

### The IFMC: What?!

A common question about ESI clients is, “Which business is the parent company?” A frequent comment heard when describing ESI clients is, “You know, the Omni Companies.”

The reality is, each ESI client operates as a registered, independent business with its own financial and accounting records and employs its own team.

A more appropriate way to describe the businesses that make up ESI’s clients, and maybe something you have heard before, is “the IFMC.”

The IFMC is the Interdependent Free Market Consortium. The IFMC is made up of independent businesses that work together and depend on one another for parts, services, and more.

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## A Successful Partnership

Businesses do not exist in a bubble. They require lots of outsiders –vendors, customers, partners, consultants, and more – to thrive. Existing in a community that is supportive of businesses is important to success for all, as there is correlation between the health of businesses and of the communities in which they exist. A recent partnership between Alpena Community College (ACC) Instructor, Tim Ratz, local welding expert Scott MacKenzie, and Yukon Mfg., Corp. (YMC) demonstrates the value of what happens when businesses and the community support one another.

One of YMC’s customers required that welds that were going into the production of water screens for power plant use, be qualified welds. These stainless steel screens are used across the United States and into Canada. Upon notification of the qualified weld requirement, YMC leadership enlisted the help of Scott MacKenzie, a familiar name with many ESI clients, and previously a welding teacher at Alpena High School and Alpena Community College. Scott assisted with administering the test, preparing the material, and observing while the test was being performed, which is a requirement of the qualification process.

What Scott did was necessary, but the missing piece was still qualification of the welds. That’s where Tim Ratz, ACC Instructor, was able to help. Tim is a Certified Welding Inspector (CWI). The process to become a CWI is difficult, with many people taking the test repeatedly before they pass. Tim was able to inspect the welds and administer a bend test to them, following standards set forth by the American Welding Society. He worked with the YMC team to correct any issues, and was ultimately able to sign off on the qualifications for four welders. Congratulations Eric Martin, Kris Moore, Terry Skorownek, and Jacob Wilder for achieving qualification.

When asked about doing this for YMC, without charging them, Tim said it is one way he can give back to the businesses that give so much to his classes and students with material donations, careers, and more. This was a great win-win-win partnership!

The benefits of the IFMC are great, with the greatest being the ability to respond quickly to each other's needs. The small size of each business allows for flexibility and adaptability, made possible through high levels of trust and communication while maintaining independence. It is easier to adapt with a small team than a large team layered in bureaucracy. It also allows for businesses to narrow their focus, leading to greater expertise. While it may seem like chaos, it is actually the free market working at its finest.

Why is it common to hear the IFMC referred to as, "the Omni companies?" Omni Metalcraft, Corp. was the first business that grew to noteworthy size in the IFMC. It was what the community knew first and was where many people worked prior to the other independent startups.

## Introducing the Internal Job Board

In the January 2021 edition of Equipped, an internal job board (IJB) for ESI clients was mentioned, with the promise of more information to come. After preparations and testing, the IJB is ready for use. The goals of the IJB are to:

- help grow competencies of team members of ESI clients
- share opportunities for advancement/growth of ESI clients' team members
- share knowledge / advance understanding of competency needs of ESI clients
- better match competencies of current team members to the needs that exist
- assist with retention of talent as people who feel "stuck" without growth opportunities often leave for work outside of the ESI client base

The purpose is not to try and "steal" good people from other ESI clients, but instead to create a more robustly competent environment in which people feel they are in a position that challenges them, allows them to grow, and is a fit for both their, and their employer's, needs.

To access/utilize the IJB as an employee:

- Option 1: visit [www.358-jobs.com](http://www.358-jobs.com); scroll to the bottom of the page to the footer; click on the link in the left side of the footer, "current employee internal job board"; follow instructions to sign in or register as a new user
- Option 2: visit [www.358-jobs.com](http://www.358-jobs.com); choose the "opportunities" tab; choose a job that is marked as "internal only"; follow instructions to sign in or register as a new user
- Once registered, you will be able to access all opportunities on the page when you are logged in. Those who are not current team members or those who do not register/log-in, will only be able to access/apply to open opportunities

To post an open position on the IJB please contact Jackie Krawczak.

Interest in the IJB has been high with many looking forward to using it to both seek growth opportunities and for posting opportunities.

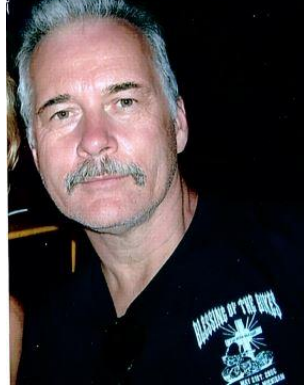
Quade Kimball is looking forward to utilizing the IJB and shared, "The new internal job board will offer transparency between all ESI's clients, so all opportunities are visible and available for anyone looking to match their strengths with the right position."

Also looking forward to the IJB is Gary Stevens, who shared, "We should strive to support people at achieving their best fit. The internal job board stands to be a valuable tool for team members of ESI clients. Encouraging people to advance their individual career paths is essential to both business and personal growth."

Applicants who apply via the IJB will be engaged like other applicants. They will work through a process to determine if their competencies are a fitting match for the position to which they are applying, and if the match would likely create a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship.

