

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING NEWSLETTER

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Employment Law Update

MANT
MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION OF NORTH TEXAS

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The topic of the November 9th MANT educational program is Employment Law. Joan Kennerly, Attorney with the Menes Law Firm and licensed to practice law in Texas since November 1984 will provide an overview of the types of employment issues employers and employees need to be familiar with. Knowledge on the myriad of laws and their impact is crucial. Please join us:

When: November 9, 2004 11:30 to 1:15
Where: UTA/Fort Worth at the Automation & Robotics Research Institute
7300 Jack Newell Blvd. So., Fort Worth, 76118
map at <http://arri.uta.edu>
Cost: Members \$15 / Non-members \$20
Register: Download flyer at www.mant.us and fax to 817-871-6031 or call 817-272-5922.

Employment Law has many varied and complicated aspects in Texas. Texas is a strong at-will state which means any employer can fire anybody for any reason or no reason at any time. The converse is that any employee can quit for any reason or no reason at any time. Seems like a pretty simple rule.

The exceptions to this rule are what make things complicated. Texas law and constitution make it illegal for employers to fire employees because of (for example) their race, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability. Likewise it is illegal to fail to hire applicants for those reasons and to demote, fail to promote, or force any adverse employment action upon an employee for any of these reasons.

Another exception is a legally binding contract between employer and employee that provides the employee can be fired, demoted, etc. only for cause. In exchange for that provision, an employer can make a covenant not to compete a part of the same contract and a condition of employment. Texas courts do not like covenants not to compete; therefore they must be carefully crafted to be enforceable. An employment contract cannot be enforced by forcing the employee to work till the end of the contract term because the United States Constitution abolished slavery. An employment contract may restrict ways to settle disputes to (for example) binding arbitration or mediation.

An employer does not have to offer any benefits to an employee or pay for the ones it does offer. An employer does have a duty to provide a safe working environment for employees. If an employee is hurt on the job and the employer is a subscriber to Texas Workers Compensation, that is the employee's only legal remedy against the employer. If the

employer does not subscribe to workers compensation, an employee who is hurt on the job may sue the employer for damages from that injury. Employees who have been fired may be eligible for unemployment benefits. The Texas Workforce Commission has the authority to decide whether an employee is eligible for unemployment benefits.

Many employers, managers, and supervisors are more comfortable with written rules than they are without them. Personnel policies are useful tools which must be carefully written to accomplish what the employer wants them to accomplish. Likewise, safety rules, standard operating procedures, and other sets of standards employees are expected to meet do not help the employer if they are written without a great deal of thought. Good writing is not writing that can be understood; it is writing that cannot be misunderstood. Good writing is essential in all aspects of the employer-employee relationship.

There are a lot of legal terms and concepts employers ought to be familiar with to the extent that they know when to seek legal advice when they need it. Employment litigation is costly in many ways—time, money, wear and tear on the people involved to name a few. An employer who can avoid litigation by following the law can save itself these costs and at the same time create a peaceful workplace which enhances morale and maximum productivity.

The respect with which an employer treats its employees is mirrored in the way the employees treat the product, service, equipment, supervisors, and ultimately the customers. Learn more on November 9th at this informative MANT workshop.





Real People. Real Solutions.



Left to right: Gerry Bransom, President; Elise Bransom, Secretary/Treasurer; Tami Robinett, Vice President; Paul Wu Li Branch - CNB; Charlie Bransom, Vice-President

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Golf Tournament

More than 40 MANT members and guests gathered at Mansfield National Golf Course on September 24, 2004

for the 2nd Annual MANT Golf Tournament. Over \$1500 was raised and will go toward Association

operating expenses. Linda Lummus, Tournament Chair said that approximately ten new members and renewals occurred as a result of the event. The weather was beautiful, we had a putting contest, longest drive and closest to the pin contests as well as awards for the first through third place teams. Thanks to all who helped make it a success!



