

ForwardskillingSM initiative applies an innovative playbook to help small/medium-sized manufacturers upskill workforce

American Re-Industrialization Should Happen First and Best in Wisconsin

NEW BERLIN, WI, UNITED STATES, May 28, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Pindel Global Precision](#), a leading innovator in advanced manufacturing and contract machining of precision parts, announced the successful completion of the second phase of its ForwardskillingSM workforce upskilling pilot. The groundbreaking initiative aims to upskill the existing manufacturing workforce to leverage the latest advancements in manufacturing technologies, including automation and artificial intelligence.

American Re-Industrialization Should Happen First and Best in Wisconsin

The offshoring of manufacturing in past decades has diminished Wisconsin's presence on the global stage, but its highly trained and highly trainable workforce, when augmented by automation and AI, offers Wisconsin the chance to be the manufacturing powerhouse for the world again. Bill Berrien, Pindel's CEO, said "An American industrial comeback is brewing. Four months into President Trump's second term, companies are racing to reshore production and committing billions to reindustrialization."

Our society has spent decades assuming that the career skills we learn in our first 25 years of life will automatically carry us through the next 50. If we want a new era of industrial dynamism, we need to forget that myth and embrace the reality that learning has to be lifelong. In order to rebuild heartland prosperity, we must empower American workers to continually grow and build their skills. This is a challenge that Washington D.C. cannot solve alone. Helping American workers build the new skills that President Trump's industrial vision needs will require strong



Bill Berrien, CEO

partnership from states and the private sector.”

To meet this challenge, employers and employees have turned to upskilling. The term 'upskilling' is used to describe the practice of offering continual opportunities to acquire new skills and leverage new technologies (most relevantly, automation, AI, and industry best practices). Upskilling enables employees to add more value to their companies and, in turn, to individually capture more value in wages, benefits, bonuses, and life and career fulfillment.

An Uber®-Inspired Solution to the Skills Gap

To address the difficulties that small- and medium-sized businesses face when upskilling their employees, Wisconsin is taking a page out of the shared-economy playbook with ForwardskillingSM.

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First conceived by Pindel’s CEO Bill Berrien during his participation in the Presidential Leadership Scholars program in 2019, ForwardskillingSM has a dual intent: (1) to act as a CLEARINGHOUSE for upskilling courses, vendor training, certificate programs, and other offerings that already exist in the market, and (2) to act as a COORDINATOR of upskilling programs by

proactively piecing together the curriculum, training facility, training materials and tools, and instructors (all perhaps offered by different organizations) required to address specific industries’ training needs.

Berrien envisions the program as a cornerstone of a new manufacturing renaissance that has the potential to propel Wisconsin back onto the global stage. “We are at the dawn of a golden age for American manufacturing, and ForwardskillingSM is how we ensure that our workforce leads the charge,” he says. “By investing in our people and keeping pace with technological advancements, we’re not just keeping up with the future—we’re building it.”

Early Success: Piloting ForwardskillingSM with Swiss Machining



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Although Berrien's long-term vision for ForwardskillingSM covers many skillsets even beyond manufacturing, its initial focus has been on Swiss CNC machining—a critical and specialized skill in short supply across Wisconsin. Swiss CNC machines are sophisticated lathes capable of producing extremely precise components, making skilled Swiss machinists highly valuable.

Recognizing this shortage, Pindel partnered with [Milwaukee Area Technical College](#) (MATC) to pilot the first ForwardskillingSM program—Swiss Production Machinist 1—exclusively for its own employees. Weekly classes at MATC covered essential topics like shop safety, basic tooling, machine setups, and entry-level troubleshooting. By the end of this initial pilot, measurable improvements in employee confidence and productivity validated the ForwardskillingSM approach.

Expanding the Model: Swiss Production Machinist 2

Buoyed by initial success, Forwardskilling's second pilot, Swiss Production Machinist 2, took a significant leap forward by including employees from multiple manufacturers. Employees from four Southeastern Wisconsin companies gathered weekly at MATC, learning under instructor Chris Chomicki. Participants advanced in independent machine operation and intermediate troubleshooting on CNC Swiss equipment.

The multi-company structure provided unique benefits. Participants experienced hands-on experimentation without the pressure of immediate production demands and gained insights from how peers from other companies approached machining tasks. A participant from Reader Precision Solutions in Elkhorn, WI, shared his experience: "Chris Chomicki's course was an extremely valuable resource. I was able to experiment in a classroom environment without the worry of meeting production goals and had the chance to see how others approached the same routine tasks we all face daily. If given the opportunity, I'd love to pursue more courses focused toward developing those already working in a manufacturing setting."

Such testimonials underscore a distinct advantage of Forwardskilling's shared model: knowledge exchange among peers enhances the learning experience beyond traditional isolated, company-specific training.

Employers, too, quickly realized the advantages. While releasing an employee for training even one day per week can pose challenges, Swiss 2's thoughtful scheduling minimized disruptions and delivered swift returns. Steve Syburg, President of Sharp Turn Products in Oconomowoc, WI, remarked:

"Our machinist enrolled in the training course has indeed found it very valuable. I have seen a significant increase in both his motivation and his ability to troubleshoot issues at the machine. Having structured education rather than learning informally from colleagues proved beneficial, and the one-day-per-week class reduced disruptions. I'm confident the course costs will quickly be offset by improved tool usage and reduced in-process scrap."

This second pilot demonstrated Forwardskilling's scalability. It showed Wisconsin manufacturers are eager to embrace innovative training methods that strengthen their workforce collectively rather than individually.

A Proven Model—and the Road Ahead

Forwardskilling's next step, Swiss Production Machinist 3, will launch later this year with details to be announced. With two successful pilots completed and a third on the horizon, ForwardskillingSM has matured from innovative concept into a proven blueprint for regional workforce development. As reshoring accelerates and technology continues its rapid evolution, Wisconsin exemplifies how collaboration provides the swiftest route to a future-ready manufacturing workforce.

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