

## UNIVERSAL TOOL AND MANUFACTURING CO. (UTM)

### BACKGROUND:

Universal Tool and Manufacturing Co. (UTM) was founded in 1945 by two German immigrants. Over the years Emil Augenstein became the sole owner and remained the sole owner until his death in 1982 at which time his daughter, Dorothy, took over the position as president. UTM remains in the family and is a women-owned, ISO 9001: 2015 certified manufacturing business. Now, Dorothy and her daughter Robin continue to look toward the future while carrying on a proud history of exemplary service to world-class customers. UTM continues to meet the challenge of custom metal stamping and tool and die making and decorative hardware.

### CHALLENGE:

UTM was facing a common challenge that most in the manufacturing industry are struggling with today, finding workers with the right skills. The company also wanted to develop a safety committee, but they didn't have enough people with the right certifications and knowledge to help ensure this program would continue forward as needed. As high schools and parents continue to steer students away from the manufacturing industry, recruiting employees with the necessary skills and certifications to positively contribute to a manufacturing operation from day one has become increasingly difficult. The challenge is continuing to bring back manufacturing to America. Making America strong again.

### SOLUTION:

To overcome their challenge, UTM began looking within their own organization. The goal was to find stand-out employees that showed exceptional promise and potential and give them the opportunity to hone their skills through an apprenticeship program. UTM turned to NJMEP and its Pro-Action Education Network™ which just received a Certificate of Registered Apprenticeship from the US Department of Labor. They identified two exemplary employees that showed incredible initiative and drive. UTM asked if they wanted to be enrolled in the NJMEP's first Industrial Manufacturing Production Technician (IMPT) apprenticeship program. Both immediately jumped at the opportunity and would begin their apprenticeship in April of 2019.

Course material consists of safety training, part of the MSSC certification, as well as manufacturing and production on the job learning and in-class related technical instruction (RTI). On the job learning consists of 2,736 hours that supports the in-class portion of the program. Some of the on the job learning includes the ability to demonstrate good safety practices, read and interpret MSDS sheets, operate production equipment, producing quality products, interpret technical information, use mechanical tools and testing equipment, and perform mechanical set-up according to the employer's standard operating procedure manual and equipment manufacturer's specifications. Likewise, RTI supports the on the job learning. RTI consists of safety awareness training, production and process as well as product design lessons, maintenance and awareness training, technical drawing, quality assurance as well as Tech & Numbers course material.

Jessica was one of the employees chosen to take part in the apprenticeship program. She has been working in manufacturing for nearly eight years and just last year she was promoted within UTM to work on the Quality Control team.

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## **RESULTS:**

UTM didn't have to wait the entire year and a half to begin benefiting from the NJMEP Pro-Action Education Network™ IMPT Apprenticeship Program. After passing the MSSC Safety Module, Jessica was able to immediately apply the skills she acquired. The company can rely on her as a key member on their Safety Committee. She is even able to train employees and up-skill additional members of the UTM team. It only took a month before the skills she is working to develop, began to pay off for the company that invested in her future.

When asked what else Jessica would like to gain from the Program she stated, "I would like to learn the ins and outs of a warehouse and how to run a plant." This kind of interest will be reinforced through the IMPT Apprenticeship Program, further creating mutual respect and loyalty between both UTM and Jessica.

The Apprenticeship Program Cohort One began in April of 2019 and is made up of 16 individuals from 8 different companies. Each of the companies is investing in their employees to build a more productive, knowledgeable workforce to drive business forward. This is just the first of many Cohorts that will be taking place throughout the duration of the Gains Grant, which offers subsidies to ease the investment burden on NJMEP clients.

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