

# *for* **THE RECORD**

YOUR Trade Magazine... published by the National Tooling and Machining Association

## SPAN THE GAP

BRIDGING THE GENERATIONS FOR A STRONGER TEAM



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## SEND US YOUR STORY

Each issue of The Record features our members. We want to hear from you. Send us stories of successes, innovations or experiences.

The submission deadline is the first of the month prior to publication.

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- 

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# FROM ROGER

*a message from the president*

Bridging the Generations: What a great subject. For us Baby Boomers, it brings back memories of our generational bridge into the industry. Gen X, Y and Z may still be looking for that generational bridge, or crossing it now. For each generation, the question is, where do we go from here?

Based on this month's focus, I first Googled, "How long is a generation?" Google said there is no set time, but most consider it 25 years, which sounds about right to me.

As most of you know, I am a proud second generation NTMA member, and this month's focus brings back many memories. My dad, who was 30 years older than me, helped get me started on my generational bridge into manufacturing; however, there were also others who walked me across that bridge. There were three men who were between my dad's age and mine. They were industry leaders and friendly NTMA competitors who helped, encouraged and mentored me.

The good news in my story, and the

story of many others, was the fact we had someone to help us start, someone to walk with us and someone to assure we finished our journey. In some cases, it may have been the same person, or it may have been multiple individuals.

As I look around at our need for future workers and leaders, it makes me ponder: has my generation done our job? Have we helped the current generation in their search, walk and crossing of that generational bridge? Is it possible we inadvertently contributed to the lack of young people crossing the generational bridge of life, industry and careers?

I am reminded that those who walked with me were not family members, but rather industry friends. Honestly, if not for them, I'm not sure I would have built a career in manufacturing. The opportunity was in front of me, yet I needed help: a nudge to start and the encouragement to cross that bridge.

Could that be where many of our future workers and leaders are? Are they just waiting for someone to encourage

them and walk with them across that generational bridge? Some who read this might have been fortunate to be raised, led, encouraged and mentored right across that bridge without a problem. For that, be thankful. I encourage today's manufacturers to look around. Who can you motivate or walk alongside as they turn a job into a career? Those three men that helped me will never know how they affected my career. Without them I may have gone a totally different way with a much different life outcome.

Regardless of age, if you are a manufacturing leader, look outside of our circles. There are individuals that just need a little help to start or finish their generational bridge journey. We focus much of our attention and discussions on needing employees and skilled workers. We truly want them to walk into our shops and say, "Here I am." The reality is, that day is over.

The road to our industry changed in the '80s with offshoring, college for all and the idea that service industries were the jobs of the future. The exit

to manufacturing closed, and we now have a gap of more than 25 years. It is our responsibility to rebuild the road to manufacturing careers and it is our responsibility to reroute individuals who need direction. Let's stop hoping and waiting for them to appear, and let's engage with those who are searching but don't know where to look. Let's engage with parents who do not know how to guide their children. Let's engage with our country's leaders to make sure they have a roadmap to manufacturing careers and a generation prepared to bridge young people's knowledge with established opportunities.

NTMA focuses a lot on training, but it's both NTMA and industry's role to focus on telling the story, telling "your" story and telling "our" story about the generational bridge

that leads to manufacturing and a sustainable future. When we succeed at that, then the training starts.

Let's commit to "Bridging the Generations" as we Manufacture America's Future.

Roger Atkins, President, NTMA

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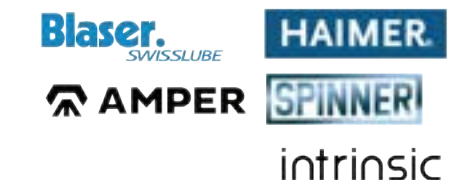
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- Finishing & assembly: hardware installation, cosmetic finishes, final fit-up
- Full-production private label: turnkey builds from sourcing to packaging
- Shipping: across Indiana—from Indianapolis to South Bend—and nationwide

We're part of the ETI Network: ETI FAB (metal fabrication), ETI (environmental control systems) and ETI Controls (PCB design & assembly). Together, we lower total cost, shorten lead times and protect top-tier quality — so you don't have to juggle multiple suppliers or tolerate delays and defects. Please reach out with your vision and let us help you build the products that shape the future.



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Founded in 1993 as Industrial Hardware Distributors, Inc. (IHD), our company was built on servicing manufacturing hardware such as fasteners, fittings and electrical supplies. In 2003, after purchasing our company headquarters at 1201 Burlington in North Kansas City, we found ourselves with a small powdercoat test line left by the previous owner. Asking our manufacturing customers if we could coat their products, we then started IHD Powdercoat Services. Since both product lines complement each other, we combined the companies under the IHD Solutions umbrella. In 2014 we moved the powdercoat line into a 100,000 square-foot facility located in the Fairfax area of Kansas City, Kan. We have since added casters and sub-assemblies to our product offerings. Our product mix supports our manufacturing clients where they can get most items from a single source.



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We want to hear your story.

Our editorial staff is currently scheduling member companies for our regular features:

**WHO WE ARE & WE MADE THAT.**

If you think your business would be a good fit, please email:

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## ADVOCACY: ONE VOICE FILES COMMENTS IN SECTION 232 MACHINERY INVESTIGATION



On Oct. 17, 2025, One Voice submitted formal comments to the U.S. Department of Commerce in response to its Section 232 national security investigation into imports of robotics and industrial machinery. In the comments, One Voice stressed that small- and medium-sized manufacturers rely heavily on advanced equipment sourced domestically and globally to remain competitive, grow their workforce and contribute to U.S. supply chains vital to national security.

The associations warned that tariffs on machinery not produced domestically — or on critical imported components — would raise costs, delay modernization and limit members' ability to invest in robotics and automation. In survey responses, members reported spending over \$1 million annually on machinery, dies, presses and robotics, with much of the most advanced technology available only from allies such as Japan and Germany. The comments highlighted that indiscriminate tariffs would disproportionately penalize purchases from these trusted suppliers, while doing little to address the real challenge posed by Chinese subsidies and overcapacity.

