

SAINT-GOBAIN - PRO-ACTION EDUCATION NETWORK APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics is a world leader in producing engineered, high-performance polymer plastics and serves a variety of major industries around the globe.

To further Saint-Gobain's employee professional development initiatives, Sean Devlin took on the responsibility of becoming a mentor. The company has three apprentices currently enrolled in NJMEP's US DOL Registered Apprenticeship program, which is made possible through the Pro-Action Education Network™

CHALLENGE

Saint-Gobain is facing a challenge that's become common among manufacturing businesses in today's current business landscape, recruiting and retaining workers. With manufacturing skills becoming harder to find, the company is forced to think outside the box when it comes to building their workforce.

"In 2018, we had 5 or 6 retire and 5 or 6 people leave for other opportunities. Our retention was extremely low. At one point we were at 60% staffing levels for our production floor, and we were a ton of overtime. We were having a hard time finding the people we need," Sean stated when discussing why Saint-Gobain was looking for new ways to attract and retain workers.

Luckily there is a partner that could provide the ideal workforce solution to meet their needs.

"We reached out to NJMEP because we've worked with them before for recruiting and it went well. That's when Torsten Schimanski [Pro-Action Education Network™ Program Manager] told us about the apprenticeship program."

Food regulatory bodies require businesses to participate in annual training for specialized employees and any time Sea Breeze brings on new members of the team, those individuals must be brought up to speed. Additionally, when staff are promoted to a new role, they must be trained to ensure a smooth transition, and production is not hindered in any way.

SOLUTION

"We started looking at people who had a wider variety of previous experiences. We started focusing more on people's personality in an interview setting. Some, of course, didn't work out but we found some really great employees that we can train so they have the skills they need."

NJMEP's US DOL Registered Apprenticeship program is an ideal solution for manufacturers that want to cultivate a talent pipeline. Saint-Gobain can hire from a wider

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Sean Devlin, Saint-Gobain

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group of people and train those individuals through the Registered Apprenticeship to provide the education and experience they need to contribute to and be successful within the organization.

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RESULTS

By providing employees with in-depth professional development opportunities, Saint-Gobain is rewarded with effort and loyalty from their employees. Employee retention and loyalty skyrocket and Saint-Gobain walks away from the apprenticeship program with qualified and highly-motivated employees.

Sean, Production Manager, and mentor for Saint-Gobain apprentices can see the impact of the Registered Apprenticeship program on the apprentices.

“Bryan came with a great work ethic from his time in the military. He has shown growth in both his leadership skills and business knowledge over the last few months. It is a common sight to see him helping out another operator who is struggling. And, he understands the direct impact quality and scrap have to the bottom line.”

“Luis sees that we’re investing in him by giving him this chance to gain some knowledge. He’s applying for tuition reimbursement, and he’s excited to use the credits he gets from the Bridge to College Credits program. He will be working toward his mechanical engineering degree.”

“Nick has a lot of really good experience from working with Toyota and BMW, and they have good training programs. For him, it was getting experience with more of the manufacturing side of things. He has a better handle on part drawings, using micrometers, calipers and more.”

Apprenticeship programs like NJMEP’s which have a curriculum that is registered and approved by the USDOL can have a massive impact on any manufacturing workforce. The skills acquired, the knowledge shared, and on-the-job/hands-on learning is proven to both increase componentry and the capabilities of employees and at the same time improve employee loyalty and retention.

Saint-Gobain currently has three employees enrolled in the Industrial Manufacturing Production Technician (IMPT) Registered Apprenticeship. It is a one and a half year-long program that includes 2,736 hours of on-the-job training, 264 hours of related technical instruction, fundamental technical education, and a focus on four critical Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) Credentials.

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