



NEXT-LEVEL APPRENTICESHIPS

TRANSATLANTIC EXCHANGE ON TRAINING PROGRAMS

ICATT

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“FUTURE-PROOFING” COMPANIES FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

US companies are increasingly realizing the value of apprenticeships as a means of creating not only a skilled workforce with industry-specific knowledge, but also ensuring the ability for the company to continue growing and adapting to modern challenges. The German apprenticeship training system is highly regarded and is considered a successful global export. US companies can leverage this knowledge to successfully implement their own apprenticeship programs. “Next- Level Apprenticeships: Transatlantic Exchange on Training Programs” focuses on fostering German-American partnerships through peer-to-peer exchange.

Apprenticeships are future-proofing companies

A significant challenge faced by US manufacturers is the retention of 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. Why seek the talent you need when you can develop their skills right inside your own facilities? An investment in your employees is an investment in your company.

This “Transatlantic Exchange on Training Programs” Initiative focuses on promoting the exchange of best practices in Advanced Manufacturing Technician and CNC Machining training programs between Germany and the US. The primary goal of the Transatlantic Exchange on Training Programs Initiative 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.

UNDERSTANDING GERMAN-STYLE APPRENTICESHIPS

The focus of the 2024 webinar series centered on the particularities of the Advanced Manufacturing Technician (AMT) and CNC Machining training programs. Vital to appreciating why these programs work is understanding the fundamentals of German-style apprenticeship programs and learning how these key components are being integrated into the American education and training process. At its core, a German-style apprenticeship is designed around meeting the needs of the labor market. It combines theoretical training at qualified technical and vocational colleges with practical experience gained through employment. Together, the skills and knowledge gained by apprentices ensures not only that they have the ability to competently work in the present-day labor market, but that they are adaptable to changes in the industry.

STATISTICS

According to our presenting experts from Germany, the country sees **1.22 million** apprentices annually. This number is spread across **327** professions with **5%** of all employees holding the title of apprentice. German apprenticeships boast an overall **91%** pass rate. With roughly **19%** of all companies in Germany being involved in apprenticeship programs, amounting to **408,700 of 2.2 million**, hiring **489k** new trainees annually, and retaining approximately **77%** of apprentices after graduation, the merits of the system are easy to recognize.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

While the specifics of each apprenticeship can vary depending on the chosen occupation, there are certain fundamental aspects that make the German system particularly effective.



- **EDUCATION & TRAINING.** Apprentices spend 70% of their time working with their employer and 30% of their time attending classes. Courses cover both job-related and general subjects, with a special focus on knowledge that will aid them in their careers.
- **FAIR COMPENSATION.** Apprentices are paid, receiving on-the-job training often in dedicated learning spaces. As apprentices gain experience and knowledge, their wages increase to reflect their expanded skillset.
- **CERTIFICATION.** Most apprenticeships take 2-3.5 years to complete, but may be shortened based on the apprentice's performance. At the end of each year of the program, in addition to any academic exams, apprentices also take theoretical and practical exams evaluating their skills and assessing their relevant knowledge. At the end of their final year of the apprenticeship, successfully passing these exams results in internationally-recognized certifications.

The objective of each apprenticeship program is to develop a competent workforce that can meet the growing demands of the industry. Apprentices are being trained for an occupation, not just a job. Achieving this goal takes careful planning and a well-developed strategy which is actualized within the 2-3.5 years of the training program.

- **YEAR 1** is dedicated to establishing the base and ensuring each apprentice has mastered core competencies.
- **YEAR 2** sees apprentices deepen their skills, often specializing in company-specific machines or developing interdisciplinary critical thinking skills. For apprentices in two-year programs, there is also an emphasis on exam prep.
- **YEAR 3** continues with exam preparations while allowing apprentices to further develop their specializations. Companies will often begin seeing a tangible return on investment as apprentices begin taking on independent work.

After successfully completing their final year, apprentices graduate not only with a degree that can be built upon further but also with internationally recognized certification of their expertise. This certificate indicates that the apprentice has met industry standards and is capable of flourishing in the workforce. In Germany, these standards are established as a collaborative effort between employers, educators, and government agencies.