The Commerce Department launched the Section 232 investigation on Sept. 2, 2025, under the authority of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. A notice published in the Federal Register on Sept. 26 formally opened the inquiry, which covers a broad range of equipment, from CNC machining centers and stamping presses to industrial ovens, laser cutters, and injection molding machines. The Commerce Department is reviewing whether U.S. dependence on foreign suppliers in these areas constitutes a national security risk.

Members also detailed the practical effects of tariffs, from surcharges of tens of thousands of dollars on CNC machinery to canceled or downsized investments. With 92% of members reporting severe workforce recruitment challenges, the associations emphasized that access to cutting-edge machinery and robotics is essential to offset labor shortages, expand production and strengthen U.S. manufacturing competitiveness.

Now that the public comment period has closed, Commerce will compile its findings into a report with recommendations for the President, who will then determine whether remedies such as tariffs or quotas are warranted. One Voice will continue to advocate for policies that support member companies' ability to modernize, innovate and grow while maintaining secure and resilient supply chains. It is not clear at this time when tariffs may take effect, if they do, and at what rate.



Omar S. Nashashibi is a founding member of Inside Beltway, a bipartisan lobbying and strategic consultant firm based in Washington, D.C. He may be reached at: [omar@insidebeltway.com](mailto:omar@insidebeltway.com)

## SUCCESSION: IS NOW THE RIGHT TIME FOR YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS?



It's easy to get caught up in the daily demands of running your business.

But savvy owners know that if you invest a small amount of time to identify the current value of your business, maximize its potential value and plan for its future transition... the payoff is substantial!

You don't have to do this alone. Here's an example of how we partner with businesses like yours to guide and support you through the process —

without affecting your day-to-day operations.

A manufacturer based in the Midwest reached out to Succession Plus for a valuation. We identified the current business value and did a thorough analysis from a buyer's perspective, identifying gaps that may prevent this business from maximizing their potential value.

We uncovered a gap in value of about \$1.8 million. Then we set to work, collaborating with the company CFO and owner. Our mission: to address and close this value gap.

During an 18-month period we identified areas of risk that could negatively impact the owner when selling the business. One big area of risk was leadership. We sent up a red flag about building a long-term incentive plan to retain critical leaders, particularly on the operations side.

Working with their legal counsel, we implemented a stock appreciation rights plan and shared that with stakeholders. It was incredibly well received! The owner eliminated uncertainty about the future and aligned key managers with the business transition in the upcoming five to eight years.

We also developed a detailed plan to grow the business and address areas of weakness, such as too much business concentrated with one customer or industry. The results were phenomenal. After 14 months, we revalued the business and saw an increase of more than 40%.

This story drives home the point: there's great value in working on your business well in advance of your potential transition.

Succession Plus has helped hundreds of businesses increase their enterprise value by 34% on average after a two-year period. I ask all NTMA members a simple question: is it worth your time to explore how we can increase the value of your business without increasing your revenue?

**SUCCESSION+** Mark J. Dorman AIF, CLU, ChFC, CEPA, CFBS helps small and mid-sized businesses plan for a successful exit. In his 40-year career, he has counseled hundreds of privately-held businesses and has purchased, founded and exited businesses of his own. <https://succession.plus/us/> [linkedin.com/in/markjdorman](https://linkedin.com/in/markjdorman)

## REVENUE: SALES REPS WHO AREN'T AI FLUENT WILL BE IRRELEVANT



Maybe you've heard about this new exciting technology called AI?

Of course, I'm kidding. You've heard of little else for the last 18 months!

But experience tells me that your sales team may not be leveraging the potential. And that's likely to be reflected in your revenue numbers in coming months as buyers and competitors become more sophisticated in their use of AI.

While technology sales teams are quickly moving from "AI enabled" to "AI native" — from some tools laid atop traditional CRM to integrated AI that understands all prospect and customer integration and dynamically suggests specific activity and messaging — many industrial sales teams still ask, "Who's Claude?"\*

Here are some straightforward approaches that will help your sales team improve with basic AI techniques:

1. Conduct pre-call research — before prospecting or discovery meetings, a simple prompt will help to discover and understand buying team backgrounds and corporate goals that can inform consultative sales questions.
2. Optimize messaging and questions around what matters to buyers — with a carefully defined ICP (ideal customer profile) including details on the buyers' problems that you solve (vs. what you do), AI can help craft helpful questions and approaches that will resonate with prospects more than "About Us" pitches.
3. Create sophisticated financial justifications that will help prospects understand the cost of the status quo, and even Monte Carlo simulations to weigh risk in outcomes of switching to you.
4. Suggest part design changes to improve performance and production efficiency to reduce cost.

These are just examples. Your team will have others — once they start using it — and these are only for sales and marketing. AI offers significant operational insight as well.

\*Claude (Anthropic), like ChatGPT (OpenAI), Gemini (Google), and Grok (X) is an LLM that offers free and low cost paid access online.



