



NEXT-LEVEL APPRENTICESHIPS

TRANSATLANTIC EXCHANGE ON TRAINING PROGRAMS

THE SOLUTION TO THE SKILLS GAP

US companies are increasingly realizing the potential of apprenticeships in creating a skilled workforce with industry-specific knowledge. The German apprenticeship training system is highly regarded and considered a successful global export. US companies can leverage this knowledge to implement their own apprenticeship programs successfully. “Next- Level Apprenticeships: Transatlantic Exchange on Training Programs” focuses on fostering German-American partnerships through peer-to-peer exchange.

Apprenticeships as a solution to the skills gap

A significant challenge faced by US manufacturers is the search for qualified workers. A staggering 85% of German companies in the US report difficulties in attracting and recruiting skilled talent. This issue is not exclusive to German companies, but rather a broader challenge highlighting the increased interest in establishing German-style apprenticeships within the US.

This “Transatlantic Exchange on Training Programs” Initiative focuses on promoting the exchange of best practices in various technical and business-related training programs between Germany and the US. Its primary goal is to establish a robust foundation for collaborative career training between the two countries.

To solidify the presence of German-style apprenticeship programs in the US for the future, the initiative facilitates peer-to-peer exchanges between experts already involved with apprenticeship training in Germany and the US.

The German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest, Inc. (GACC Midwest) develops a series of virtual workshops on different training programs and organizes delegation trips to Germany to visit various key players in the workforce development landscape. These activities aim to encourage in-depth discussions on best practices and solutions for the success of apprenticeship programs. Participants include trainers, educators, policy makers, exam board members, and other relevant stakeholders.

These events bring together experts with diverse viewpoints from Germany and the United States and promote an exchange of knowledge, ideas, experiences, and best practices.

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BUSINESS APPRENTICESHIPS

The Business Apprenticeship webinars highlighted the implementation and administration of the program, in addition to its core curriculum. The program offers companies and apprentices to gain experience in, be exposed to, or acquire experience in, different departments. A finished Business Apprentice will be a well-rounded and skillful employee that is experienced in the company's business processes, company culture and departments.

BENEFITS

- Meeting the company's increasing need for difficult-to-hire skills.
- Growing diversity with a focus on attracting more diverse apprentice applicants.
- Training young individuals from the ground up, providing them with comprehensive skills development.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Easy infrastructure setup for Business Apprenticeships in an already existing office structure, compared to technical apprenticeships, allowing for a quick start.
- Companies designate and promote at least one dedicated trainer or responsible person in each department/team leader to train apprentices.
- Every apprentice has a mentor.
- Feedback between departments and apprentices focusing on their training and the business apprenticeship program is crucial.
- Both apprentices' and program stakeholders' feedback enhance mutual learning and program improvement.



DAILY TASKS OF AN APPRENTICE

- Apprentices are included in the daily business procedures like regular employees, gradually taking on more challenging tasks.
- Apprentices have a normal workday that includes working closely with the staff they are learning from, rotating between departments.
- Administrative duties: Assisting with general administrative tasks, such as managing calendars, scheduling appointments, organizing meetings, and handling correspondence.
- Documentation and reporting: Preparing reports, memos, and other documents related to business operations, projects, or meetings.
- Customer service: Interacting with customers or clients, addressing their inquiries or concerns, and providing appropriate assistance or connecting them to the right contact person.
- Assisting with marketing activities: Supporting marketing campaigns, including social media management, content creation, market research, and analyzing campaign performance.
- Attending meetings: Participating in team meetings, taking minutes, and contributing ideas or insights when appropriate.
- Data analysis: Collecting and analyzing data, using spreadsheets or other software to identify patterns, trends, or insights that can inform decision-making.

TRAINER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Trainer/responsible staff introduces apprentices to company, duties, and expectations.
- They are the primary contact for apprentices and colleges.
- In-company training plan development: Collaborating with relevant stakeholders, such as the training department or subject matter experts, to develop and update the in-company training plan as well as the rotation plan through the departments for the apprentices. This includes defining learning objectives, designing curriculum, and selecting appropriate training materials.
- Department rotation: Apprentice gets insights into different departments (two months per department) and has weekly meetings with the apprentice's current de-

partment to check on progress and the training

- **Instruction and guidance:** Delivering training sessions, workshops, or classes to apprentices, ensuring that the content is relevant, engaging, and aligned with the program core competencies.
- **Individual coaching and mentoring:** Offering one-on-one guidance and mentorship to apprentices, providing feedback on their performance, and helping them set goals and track their progress. Offering support and encouragement to boost their confidence and motivation.
- **Monitoring and reporting:** Regularly monitoring apprentices' performance and attendance, keeping track of their progress, and maintaining accurate records.
- **Generating reports or maintaining documentation** to track their achievements and compliance with training requirements.
- **Communication and support:** Maintaining open and effective communication channels with apprentices, responding to their queries and concerns promptly.
- **Offering guidance and support beyond formal training sessions**, such as assisting with problem-solving, career

