



## Camcraft, Inc.

SUSTAINING A CULTURE  
THAT VALUES EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

**In 1950, Camcraft was a two-man machining operation.** Today, it has grown into one of the most respected precision-machined part manufacturers in the country, serving a worldwide customer base that includes companies in North America, South America and Europe.

Purchased by the Bertsche family in 1986, the company is still run today as a family business and considers its nearly 200 employees a part of the family. This is exemplified in the firm's written commitment to employees in its mission statement, and the company's long-term investment in employees' training and development. The company's onsite training department has grown substantially over the years and in times of economic decline, rather than decrease training, the company uses it as an opportunity to increase its development efforts.

"Business is fighting for survival from foreign competition," says Michael Bertsche, President. "We deliver critical parts for diesel engines and they are very difficult to make and must be perfect. We can't do this without highly trained people. You cannot buy an internal quality system, we have to build it from within by investing in our people."

### *Demonstrating a Commitment to Employee Learning*

Bernard Bertsche, CEO, started Camcraft's onsite training department many years ago when he could not find qualified instructors or resources outside the company. Demonstrating the Bertsche family commitment to its employees, Mr. Bertsche asked CNC operator Don Slawiski, if he would build up the department while

#### COMPANY STATS

Name	Camcraft, Inc.
Industry	Manufacturing
Number of Employees	190 full-time
Location	Hanover Park, Illinois
Product/Service	Precision Machined Components
Markets	Auto, Hydraulic, Off-the-Road Vehicles
Revenues	\$35 million
Year Founded	1950
Ownership	Private, family-owned
Web Address	<a href="http://www.camcraft.com">www.camcraft.com</a>



CAMCRAFT

Precision Machined Components

the firm continued to help pay for his pursuit of an Associates Degree at the College of DuPage (IL). After nine years with the company, Don now manages the department. In the past five years, Don obtained his Master's degree in Adult Education and has transformed the small training department to a one-stop training center that performs a multitude of functions to help employees be successful in their current job and prepare for future opportunities. Its functions include:

- ♦ Delivering a comprehensive employee orientation.
- ♦ Administering a variety of assessments to determine employee skill and knowledge levels.
- ♦ Delivering a broad array of customized technical courses and interpersonal skills development — all of which are on company time.
- ♦ Oversight of employees' individual learning development plans.
- ♦ In conjunction with HR, oversight of the firm's tuition reimbursement program where employees are reimbursed 50-80% for a variety of certificate and degree programs.
- ♦ Developing strategic partnerships with area educational institutions
- ♦ Brokering of specialized leadership courses for supervisors and top management.
- ♦ Management of an onsite computer center where employees build an array of computer skills and online training, including English as a Second Language tutoring.

As in many work environments, employees are apprehensive about taking tests. To respond to this concern, while continuing to encourage continued learning, employees' actual test scores are never shown to management. Rather, Don's reports indicate whether or not the employee met the standard or not. If the employee did not

meet the standard, and if he/she is motivated, he/she will receive one-on-one tutoring and then be allowed to re-take the test.

"We care most that they learn the material, not that they pass the exam," says Jerry Benish, Director of Human Resources.

Core to Camcraft's philosophy is that all employees should have a basic understanding of the organization's business fundamentals. To that end, the training department delivers courses on eight core competencies, including safety, math, quality, statistical process control, metrology, basic English skills, and "People Skills," which all employees must complete. One course, People Skills, a course taught by a senior manager, stresses the need for tolerance and understanding of different cultures and the need for constructive communication.

"I have worked at other companies so I can compare," says Mike Hill, a machinist with 25 years of experience — ten of which were spent at Camcraft. "Camcraft has a great number of knowledgeable people that work on the production floor."

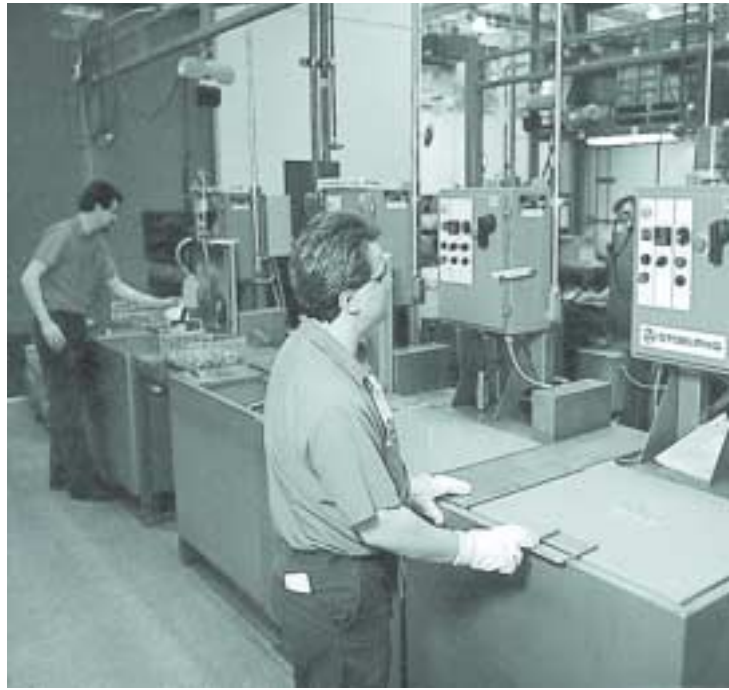
Because of Camcraft's commitment to education and training, in 2001 Camcraft became the first manufacturer in the State of Illinois to become certified to deliver technical training aligned with the National Institute of Metalworking Standards (NIMS) that lead to an Applied Associate's degree. To date, Camcraft has graduated 13 "NIMS credentialed" apprentices from its program; 14 more employees are currently in training.

### *Measuring Impact*

Never a firm to rest on its laurels, Camcraft continually evaluates and improves all educational efforts. Senior managers and supervisors across departments routinely review effectiveness of courses, test results and employee evaluations. Ineffective courses are eliminated and new courses are added or updated based on these evaluations.

*"We value our people and invest in them. We build long term relationships with our employees who in turn have an impact on building relationships with important customers and suppliers."  
- Michael Bertsche, President*

Camcraft's commitment to long-term investments in employee education has paid significant dividends in both financial and human resources terms. Camcraft's profits were up 14% last year and soared 40% this year, despite a difficult two-year period for manufacturing in general. In addition, Camcraft has posted record lows in returns (.05%) and lost workdays, and has delivered parts to customers on time 96% of the time. Its average workweek remains at 45 hours per employee, and the firm consistently has among the lowest turnover (6%) and absenteeism rates in the industry according to the Precision Machining and Products Association. Last quarter 120 employees (out of 190) had perfect attendance.



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