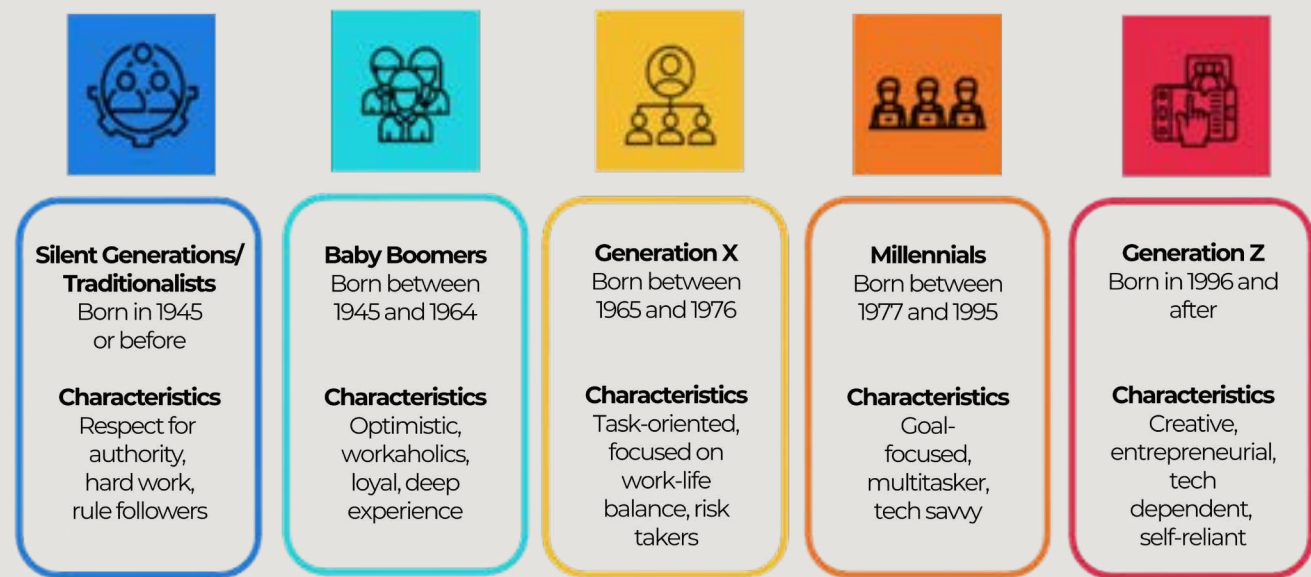
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# ALL GENERATIONS. *One Manufacturing Team.*

ELLEN FELDMAN ORNATO, CO-FOUNDER AND PARTNER, THE BOLDER COMPANY

If you walk a manufacturing floor today, you'll see four distinct generations working side by side: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z. So, how is your shop maximizing the positives of differing habits, values and expectations as you build your playbook for attracting talent, reducing turnover and sustaining productivity in a competitive market?

Let's consider four key areas where these generational differences are most pronounced, and explore strategies to turn individual differences into organizational strengths:



\*Generation descriptions provided here refer to the generally accepted USA-based definitions.

Source: National Human Resource Centre

**BOOMERS:** Prefer independence, directive leadership, structured roles and clear expectations.

**GEN X:** Known for independence. Dislike micromanagement and want freedom to solve problems their own way.

**MILLENNIALS:** Thrive in collaborative settings where they can decide how their work gets done.

**GEN Z:** Enjoy independence to test solutions and approaches balanced with clear structures and guardrails. Seeking mentorship.

**THE TAKEAWAY:** Clarity is key. Communicate where structure is needed and where autonomy and innovation are welcome. Create opportunities for check-ins and feedback to ensure alignment.

## *Supervision and Feedback*

**BOOMERS:** Annual reviews are a norm; recognition of tenure and loyalty carries weight.

**GEN X:** Prefer straightforward feedback, dislike constant oversight.

**MILLENNIALS:** Expect coaching, mentorship and thoughtful feedback.

**GEN Z:** Instant communications are a norm; they expect real-time feedback and can interpret delays as lack of engagement.

**THE TAKEAWAY:** Layer feedback systems. Introduce formal recognition for experienced workers, efficient coaching for mid-career employees and ongoing feedback loops for younger staff.

## *Work Life Balance*

**BOOMERS:** “Live to work” mindset; long hours can feel like loyalty.

**GEN X:** Will put in extra time when needed, but guard work-life balance.

**MILLENNIALS:** Seek efficiency, flexibility and balance; less willing to sacrifice personal life.

**GEN Z:** Prioritize wellbeing and boundaries. Advocate for flexible schedules and mental health support.

**THE TAKEAWAY:** Adaptability! Offer flexible shifts and cross training to create nimble teams. Create transparency around scheduling and expectations to avoid mandatory overtime and reduce pressure to over-perform.

## *Work Cultures*

**BOOMERS:** Entered the workforce when tough talk and abrasive management were often accepted. Many may still tolerate these conditions, but not necessarily endorse them.

**GEN X:** Pragmatic; they may brush off harshness but recognize its risk to morale and retention.

**MILLENNIALS:** Far less tolerant. They expect inclusive, respectful workplaces and are more likely to leave if culture is abusive.

**GEN Z:** Grew up in an era of accountability and will openly challenge disrespectful treatment.

**THE TAKEAWAY:** Owners have the opportunity to lead cultural change and make toxic shop-floor banter and angry managers a thing of the past. Create robust accountability throughout your organization with interventions like training and coaching. Join a peer accountability group or invest in executive coaching to ensure you are walking the walk.

## *Meeting Conflict in Real Time*

Set the tone in your organization by modeling the behaviors that reduce friction and conflict. When tensions build:

1. Notice when emotions rise.
2. Take a beat before responding.
3. Get curious about what assumptions are shaping behavior.
4. Choose a response that draws on the strengths of each generation.

Embedding this mindset into daily operations through team huddles, mentoring pairs and supervisor training builds “muscle memory” for intergenerational collaboration.

### FINAL TAKEAWAY

Every generation brings valuable advantages: Boomers offer deep experience, Gen Xers independence, Millennials collaborative innovation and Gen Zers digital fluency. It's up to you to maximize these assets. For manufacturing owners, the opportunity lies in respecting these differences while creating a unified culture. Don't just reduce conflict, unlock the full power of a multi-generational workforce!



# PASSING THE TORCH:

*Why the next generation shouldn't always start from scratch*

## MIKE PAYNE, PRESIDENT, HILL MANUFACTURING & FABRICATION

There's a rising wave of young manufacturing leaders who want to make their mark. They're ambitious, sharp and ready to build something of their own. Many assume the only path forward is starting from scratch, buying their first machine, leasing a small space and hustling to win their first customer.