- **DETERMINE NEEDS.** Employers identify weak points in the workforce, specifying new tasks, skills, and qualifications needed in their industries.
- **ESTABLISH NEW STANDARDS.** Social partners work alongside government agencies to negotiate and pass new training standards.
- **DEVELOP CURRICULA.** Government officials adjust the legal frameworks and provide resources to assist educators in developing curricula that meet the newly-defined standards.
- **IMPLEMENT UPDATED REGULATIONS.** Adopted standards are fixed within training regulations in the companies and within the framework curricula.

The end-of-year exams further solidify these standards, verifying that apprentices, their employers, and the schools have done the work to satisfy training and education requirements. Both theoretical and practical exam results are evaluated by an exam board which comprises representatives from employers in the industry, employee representatives (union members), and governmental representatives (vocational instructors). This combination of expertise and experience helps ensure the continuation of high-quality industry professionals.

WHY IT WORKS

Many factors play into the high success rate of the German apprenticeship program—and what makes it such an appealing model to follow.

- **PRECEDENCE.** It's a historically-grown system with high acceptance within German society. From occupational guilds in the Middle Ages with masters and apprentices to the passing of the Vocational Training Act of 1969, Germany has a long, proven history of passing knowledge from one generation to the next.
- **MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL.** Both parties, trainees and companies, benefit from the arrangement. Trainees are trained according to the demands of their field for skilled labor, making them attractive employees to hire. Companies often retain their apprentices, meaning their demands for skilled labor are met.
- **UNIVERSAL SUPPORT.** Support comes from all sides. All stakeholders—colleges, companies, trainers, apprentices—actively contribute to the productive continuation of the program. Additionally, the vested interest of strong institutions like governmental chambers and social partners, goes a long way toward maintaining standards and promoting the viability of the program.
- **UNIVERSAL STANDARDS.** Standardization ensures core competencies are covered. Occupational training profiles provide a guideline for any given profession. They

establish the topics that need to be covered and outline how many hours should be spent on each. This kind of standardized training is an advantage, particularly for companies with many locations as it assures performance consistency.

- **CUSTOMIZABLE.** The system boasts a high degree of flexibility and adaptability. With apprenticeships in over 325 professions across the country, the model is proven to be effective for a range of companies and occupations. It is also scalable; apprenticeship programs can be individualized to suit the size of the company and the scope of their needs. For example, from the fundamentals outlined in the AMT or CNC machining programs, companies can introduce specialization on certain machines or processes particular to their needs.

In summary, German-style apprenticeships provide a solid model for the US market to follow. Rooted in history, it has a proven track record of success, but there are measures in place to ensure training and standards remain modern and relevant. Rapid technological advancements in the AMT and CNC machining fields set the imperative for a highly skilled, adaptable workforce. A training and education system modeled after German-style apprenticeship programs is the clear solution.



Dual Learning at two venues

70 % Training in the company

- Structured training under real work conditions
- Trainees participate in actual business activities
- Trainees receive a remuneration



30 % Lessons in vocational school

- Lessons in class
- Occupation related (2/3) and
- General (1/3) subjects



Dual VET lasts from two to three and a half years.



SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing an apprenticeship program in your company can be daunting, especially without the robust historical precedence seen in Germany. Our experts from Germany and the US shared some advice that can be implemented by both companies starting from scratch and with an already-established program. Any sized company should feel empowered to start an apprenticeship program and begin reaping the benefits!

PLAN & DEVELOP

The success of any apprenticeship program lies in having a clear plan. It is important to look beyond the job title and ensure the core competencies of the profile align with the needs of your company. For example:

- **CNC MACHINING PROFESSIONAL.** A major component of this profile involves foundational manual machining skills to complement CNC set up, tooling, operation, and programming abilities on both Mill and Lathe. CNC machinists need to be highly familiar with technical diagrams and be able to meet very tight tolerances and unique specifications. They need to be able to program, monitor, and diagnose issues specifically with CNC machines.
- **ADVANCED MANUFACTURING TECHNICIAN.** This profile shares some of the same emphasis on manual machining, and manufacturing parts to tolerance as a CNC machinist, but equally values proficiency assembling, disassembling, manufacturing and replacing parts of mechanical, pneumatic, hydraulic, and electronic systems. Also important is the ability to monitor, maintain, and repair these systems and machines. Though “advanced” is in the title, this profile is not inherently more difficult than any other for apprentices to learn.

