



# MARITIME TRADES

## Advanced skills training investment strengthens Alameda's blue economy

**A**merica's largest generation—the millennials—doesn't want to work in manufacturing. They're not interested in becoming craftsmen or machinists or painters. At least, that's the narrative you'll find in the opinion pages.

But for Thomas Edgerton, training manager at Bay Ship & Yacht, Alameda's highly regarded maritime construction and repair business, that story doesn't match his experience. "Young people are interested in these high-skill, well-paying, rewarding jobs," he says. "A lot of them just don't have the training."

That's why Bay Ship puts so much effort into training its employees, he says. "By investing in employee development we're offering them upward mobility through the company while also furnishing them with skills that make them competitive in today's economy." That upward trajectory, in turn, also allows new employees to learn the trade from master craftsmen.

Bay Ship follows a job skills development approach called "training within the industry," or "TWI" for short. Originally developed during the WWII era, TWI has employees at every level learn from those more experienced, ultimately resulting in a culture of "continuous improvement."

Bay Ship first instituted TWI in its paint department. The program's success led to a quick expansion, and today more than one third of the company's nearly 300 craftsmen participate in the company's TWI program. Bay Ship expects to extend the program to the rest of its workers by the end of the year.

As a result of the program, Bay Ship, which is already known as one of the country's premiere maritime repair and manufacturing facilities, is able to maintain and grow its workforce.

Renee Pierce, an economic development analyst for

the California Employment Training Panel, says that's to be expected with this kind of program. "When companies like Bay Ship & Yacht design and execute these training programs, the benefits for employees and business alike far exceed the original investment."

The ETP recently provided \$94,000 in funding to Bay Ship & Yacht to grow its TWI program. But that amount could grow to nearly \$250,000 annually, provided Bay Ship & Yacht reaches its targets.

The deal is part of the ETP's mission to help grow talent bases in industries important to the future of the California economy, such as manufacturing, agriculture and biosciences, Pierce says. Businesses come up with the proposal and do the training, while the ETP tracks metrics to ensure that companies are fulfilling their commitment to workforce training.

"At the end, if they've hit their targets, they get a reimbursement for the costs," Pierce says. "It's pay-for-performance."

The benefit for California is a healthy, globally-competitive economy, Pierce notes. "California is the sixth-largest economy in the world, and one of the biggest draws for businesses is our talent. ETP funding contracts help keep California on top."

If Bay Ship & Yacht is any indication, the investment in talent development is a winning strategy. The company serviced more than 200 vessels last year, and the quality of its work has led to Bay Ship being chosen for innovative and experimental projects, such as a hydrogen fuel cell ferry proof-of-concept.

"Ask any business leader in the Bay Area what their biggest concern is and nine out of ten times they'll tell you it's finding the right talent," Edgerton says. "We're lucky to have a great talent base from which we can continue to grow, especially with the help of organizations like the California ETP."

"Young people are interested in these high-skill, well-paying, rewarding jobs."

**Thomas Edgerton,**  
Training manager,  
Bay Ship & Yacht

### BAY SHIP & YACHT

[bay-ship.com](http://bay-ship.com)

**YEARS IN ALAMEDA:**  
41 years

**INNOVATION:** Shipyard is breeding ground for new and experimental ships

**TRAINING MANAGER:**  
Thomas Edgerton

**ALAMEDA FAVORITE:**  
My daughter's place on the beach, the local vibe, the international mix of people, water fun and the fact that everyone drives 25 mph.

### CALIFORNIA EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PANEL

[etp.ca.gov](http://etp.ca.gov)

**MISSION:** Supporting job creation and retention through training

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANALYST:**  
Renee Pierce

**ALAMEDA FAVORITE:**  
Interesting shops and restaurants in a walkable downtown area, full of friendly people.