

H & F Manufacturing Corporation

HIRING SKILLED EMPLOYEES THROUGH CRTechnical

When H & F Manufacturing Corporation has a job opening, the company doesn't place an ad in the paper, post it on the Internet or announce it through social media. Yet, it finds the ideal job candidate almost every time.

Like many manufacturers, H & F Manufacturing turns to outside agencies to find workers with specific skills or training. It used to receive dozens—sometimes hundreds—of applications for each job opening and would spend hours sifting through them and pre-screening applicants. Now the company lets someone else identify the top applicants for each position.

"Everything we do here requires a very specific skill or multiple skills," said Steve Farniok, CFO of H & F Manufacturing. "But the process of finding the right people is very difficult and time consuming. We'd rather focus our time and energy on making products and serving our customers."

About H&F Manufacturing

H & F Manufacturing is a sheet metal fabricator with 75 employees and a 90,000-square-foot facility in Maple Grove. Much of its work involves precision steel, stainless steel and aluminum component manufacturing. It is one of a handful of metal fabricators in the metro area that houses lasers, punches, robotic welders and other high-end fabrication equipment.

Incorporated in 1981, H & F Manufacturing is owned and managed

by the Farniok family. Over the years, they've learned how to adapt to a variety of industry changes and economic conditions. The company experienced rapid growth in the '90s, expanding from 16,000 square feet in 1994 to 90,000 in 2000. Like others, H & F Manufacturing has experienced many economic peaks and valleys over the last decade.

"One of the ways we've been able to stand out from the competition is by investing in state-of-the-art machines and the people who can run them," Farniok said.

Recognizing the importance of finding skilled employees, H & F Manufacturing began working with CRTechnical 10 years ago to fill a variety of positions in quality, estimating, programming, automation and welding along with other areas. Many of those new hires have been found through CRTechnical's connections within the industry and have become long-term employees.

Competing with Less Time, More Talent

A few years ago, H & F Manufacturing needed to fill two key positions in its quality and estimating departments. The first was for a quality manager who could lead the company through ISO certification. The second was for someone in estimating who could manage an increasing number of quotes coming through the door.

Once H & F Manufacturing identified the skills and experience it was looking

for, CRTechnical began the process of identifying the best job candidates.

In both cases, the search for the right employees lasted for several months but, in the end, their knowledge and experience allowed them to hit the ground running. The new quality manager had 20 years of experience and had been through ISO certification before. In less than 15 months, he helped the company achieve ISO 9001:2008 certification.

The estimating candidate had 10 years of related experience and a keen understanding of quoting programs and machining processes. As a result, he was able to help the company turn around quotes much more quickly and accurately.

"We've had really good luck with CRTechnical," said Tom Farniok, plant manager. "We just tell them what we're looking for and they send the candidates over. Sometimes it takes a few months, but I'd rather take the time to find the right person than rush into hiring the wrong person."

In many ways, CRTechnical has become an extension of the company's HR department, handling everything from recruiting and interviewing to assessing skills and training for potential new hires. The company then conducts its own interviews with the candidates that have been pre-qualified.

Tom Wolden, president of CRTechnical, said everyone is doing more with less these days, which is why more and more businesses are turning to him for help.

"Many companies don't have the time to identify, screen and assess potential job candidates," he said. "They need people who can walk in the door with the right skills and experience and get to work."

About CRTechnical

CRTechnical is a small, local staffing company that specializes in filling technical and management positions in

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the manufacturing industry. It prides itself on recruiting the “hard to find” person for a variety of companies, from small job shops to Fortune 500 companies.

However, CRTechnical is more than just a head hunter. It has a deep understanding of the manufacturing industry in Minnesota along with its workforce challenges.

Prior to starting CRTechnical in 1994, Wolden was the senior vice president and chief operating officer of Strom Engineering. As the son of a former Sperry Univac (now Lockheed Martin) executive, Wolden grew up in the industry and went on to obtain a degree in machine design from Dunwoody College of Technology.

Wolden is an active member of several manufacturing-related organizations, including the MPMA, the Society of Manufacturing Engineers, and Manufacturing Success. Often he can be found on the floor of a manufacturing company, assessing the skills necessary to complement a company’s processes and equipment.

“One thing that sets us apart from a big staffing company is our connections in the industry,” Wolden said. “We’re able to utilize resources not commonly available and are constantly networking with a wide group of professionals in the industry. In fact, we get calls all the time from people who aren’t available right now,

but might be for the right opportunity in the future.”

CRTechnical operates out of two offices—one in Minneapolis and another in Kansas City. Wolden operates the Minneapolis office and his partner, Dave Nelson, operates the Kansas City office. Together, they have more than 50 years of combined experience.

For H & F Manufacturing, that kind of experience has led to hiring employees with the right experience. “A company is only as strong as its employees,” Tom Farniok said. “And we’re building a great group here.” PM



For more information about CRTechnical, contact Tom Wolden at 763-560-6015 or TomWolden@CRTechnical.com

Steve and Tom Farniok with H & F Manufacturing have worked with CRTechnical for more than a decade to fill positions in quality, estimating, programming, automation, welding and other areas.