



## **Preparing for the Tooling Challenges of Tomorrow**

### ***Dixien, OEM Parts Manufacturer, Gears Up for Tooling Shortage***

While new car sales continue to climb, automotive manufacturers scramble to meet tooling demand. According to research published in the Harbour Results Inc., the automotive sector will require \$15.2 billion worth of tooling to meet production demand by 2018. Currently, the US auto industry has approximately \$11.25 billion for tooling capacity. In order to achieve this, the current capacity must grow at least 35 percent.

#### ***What are the implications?***

The Congressional Research Service reports that 36 percent of tool and die firms closed their doors between 1998 and 2010. The automotive industry has had to contend with increased shipping costs in relying on China for tooling resources to meet production capacity needs. The supply chain disruptions from potential shipping delays cost automotive companies in multiple areas. A tooling shortage results in higher costs and increased risks of supply chain disruptions for the automotive industry.

#### ***How automotive tooling companies are preparing***

Diminished tooling capacity is very much on the radar of tooling shops. Automotive parts suppliers in the US are tackling the challenge in a number of ways. Some tooling companies are partnering with local institutions and government entities to address this challenge. Other local firms are focusing on developing talent internally to meet the need for skilled tooling professionals. Companies like Dixien, LLC are focused on developing the next generation of tooling professionals. "We are prepared to answer the growing need for highly-skilled tooling professionals in the automotive industry."

#### ***Veteran toolmaker discusses how shop training shaped his career***

Former Dixien apprentice recounts the details of his experience at Dixien. Joe Hutson, 44, a toolmaker discusses his apprenticeship. "My apprenticeship at Dixie helped form my ideas about machining that trade school couldn't teach. Working with different die makers helped me find out who I was going to be in the field." When asked if specializing in an area of study was sufficient in terms of preparing him for the workforce, he stated, "It's good to have shop experience to go with your shop theory."

Tooling demand will continue to grow as auto sales increase. Automotive suppliers will have to meet the tooling needs of the customer base in multiple ways, relying on strategic public-private partnerships, outsourcing, and internal training and development initiatives. Dixien is well-prepared for future challenges like the impending skills gap in tooling production for the automotive manufacturing industry. Dixien manages the skills gap by nurturing talent internally through extensive training for its tooling professionals. This is a win-win for customers as this guarantees the highest level of quality for its customer base.

#### ***About Dixien LLC***

Dixien, LLC was founded in 1970 and is a privately held, full-service manufacturer of metal stampings, welded assemblies, plastic components and fabricated metal components. The

company's goal is to deliver quality parts, assemblies and sub-assemblies to automotive, aerospace, commercial, and industrial customers.

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parts manufacturer, OEM parts supplier, auto industry, ISO, global supplier of parts and components