But here's the truth, the smartest play for the next generation may not be starting new. It may be buying and building on what already exists.

### THE HIDDEN OPPORTUNITY

Across the U.S., thousands of shop owners are nearing retirement. They've built strong businesses with people, equipment, customers and cash flow already in place. What they don't always have is a clear plan for what happens next. Too many shops quietly close because the owner didn't see a viable successor, or because no one stepped up to buy.

For the next generation, that's a missed opportunity. Why

spend five years trying to reach breakeven when you could step into an existing operation and grow from there?

### WHAT COMES WITH BUYING INSTEAD OF STARTING

When you acquire a shop, you're not just buying machines. You're gaining:

- People: A trained workforce that knows how to deliver. Recruiting and developing talent is one of the hardest parts of running a shop; buying a business means you don't start alone.
- Equipment: Machines, tooling and infrastructure that would take years and millions of dollars to piece together.
- Cash Flow: Existing customer relationships and jobs hitting the floor. Revenue from day one.

These things give you a foundation to scale. Instead of spending your early years fighting for survival, you can focus on improving processes, adding technology and growing the customer base.



### SELLERS HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY

Of course, this only works if current shop owners prepare for the next generation. Too many businesses aren't sale-ready. Owners need to:

- Clean up the books so buyers, investors and lenders can understand the numbers.
- Document processes and tribal knowledge so the business doesn't fall apart if one person walks out the door.
- Invest in their people to make sure the workforce is stable and engaged.

Most importantly, they need to support the idea that their legacy can live on through someone else even if that successor isn't a family member.



### A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN GENERATIONS

This isn't a zero-sum game. Sellers don't have to "cash out and disappear." Many successful transitions involve planned handoffs: the seller stays on for some time in a mentoring role while the buyer gradually takes on ownership and leadership.

While this structure can have its own hurdles, it gives young leaders the confidence to grow into their role; and it gives the selling generation assurance that their shop, and their people, are in good hands.

### A NEW WAY OF THINKING

For too long, the story has been that if you want to own a shop, you start your own. But manufacturing isn't Silicon Valley. We don't need a thousand new startups with the hope some of them hit a homerun. We need to keep the backbone businesses that already exist alive and thriving.

The next generation should see acquisitions not as a shortcut, but as a smarter starting line. A chance to honor what's been built while pushing it into the future with new ideas, new technologies and new energy.

### PREPARING FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER

If you're a young leader, don't dismiss acquisition as "something only private equity does." With SBA loans, seller financing and creative deal structures, ownership is more accessible than you think. You don't have to invent a business from nothing to build something meaningful.

If you're a current owner, take succession seriously. The shop you've poured your life into doesn't have to fade away. By preparing your business and supporting the next generation, you can create a win-win: a fair exit for you and a foundation for someone else to build on.

### PASSING THE TORCH

Manufacturing has always been about progress, taking what exists and making it better. This moment is no different.

The torch is ready to be passed. The next generation doesn't need to start from zero; they need to pick it up, carry it forward and build the future of American manufacturing on the foundation that already exists.





**W**alk into almost any machine shop today and you'll see something rare in other industries: five generations solving problems side-by-side. That's a superpower — but only if we design for it.

The stakes are high. According to Deloitte, U.S. manufacturers may need nearly 4 million new employees by 2033, yet as many as half of those roles could go unfilled without decisive action to transfer skills and attract new talent.

At its best, a multigenerational shop blends time-served craft with digital fluency, with mutual learning occurring across the floor. Below are pragmatic moves any shop can make to honor tradition, reduce the skills bottleneck and modernize for growth — backed by what we've learned working with CAM Assist, CloudNC's AI for CNC programming.

# BRIDGING THE GENERATIONS IN PRECISION MANUFACTURING

**DANIEL SODERLUND, SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE, CLOUDNC**

## 1. Capture "tribal knowledge" as you work

Veteran programmers hold an encyclopedia of tacit know-how: what strategy to try first on a tricky pocket, which tool will complain (and why!) and when to switch to a different holder to kill chatter. The risk is that this knowledge walks out the door on retirement.

Pairing experts with an AI CAM assistant helps codify that expertise on the fly. That frees senior staff to teach the "why" behind the "what," while juniors see the strategies materialize in their own CAM systems.

## 2. Make mentoring two-way — and formal

Traditional mentoring (senior to junior) remains essential for process judgment and shop culture. Add "reverse mentoring" to the mix: invite younger programmers to coach seasoned colleagues on new CAM features, data tools or collaboration platforms. Formalizing both directions accelerates trust and transfer. Done right, reverse mentoring improves retention, broadens thinking and speeds technology adoption — key ingredients when you're modernizing, without losing your roots.

## 3. Standardize the digital toolbox

A lot of friction comes from inconsistent libraries, post processors and workflows. Pick standard tool libraries and machining templates, and keep them consistent across the CAM packages you use. Tools like CAM Assist plug into major environments — including Autodesk Fusion, Mastercam and Siemens NX — so your "house style" travels with you and new joiners ramp faster. (Bonus: standardization makes your quotes and lead times more predictable.)

## 4. Start with a small AI pilot, then scale what works

You don't have to flip the whole shop at once. Choose a family of parts (e.g., specific fixtures or 3+2 prismatic housings), baseline programming hours, then run a 6-8 week pilot. Many shops adopting AI report significant time savings and smoother onboarding, which compounds when you redeploy senior capacity to complex work and coaching. Adoption is spreading fast, and customers highlight shorter programming cycles and improved consistency.

## 5. Keep humans firmly in control

Bridging generations isn't about replacing judgment — it's about amplifying it. Our latest release, CAM Assist 2.0, increases user feedback and step-by-step control over strategy generation, so programmers can inspect, edit and learn from the AI's proposals. That design choice matters: senior experts stay decision-makers; juniors see good practice, faster. The result is a culture that respects craft while moving at digital speed.

