Challenge

Permac Industries specializes in components and assemblies for aerospace, medical, transportation, food, and beverage industries. During the recent economic downturn, Permac streamlined processes and developed a leaner approach to most aspects of its business. Its major challenge continues to be finding employees with the skills necessary to run sophisticated precision machine tools and equipment while also maintaining the company’s reputation for on-time delivery and quality service.

Action

Darlene Miller, President and CEO of Permac, serves on the President’s Council on Jobs and Competitiveness and co-chairs the High Tech Education Subcommittee. She is a strong advocate for skills training and led the creation of a solution to the manufacturing skills gap in her region.

Working closely with other precision machine shops that shared similar problems, Permac convened two regional community colleges (Dunwoody and South Central), along with The Manufacturing Institute, ACT, and the National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS).

Together they created “Right Skills Now.” It is a fast-track, accelerated learning package that combines a semester of applied instruction plus a paid internship, with a goal of turning out entry-level CNC operators. Students earn a college certificate, a National Career Readiness Certificate, and four NIMS machining certifications, validating their high-demand skills.

As each class completes training, regional manufacturers hold a “reverse job fair” in which graduates interview companies for placement opportunities. Permac hires operator level workers through Right Skills Now, with the goal of advancing those workers through additional training to higher level positions within the company – a true “grow your own” strategy.

Results

>> **Accelerated Learning:** The accelerated pace of the Right Skills Now model gives Permac a ready source of skilled workers much more quickly than traditional college programs.

>> **More Job-Ready Applicants:** Industry-based skills certifications built into the Right Skills Now program provide a guarantee of what entry-level workers know and can do, minimizing risk to the company.

>> **Easier Hiring Process:** The training partnership with the local colleges greatly facilitates the company hiring process for entry-level workers.

>> **Increased Awareness:** Launch of the Right Skills Now program and the media attention it has generated has greatly increased awareness of manufacturing as a viable career and the availability of high-wage jobs in the industry.

""Working with our area community colleges, Permac and other precision machine shops were able to design a new accelerated model that meets our hiring needs – Right Skills Now!"

—Darlene Miller, President and CEO.