

Always Growing and Learning

PRESS OPERATOR EXPLAINS THE VALUE OF THE IMT APPRENTICESHIP



"I never turn down extra training," says Pedro Driscoll, who is participating in the first cohort of Industrial Manufacturing Technician (IMT) apprentices at [Bermo](#), a metal manufacturing company in Minneapolis. "I was honored to represent the company" Pedro continues. "This is my second time going to school for Bermo, and I was proud that they asked me."

The 18-month [IMT apprenticeship](#) trains frontline manufacturing workers to set up, operate, monitor, and control production equipment. Apprentices learn to understand manufacturing as a business system that integrates multiple disciplines, processes, and stakeholders. That knowledge allows workers to efficiently and safely manage time and materials, which helps improve manufacturing processes and schedules.

Pedro has little doubt that the IMT training makes every participant a more valuable employee. Bermo benefits, he explains, from the "experience and knowledge that their new apprentice has. They can do more troubleshooting. They don't have to find someone else to solve the problems—they can do it themselves. It cuts down on downtime—that's a huge aspect of manufacturing—down time can make or break. It costs money every time the machines are down. The more knowledge people have, the better they're going to be for the plant."

Pedro isn't a typical IMT apprentice. The program is designed for workers who have little manufacturing experience, but Pedro has close to two decades of experience—first as an extruder operator, later as a spot welder, and, since 2007, as a press operator. Pedro also has a number of certifications he's earned at various jobs. For Pedro, the IMT is an opportunity to learn about the big picture and develop some of the knowledge and additional certifications he'll need to achieve his goal of becoming a supervisor or a plant manager.

"Some of the classes we're taking [as part of the IMT] are management classes. That's good extra knowledge. It's good for a plant manager to have knowledge of what's going on in the plant. I may not have a fancy college degree, but I have a lot of experience and skills. I just want to be able to put all my skills and knowledge [toward helping] a company succeed."

Pedro's enthusiasm for the IMT makes him an effective champion and recruiter. He frequently shares his excitement about the IMT with fellow workers during breaks and after hours, and he happily chats with fellow team members who stop by his workspace to ask questions and learn more. "I've already talked to people who want to take this class," Pedro notes. He hopes that his will be the first of many groups to complete the IMT program at Bermo.

Pedro urges other employers to adopt the IMT. "Employers have got to understand," he observes—"they've got to look [at] the depth of the factory and think about how to keep it going—the more knowledge an individual has, the better your plant is going to be, and the more money you'll make." The payoff? "It's huge. Workers like myself feel appreciated; we're not just a number—we're a person that they care about in some way."

For more information on the IMT Apprenticeship, including resources for employers, workforce development organizations, unions, and apprentices, [visit \[IMTApprenticeship.org\]\(http://IMTApprenticeship.org\)](http://visit IMTApprenticeship.org).