“Know what your goals are for the apprentice, what competencies they should develop under your training, [and] make sure your training plan includes a strong foundation.”
-Geneva Scurek

Other occupational profiles may focus more heavily on mechanical know-how or require a broader range of skills. Deciding which best satisfies the needs of your company takes careful consideration. Sometimes, projected needs are beyond the scope of what your facility is currently able to train internally. Collaborating with another company or partnering with a third party for specialized training could be solutions.

RECRUIT & HIRE

Deciding to commit to the process and make the decision to implement an apprenticeship program in your company is the easy part. Finding the right candidates, however, can be trickier. Throughout the workshop series, our experts shared their strategies for ensuring the process runs smoothly.

COMPARISON

OCCUPATIONAL PROFILES

Core Competencies/Tech Skills	Occupations			
	CNC Machining Professional	Advanced Mfg. Tech	Mechatronics Tech	Ind. Electronics Tech
Manual machining	40%	25%	15%	0%
CNC Machining (programming)	50%	5%	5%	0%
Pneumatics (Fluid Power)	5%	20%	10%	5%
Mechanical (Gears/Shafts)	0%	20%	10%	5%
Electrical/motors	5%	20%	20%	30%
Drives/Servos/Sensors/HMI	0%	5%	20%	30%
PLC/Automation	0%	5%	20%	30%
Welding/Soldering	0%	(5)%	(5)%	(5)%



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FINDING APPLICANTS

- **ROADSHOWS.** Putting together a small team that can attend area career fairs or trade shows is a great way to build company familiarity. Implementing games and other hands-on experiences can further impart a positive impression of your company. Use informal speed-date style mock interviews to meet candidates, establish a rapport, and possibly invite them to apply.
- **OPEN HOUSES.** Inviting potential applicants to visit your facilities and meet current employees. Organize demonstrations of CNC machines or allow potential hires to see how an advanced manufacturing technician troubleshoots a system error. Providing potential hires the opportunity to interact with current apprentices is a great way to exchange experiences and begin fostering a positive work environment before they're even hired.
- **FIELD TRIPS.** Along the same lines of hosting an

open house, inviting area high school students to visit your company on a field trip is another excellent tool. Many young people are unaware of the range of possible career paths. Invite them to see what your machinists and technicians do on a day-to-day basis. Talk to them about career progression. Networking with local schools and educators can broaden student horizons and deepen the potential talent pool.

Recruiting the right candidates for technical roles can require unique strategies. Many young people are unaware of these careers. Inviting candidates into the work environment and highlighting the range of service paths that can be taken by advanced manufacturing or mechatronics technicians can pique interest and encourage application. Then, with resumes in-hand, the real finely-tuned process can begin.

HIRING APPRENTICES

- **ONLINE APPLICATION.** Utilizing online applications can be beneficial for both applicants and the hiring company. It's a fairly low-stakes first step for applicants which they can complete from the comfort of their homes and at a time that is convenient for them. For the companies, filing and processing online applications is often a time and resource saver.
- **ONLINE ASSESSMENT.** While academic grades are often not a major consideration for companies hiring apprentices, incorporating a skills test can be useful. The skills test is certainly a good tool for assessing starting competencies. Applicants can be prompted to complete technical troubleshooting problems or asked to read and interpret technical diagrams. Even if answers are incorrect, it introduces applicants to job-relevant tasks and can offer insights into where training should begin. More importantly, however, attaching a deadline to the test provides a quick way of gauging interest and reliability.
- **ONSITE INTERVIEW.** Once applicants have made it through the first round of the application process, it's time to really meet them. An in-person, on-site interview can provide insights into the candidate's

soft skills and further solidifies their interest. It's important to know applicants are up for the challenge of the way German-style apprenticeships combine work and school. Inviting applicants into your facilities, prior to tendering a job-offer, allows them to get an idea of what their day-to-day work will look like and can help build that familiarity that encourages them to stay after their apprenticeship is complete.