## What this looks like in practice

### DAILY "PROGRAMMING HUDDLES."

Ten minutes at a workstation: a veteran explains the rationale behind yesterday's toolpath edits; a junior demonstrates a new verification shortcut. Capture decisions in your template or tool library on the spot.

### STRUCTURED KNOWLEDGE CAPTURES.

When a thorny part finally runs sweet, record the setup tips and strategy choices in a one-page playbook and attach it to the part family in your PLM/CAM. New programmers learn the "house way" faster.

### RECOGNITION THAT SPANS ERAS.

Celebrate legacy craftsmanship — retiree spotlights, "greatest hits" walls — while also recognizing time saved, setups simplified and crashes avoided through better digital practice. It signals that past and future excellence are the same story.

## Bottomline:

The skills gap is real, but solvable. Shops that pair intentional, two-way mentoring with modern, human-in-the-loop CAM automation are already proving they can respect tradition, ramp new talent faster and deliver more work with the people they have. That's how you bridge generations — by giving every machinist, at every age, a way to contribute at their best.



Daniel has worked for some of the leading companies empowering manufacturers with technology over the last two decades. Before joining CloudNC, he worked with ProShop ERP and FARO Technologies, and he loves empowering organizations to achieve explosive results and delivering tailored solutions that drive growth and success for his clients and partners. Before entering the manufacturing sector, he worked across a number of varied fields, including time in the US Navy.





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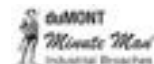


## EXPERT GUIDANCE When You Need It Most

Choosing the right cutting tool can be challenging, but our Tooling Concierge Program is here to help. Get personalized support and expert recommendations for your machining needs, whether you have technical questions, need the perfect tool, or seek application guidance. We're here to ensure your success.



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## 2026 NTMA EVENTS CALENDAR

Please contact Kristen Hrusch, our Events Manager  
for more information and to register:

Kristen Hrusch - [Khrusch@ntma.org](mailto:Khrusch@ntma.org) 216.264.2845  
or visit [www.ntma.org/upcoming-events](http://www.ntma.org/upcoming-events)

[www.ntma.org/events](http://www.ntma.org/events)

\* Events Subject to Change\*

**2026 CHAPTER  
LEADERSHIP  
SUMMIT** POWERED BY NTMA

**JANUARY 28 -30, 2026**  
FORT WORTH, TEXAS

**EMERGING  
LEADERS<sup>26</sup>**

**APRIL 27- 29, 2026**  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

**IMTS2026  
TECHNOLOGY  
LUNCHEON**

**SEPTEMBER 14 - 19, 2026**  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

The Precision Manufacturing Conference

**ENGAGE  
2026** PRESENTED BY NTMA

**NOVEMBER 10-13 2026**  
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

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# NTMA-U GETS A MAJOR MAKEOVER: TRAINING THAT REFLECTS TODAY'S MANUFACTURING

*A modernized learning experience built by industry, for industry —  
now redesigned for today's workforce.*

JENNY STUPICA, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, NTMA

Over the past year, NTMA has been hard at work giving its industry-leading online training program a complete refresh — and the results are impressive. We've always been proud of our curriculum. It was built by industry, for industry — and it continues to deliver the real-world knowledge today's apprentices need. But, we also recognized that technology and learner expectations have changed dramatically since NTMA-U first launched. That's why we've upgraded the entire interface and learning experience from the ground up, creating a platform that's cleaner, faster and far more engaging.

## BUILT FOR MODERN LEARNERS

### SHORT-FORM VIDEOS FOR BUSY SCHEDULES

Lessons now range from two to nine minutes, making them easy to fit into busy schedules and between shifts. Learners can make steady progress without sacrificing shop time.

### NEXT-LEVEL VISUALS AND TECHNOLOGY

Advanced animation, AI voiceovers, 3D models and custom illustrations bring complex concepts to life. In blueprint

courses, students can even visualize finished parts and assemblies in 3D — making it easier to understand how components fit together.

### LEARN ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

The new NTMA-U works across all devices, including smartphones, for maximum flexibility. Apprentices can log in anytime, anywhere and pick up right where they left off.

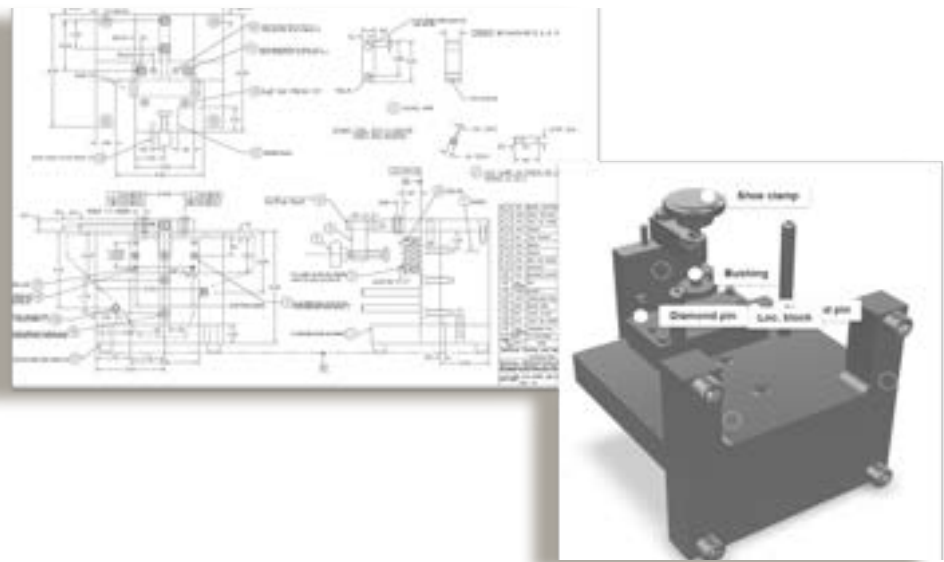
### GUIDED, NOT SELF-TAUGHT

While learners set their own pace,

every course includes instructor-led video lessons from certified educators — ensuring accurate, structured instruction.

