss of revenue, legal liability and loss of employee and customer trust.

What Your Philanthropic Efforts Say to Employees

Posted On November 21, 2023

According to statistics done by [recharity.ca](#), 71% of employees think it's important for a company to support giving and volunteering. Having a charitable program also can help a company's competitive edge, according to an article by the *Harvard Business Review*. Corporate philanthropy spending reached over \$21 billion in the U.S. in 2021 and there is a growing emphasis on integrating charity work into your corporate strategy.

Focusing on philanthropy enhances productivity, which allows companies to maximize their impact. Working within the community can help employees engage and form meaningful relationships with nonprofits.

Here is what some PT/MC companies are doing to support their local communities.

[Sumitomo Drive Technologies](#) recently hosted a luncheon for Veterans Day to honor and celebrate veterans' dedication and service.

[Applied Industrial Technologies](#), in celebration of their 100-year anniversary, partnered with Humble Design Cleveland to help restore homes for those recovering from

homelessness. Humble Design Cleveland helps custom design houses and fully furnish home interiors.

NTN Bearing Corporation of Canada opened their community garden to the public. All produce from the garden is donated to Haven Toronto and then later given to the homeless in need of fresh and nutritious meals. Haven Toronto is a center for homeless men in need of a community.

To get started on developing a give back program, survey your employees to find out what causes they wish to support. Then determine how you want your employees to participate. This may include developing an employee task force to lead and coordinate efforts. To grow awareness of your efforts, encourage participants to document the experience and share photos on their social networks and with your organization's social networks.

What Is It You Do Exactly?

Posted On December 19, 2023

By Chris Bursack, ISC Companies Inc.

I recently spoke at an industry event where I stressed the importance of what we do while pointing out that our industry exists in relative obscurity. We are involved in virtually every manufacturing process. We provide mechanical and electrical products (and expertise) used in food processing, printing, lumber and millwork, pharmaceuticals, material handling, energy production, transportation... the list goes on and on.

If you were around at the beginning of COVID, you probably saw letters from customers stating that they viewed us as essential businesses and as such, we needed to stay open during any sort of shutdown. They recognize the reality that without us their production lines could be in jeopardy if there was any sort of breakdown.

So, just how do we communicate not only what we do but also our essential nature to those outside of our profession? I have certainly experienced the puzzled if not bored looks when I extol the virtues of various types of bearings to someone not familiar with our industry. How anyone can not be interested in bearings is beyond me.

I have had better success relating everyday products or processes and the role we play in making these things possible.

An obvious example is food production. Think of a simple loaf of bread. Think of all the agricultural equipment used to plant, tend and harvest the wheat used. Then the grain is milled into flour. The flour is packaged and sent to the bakery. The bakery uses industrial mixers, conveyors, ovens, slicers, and packaging equipment. At every step in the process, there are products we supply. Bearings, gearboxes, belt and chain drives, electrical controls, sensors, pneumatics, hydraulics and more.

That's just for a loaf of bread. Think about clothing production. What about building products? Bricks, windows, shingles. How about things like wastewater treatment? All full of products we sell.

It's hard to conceive of an area of modern life where products we provide are not used.

So next time someone asks you what you do ask them, "What did you have for breakfast this morning?" Then, go on to explain how someone just like YOU made that breakfast possible!

Shifting Employee and Customer Needs

Posted On December 20, 2023

During the PTDA 2023 Industry Summit, a panel of PTDA industry veterans addressed how they are adapting to fluctuations in the industry, including hiring, development and retention challenges. Here are a few of the insights shared by panelists: Michael Moonan, SVP of Sales, Solve Industrial Motion Group; Craig Pirie, President, Daemar Inc.; Drew Tucci, VP Sales & Marketing, Eastern Industrial Automation

We say that our employees are our organizations' most valuable asset. Now more than ever, that knowledge that our employees bring to the customer—whether in product selection, process improvements, service—is what makes us valuable.

Shifting Priorities

How are you changing your workforce, your processes and even your management style from an environment of warehouse workers and drivers to a workforce of solutions specialists and service providers?

- We've become a service-minded organization. We have a small panel shop, machine shop, local and international services. That evolution creates challenges for any culture. If one team fails, then the entire customer

business is on the line. We've exposed the cost, culture and detail for employees to help them understand their role and what's at risk.

- Daemar has surrounded its CSRs and front-line sales teams with the tools to be responsive to customers' needs. The team has access to ERP and CRM systems, online catalogs, supplier websites, online pricing portals to see inventory. They can provide immediate solutions when talking with customers.
- IBT is seeing a lot of knowledge escaping from the MRO side of business. Its customers are now leaning on the IBT team to be not just the product supplier but also the service and expertise supplier.

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Diversity in the Workforce

The world's demographics are changing and, to stay competitive, to be able to grow, we as PT/MC companies need to tap into populations that aren't our traditional workforce. How have you recruited and, probably more importantly, included diversity in your workforce?

- Solve brought in a talent acquisition team, and it's been transformative in helping to look for talent in places never previously considered. Candidates might not come from the traditional channels but if they have a mechanical aptitude and like to serve customers, they might be a good fit.
- At Daemar, 20 to 30 years ago people worked their way through the organization. Now, with such a diverse number of jobs to fill, where the company looks has changed. Working with its internal HR department has allowed Daemar to recruit in different places. They've also changed the words they use to recruit and are more focused on promoting what candidates get vs. just applicable job skills.