

EXOTHERMIC MOLDING INC - APPRENTICESHIP SUCCESS STORY

BACKGROUND:

Exothermic Molding is one of the pioneers in the Reaction Injection Molding (RIM) industry. The company offers products to countless markets and for use in a variety of applications while remaining committed to the RIM process. Since its founding in 1971 Exothermic grew from a garage-based operation to an eight-press, 10,500 square foot facility in Kenilworth, NJ (*Congressional District: 7; Legislative District 21*).

The company's mission is to provide as much customer value as possible. Exothermic wants to ensure this philosophy carries over to its workforce as well.

CHALLENGE:

"Exothermic recognizes the cost of losing staff and retaining new employees. The company wanted to prevent this scenario from occurring," Paul Steck, President of Exothermic stated.

A well-trained and reliable staff is required to achieve Exothermic Molding's goals. A manufacturer is only as good as its workforce. The manufacturing industry across the nation, and around the globe is facing a severe skills shortage. There aren't enough people with the right skills to contribute to the expanding manufacturing industry. New Jersey manufacturers can't find people with the necessary skills even in a densely populated state with a highly educated workforce.

While it's a challenge to find the right employees, it's yet another challenge to retain those critical employees. Retention is critical in the competitive manufacturing industry. Employees tend to hop around to different companies without any regard for employer loyalty. This is because many employers don't invest in their workforce.

SOLUTION:

In an effort to address the skills gap and to increase employee loyalty, Exothermic placed a stand-out employee in NJMEP's Industrial Manufacturing Production Technician (IMPT) US DOL Registered Apprenticeship Program. The company chose Jalil, a motivated employee to take part in the year and a half long apprenticeship.

Jalil finished 264 hours of related technical instruction where he completed four Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) Credentials. The four modules include Safety Awareness, Manufacturing Process and Production, Quality Practices and Measurement, and Maintenance Awareness.

The company's leadership believes that investing in their employees will pay off for the entire team and ultimately for the customer, as well.

NJMEP's Pro-Action Education Network™ is a statewide, scalable program that includes US DOL Registered Apprenticeship programs. The program is rebuilding and upskilling the New Jersey manufacturing workforce.

"When I went to Exothermic Molding, I didn't know anything about molding, I just wanted a job. My company continues to push me to become better. Overall this apprenticeship program, to me, has been a success and I think it'll continue to benefit me because I feel like this is the new way. Everybody's path is different. [NJMEP's Apprenticeship Program] offers hands-on training along with classroom training."

RESULTS:

The benefits of Exothermic Molding's decision to enroll Jalil in this program are undeniable. Jalil scored higher than the national average on all four of his Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) tests. Additionally, LEAN manufacturing training was provided throughout the related technical instruction portion of the apprenticeship. He is excited to contribute more to his organization now that he has become a Certified Production Technician. He's grateful that his company invested in him and he was able to acquire these certifications to expand his manufacturing skills set.




"The fundamentals of LEAN are important for all our staff to understand," explained Paul Steck, President of Exothermic. He continued, "Having Jalil relay a few of the fundamentals to the rest of the staff has been effective. He has been tasked with sharing a highlight of his LEAN Training with the workforce during our Monday morning Team Meeting."


Jalil, Exothermic Molding's apprentice stated, "When I went to Exothermic Molding, I didn't know anything about molding, I just wanted a job. My company continues to push me to become better. Overall this apprenticeship program, to me, has been a success and I think it'll continue to benefit me because I feel like this is the new way. Everybody's path is different. [NJMEP's Apprenticeship Program] offers hands-on training along with classroom training."

Investing in Jalil's education and his professional development helped Exothermic Molding create a committed employee. He has now been promoted within the organization and is even training new employees. Exothermic Molding benefits in many ways by having enrolled a single employee in the NJMEP Registered Apprenticeship Program. In addition to having a highly motivated employee, other staff members will see a pathway toward career growth. Exothermic will see increased productivity, which impacts customer satisfaction.



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