

Got Fastener Training?

Metric: Are You Up to Speed?

by:

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When I first came into the fastener industry about 25 years ago, metric fasteners were a sideline for most fastener distributors. Some carried more items than others and the company I worked for, **Ababa Bolt** in San Diego, CA, USA, carried more than most. In our area, we were known as the go-to supplier for metric fasteners. In those days (I am not trying to sound like an old timer), we got our metric technical information exclusively from supplier catalogs, and on rare occasions, an association technical presentation.

Sometime in the early 1990s I was at a **WAFD** conference (if you don't know what WAFD is, ask someone who's been around for more than 10 years) in beautiful Ojai, CA, USA. "Metric was coming," they told us. "You better get ready."

That's where I got my first good dose of metric fastener training. **Dale Tarantino** and **Bill Unferth** gave a great presentation on metric fasteners that covered things like property class markings and the metric tolerancing system.

I said "This is great. We should train our sales people and our customers in metric fasteners."

And we did. We used catalogs and supplier information. The training was well received and we enjoyed some nice business for being in-the-know on metric fasteners.

Fast forward 25 years. Metric is finally here. Not exactly the way we expected, but definitely here, and here to stay. USA auto makers are 100% metric. So are manufacturers of everything from milling machines to windmills. Inch fasteners still predominate in areas like construction, aerospace and some heavy equipment and truck markets, but metric is way more than a sideline for most fastener suppliers, and it's everything to many. As an independent consultant, about half of what I do in terms of fastener problem solving, distributor training and engineering drawings is metric. If the trend continues, and it will, in a few years I expect it will be upwards of 75%.

In today's market it is essential that suppliers and end users have a solid understanding of metric fasteners that is based on more than catalog information. This means having access to and understanding of, the specifications and standards that govern metric fasteners. It also means keeping abreast of industry trends and the latest technical and training resources.

Two of the best resources for keeping current are the

Industrial Fasteners Institute (IFI) and the **Fastener Training Institute® (FTI)**. These two organizations team up to bring resources and training to fastener providers throughout the supply chain.

If you pay any attention at all to the metric fastener industry you know that times are changing. Specs are changing. The IFI is blazing the trail on getting us all up to speed and showing us how to get our customers (OEMs and end users) on board with the latest changes. Basically that means that **DIN** and **JIS** are out, and **ISO** is in, and when it comes to metric fasteners, **ASME** (which was never really in, in the first place) is definitely out, and **ASTM** metric standards are not major players.

"Easy for you to say," you are thinking. "My reality is somewhat different."

That's right. Your customers are still asking for DIN standard parts and those who are catching the wave and asking for ISO parts have trouble getting ISO certifications. What to do?

The FTI is offering a new course, *Metric Fasteners: There's More to Know Than You Think*. This is a full-day, highly technical course focusing on metric fasteners. It covers metric specifications and standards, metric terminology and metric math. Attendees will find out about the latest industry trends and why many common metric standards are obsolete, and what to do about it. They will also get some hands-on experience in applying generic fastener principles such as the torque-tension relationship to metric fasteners.

Technical topics such as metric threads and tolerancing will be covered in detail. Also, some amazing resources will be shared to help attendees become THE metric technical authority in their market.

It's an exciting time to be a metric fastener supplier, but it will be a frustrating time for those who do not avail themselves of the information necessary to know how to navigate the changing standards and marketplace situation. Suppliers are responding to the changes, and even though demand for DIN product is still stronger than for ISO, they are getting in line with the standards changes. Up-to-speed suppliers will dual-certify their product where it meets both DIN and ISO standards. Where there are differences such as in some hex cap screws and nut hex dimensions, some offer and certify to both DIN and ISO products under separate part numbers.