

MARION TECHNICAL COLLEGE:

Mobile Lab Brings High-Tech Training to Employer Sites

When it comes to closing the skills gap, Marion Technical College (MTC) is going the extra mile with a mobile lab that provides training on state-of-the-art manufacturing technology – right on the employer’s site.

The lab was designed around the specific needs of manufacturers, said Bob Haas, Chief Strategy Officer for Marion Technical College. “We surveyed manufacturers and learned that their biggest priority for the mobile lab was training employees on production-quality equipment,” Haas said.

Based on that input, the lab was engineered from the ground up to include a CNC (computer numerical control) mini-mill capable of creating precision parts and prototypes as well as a desktop robot. The 400-square-foot lab also includes six control units at which students can learn to program the mill as well as room for nine students and an instructor.

Launched in early 2018, the \$500,000 lab was funded through grants, with major support from the Ohio Department of Higher Education, JobsOhio, Honda, Union County – Marysville Economic Development Partnership, RobotWorx, Columbus 2020, Cardington Yutaka and other manufacturers. While the lab is operated by MTC, it is intended for use across the state, Haas said.

Providing on-site training through the lab offers a variety of advantages for employers and their teams. The manufacturers do not need to stop production on a line to allow for training time. Instead, employees can go to the mobile lab in the company’s parking lot. Companies also save money compared with sending people offsite for training – and it is more convenient for employees. In addition, the employees are mastering skills they can use right away so they are more likely to retain what they learn.

MTC can work with employers to customize and deliver the training. The only cost is instructional time. Companies with qualified staff can conduct the training on their own. Customized classes can cover a wide range of topics, including programmable logic controllers (PLC), computer-aided design (CAD) and geometric dimensioning and tolerancing (GD&T) as well as robotics, basic electricity, blueprint reading and basic skills such as math, business communications and Microsoft Office.

In addition to delivering training, MTC is using the lab to promote manufacturing careers through school visits. “By giving students a first-hand look at the exciting technology used in today’s workplace, we can help dispel outdated myths and get students excited about the potential for careers in manufacturing,” Haas said.



Marion
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