## Working in Manufacturing: A Lifelong Career

The perceptions that exist about what it is like to work in manufacturing are varied. One perception is that manufacturing jobs are not careers and that people who work in manufacturing are just there for a short time while they figure out another career. Many team members of ESI clients would say otherwise. We had a chance recently to catch up with two



individuals who had long and successful careers with different ESI clients and are now retired. We took the opportunity to ask them what it takes to find success and career growth in the manufacturing environment. We also spoke with a current employee who is close to retirement and added his input to the mix.

Craftsman Tim Smith (pictured above) started his manufacturing career as a welder at a business that was not an ESI client. When he came on board with ESI clients, he worked through various roles including sales and leadership positions.

Craftsman Virgil LaRoche started out in the shop of an ESI client, and over the course of 36 years working for ESI clients, he held a variety of positions including roles with leadership responsibilities.

Both men talked about the value of learning as much as you can and saying yes to, and seeking, opportunities to learn more. Tim shared, “Within the IFMC there were so many options available to me. Learn everything you can about different things.” While Virgil added, “Do the things no one else wants to do and always find something to do. Keep yourself busy.” Reflecting on their careers, they were both confident that their interest in continuously working and keeping busy was a factor in their success.

Virgil also talked about the importance of showing up ready to work every day and putting in extra effort, going over and above the minimum expectation. Tim agreed with that and also added, “Get along with people. And listen to them. Even if you don’t agree, listen to them. You might end up learning something from what they say.”

“Work toward your goals. With the way the businesses are growing, sooner or later something will come along that will bring you new opportunity,” is what Tim said about having persistence. And finding opportunity within the ESI client base is a wise decision because both men agree they are good companies to work for. “ESI clients have always been good to me. I’m still willing to help them out should they need anything,” was Virgil’s sentiment about what it is like to work for ESI clients. In fact, Virgil has been back to assist in various capacities, most recently for Reacher Mfg., Corp. on the forklift, loading and unloading trucks.

What you do with the opportunities is important as well. In a spotlight interview we did recently with long-time employee of various ESI clients, Craftsman Glen Momrik says he pairs smart personal financial management with the competitive wages he has been offered with ESI clients and has been able to live a comfortable, debt-free life.

The consistent messages from Tim and Virgil, and the similar sentiments from people like Glen, and others, is that making a career out of manufacturing is not only possible, but it is also fulfilling. It does take work, but for the person who has grit, a positive attitude, and an eagerness to learn, the rewards are great.

## The Competency Need is Great

35 ESI clients currently have more than 75 positions open in nine different cities and three states.

Your help is needed to fill the positions. Here is one way you can help:

Visit the ESI website:

[www.358-jobs.com](http://www.358-jobs.com).

Click the “opportunities”

tab. Copy the web address and paste it in a social media post.

Add content and post it.

Some ideas for content:

“My team is hiring!

Check out the opportunities.”

“Join me at a great place to work.”

“Where I work is growing and hiring. Check it out.”

“This company has been good to me. You can work here too.”

“So many job openings!”

Referrals are the best way for ESI to receive applicants. Your help is appreciated.



## Contact ESI

### ESI contacts

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Misc.

Opportunities / Competencies /

Career Questions

989.358.JOBS (5627)

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## Missed the Futures for Frontliners Deadline? Consider this.

### Looking at earning a college degree or certificate to help propel your career?

Futures for Frontliners is a program designed to help pay for tuition for workers who were considered essential during the initial COVID-19 shutdown (and some additional criteria). Many team members of ESI clients qualified and several applied. The deadline to apply for the funding was December 31, 2020.

If you missed the deadline, there is a new opportunity for those 25 and older (additional criteria must be met) to have education and training paid for. The program is called Michigan Reconnect. Learn more about it at [Michigan.gov/reconnect](https://Michigan.gov/reconnect).

Don't forget about the tuition reimbursement opportunity that many ESI clients offer their full-time team members as well. More information can be found by contacting ESI.

## Tips from ESI: Wear Your Safety Glasses

"Where are your safety glasses?"

You may have heard that a time or two when in the shop environment, and for good reason. Your eyes are valuable, and easily injured with the risk of injury increasing in certain environments. Manufacturing being one of them.

According to OSHA (MIOSHA and Federal OSHA), safety glasses are to be worn in all manufacturing spaces, without exception. In a building that has manufacturing in a portion of it, but not all of it, safety glasses can be removed only when in the office, lunch/break rooms, the restrooms, and other similar areas where manufacturing activity does not take place. Safety glasses should be worn in manufacturing areas even when there is no active manufacturing taking place at that moment. For people who wear prescription glasses, they are required to have side shields on their glasses when they are in areas considered to have, "high flying hazards." This includes areas where there is welding, grinding, deburring, and other similar work.

You can help maintain a safe environment by setting the example for others by wearing your safety glasses. You can also remind others to wear theirs. It isn't just in the shop that protection of your eyes matters. Safety glasses should also be worn at home while working on projects that are high risk. Mowing, tree-trimming, carpentry work, and other similar activities.

Safety glasses are not designed to protect the top of your head, your pocket, or a compartment inside of your vehicle. They are meant to protect your eyes and that only works if you're wearing them.