TRAIN & RETAIN

There is no one-size-fits-all option when it comes to implementing a successful, productive apprenticeship program. However, experienced professionals shared best practices that can be a great jumping off point for companies new to the ins and outs of an apprenticeship program or might spark some ideas in veteran trainers.

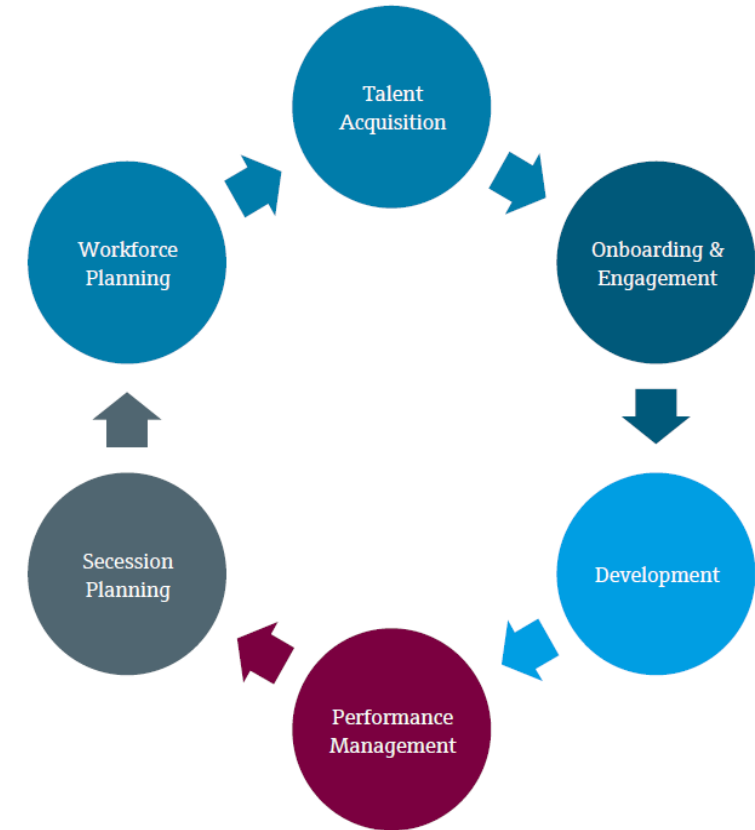
- **BE CLEAR IN YOUR MISSION.** Decide early on why you want to start an apprenticeship. What is the goal? What role will each apprentice play in your company after completing their training?
- **FIND THE RIGHT TRAINER.** Experience is crucial, but so is an eagerness to pass along that knowledge.

The right trainer should be dedicated to the role and a good leader. Ideally, they are allowed to focus on full-time mentorship.

- **MAKE THE APPRENTICESHIP ADAPTABLE.** While your company may have specific needs now, the future may hold different opportunities for growth. Understand what the different occupational trainings can offer. For example, CNC technicians have a relatively linear career progression that is very focused on education and training. These technicians tend to be very technically specialized and committed to this role. Advanced manufacturing technicians, however, tend to have a broader education on everything related to manufacturing. Their courses overlap with both CNC and mechatronics, allowing for more versatility in career advancement. Being familiar with these differences and being able to offer both can give apprentices more of a choice in who they want to become within your company.
- **SOLIDIFY THE BASICS.** An apprenticeship program does not have to be robust or extravagant in the beginning. However, there are certain minimum requirements to be successful. A dedicated trainer or supervisor is key to providing uniformity and accountability in the methodology. Additionally, an established working or training space for the apprentices helps keep them focused on their training and learning by discouraging their involvement on the shop floor and preventing over specialization too early on. However, the training space should still mimic the production floor by maintaining the same conditions and holding them to the same expectations.

For employers, one of the biggest draws of adopting an apprenticeship program is meeting their workforce needs. To ensure this objective is met, here are some expert-backed best practices.

- **OFFER PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT.** Give something for apprentices to work toward and demonstrate your investment in their professional development by having the option of permanent employment after completion of the program. This shows confidence in their abilities and helps



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SOURCE: ENDRESSHAUSER STRATEGIC RECRUITING, SLIDE 25, 03/08/2024

ensure your company's needs are met.

