

## Industry Outlook: Learning Keeps Industry In Motion

Written by William J. Stevens, President & CEO, Motion Industries  
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As we look around us, one constant is this: Things change! Over the past decade, we have gone through two industrial recessions and have seen many changes in our customer and supplier base. These include changes brought on by mergers and acquisitions; changes in the ways we do business electronically and via the Internet; and changes in the technical skills and knowledge of those who work for our customers and suppliers, as well as those who work for Motion Industries across North America. Many of these changes have led to improvements in the processes we use daily and productivity in the workplace. The downside of such changes, however, is a growing shortage of technical skills and knowledge in operations, maintenance and engineering roles in many of the industries that we do business with today.

Almost without exception, the exiting of the baby-boomer generation from the workforce is taking a toll with respect to the experience of the remaining workers and the knowledge base leaving with the retirees. Companies are faced with the mission of effectively handling this dilemma, while at the same time figuring out how to keep their staffing at the right levels and their bottom lines healthy. It's a challenge for all of us.

As a supplier to a broad and diverse group of industrial companies, it is our goal and objective to provide customers the best product information in every situation. The challenge of retaining product knowledge and determining the most efficient method for providing this information to our customers has become very important as individuals retire. Motion Industries is committed to the type of training for our employees that will enable them to convey and transfer product information to our customers. Accordingly, we find ourselves conducting more training and education internally—*and we are also offering more training to customers than ever before.*

We're fortunate at Motion Industries to have the "Motion Institute," our own version of an "industrial products university." The Motion Institute supports our employees and our customers by providing specific product training, troubleshooting and even repair, in some cases, on the products we sell. One of the major changes we've noted over the years involves desired

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methods of receiving product training and education—from frequent hands-on labs in a central location, to Web-based training that's conducted at a specific time or sessions that can be presented at the customer's convenience.

We believe that the Motion Institute is certainly an investment in our future.

In addition to our own efforts, we support and encourage our suppliers to host training courses on their products for our sales people and our customers. Many times, part of our service offering to a valued customer is providing the education or the means to get that customer's personnel educated by our supplier partners. This is a win-win opportunity!

The challenges of ensuring a skilled industrial workforce will likely continue—and we at Motion Industries will continue identifying and developing new and creative ways to educate and train our employees and customers to overcome those challenges. We know continuous learning keeps industry in motion, and Motion Industries is committed to education! **MT**

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