

Gary W. Gathen

Chief Engineer, G Corp.

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Career and Professional Highlights

- Began career in tool and die at Gathen Industries, Inc. (GII) a family-owned tool and die shop, in Center Line, MI, doing part time janitorial and clerical work – 1952.
- Completed die making apprenticeship at GII, which specialized in automotive progressive dies and end treatment dies for decorative stainless steel and aluminum moldings – 1954 to 1960.
- Completed UAW die design apprenticeship at Die Engineering Activity, Fisher Body Division, General Motors Corp, Warren, MI Technical Center from 1960 to 1966.
- Earned Bachelor Mechanical Engineering degree, General Motors Institute (now Kettering University), Flint, MI, major: Tooling and Manufacturing Processes – 1960 to 1965
- Spent junior year co-op work sections at Fisher Body Plant 23, in die making, estimating and special projects departments and Plant 37, in die tryout, welding and aluminum foundry – 1962 to 1963.
- Completed fifth-year bachelor thesis, “Standardizing Component Parts of Mechanical Handling Devices” at Fisher Body – 1965.
- Developed, designed, built and tested a standardized ball screw-actuated reciprocating drive unit, installed in blank loader for floor pan at Grand Blanc, MI stamping plant. - 1965
- Spent 18 weeks visiting nine Fisher Body stamping plants collecting data, photos, designs and pressroom mechanical handling methods – 1965.
- Employed at Gathen Industries as project engineer, die designer and material purchasing agent – 1966
- Designed and supervised construction of new 27,000 square foot die making plant for GII in Roseville, MI, completing construction in six months
- During the period from 1966 to 1991, served in various capacities and worked on numerous special projects at Gathen Industries and Gathen Stamping, Inc. as follows:
 - Project Engineer: led a progressive die program which designed, built and delivered a normal 20-week die in just 41 days.
 - Advanced Engineering Manager: introduced CAD and CAM technologies, CNC milling, wire EDM, CMM inspection, SPC and other cutting edge processes and machinery.
 - Die Design Room Boss: set up and recruited an experienced, dependable crew of die design contractors
 - Vice President Sales: increased sales 30%, adding six new non-automotive accounts.
 - President: improved net profit on sales from three percent to more than eleven percent in three years.

- Elected to board of directors, National Tooling and Machining Association, Detroit Chapter – 1968. Retired in 1998
- Served on NTMA national committees: government relations, apprenticeship and training, foreign relations and was appointed to several roundtable best practices initiatives.
- Appointed Past Service Life Member of NTMA – 1992 to present
- Was president, NTMA Detroit Chapter – 1970-71 and 1974-75.
- Chaired various NTMA chapter committees
- Was instrumental in creation of a task force to standardize quality certification standards in the tool and die industry. QS-9000 ultimately resulted from efforts of this group others.
- Worked briefly in commercial, industrial and investment real estate – 1973 to 1974.
- Founded G Corp, a manufacturers' representative firm in tool and die and stamping industries – 1991.
 - Have represented medium and large tool and die shops and special machine builders in South Africa, Europe and South America, and the US.
 - Currently represent firms in US and Europe in tool and die making, and specialized manufacturing software
 - Work as consultants for adapting lean manufacturing for tool and die making
- Founded iDEAL Tool Company
- Member of Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME) Forming and Fabricating Community and have been featured in several industry articles and newsletters.
 - Active in Stamping and Dies technical group currently focused on variations in the stamping process
 - Founder and chairman of Lean Tool and Die Making tech group which is dedicated to adapting lean principles to the die making industry as a total system approach, including a standardized lean die configuration.
 - Participant in SME Lean Certification program development.
 - Member, Forming & Fabricating Community Steering Committee
 - Member, Machining & Material Removal Community
 - Member, Process, Product Design & Management Community
 - Member, TCN Leaders Committee
 - Member, Human Side of Lean Technical Community
 - Participant, Lean Certification Development, Lean Blitz Week, 2006
 - Lean Certification Volunteer
- Seminars given or planned: Building Dies with Less, Lean for the Tool and Die Shop, Value Stream Mapping, etc.
- Currently developing, with SME members and staff, a lean tool and die industry co-op which will result in a future SME sponsored symposium
- Developing a coalition of tool and die making enterprise from raw materials to stamper to reduce cost 50% and delivery by 75% within three years.
- Perform forensic expert witness work in tool & die and stamping industry litigation.

PUBLICATIONS AND ARTICLES

- Feature writer, STAMPING Journal 2008, Lean Tool & Die and related articles
- Gathen, Gary, Lean Tool & Die Solutions, THE FABRICATOR, August, 2007
http://www.thefabricator.com/ShopManagement/ShopManagement_Article.cfm?ID=1736
- Gathen, Gary, Fixing The Tool And Die Crisis Business Xpansion Journal, Apr, 2007.
http://www.bxjonline.com/bxj/article.asp?magarticle_id=1100
- Martin, Frank and Gathen, Gary, Revitalizing the U.S. Tool & Die Industry Stamping Journal, May 10, 2005 http://www.thefabricator.com/ToolandDie/ToolandDie_Article.cfm?ID=1087
- Gathen, Gary, Lean DOES Work For Tool & Die Business Expansion Magazine, Oct, 2005
http://www.bxjonline.com/bxj/article.asp?magarticle_id=892&mag_id=1
- Gathen, Gary, What Can SMED Do for You? Cover story, IMPO (Industrial Maintenance and Plant Operation) magazine, Jul, 2004 <http://www.impomag.com/scripts/ShowPR~RID~7360.asp>

Philosophy

- Lean principles can be applied to the one-off tool and die industry in a total system approach, resulting in a die factory system competitive with low labor cost countries.
- Tool & die making should be converted from a craft to a science-based process,