Texas Manufacturers Associations Form Alliance

Five manufacturing associations from across the state met on October 20th to discuss best practices, member value and benefits, board development and a variety of other issues relevant to running a successful manufacturers association.

The San Antonio, South Texas, New Braunfels, Harlingen and North Texas Manufacturers Associations agreed to align and form the Texas Alliance of Manufacturers Associations. The intent is to identify and bring into the group more manufacturers associations from

throughout the state, and with membership approval of the allied associations, leverage the strengths of each organization to raise awareness of manufacturing issues at the state and national level.

It was an extremely informative session touching on the outreach activities of each individual association. South Texas offers apprenticeship programs, San Antonio is an advocate and ombudsman for manufacturers issues with the municipal agencies, Harlingen is working with their Airport District to display manufactured products, New

Braunfels has a scholarship program. Texas manufacturers employ nearly 1 million and we are 2nd in the nation in manufacturing strength and output and 1st in exports. This attempt at identifying and communicating with the different manufacturing and industrial organizations around Texas should prove beneficial to both Association leadership and the individual member companies.

The group plans to meet again in February 2005 at the offices of the very successful San Antonio Manufacturers Association. Their President, Mike Harris is hosting the meeting.

TAMA

Learn About Training Within Industry at December 14th MANT Program



Leveraging the Role of Supervisors and Team Leaders to increase productivity, improve morale, and reduce training time

Are your processes the best they can be? When is the last time you actually took the time to see if your operations were actually doing what they were designed to do? At the December 14th MANT educational program you will hear how to use the job methods analysis of the Training Within Industry (TWI) toolset. TWI is a guaranteed way to help supervisors solve problems that arise when implementing improvement strategies. TWI consists of three standardized programs covering essential skills needed by all supervisors and team leaders, regardless of their industry: Skill in Instruction, Skill in Improving Methods, and Skill in Leading. Supervisors are given the opportunity to learn and practice the process in a confidential, low-stress, and highly supportive environment. Each program is

simple, straight-forward and easy to implement.

Participants attend a class for 2 hours per day for 5 days. Each day, after the session, trainees return to the workplace to use the techniques learned and choose real life examples to discuss and practice in class.

Small class sizes keep everyone involved and maximize success. Certified trainers assure training is delivered to quality standards and that proven TWI methodology is followed.

TWI consists of three main training modules:

- Job Methods Training (JM) Teaches supervisors how to improve the way jobs are done
- Job Instruction Training (JI) Teaches supervisors how to quickly train employees to do the job correctly, safely, and conscientiously.
- Job Relations Training (JR) Teaches supervisors how to build positive employee relations, increase cooperation and motivation, and effectively resolve conflicts.

The MANT workshop includes a step by step approach to actually using an interactive tool that will guide you through the basic TWI process. When you leave this workshop, you will be ready to take the tool and apply it to your operations. This session will be presented by Kurt Middelkoop, manufacturing specialist with the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center. To register or learn more about TWI contact the TMAC Customer Relations Department at 817-272-5922.



Luminator Observe Lean Techniques in Action!

Luminator has been an innovator in the design and manufacture of communications and lighting products for almost 70 years. They serve three major transportation sectors: bus, rail, and aerospace. Luminator is the world's largest manufacturer of transportation lighting. If you've ever traveled on a public transit bus, passenger train, or commercial, corporate, or military aircraft, chances are you have come in contact with a Luminator product. Observe Lean Manufacturing techniques and tools such as 5s, Visual Controls, Cellular Flow, Pull Systems, and other lean practices in action which have yielded Luminator millions of dollars in cost reductions and other impacts!

Lean Practitioner Network

Thursday, December 2, 2004, 7:30- 9:30 a.m.

at Luminator, A Mark IV Company, 1200 E. Plano Pkwy, Richardson, TX 75074

Be part of a new group of manufacturing professionals who meet regularly to observe, learn and share Lean practices.

Who should attend?

Those actively pursuing or thinking about implementing Lean Initiatives.