- **RECRUIT BASED ON NEEDS.** Hire and train apprentices for roles needing to be filled at your company. Work with your various department leads to understand what those needs are. Predict upcoming age-related departures and employment fluctuations to be sure apprentices have a place to go after graduation.
- **PROVIDE CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK.** Honest, fair critiques throughout their training provides apprentices the opportunity to grow and develop. This also serves as a demonstration of your investment in their futures and promotes a supportive community within the workplace. If the goal is to build a long-term employee, fostering a supportive work culture can be nothing but productive.



BENEFITS NOW & FOR THE FUTURE

When apprenticeships succeed, everyone wins: the apprentices, the employers, and the community at large. We believe in an economic future empowered by industry professionals who are invested in the growth and development of their fields. Our experts shared their perspectives and proven statistics exemplifying just how far-reaching successfully-implemented apprenticeships can be.

APPRENTICE BENEFITS

The benefits for apprentices are almost immediate and are often the clearest to identify.

- **REMUNERATION WHILE TRAINING.** Often standing in the way of the decision to pursue a college degree is the implied choice between education and income. The German-style apprenticeship program bridges the gap between these choices by offering compensation while providing both hands-on training and an advanced education.
- **CAREER OPPORTUNITIES.** Whether with company that provided the apprenticeship or another company, apprentices can typically look forward to a contract for gainful employment. They train under real work conditions in real work environments, learning proper procedures and how to handle occupation-specific machinery. The experience gained is invaluable and is often a real resume-topper!
- **LATERAL MOBILITY.** Often, the specific career chosen by the apprentice allows for cross-training opportunities and the chance to continue training beyond the initial apprenticeship.
- **CONTINUED EDUCATION.** Whether in Germany or the US, apprentices can expand upon the education they have received as part of the program. US apprentices graduate with an associate's degree that can be easily built upon to achieve a four-year uni-

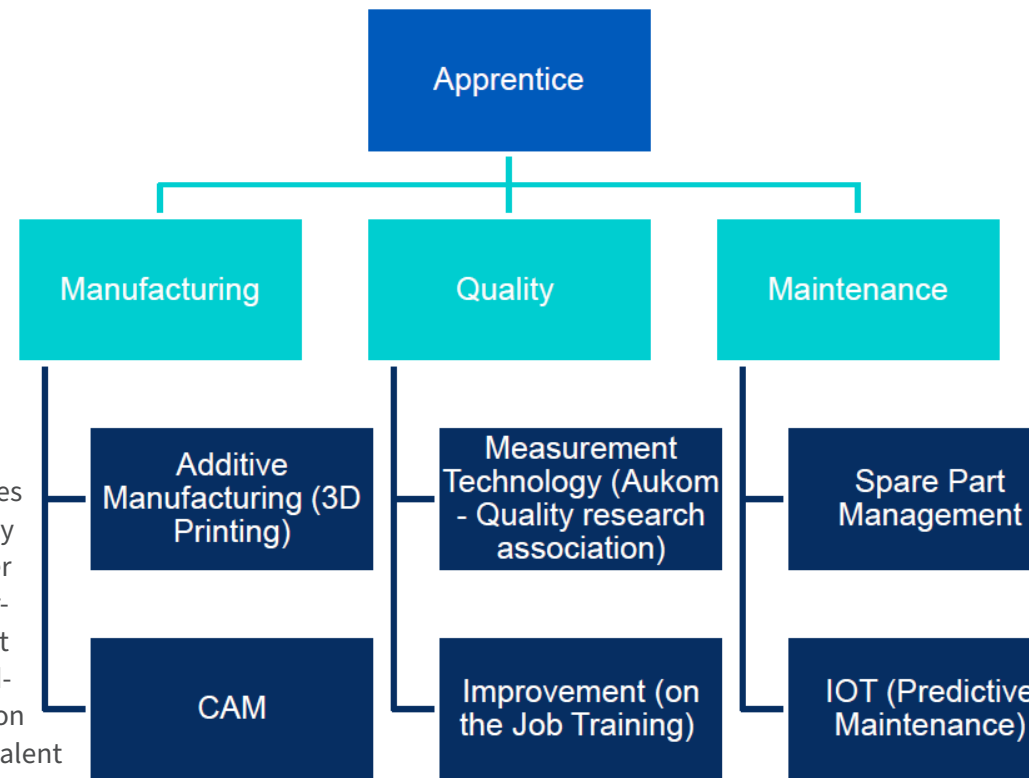
versity degree.

