

POWERTECH UPSKILLS THEIR WORKFORCE TO CLOSE THE SKILLS GAP

BACKGROUND

PowerTech is an industry leader in the energy conversion space. The company specializes in electrical power supply systems for rail and industrial applications. Their mission is to “ensure energy availability and to use it as effectively as possible. Whether in rail vehicles, in industry or in research and development, our power supply systems operate efficiently and reliably and ensure that optimum use is made of energy.” PowerTech complies with the standards of ISO 9001 quality management systems and the International Railway Industry Standard (IRIS).

CHALLENGE

Manufacturers all over the country are facing a severe skills gap. PowerTech was in search of new production workers with all the skills to help drive their company forward. Unfortunately, that perfect hire with all the right experience just didn't exist. Finding employees that will remain loyal to an organization is another massive challenge. Workers find it much easier to walk away from an organization that doesn't invest in their professional development.

PowerTech is not alone. Nearly every manufacturer across the nation is facing similar challenges. What makes PowerTech stand out is how they took action to move forward and overcome.

SOLUTION

“It comes down to motivating people and increasing company loyalty. The original discussion with PowerTech leadership was centered around how we can develop everyone at our organization. The NJMEP program was simply a good solution.” Andreas Beilharz, Director of Operations and PowerTech's mentor stated.

PowerTech hired Jaime S., a former truck driver, to help with work in the OEM side of the business. Jaime proved himself as a valuable member of the team. To provide Jaime with the skill that will allow him to contribute even more to the organization, PowerTech leadership signed him up to take part in the NJMEP Industrial Manufacturing Production Technician (IMPT) Apprenticeship Program.

The IMPT Apprenticeship Program is part of NJMEP's Pro-Action Education Network™. The Pro-Action Education Network™ is a state-wide workforce development program spearheaded by NJMEP. This program provides New Jersey manufacturers with a variety of solutions to bridge the skills gap. The IMPT Apprenticeship Program is a year and a half long program that mixes on-the-job (OJT) training with in-class related technical instruction (RTI). The curriculum focuses on providing education to develop well-rounded manufacturing professionals.

“We wanted to push some of our guys from the shop floor to the next level. With the support of NJMEP, we could offer to develop our workforce.” Beilharz stated.

RESULTS

“We saw that the NJMEP program gives apprentices a bigger picture about the product they're working with, a perspective on safety, and a production point of view.” Beilharz explained.

Jamie, PowerTech's apprentice stated, “It gave me some newer information. I did welding in high school but I learned a lot more of the technical details. I've learned more about blueprint reading and drawing and pneumatic systems, and hydraulic systems. Of course, the safety review was great,”

Jamie has been promoted to servicing PowerTech's older materials. PowerTech can now utilize his new skillset and place him in more critical roles. He is now able to contribute even more to PowerTech.

This apprenticeship is split up into two parts; related technical in-class instruction and on-the-job learning. As of March of 2020, Jamie completed the in-class related technical instruction portion of the apprenticeship. Now he will continue forward with additional on-the-job training. PowerTech is already realizing the benefits and there is still another entire section of the program centered around on-the-job training.

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