Why you should attend:

- Tour a company with Lean Techniques Applied
- You'll Learn new Lean Techniques
- Share Ideas
- Get Feedback
- Find out what does and doesn't work
- Network with people who understand your challenges

The price to participate in this unique event is only \$10. Contact Stephanie Thompson at the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center to register at 817-272-5961 or sthomp@arri.uta.edu. Group size is limited, so be sure to call and sign up today!

Bulletin Board

Operations Manager - Glidepath LLC/ Grand Prairie

Glidepath is an airport baggage handling systems integrator. Interested applicants should send resume to Matt Williams, CEO at matt.williams@glidepathgroup.com.

Estimator - SMI Manufacturing/ Houston

Prefer Industrial Engineer with at least five years five years work experience in a metal machining environment. Email resume to Nathan Post at npost@superior-smi.com.

Dallas-Area Site Manager

Fast-paced & demanding growth environment requires operations manager with proven ability to deliver results with emphasis on quality, schedule and cost controls. Must be adept at supporting corporate, departmental and team objectives. Proven skill set to produce increased departmental output while decreasing direct expense. Full responsibility for facility and equipment maintenance. No desk jockeys. Position requires a broad based skill set including strengths as a problem solver, team builder and motivator. Direct management of 20 hourly employees. Semiconductor experience a plus. BS/BA with 5 years relevant experience at a minimum. Competitive compensation & benefits. Email resume with salary requirement to: txemployment1@hotmail.com or fax to 215-249-1474. EOE

General Manager Plant Manager Materials Manager Manufacturing Engineer

This is a metal fabrication operation with 150 employees with likely growth to 300 employees over the next several months. They have two sites - one in Grand Prairie (25 miles west of Dallas) and one in Tyler (100 miles east of Dallas). They service the HVAC industry with stamped parts and some assembled parts. Contact Mark Sessumes with TMAC at sessumes@arri.uta.edu. Customer seeks someone with at least 5 years metal fabrication experience and knowledgeable about lean techniques.

HELP WANTED

MANT Job Mart

Applied Manufacturing Conference Draws a Crowd



The Third Annual Applied Manufacturing Conference drew more than 200 attendees to their event held at the Hilton Arlington October 19-21. Manufacturers from around Texas and from as far away as Maryland gathered to learn, share and network during the three day event. Attendees enjoyed participating in tours of local manufacturing plants, informative seminars, networking with exhibitors of manufacturing services and products and listened to great keynote speakers.

Many different industry sectors were represented

and conference attendees appreciated the depth, variety and quality of the topics and speakers provided. It was a great opportunity for plant managers and manufacturing decision makers to find out about trends and hear about a variety of improvement techniques to enhance their operations. David Dauch, VP with American Axle shared his company's world class journey, John Brandt, former Editor-In-Chief with IndustryWeek disseminated newly completed research on the competitive landscape with China, Pat Cleary with the National Association of Manufacturers provided information on the structural challenges manufacturers face today, Congresswoman Kay Granger presented an update on the Administration's manufacturing initiatives and the conference closed with Shane Yount of Competitive Solutions, Inc. on Process Based Leadership techniques. If you missed this year's conference we'll have post-event information on the web soon. More information to come on the 2005 AMC! Please contact Iris Bruton at 817-272-5909 if you'd like to know more.

ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL CONTRACTING AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION SEMINAR

Thursday, Nov. 18, 2004
8:30 a.m. to Noon

Fort Worth International Center
808 Throckmorton Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

[Register at www.fwic.com](http://www.fwic.com)

Distinguished panelists with inside and outside perspectives on international business will address solutions for common difficulties in international commercial ventures.

Topics to be covered include:
Negotiating transactions with an emphasis on international sales contracts;
International joint ventures;
Logistical considerations;
Resolving disputes through mediation, arbitration or litigation



The Manufacturers Association of North Texas newsletter is proudly sponsored by
The University of Texas at Arlington and the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center, a component of the
Automation & Robotics Research Institute and the City of Fort Worth Business Assistance Center.
Editor, Deborah M. Wallace

