

# Workforce Development

*“No other investment yields as great a return as the investment in education. An educated workforce is the foundation of every community and the future of every economy.”*

- Brad Henry

Optimax’ dedication to continuous learning has been a driving force in the culture of the workplace. As the economy and perception of manufacturing continue to change, the challenge of finding skilled technology workers continues to increase. With a great vision for the future, Optimax has partnered with FAME to increase the number of skilled technology workers to fill the pipeline. FAME (Finger Lakes Advanced Manufacturers’ Enterprise) is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to increase prosperity in the Finger Lakes region by helping manufacturers’ with their most vital resource – people.

As part of the FAME initiative, Optimax has taken an approach to educate the young and inspired by providing tours to local schools and interested students. This past year, Optimax has opened its doors to over 100 students for tours. During these tours, the students have the opportunity to see their science and math education applied in the work environment. The exposure to manufacturing creates an awareness of the numerous options available to students. These tours show that today’s manufacturing environment requires high skills, intelligence and a mindset to constantly challenge the process. In order to be effective, workers must have good hand-eye coordination, computer skills, problem-solving skills, the ability to work as a team, the ability to multi-task, and the ability to think and communicate logically and critically under pressure. Out of these tours have come interns and new hires working in roles from manufacturing to IT.



FAME realizes that in order to build a skilled workforce, they need to be proactive; they must go to the students and not wait for the students to come to them. Optimax is one of many companies making an appearance in local schools. By working with the schools, Optimax has been assigned to science departments and given the opportunity to speak with students interested in fields related to science, technology, engineering, and math. The number of students introduced to manufacturing multiplies exponentially by this presence, as well as the number of teachers and faculty members.

The teachers and faculty members are instrumental in the direction youth take after high school. By igniting the passion in these influencers, they pass it on through their curriculum. FAME members have invited teachers and school-to-work coordinators to tour the different facilities and witness the numerous options available to students.

Manufacturing offers opportunity. For the students who are experientially driven, there is opportunity to learn a skilled trade and work with their hands. For students interested in technical and engineering fields, there is

opportunity to apply their knowledge and test their innovative ideas. From an entry level optical technician to a top specialist with a doctorate, there is opportunity to learn, grow, and advance.

Optimax strives to create awareness of the opportunity available in manufacturing. The manufacturing environment requires the worker to challenge and improve the process in order to deliver a precision product to customers. Optimax has taken a hands-on approach in helping potential and existing employees develop the skill sets that are required on a daily basis. Accountability and critical thinking are important to the Optimax manufacturing environment. The intimate setting allows for employees to acquire great responsibility in a short period of time, with the opportunity to excel.