- **INTO THE FUTURE.** Apprentices learn a myriad of skills necessary to perform the work of the career program they have chosen to pursue. Arguably the most important of those are the base skills. Advanced technology and automation are becoming increasingly prevalent across the manufacturing industry, replacing some jobs with machines. However, technicians are needed to tend to and service the robots running the machines. A solid grasp of base skills will always be essential. Apprentices who have mastered the fundamentals—specifications and tolerances, problem-solving and critical thinking—are primed to pivot and adapt to these changing roles.

EMPLOYER BENEFITS

While the employer arguably puts invests the most up-front, the return on that investment is massive.

- **QUALIFIED WORKFORCE.** Apprentices are trained in accordance with company-specific requirements and are ready to hit the ground running, as compared to external applicants who require additional training. After completing the program, apprentices also graduate with an associate's degree, meaning the workforce is not only more qualified but also better educated.
- **RAPID AMORTIZATION.** Because apprentices are ready to get right to work, once hired full-time, their employers benefit from the increased productivity and quickly begin to recoup their investments.
- **MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY.** Training up the apprentices on the company culture helps solidify the company culture, becoming active participants in



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SOURCE: SCHOTT AG, WORKSHOP AHK CHICAGO, SLIDE 15 2024/04

the business community and help develop training standards. In turn, apprentices-turned-employees become role models for future apprentices, having a positive, cohesive effect on the shop floor.

- **VERSATILE AND SPECIALIZED.** The capacity for training to manifest in individualized processes means that apprentices be specialized to suit an array of company-specific needs. For example, apprentices can be cross-trained on the running, diagnosis, and maintenance of a range of machines, including niche, company-specific devices. This allows for the development of a well-rounded workforce.
- **DEVELOPMENT OF CO-COMMITMENT.** The shared experiences, growth, and development that results from the apprenticeship program fosters a sense of co-commitment between employers and apprentices. Each side feels mutually invested in the continued success of the other.
- **INTO THE FUTURE.** Bridging the generations becomes much easier. As seasoned employees retire and are replaced by recently-graduated apprentices, employers can be confident the knowledge shared between generations is preserved and the company can continue to run smoothly.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

A beneficiary of the apprenticeship program that is often overlooked is the community at large. However, these benefits are no less important than the others.

- **RELATIONSHIPS WITH EDUCATORS.** No German-style apprenticeship is complete without the involvement of local technical and community colleges. Through working together to educate and train each cohort of apprentices, employers and educators begin to develop positive associations.
- **STRENGTHENED LOCAL WORKFORCE.** In Germany companies boast a retention rate of up to 94% while the GACC ICATT Apprenticeship Program has reached over 85%. This means that workers are trained locally and are staying there, boosting the local economic performance and productivity and leading to a generally better educated and higher skilled workforce.
- **BALANCED LABOR MARKET.** Employers hire apprentices to fill the gaps in their own company, ensuring that the supply meets the demand.
- **INTO THE FUTURE.** Changes in technological development trends can be accounted for by having a steady flow of skilled labor thereby avoiding disastrous labor shortages. Apprentices are not only taught the skills necessary to perform the work today on modern machines, but they receive the theoretical training necessary to grow and develop right alongside technological advancements in their industries.

CAREER PATHWAYS

- FIELD SERVICE TECHNICIAN
- ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN
- EQUIPMENT ENGINEER TECHNICIAN
- MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN
- CNC OPERATIONS & QUALITY TECHNICIAN
- INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN
- CALIBRATION TECHNICIAN
- WELDING TECHNICIAN
- ASSEMBLY TECHNICIAN

ISSUER: ENDRESS+HAUSER, HEAD, ROBERT - APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM MANAGER
SOURCE: ENDRESS+HAUSER STRATEGIC RECRUITING, SLIDE 25, 03/08/2024

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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WHAT'S NEXT?

We are excited to announce our upcoming study trips to Germany in 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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ENSURE & PROMOTE COMPANY GROWTH

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



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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