



Benchmade Knife Co.

The EWTF funds supported the creation of a workforce development plan (“WDP”) that affected almost all employees of Benchmade during the training period.

Benchmade’s success will depend on continuing to increase the skill set of its workforce, building new organizational capabilities, and maintaining a problem solving culture that encourages employee involvement.

The WDP has been created to support these goals. For all employees, the WDP targets hard skills, team skills, and lean manufacturing skills. For people managers and leaders, the WDP also reflects a commitment to building manager quality: Ensuring Benchmade has broad capability and bench strength.

As an example, all Customer Service Department employees attended a 6 week (56 hour) “High Impact Customer Service” training program facilitated by Clackamas Community College onsite at Benchmade’s headquarters in Oregon City. Participants in the course practiced techniques to handle potential unproductive interactions and create positive memorable experiences for all customers. Emphasis was placed on providing a common language and understanding of service in the organization, providing a vehicle for teamwork, and working most efficiently and productively on the job.

Frank Knight, Benchmade’s Customer Service Supervisor, has stated: “Even after the first day of training the program provided an immediate return on investment; creating a foundation to build knowledge, attitudes and skills for delivering outstanding customer service.”