planning, or job search skills

RECRUITING AND RETENTION

- Recruiting apprentices can be challenging, requiring a thorough review of numerous applications. High school presentations and company events can significantly impact applicant numbers.
- Effective communication and information sharing about the apprenticeship program are crucial to attract potential apprentices. It is essential to provide a clear overview of what apprentices can expect.
- Emphasize not only what the apprenticeship entails but also highlight the career options, opportunities, and prospects available after completing the program.
- Instead of convincing applicants, focus on attracting those who are genuinely interested from the beginning.
- The associate degrees that come with apprenticeships are a major selling point for prospective apprentices, as they couple traditional college education with the non-traditional benefits and work experience that their company provides.
- Retention strategies involve offering apprentices job

positions before they complete their apprenticeships. This allows both the company and the apprentice to assess the best-fit department. By starting in a familiar team and role, the apprentice can seamlessly transition into a full-time position if desired, while the company can evaluate their potential fit.

- Business apprenticeships provide versatile skills, offering apprentices various opportunities for future departments.

COLLEGE

- College education enhances transferable skills, activating both soft and technical skills that are then applied in the workplace.
- Support systems are in place to assist struggling students, fostering communication with the company to find solutions collaboratively.
- Colleges offer support services, such as free tutoring, additional assistance, extra classes, and mental health support, aiming to connect students with the resources they need.
- If a student faces academic challenges, their assigned advisor identifies the issues and determines whether tutoring or other interventions are necessary.
- If the issue is related to a specific class, the college collaborates with the company to create a plan of action.



BUSINESS APPRENTICESHIP POTENTIAL FUTURE DEPARTMENT



Consulting
Services



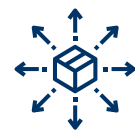
Events



Marketing



Human
Resources



Logistics



Accounting



Purchasing



MECHATRONICS APPRENTICESHIPS

The Mechatronics Technician webinar emphasized the implementation of the apprenticeship program in different company environments, the recruitment and retention of apprentices at the company. Mechatronics Technician apprentices learn how to troubleshoot and maintain electro-mechanical systems, including metalworking, pneumatic and hydraulic systems, and have a strong focus on electronics and programmable logic controllers (PLCs). After the apprenticeship a Mechatronics Technician apprentice is a skilled employee for a variety of manufacturing positions ranging from maintaining automation technology to building and servicing complex machinery.

HOW TO START A SUCCESSFUL APPRENTICESHIP

- Develop a comprehensive training plan and agenda for each apprentice, allowing for adjustments and improvements as needed.
- Understand and identify the company's specific needs and communicate the value and importance of the apprenticeship program to employees.
- Address potential challenges such as resistance from full-time staff and supervisors who may prioritize work over training.
- Cultivate mentors within the company who can provide guidance and support on the shop floor.
- Seek support from German headquarters, if applicable, to enhance the training, exercise, and experience sharing.
- Emphasize the importance of starting slowly, understanding the company-school relationship, and communicating effectively with departments involved in training.

“Train people well enough so they can leave. Treat them well enough so they don't want to.” Richard Branson

- Build a network with other apprenticeship companies to collaborate and share best practices.

IMPLEMENTATION - FIRST YEAR OF TRAINING

- Designate a single contact person within the company for each apprentice, providing guidance and support.
- Ensure that the apprentice is fully integrated into the team and follows the same schedule as other employees.
- Explore opportunities to combine training with college classes for a well-rounded education.
- Focus on foundational training during the apprentice's first year, covering basic machine operation and company structure.

- Address the challenge of perceiving apprentices as additional work rather than support by emphasizing the apprentices' learning process and potential contributions.
- Consider having a dedicated full-time trainer or distribute training responsibilities among employees.

RECRUITMENT

- Collaborate with high schools through presentations, open houses, and other events to generate interest in apprenticeships.
- Encourage current apprentices to accompany recruiters during school visits to establish relatability.
- Engage in community outreach, meeting with school principals and directors, attending technical teacher meetings, and networking to promote ap-

prenticeships.

- Provide opportunities for job shadowing and Career Exploration and Training (CET) classes to help students determine their career interests.
- Employ various selection methods, such as speed dating with multiple rounds, success factor tests, and personality assessments, to identify suitable candidates.
- Consider offering pre-apprenticeship programs within the company, involving real-life production experiences.
- Foster diversity by reaching out to culture clubs and involving diverse apprentices in recruitment efforts.
- Allow apprentices to train together in occupations with similar foundations to provide exposure and help them choose their preferred career path.