### COMPREHENSIVE CAREER PATHWAYS

NTMA-U covers everything from introductory and pre-apprenticeship training to full apprenticeship coursework. Graduates can earn a nationally recognized Journey person's Certificate and up to 17 articulated college credits.



This next-generation NTMA-U reflects the clean, high-tech environment of today's shops — giving learners the tools to succeed in a fast-evolving industry.

### REFRESHED FOR TODAY'S WORKFORCE

Every aspect of NTMA-U has been reimagined. The visuals are bright and clean. The navigation is streamlined. The interface is fully ADA-compliant, with closed captioning, balanced audio and accessible color design. Outdated links and clunky interfaces have been replaced by smooth, modern functionality powered by AI-enhanced voiceover and multimedia elements. The result: a training experience that looks and feels as advanced as the technology on your shop floor.

### WHY IT MATTERS

Manufacturers across the country continue to face a critical need for skilled workers. Investing in training that connects with today's learners is key to building a sustainable pipeline. NTMA-U gives companies of all sizes the ability to offer top-tier education without needing in-house instructors or costly classroom setups — all while maintaining the rigor and credibility the industry demands.

### READY TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK?

If you stepped away from NTMA-U because it once looked or felt outdated, this is your invitation to come back. The content remains as solid as ever — but the experience has evolved dramatically. Free previews are available now. Take a fresh look at the new NTMA-U and see how it can help your company attract, train and retain the next generation of skilled manufacturing professionals.

**“This next-generation NTMA-U reflects the clean, high-tech environment of today's shops — giving learners the tools to succeed in a fast-evolving industry.”**



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Randal Leach, Ricaurte Precision Inc.

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## Accelerate Your Sustainable Energy Transformation

National Tooling and Machining Association (NTMA) Members have long relied on the trusted advisory services of APPI Energy for smarter ways to buy energy. Now that APPI Energy is part of Environ Energy, you have access to even more benefits that include energy efficiency and sustainability programs that cater to the needs of your precision tools and machine manufacturing operation.

Ask Us How We Can Help You...

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- Get started with ESG Foundations, a guided journey to sustainability.
- Learn smarter ways to buy, manage, and save energy.

Let's Connect!  
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# ICON IS THE GATEWAY TO DOD OPPORTUNITIES FOR MACHINE SHOPS

Are you interested in connecting your shop with military and Department of Defense contracts?



It can be a cumbersome process and the pathway and paperwork can be confusing. Without the right network, it may seem daunting. Good news — things just got easier. The new ICON portal is your link to government contracts and government buyers' opportunity to see your company's capabilities. Here's what you need to know.



The ICON portal is a digital bridge connecting government buyers, such as the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and the DoD, and a supplier base of qualified manufacturers, including foundries, forgers and machine shops.

For machine shops, ICON streamlines the procurement process for parts, facilitating new business opportunities, improving operational efficiency and strengthening collaboration within the supply chain. This digital platform provides a significant advantage for machine shops of all sizes by identifying

the specific details in solicitations for parts in the database, including materials, manufacturing methods and volumes.

One of the primary benefits of ICON: the network pushes relevant solicitations directly to prospective vendors based on their specific capabilities, such as materials and processes. Machine shops get enhanced visibility into new business opportunities. This targeted approach saves shops a significant amount of time and resources traditionally spent sifting through cumbersome, generalized procurement listings. By providing daily notifications of relevant open solicitations, ICON ensures machine shops are aware of and can act on potential contracts that match their machining specializations. The network also offers a searchable database of past procurement history, including pricing, which allows machine shops to build more competitive and well-informed proposals.

Beyond identifying new work, ICON provides a robust Supplier Capabilities Database. ICON users can promote their own specialties within the platform or search for potential suppliers, partners or customers. For instance, if a machine shop wants to partner with a foundry on a project for a specific tank or helicopter part, that shop can utilize ICON to identify a foundry with the expertise to cast that part. Users can manage their own contact information and communicate within the platform to set up a mutually-beneficial partnership to make and sell that critical component.



Ultimately, ICON directly addresses challenges faced by machine shops by modernizing the traditional, often inefficient, procurement process. It connects them directly with real-time DoD solicitations for critical parts. By digitizing and centralizing the bid, award and management stages, the network increases operational efficiency and helps machine shops secure valuable government business. The result is a stronger, more agile supply base for critical components, which benefits both the government and the machine shops that serve it.

ICON is a win-win. Machine shops have the opportunity to explore and earn new business while supporting and supplying the American warfighter.

You can further explore ICON today at [www.iconportal.com](http://www.iconportal.com).

Partner News





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“Even if you are not in the industry, going to **IMTS** **exposes you to a new frontier of crazy machinery, connections, and opportunities.** Just walking that show could totally change your career path.”

Roadtripping parents-to-be Jeff and Crystal knew the importance of planning – and being flexible. They brought an open mind to **IMTS – The International Manufacturing Technology Show** and found new technologies, great people – and new ways to do business.

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# BENEFIT PARTNER

## ENVIRON ENERGY: YOUR PARTNER FOR MANAGING ENERGY COSTS

**KATHRYN ALLEN, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, ENVIRON ENERGY**

As a partner of the National Tooling and Machining Association (NTMA), Environ Energy offers a comprehensive suite of services that members can leverage to reduce and manage energy costs. Their programs are designed to provide a competitive edge by navigating the complex and volatile energy markets on behalf of NTMA members. By participating in Environ's programs, members can access a range of benefits that go beyond simply finding a new energy supplier.

Environ Energy's offerings for NTMA members can be broadly categorized into three main areas: procurement, efficiency and sustainability.

