

The Conveyor

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NUNNSENSE



Trade Shows To attend or not to attend?



In sorting through my mail today, I came across a flyer advertising an upcoming metal fabricating industry trade show. It is a show that I have attended in the past, so it caught my attention. I decided to read it completely before either passing it along to another in the company or sending it through the shredder.

After perusing the flyer, I took a moment to review all of the reasons why I should justify attending a trade show. Even though I love attending these shows, I didn't want to make the decision based strictly on my desire to see all the newest technology and latest gadgets to cut, bend, weld and polish metal.

The flyer of course let me know that it is the "largest show of its type in North America!" That with a click of my mouse, I could be a "VIP attendee" with all kinds of benefits; That I would be able to listen to a presentation put on by a congressman explaining how our government is helping manufacturers compete in a global marketplace; As a VIP attendee, I can end each afternoon with a happy hour and finally, if I stay through the last day of the show, I may even

win fabulous prizes during the buyer appreciation day!

Before signing up for the show based on these tantalizing reasons alone, I went back to the justification I had just moments earlier set out to note.

Since this is a technology show, I typically meet with our managers and determine what items remain in the Cap/Ex budget that needs to be purchased. We then determine if we can do part of our shopping at the upcoming trade show. Being able to make these evaluations during a 2 or 3 day event versus multiple, sometimes dozens of review meetings at the plant, in and of itself justifies the expense of attending the trade show.

Following the review with our production management team, I then began to review the various educational sessions being offered at this trade show, and asked myself who in the company would benefit from these sessions? Cost justification of having this training take place during the trade show also weighed heavily on my decision as to who should or should not attend.

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Lastly, I reviewed the list of exhibitors that would be present at this show and began to make a list of where I will go, what needs to be seen and with whom I should establish meetings. As mentioned, organizing multiple meetings at a trade show over a period of a few days may save countless days and hours spent in meetings back at the office.

Applying these lessons, Drake will strive to provide these deliverables to you when visiting our booth at the next food industry trade show in which we will be exhibiting.

Stephen C. Nunn
PROCESS EXPO NOV. 1-4, 2011
CHICAGO MCCORMICK PLACE

Operations Update

Last quarter, we talked about Training as a tool to facilitate change. We discussed the need to develop Standard Work as a method of better defining “how we do what we do.” We concentrated on the “On the Job” aspects of Training. But we didn’t discuss the Training that may be available beyond the walls of F.R. Drake. In this article, I’d like to focus a bit on that, and here’s why:



New Polishing Machine Installed at Drake West



Dustin Coffey prepares to polish a part for one of the new LS-600 Loaders. Right, The Polishing Machine’s air filtration system.

To ultimately deliver a high quality loader, our production process must utilize manufacturing equipment of high quality. Drake recently added a Costa-Grissom Polishing Machine to the Drake West Facility. This polisher is somewhat different due to the use of a softer wheel to buff initially. A harder wheel is used to perform secondary buffing.

The fabric of our equipment, stainless steel, will now be easily finished at an even higher level. Along with aesthetic benefits, specific requirements from the USDA will be met. Performing this function on site enables our ability to offer this without additional cost to the customer.



Toward the end of May, I was invited to participate in a “Mock Interview” training session at Valley Vocational Technical Center. I had the opportunity to meet many graduating welders, and discuss their future plans, as well as offer advice on career plans. Afterward, I had the opportunity to tour the facility, and speak with several of the instructors. I came away very impressed with the dedication and professionalism of both the student body and the staff. The Shenandoah Valley is quite lucky to have such a resource available, and so are we.

Most of us currently working at F. R. Drake didn’t “spring up fully formed” when we started here; we came here from a variety of employers, developing our skills along the way. Many of us were students at Vocational Schools or Apprentice Schools, and got our basic skills

training that way.

Unfortunately, those Vocational Schools are rapidly vanishing. Trade skills have been perceived as less important in the modern educational system, taking a back seat to more glamorous crafts like Cake Decorating, Web Page Design, and Theatre. One of the schools where I once taught has since dropped its welding program; the other two remain only due to their connection to Apprentice Programs. That may prove to be the saving grace of Valley Vo-Tech. It is connected to a thriving Apprentice program; two of our co-workers are currently enrolled in the program, and

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many more are graduates. More still may join yet; I am currently working with Todd Cook, our Apprentice Coordinator, to establish two more Apprentice Certificate programs here at F. R. Drake, Welding and Electro-Mechanical Assembly Technician.

I have said that the Manufacturing staff at our plant is possibly the best educated and most highly skilled work force that I've had the pleasure to work with. The large number of our co-workers with Technical and Journeyman Certificates attest to that, as well as to the value of Valley Vo-Tech as an on-going technical training resource. Both our past and future are linked, as is our survival in a highly competitive marketplace. We should thank them for the talent they have provided, and support them publicly for their work.

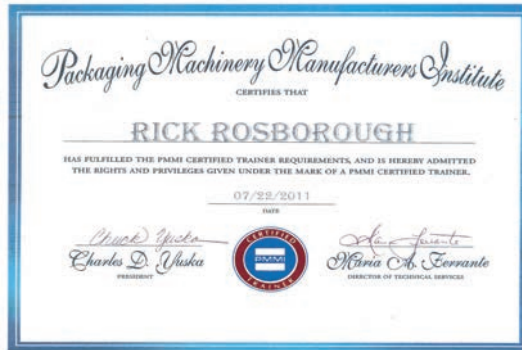


Jerry Kelly, Director of Operations



TRAIN THE TRAINER CERTIFICATE AWARDED TO RICK ROSBOROUGH

Rick Rosborough, Drake's senior field service technician, has successfully completed all course work from The Packaging Machinery Manufacturers Institute (PMMI) and is now a certified trainer. Rick will be developing and implementing additional training programs for Drake that can be used in our customers' operations to further enhance their in-house training initiatives. If you have interest in any of these training programs, please contact Rick directly via email. rosborough@drakeloader.com



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