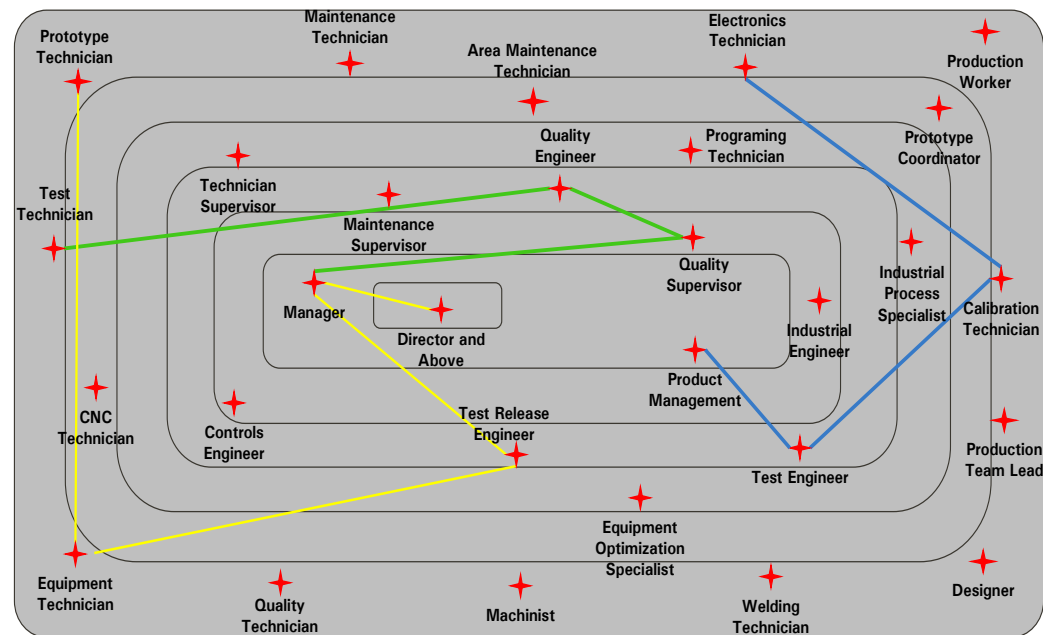


RETENTION AND FURTHER QUALIFICATIONS

- Invest in apprentices to cultivate their long-term loyalty and commitment to the company.
- Develop a strong company culture and training program that positively impacts apprentice retention.
- Showcase career paths, success stories, and opportunities within the company to motivate apprentices to stay and feel appreciated.
- Provide options for further qualifications, such as additional certifications, second apprenticeships, or pursuing a bachelor's degree.
- Implement rotation programs to expose apprentices to different departments and supervisors, broadening their experiences.

- Offer additional social benefits and events to create a supportive and engaging environment.
- Establish connections with local government departments to access grants and financial support, reducing the burden on the company.
- Encourage open communication and support even if apprentices choose to leave the company.
- Sign apprentices to a two-year commitment post apprenticeship in the contract.

Career Path Examples



- Production Worker
- Maintenance Technician
- Welding Technician
- Designer
- Test Technician
- Prototype Technician
- Electronics Technician
- Machinist
- Quality Technician



IMPLEMENTATION - TRAINING CENTER VS ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

Training Center:

- Provide training in a dedicated facility during the first year, ensuring apprentices feel valued and important.
- Align training at the center with classroom learning to reinforce concepts and skills.
- Assign projects that may not be directly related to company output but develop apprentice capabilities.
- Establish partnerships with tool suppliers, set high standards, and encourage apprentices from higher cohorts to support each other.
- Assign mentors and trainers to facilitate open communication and support throughout the training.
- Showcase the progression of apprentices from learners to trainers and leaders within.

On-the-job training with one apprentice:

- Provide a more relaxed approach to training while ensuring a well-rounded education.
- Expose apprentices to a variety of tasks and different machines, giving them experience in diverse areas.
- Align training with college schedules and tailor it based on the classes apprentices are taking.
- Utilize training materials like binders and textbooks to support on-the-job training.
- Start with basic training to establish a solid foundation, gradually increasing complexity.
- Offer shadowing experiences and one-on-one guidance to enhance learning.
- Assign projects for apprentices to work on independently, either sourced online or related to company operations.
- Purchase kits or materials for apprentices to practice and gain experience.
- Focus on providing a comprehensive training experience that prepares apprentices for full-time employment.





