

IFI Connects Members to Valuable Resources

by:

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If the COVID-19 pandemic taught us one thing, it's this: We're in this together. That timely revelation rings especially true for manufacturers that have consistently enjoyed great success because they participate in industry partnerships that enhance their workforce and bottom lines.

Recognizing its critical role as an industry partner with manufacturers and suppliers alike, the **Industrial Fasteners Institute (IFI)** recently launched three new member programs that are expected to have a huge impact on workforce development, healthcare options and shipping resources. The new offerings signal a more proactive IFI moving forward, one that will build upon the successes of IFI's established programs, resources, educational offerings and networking events. These include webinars, the *IFI Book of Fastener Standards* (print and online), the IFI Online Technology Connection and the IFI Spring and Fall Meetings, known for their information-packed sessions with industry experts and myriad networking opportunities.

All of these industry resources and events, which are held throughout the year, are important reasons for membership, and IFI's quest to provide its members with new essential tools, programs and services should cause nonmembers to take a second look at IFI membership.

Plugging the Skills Gap

In response to what is perhaps manufacturing's biggest challenge—finding and retaining skilled and interested workers—IFI's Workforce Development Committee launched a partnership with **180 Skills**, the Indianapolis, IN, USA-based creator of "the world's largest library of on-line training courses for manufacturers", with nearly 700 technical skills courses covering 38 technical competency areas. Among these are automation, blueprint reading, CNC machine operation, dimensional geometric tolerancing, industrial maintenance, lean manufacturing, PLC programming, measurement tools, quality assurance, robotics, safety, Six Sigma and tool making.



Offerings also include soft-skills courses designed to develop collaborative team members. These courses include interpersonal communications, conflict resolution, listening skills, workplace communications, technical writing, customer service, group dynamics, team building and time management. Also available are basic job-ready skills such as math, geometry, **Microsoft** Office and stress management.

The IFI's 180 Skills program goes further than other on-line educational offerings by providing members with preselected curriculum tailored to specific job descriptions

such as machine set-up operator, header operators, etc., so human-resources (HR) managers don't have to figure out what classes to assign. Looking ahead, the IFI with the assistance of 180 Skills, will develop classes specific to the fastener industry based on member input.

IFI member companies now account for 800 enrolled students who appreciate the flexibility of self-based learning at work or at home. Meanwhile, human-resource managers at companies without training directors find the offerings to be time and cost-effective member tools for evaluating and upskilling employees as each training module includes a skills assessment component to gauge learning comprehension.

Accessing Affordable Healthcare for Manufacturers

IFI's second recently announced partnership, this one with **National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)**, connects members with an amazing array of health plans with **Mercer Health & Benefits LLC**, serving as the broker. The health care plans were selected based on what manufacturing employees enroll in most. All medical plans include prescription drug benefits, and you can elect to provide vision, dental and even life insurance. The medical plans include Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) and Health Saving Account (HSA) options, all offered through an easy-to-navigate web-based platform.

This new offering results in greater purchasing power for IFI member companies with workforces ranging in size from two to 99 employees (some state exceptions apply). Available in most states where fastener manufacturers are concentrated, the program enables companies to offer employees Fortune 500-type benefits.

As small and medium-sized manufacturers strive to attract, develop and retain skilled employees, and health care costs continue to rise, the importance of the NAM/IFI partnership cannot be overstated. Current IFI members and companies considering IFI membership can get a competitive-rate quote now at IFI.NamHealthcare.com.

Simplified Shipping Saves

Completing the trio of new partnerships at IFI is one that will streamline and simplify shipping for small and medium-sized manufacturers. Introducing **PartnerShip**®, the endorsed shipping provider for IFI.



With experience managing over 160 association programs, PartnerShip can help IFI members ship smarter. And IFI

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members receive the following:

- Small package shipping discounts using **FedEx Express**[®] and **FedEx Ground**[®] services.
- Savings on less-than-truckload (LTL) freight with **UPS Freight**, **YRC Freight** and many other carriers.
- Competitive rates on full or partial truckload shipments.
- Expert logistics management for specialized services including trade show shipping and international freight.

A win-win for IFI and its members, this free member benefit lowers total shipping costs while helping offset your IFI membership dues.

Saving is simple—if you already have an existing FedEx account, your IFI discounts will be added. For LTL freight shipments, you can easily quote online and rate shop carriers to fit your service needs and budget. IFI members and companies considering IFI membership can get a quote on how much they would save under this program by visiting: www.PartnerShip.com/IFI.

Optimum ROI for IFI Membership

Coupled with IFI's current programs, resources and events, these new offerings ensure a huge return on investment (ROI) for IFI members. The savings from these new programs alone could very well pay for the cost of a company's investment in IFI membership. Simply put: The time is right for fastener manufacturers and industry suppliers to get and stay connected via IFI. www.indfast.org

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For More Information on These New IFI Membership Benefits:

**Workforce Training, www.180Skills.com
(send inquiries to info@indfast.org)**

Healthcare, IFI.NamHealthcare.com

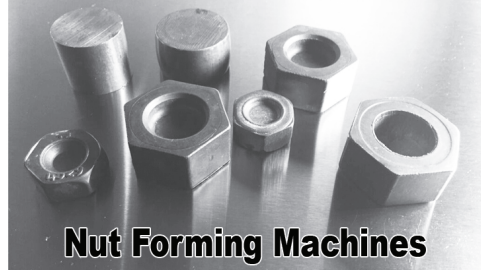
Shipping, www.PartnerShip.com/IFI

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Dan Walker is Managing Director of the Industrial Fasteners Institute (IFI), headquartered in Independence, OH, USA, an industry trade association founded in 1931 serving 180 member companies, nationwide. Learn more about IFI by visiting www.indfast.org. Companies that are interested in IFI membership should contact IFI by phone at +1 216 241 1482 or by sending an email to dwalker@indfast.org.



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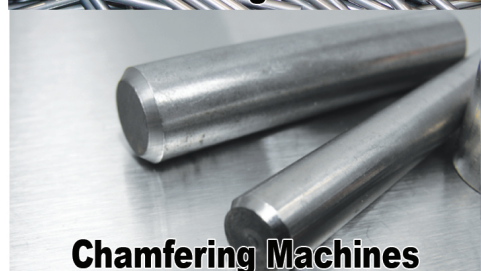
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