

Day 4 ~ Duo Lift Manufacturing

I spent most of the morning with owner, Jim Hellbusch on a super long prototype trailer. I noticed the communication skills between the employees working on the project was effective, casual, low stress and their teamwork was impressive. We talked a lot about blueprints and the importance of engineering, calling out specifications on drawings and how important they are to the assemblers/welders. Jim and I took a tour and he showed me many jigs and fixtures. We stopped by each one and he explained their significance. We also spent time talking about government contracts vs. private sector contract. With the government contracts you can't deviate from them, if you want to you have to get approval which takes a lot of time and effort. There is a lot of red tape to deal with.



The rest of the day I spent in the machine tool and saw area with Gregg, Austin, Michael and Dana. I spent significant time with Dana on the Milltronics milling machine. He told me about a lot of little things that if you don't do them right, can cause big problems down the road, for example, you should take the Cat 45 holder out of its spindle and have the machine put it back in to deviate operator error. Another idea, take the Cat 45 holder out of the spindle and leave it toolless for the evening then when you come back in the morning you always do the manual data input.

One of the big things about Duo Lift is that everyone knows they need to be productive in order for them to turn a profit. If they are spending more on direct labor and indirect labor than what they sell their product for, they are not going to be in business for very long.

I have a whole new understanding about management from when I used to work in industry 30 years ago. I also have a better understanding of supervisors, team leaders and the training of individuals. I can take all these components I never would have gotten during a quick field trip and teach them to my students for the rest of my career.



Pictured: Jim Hellbusch, David Hellbusch, Ben Hellbusch, & Tracy Dodson