

Got Fastener Training?

Confessions of a Wannabe Fastener Nerd!

by:

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Some of you may know me as the Director of the **Fastener Training Institute®**, but most know me through my longtime career in the fastener biz. My real day job is running **Desert Distribution Sales LLC**, a manufacturer's rep agency based in Scottsdale, AZ, USA. I spend most of my days working with my distributors and their OEMs on fastener opportunities and unfortunately, sometimes problems. But I've spent most of the last eight weeks on the road. This recent tour highlights the increased need for more and better information to facilitate proper use of our products.

Most fastener problems are not a result of poor quality caused by manufacturing-related issues. The problem is often improper selection of fastening elements or their use.

Fastener manufacturing is a mature business. The equipment used and the quality systems employed now routinely provide parts with very low defect rates. Defect rates per million pieces produced are commonly in the low double digits, and single-digit rates are not rare. These are achieved through modern continuous improvement policies to root out low-level defects, plus high-speed sorting systems that can efficiently and effectively quarantine the defective parts.

What our industry has lost in recent decades are the Application Engineers, Product Managers and other support folks who once were common. Many of our domestic producers have reduced nonmanufacturing staff from their operations to cut costs and remain competitive. The burden of the correct specification and use of fasteners now falls to the distributors and consuming OEMs.

Where Do These Folks Go for Product Training?

My obvious suggestion is the Fastener Training Institute (FTI). I had the pleasure earlier this year of auditing FTI's Certified Fastener Specialist (CFS) program held in Los Angeles, CA, USA. This event is co-produced with the **Industrial Fasteners Institute (IFI)**. It is a week-long fastener boot camp, which is also offered each summer in Cleveland, OH, USA. In the past I had attended pieces of the program, but this time I went through the entire five-day class.

Many folks do exciting things for spring break. My bride of 28 years, Monica, was not surprised however, when I told her my plans were to attend the CFS Fastener Training Week - Los Angeles. OK, I'm a wannabe fastener nerd! Get over it! I got a chance to hang out for a week with **Carmen Vertullo** CFS, **Joe Greenslade** and **Salim Brahimi**. If the fastener training world had a rat pack, they would be charter members.

My 20 classmates for the course came from all across the USA, plus two from Japan. We had fastener distributors,

fastener manufacturers, fastener processors, aerospace fastener manufacturers and OEMs, plus naval shipyard technicians. Quite a diverse group with one thing in common: they wanted to learn more about how to enhance fastener use, reliability and safety.

Admittedly, I find this stuff exciting, but to be brief, I'll give you the thumbnail outline.

Monday and Tuesday involved classroom work covering consensus standards, torque tension overview plus hands-on demonstrations, QA systems, terminology, thread specifications and gaging, certifications and test reports, lot traceability, testing and inspection.

Wednesday we got on a bus and did plant tours. **ND Industries**, **B&B Specialties**, **Atlas Testing Laboratories** and **R&D Fasteners** were visited. These folks were great. They took their time to explain how their operations work and were very generous with answering all of our questions.

Thursday and Friday we were back in the classroom for even more detailed training. We covered advanced print reading and tolerances, material standards, dimensional standards, machine screws and stainless steel screws, failure analysis, and metric fastener standards. Lastly was my personal favorite—hydrogen embrittlement (really!).

After completing the five-day course and passing the test, the students were given their Certified Fastener Specialist credentials. What a blast!

I Have Some Great Ideas for My Next Vacation

Shhh... don't tell Monica, but I could intern in the heading department at **AVK** or learn to run the high-temp patch line at **ND Industries**. No wait, I could work in the packaging department at **The Socket Source**.

How about a stint at the new **Stelfast** warehouse in L.A.? I got it: the QC department at **Gateway Screw & Rivet** or maybe inside sales at **Bossard Metrics**.

Best idea, how about some of you folks meeting me in Las Vegas this October for the *National Industrial Fastener Show & Mill Supply Expo*. **Bengt Blendulf** is doing his *Fastener Technology Workshop*. This is a must for anyone in the fastener biz. Bengt is an old friend (not old-old, but longtime friend) and my other candidate for the fastener training rat pack. You might even get his autograph!

Got more suggestions? Let me know at:

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Or visit the website listed below.

www.FastenerTrainingInstitute.org

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