### PROCUREMENT

The core of their service is energy procurement, where they act as a representative for members, negotiating competitive electricity and natural gas rates from a pool of vetted suppliers. This is particularly valuable in deregulated energy states, where members can save significantly by not being bound to a single utility. Environ's team uses sophisticated market analytics to find optimal contract terms and prices, which helps to mitigate financial risk and provide budget certainty. This approach gives members a significant advantage, as it provides them with more predictable energy costs and protection against market volatility.

### EFFICIENCY

Beyond procurement, Environ also focuses on helping members improve their energy efficiency. This includes conducting energy assessments to identify opportunities for



reducing energy consumption and managing projects for efficiency upgrades. These measures can lead to long-term cost savings and a reduced carbon footprint.

### SUSTAINABILITY

Lastly, Environ assists members in meeting their sustainability goals. This can involve procuring green power from renewable sources like wind or solar, or providing services for carbon accounting, greenhouse gas inventories and ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) reporting. This dual-pronged strategy of controlling both the price and volume of energy consumed leads to substantial and lasting cost savings. Ultimately, the partnership allows NTMA members to focus on their core business while gaining a competitive edge through strategic energy management.

NTMA members can take advantage of these services through a no-cost, no-obligation energy assessment. This initial consultation allows Environ to evaluate a company's specific energy usage and identify potential savings and opportunities for improvement. The partnership between NTMA and Environ is a great example of how a trade association can use its collective buying power to provide a valuable, tangible benefit to its members, helping them to control costs and become more competitive. Contact Environ Energy to learn more at [www.environenergy.com](http://www.environenergy.com), 888.238.3492 or [NTMA@environenergy.com](mailto:NTMA@environenergy.com).



*Here to Help*





# NTMA REMEMBERS CHRIS SUSTAR



Christopher R. “Chris” Sustar, 55, of Concord Twp., Ohio, passed away Thursday, Oct. 2, 2025, at Cleveland Clinic Main Campus, Cleveland, Ohio. He was born on March 20, 1970 in Cleveland.

Chris was part-owner and Vice President of Purchasing at Fredon Corporation, the family manufacturing business, in Mentor, Ohio. Fredon is a long time member of NTMA and the Cleveland Chapter.

After high school, Chris began working

at the family business. His career may have started with sweeping the shop floors, but he went on to become a Journeyman Machinist, then Vice President of Purchasing. He worked with many talented people who became friends over the years and had the privilege to work alongside his father, Roger; sister, Alyson; son, Chris Jr. and daughter, Emily.

Chris was a man called “best friend” by many, a true reflection of the spirit he brought to this world, and how he will be remembered.

# ALRO STEEL PITTSBURGH COMPLETES EXPANSION

Alro Steel is pleased to announce the expansion of our Pittsburgh location at 140 Solar Drive, Imperial, Pa. The 185,000 square-foot metals service center has doubled in size to allow Alro to provide customers in Pennsylvania with cut-to-size metals and next-day delivery. The Pittsburgh location has ample storage space for a wide range of metals, including aluminum, alloys, carbon steel, stainless steel, tool steel, red metals and more. Shapes include bar, sheet, plate, pipe, tube and large structural shapes. The facility has multiple saws for bar, structural and precision cutting, with quick access to a wide variety of additional processing

services such as plate laser, tube laser, oxy-fuel and plasma cutting, waterjet and more.

Alro Steel was founded in 1948 by brothers Al and Robert Glick in Jackson, Mich. The company is a distributor of metals and performance plastics. Alro is focused on offering cut-to-size metals and plastics with next-day delivery to over 50,000 customers in North America. Alro operates over 80 locations in 16 states and provides a broad inventory of products under the following companies: Alro Steel, Alro Metals, Alro Metals Outlet and Alro Plastics.



# NTMA MEMBERS HONORED WITH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

**KATIE GREATHOUSE, SALES & MARKETING COORDINATOR, OVERTON INDUSTRIES**

Ron, Steve and Rick Overton were recently honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award through the Indiana Manufacturer’s Association (IMA). The Lifetime Achievement Award honors an individual(s) who has excelled in the manufacturing industry. This individual(s) has worked in the manufacturing industry for the majority of their career and has made a significant contribution to their company, industry, community, the IMA and other professional organizations.

In 1986, the brothers became owners of the family business overnight after the sudden passing of their father, Ruby Overton, who had started Overton & Sons Tool & Die in 1968. Over the course of more than 40 years, Ron, Steve and Rick not only kept the company running, but have grown it exponentially. Each of them has also given back to the community in their own way: Ron put his focus into Churches In Mission, a county-wide initiative to serve those less fortunate; Steve helped found the League of Miracles,



a non-profit organization that allows children and adults with disabilities to participate in recreational activities; and Rick was a volunteer member of the local fire and police departments for more than 20 years.

# FOREST CITY GEAR RAISES MORE THAN \$5,000 FOR SCHOLARSHIPS AT 2025 GOLF PLAY DAY

**TAYLOR HOHN, COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST, DIGITAL HIVE MIND**

Forest City Gear, an industry-leading manufacturer of fine- and medium-pitch custom gears, hosted its second annual Golf Play Day at The Ledges Golf Course in Roscoe, Ill. This year’s event brought together customers, suppliers and team members for a day of friendly competition and raised approximately \$5,300 to be split between scholarships through the American Gear Manufacturers Association (AGMA) and the Rock River Valley Tooling & Machining

Association (RRVTMA). “Our Golf Playday is about more than great shots and good company — it’s about investing in the next generation of manufacturing talent,” said Kika Young, President of Forest City Gear. “We’re proud to partner with AGMA and RRVTMA to support scholarships that open doors to rewarding careers in the trades.” Forest City Gear extends its gratitude to all participants, volunteers and sponsors who made the day a

success. By combining camaraderie and competition, the Golf Playday reinforces the company’s long-standing commitment to community involvement and workforce development.