APPRENTICE EDUCATION

- Recognize the importance of education and tailor educational programs to meet the specific needs of the company.
- Encourage a well-rounded education that goes beyond rigid curricula, while maintaining a close partnership with colleges and educational institutions.
- Develop strategies to provide comprehensive support and coaching, both in technical and theoretical aspects and administrative processes.
- Encourage a culture of lifelong learning within the company, motivating apprentices and employees to continually develop their skills and acquire new knowledge.
- Offer opportunities for professional growth and encourage ongoing education.
- Ensure that apprentices can explore different areas of expertise and adapt their educational journey accordingly, creating a dynamic and adaptable workforce.

QUALITY CONTROL:

PAL EXAM / GACC EXAM

- Companies utilize the PAL exams provided by the GACC Midwest for additional certification with a global standard and see training success.
- GACC Midwest provides learning materials, a practice exam, and study sessions.
- Trainers can be on the exam board to understand the exam and guide apprentices towards solving, understanding formulations, and task assignments.
- The PAL exam can reveal weak spots in training.

THANK YOU!

In conclusion, we express our heartfelt gratitude to all the speakers who contributed to the success and uniqueness of our “Transatlantic Exchange on Training Programs” Initiative workshops. Their valuable insights and expertise made these sessions truly exceptional. We would also like to extend our appreciation to our sponsors and all the participants for their active engagement.

Thank you once again for your participation and support throughout this series of workshops!

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OUR EXPERTS

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- Viktor Esau, Training Manager, CLAAS Germany
- Jim Champion, Pathway Coordinator, Metropolitan Community College, Nebraska
- Scott Broady, Associate Dean, Metropolitan Community College, Nebraska



WHAT'S NEXT?

We are excited to announce our upcoming study trips to Germany in 2023, 2024 and 2025. These trips will provide excellent opportunities to delve deeper into the world of apprenticeships in Germany and engage in best-practice exchange.

During this study trip, participants will have the chance to:

- Visit renowned German companies known for their successful apprenticeship programs.
- Attend workshops and seminars conducted by industry experts, providing valuable insights into the German apprenticeship system.
- Engage in discussions and networking sessions with professionals and practitioners in the field of apprenticeships.
- Explore educational institutions and vocational training centers to gain firsthand knowledge of the training process.
- Immerse themselves in the rich cultural and historical heritage of Germany.

This study trip aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the German apprenticeship model, its implementation, and its impact on both individuals and businesses. By fostering an environment of knowledge sharing and cross-cultural exchange, we strive to inspire innovation and improvements in apprenticeship programs worldwide.

Stay tuned for more detailed information and registration instructions. We look forward to welcoming you on this enriching journey of discovery and learning in the upcoming years!



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CLOSE YOUR SKILLS GAP

The Industry Consortium for Advanced Technical Training (ICATT) and the Michigan Advanced Technician Training (MAT2) Apprenticeship Programs are specialized apprenticeship programs focusing on advanced manufacturing, mechatronics, electronics, and business administration. They are designed to address the skills gap in the US workforce by providing a structured training pathway for individuals interested in pursuing a career in this field. The programs focus on high-demand occupations, ensuring that apprentices are well-prepared for successful careers in the ever-evolving manufacturing industry.

Some key features and components of the ICATT and MAT2 Apprenticeship Programs:

- Industry-driven: The programs are developed and driven by leading manufacturing companies in collaboration with educational institutions.
- Dual education system: The ICATT and MAT2 Apprenticeship
- Programs combine on-the-job training with classroom instruction.
- Competency-based curriculum: The program follows a competency-based curriculum, focusing on specific skills and knowledge required for various job roles in the manufacturing industry.
- Long-term commitment: The Apprenticeship Programs typically span three years, providing a comprehensive and in-depth training experience.
- Supportive network: The programs provide a supportive network for apprentices and companies, including mentorship, best practice exchange, and resources to help them succeed.
- Career opportunities: Upon successful completion of the ICATT and MAT2 apprentices can secure full-time employment with the host company.

ICATT | APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

MAT  **SQUARED**
MICHIGAN ADVANCED TECHNICIAN TRAINING

 **GA CATT**
APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM



ABOUT GACC MIDWEST

The German American Chamber of Commerce® of the Midwest (GACC Midwest), headquartered in Chicago with a branch office in Detroit, was founded in 1963. GACC Midwest is an integral part of the German Chamber Network (AHKs) with 150 offices in 93 countries around the globe. Our continuing mission is to promote German-American business relations and to support trade and investment between Germany and the United States, especially the Midwest. Our organization combines elements of a trade commission, a membership association, and professional consulting services for market entry, apprenticeships in the US, and more.

Your Partner for the US

GACC Midwest, with its offices in Chicago and Detroit, has broad experience and knowledge of the market conditions in the US and in Germany. In our role as an advisor, we help German companies identify opportunities for cooperation and growth in the US. Our team is specialized in effectively setting up your subsidiary for success in the US.



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