

Internationally known Taylor Devices works to build local ties

North Tonawanda company always looking for area's best and brightest

BY BENJAMIN JOE
Contributor

Taylor Devices Inc. is a brand that's considered a leader in seismic damper technology and its products have been to space and back. However, the company does not sit on its laurels and is looking to succeed into the 21st century as it has since 1955.

To do this, it's reaching out locally to engineers, students and others to come to work with their company.

Human Resources Manager at Taylor Devices Tracy Masse said that the key word is "local" and the company is participating in local networking events in the community and developing relationships with local colleges to attract top talent. The company is embarking on a new era, it is a very exciting time to join the company, Masse said.

"We're developing relationships with the local colleges, as we're developing our internship programs," Masse said.

Alan Klembczyk said the company has approximately 120 employees, estimating through the various positions that Taylor Devices Inc. encompasses.

"Since Taylor is a manufacturing firm," Klembczyk said, "we hire across the board from office staff, to sales staff, to purchasing agents, to engineers, to technicians, to production workers, to production control workers, to financial employees, and technicians who test the product. So, it's across the board for opportunities."

"We actually hire across the board in terms of the skill level in education (as well)," Masse said. "If it's someone for the engineering department we're looking for a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering ... a lot of our grads come right out of UB. We're really looking for someone who is innovative, creative, open to new ideas ... just has an excitement about their career here."

Klembczyk also said that not only are the jobs there and ready to be filled, that these jobs are something that people can feel proud about.

"How can you not have a high level of pride in manufacturing a product that not only serves the military and aerospace sector but to now help save lives on earth?" Klembczyk said. "So, we'd like to share a lot of our application, information with our employees so they can appreciate where our products go."

To get a clear idea of what a career at Taylor Devices Inc. is like, one of the best examples is Alan Klembczyk himself who started as an engineer 30 years before, and is now president of the company.

"I started off right out of school, I came out of UB and the previous president, Doug Taylor, hired me right out of

engineering school," Klembczyk said. "I progressed through the engineering department. I started off as a design engineer, later became assistant chief engineer, then chief engineer, then vice president of sales and engineering and I assumed the role of president as of June 1 of this year."

Klembczyk stressed that the company is not against moving forward and conceivably, any employee can advance themselves through tuition reimbursement.

"We always encourage our employees to pursue higher degrees or higher education especially within the capacity in which they're serving here at Taylor Devices," Klembczyk said.

Working for Taylor Devices has many tangible rewards according to Masse.

"One of the nice things about working at Taylor is that not all companies offer their benefits the first of the month following your date of hire," Masse said. "We cover your medical. We offer three different plans, pretty comprehensive. We offer dental, vision, life insurance, 401K plan with a match, vacation, holiday, personal time and tuition reimbursement."

"Employee stock purchase plan is a big one," Klembczyk added. "The employee stock purchase plan is a plan where we allow our employees to use some of their pay to buy company stock so they can actually invest in the company they work for."

Klembczyk said that while there are challenges in working at Taylor Devices, they do not come close to the rewards that comes from working on products that are the cutting edge from outer-space to underwater. There are also contractual challenges that many businesses have, from staying on-time, to staying on-budget.

"The challenges that we face, because we're a manufacturing firm, we are always challenged with meeting very aggressive schedules that our customers desire from us," Klembczyk said. "We're always challenged with coming up with new designs to meet a very challenging and new application. We have other technical challenges such as having to operate in the extremes of space and the worst, corrosive environments that you can imagine and make sure we can stand by our products, providing them with a 35-year warranty."

"We do throw them (new employees) into the mix and expect them to produce immediately under a fairly intensive training program, especially in the engineering department," Klembczyk also said. "We don't expect our engineers to not contribute for a long period of time, they start to



PHOTOS BY JAMES NEISS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Pictured at top, PJ Abbarno, small assembly lead at Taylor Devices, assembles Gun Buffers. Bottom right, the map behind Marketing Specialist Sebastian Habermehl show off the international customer base Taylor Devices caters to. Bottom left, Cody Plotner, Senior QC Technician uses a Coordinate Measuring Machine to verify specifications of a Howitzer gun part in the Quality Control Department at Taylor Devices. Middle left, Taylor Devices Ben Kujawinski, VP of Operations, checks out the seismic dampers before shipping them out to be installed in the Gerald Desmond Bridge in California.

Products known for earthquakes and outer space

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The Taylor Devices offices are located in North Tonawanda where in 1955 founder Paul Taylor first set up the company. By 1961, the company was already expanding to Tonawanda Island and through the years went from making parts for NASA to saving lives through their seismic damping technology being used on bridges and buildings worldwide.

President Alan Klembczyk described Taylor Devices as still growing and was happy to sit down and go through the changes that the company has faced.

"Since 1961, we've been in this location (Tonawanda Island) and we've been expanding the footprint of this campus ever since," Klembczyk said. "Approximately five years ago, we expanded out onto another campus, which we call our Buffalo Bolt Campus, as it was in the old Buffalo Bolt manufacturing facility off of Ironton St. in North Tonawanda. At that point we moved all our large machines and most of our manufactur-

ing operations out to that facility."

Klembczyk said that while that is true, a large part of the company's overall operations remains on the Island.

"What remains here on the Island is all the offices," Klembczyk said. "We're headquartered here, all our sales, engineering, production control, testing and all our assembly operations are done here on the Island. All the fabrication of component parts is done on the other facility."

While the locality hasn't changed for Taylor Devices, the purpose for its primary product, dampers, has.

"Taylor is a company that has many different types of customers," Klembczyk said. "These include the military and aerospace sectors. It's very rewarding to contribute to the advancement of space technology, to help our military, to help aerospace companies solve very particular problems with our technology. Additionally, we've been able to convert some of the technology that we developed for military and aerospace applications, to seismic dampers that now help save lives."

A seismic damper works by absorbing a tremendous amount of energy during an earthquake in order to prevent that energy from ever reaching the structure itself. The technology is based on the development of the MX missile and the B-2 Spirit or Stealth Bomber. Taylor Devices has manufactured seismic dampers world wide, applications, including the National Theater in London, Fox Plaza in San Francisco, and the Ganlanba Bridge in China.

"We're immediately recognized as the leaders in the field for shock and vibration mitigation equipment, particularly seismic dampers to help save lives," Klembczyk said. "We use a multi-faceted approach to attract our customers. Some is online, some is by attending conferences, some is by reaching out to the building engineers who actually design the buildings so that they're very familiar with our product."

More information regarding their facility and products can be found at Taylordevices.com and seismicdamper.com.



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