Emergency Preparedness

# Get Ready for Winter

## 1 The Problem

Winter at its worst can have serious consequences for businesses. Heavy snow and ice can shut down roads, causing shipment delays and preventing access to your location. Strong winds and ice can bring down power lines. Freezing temperatures create dangerous conditions for employees working in the cold. Increased employee absences due to seasonal illnesses or injuries can have negative impacts on productivity. Any combination of these hazards can close your business for hours or even days.

## 2 Solutions that Work



Planning and preparation are key to minimizing the impact of harsh winter conditions on your business. Taking important proactive measures before the season begins by stocking up on essential supplies to protect your people and facility is a great place to start. The following tips can also help guide you as you prepare your business for the winter season:

- Know your area's risk for winter storms and monitor weather reports
- Check the integrity of insulation, caulking, weather stripping and pipes
- Have supplies on hand to keep walkways and entries clear and dry to help prevent slips, trips and falls
- Know where and how to shut off water valves in case pipes freeze
- Prepare for power and utility outages with backup power sources and create an evacuation plan
- Equip your fleet vehicles with jumper cables, battery jumpers, flashlights, blankets and flares
- Make sure employees working outdoors have proper clothing and PPE
- Learn how to identify and treat frostbite and hypothermia

## 3 How Grainger Can Help

Products and solutions to help keep your facility running and employees safe.

### Products

- The supplies you need are never far away.
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  - 250 local branches across the U.S.
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### Expertise

- Technical Product Support for help finding solutions and choosing products
- Email technical support [safetysupport@grainger.com](mailto:safetysupport@grainger.com)
- Field Safety Specialists for safety recommendations

### Resources

- Winter preparedness information at [grainger.com/winterprep](https://www.grainger.com/winterprep)
- Safety & Health Solution Center at [grainger.com/safety](https://www.grainger.com/safety)

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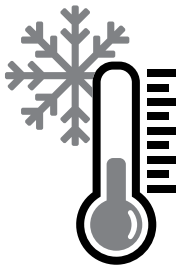
Contact your Grainger rep or call 1-800-GRAINGER for help with winter preparedness or cold stress products and solutions.

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### Fast Facts



**4**  
**MAIN FACTORS**  
that contribute to cold stress

- Cold temperatures
- High or cold wind
- Dampness
- Cold water

**70°F**

Hypothermia can occur at any temperature below this level if conditions are wet or clothing is soaked.

**2x**

About twice as many people suffer severe consequences from exposure to extreme cold in any given year than from extreme heat.

CDC's National Center for Health Statistics  
Compressed Mortality Database

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# LEVEL UP

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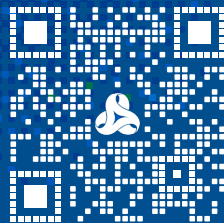
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# CHAPTER CHECK-IN

## RRVTMA LAUNCHES REDESIGNED WEBSITE TO IMPROVE MEMBER EXPERIENCE

**TAYLOR HOHN, COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST, DIGITAL HIVE MIND**



The Rock River Valley Tooling & Machining Association (RRVTMA), the Stateline's chapter of the NTMA, is excited to announce the launch of its newly redesigned official website. The updated site offers members and the local manufacturing community a more intuitive, personalized, and visually dynamic online experience.

### KEY FEATURES OF THE NEW WEBSITE:

- Streamlined Navigation & Modern Layout — Quickly access information about membership, apprenticeships, scholarships, events and more through a clean, user-friendly design.
- Enhanced Resources — Find up to date news, event details and announcements. It's easy to find and register for upcoming programming. Now, member companies can submit corporate news and press releases to be featured on RRVTMA's news page.
- Apprenticeship & Workforce Focus — The site prominently features RRVTMA's apprenticeship training, membership opportunities and scholarship programs

— central to the association's mission of investing in workforce development. A streamlined new digital apprenticeship application portal is easier for prospective students, sponsoring companies and RRVTMA administrators alike.

- Updated Member Directory & Contact Areas — Member and associate company information is more accessible, offering better opportunities for networking within the region's precision manufacturing community.

“This redesigned site reflects our renewed commitment to connect our member companies—tool and die shops, contract machinists, precision manufacturers and more — with the tools and community they need to thrive,” said RRVTMA Director of Public Relations Jared Lyford. “Careers in the trades and manufacturing deserve to be more than afterthoughts. Our website, how we connect with members and students and the greater community, must align with that as well.”

## WESTERN MASS HOLDS TWO BIG EVENTS PROMOTING NETWORKING AND EDUCATION

**ANGIE BEAVIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WESTERN MA CHAPTER NTMA**



On Thursday, Aug. 21, 2025 the Western Mass Chapter of the NTMA (WMNTMA) held our annual summer Pig Roast BBQ at the beautiful Beveridge Pavilion at Stanley Park in Westfield, Mass. More than 75 members and friends gathered for the annual networking event to enjoy a BBQ feast. The Agawam High School Robotics Team, Rosie Robotics, attended and students gave a demonstration with one of their bots. A \$1000 donation was made to Agawam Robotics on behalf of the Larry Maier Educational Scholarship Fund.



Two weeks later, on Thursday, Sept 4, 2025 the chapter held our 21st Annual Educational Fundraising Golf Tournament.

More than 150 members and guests registered to play at St Anne's Golf Course in Feeding Hills, Mass. Funds raised from the tournament will go directly to the manufacturing programs at the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative and Westfield Technical Academy, various educational initiatives decided by the WMNTMA and an educational scholarship through the Larry Maier Memorial Educational fund.

The weather was on our side and players enjoyed several food stations on the course, an air cannon shoot, several hole-in-one contest sponsored by Mercedes-Benz Springfield, Hole In One International and Teddy Bear Pools & Spas. The afternoon ended with happy hour, a raffle, announcements, awards for the winners, recognition of sponsors and a \$10,000 putting competition.



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