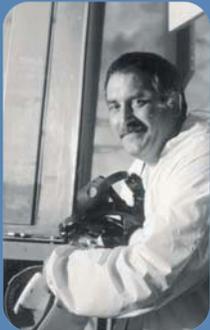


Untold Stories About Real Lives UNICOR





## Mission Statement

It is the mission of Federal Prison Industries, Inc. (FPI) to employ and provide job skills training to the greatest practicable number of inmates confined within the Federal Bureau of Prisons; contribute to the safety and security of our Nation's Federal correctional facilities by keeping inmates constructively occupied; produce market-priced quality goods for sale to the Federal Government; operate in a self-sustaining manner; and minimize FPI's impact on private business and labor.



# Introduction



A common thread binds the lives of the computer specialist, sheet metal technician, recycling specialist and product development manager you are about to meet. All are either currently in federal custody, or were recently released, having completed their sentences. They and their families have been personally touched by Federal Prison Industries (FPI); the Federal Bureau of Prisons' inmate employment program, more commonly known by its trade name, UNICOR.

UNICOR offers those who have taken wrong turns in life a "second chance." The stories you will read are real and representative of thousands of federal inmates who have opted to build more promising futures.

A strong work ethic is ingrained in our culture. It enables us to serve and live within our communities, promoting a safe environment in which to raise families. This very cornerstone of our existence, however, is often absent or limited for those entering the prison system, but UNICOR serves as a catalyst, providing technical training and meaningful work experience. It teaches the value of earning a paycheck, instills a solid work ethic, fosters a sense of self-worth, and promotes mutual respect among inmate workers and FPI supervisors – traits

which prospective employers seek outside prison walls.

The prospect of searching for meaningful work upon release from prison after years of incarceration can be overwhelming, but since 1934, UNICOR has bridged the gap and continues to facilitate the offender's transition from federal inmate to law-abiding citizen.

Who knows – the skilled furniture craftsman who restored your treasured family heirloom, may have been trained in Coleman, Florida; the automotive technician who discovered your broken wheel axle, might have acquired his skills in Beaumont, Texas; the local tailor who masterfully let out those seams in the suit you'll wear this weekend to your sister's wedding, may have gained his sewing expertise in Miami, Florida; the next door neighbor who provided tutoring assistance which helped the kids earn passing grades in computer applications, may have been employed at Fort Dix, New Jersey – all, of course, being federal institutions.

UNICOR is truly an example of the good that government can do. What better way to put federal procurement dollars to work!

# Employment as a Human Right

Contemplating work as a human right certainly lends a different perspective to the continuing debate about prison industries.

We must remember that individuals are sent to prison AS punishment and not FOR punishment. Punishment in the form of a prison term includes the elements of deterrence, retribution, incapacitation, and rehabilitation. Forcing prisoners to perform harsh, strenuous, and meaningless labor does not meet the goals of a modern correctional system. A civilized society sees prison work for its rehabilitative potential and its importance in a broader correctional management program that includes education, vocational training, and substance abuse treatment.

Nowhere in Federal statute is it written that offenders should be restricted from meaningful, productive work opportunities as part of their sentence. In fact, our Federal statute specifically requires all able-bodied inmates to work in some capacity.

When inmates perform productive work, they acquire marketable skills, ranging from a basic work ethic to trade-specific expertise. These skills improve self-esteem and enhance the

prospect for post-release success. Further, prison idleness and the inherent safety and security risks it breeds are reduced when inmates are constructively occupied.

Next year alone, 600,000 inmates (about 1,600 daily) will be released from State and Federal prisons and return to their, primarily, inner-city communities. If they are overwhelmed with uphill challenges to re-integrate without sufficient preparation and marketable job skills, the likelihood that these individuals will violate their conditions of release and commit new crimes is very real.

Sadly, there are factions in our society which continue to resist the idea of providing inmates the ability to perform meaningful work while incarcerated. Some view “work” as part of the punishment and thus believe it should be menial, demoralizing, and perhaps even debilitating.

On a more encouraging note, rigorous professional research has validated that inmates who participate in vocational training and prison industries work programs while incarcerated are 24 percent less likely to return to criminal behavior and 14 percent more likely to be employed.

The data also revealed that minorities, who are at greatest risk for recidivism, benefitted more from programs such as UNICOR.

Productive inmate work also contributes to the U.S. economy by generating private sector demand. Of the sales revenue generated by FPI, every cent goes into the economy. Seventy-three cents on the dollar is spent buying raw materials, supplies, services, and equipment from commercial companies, thereby creating private sector jobs. Twenty cents is spent on salaries and benefits of the civil service staff who train and supervise inmate workers. Seven cents is paid to inmates, and those working for FPI are required to pay at least 50 percent of their earnings toward satisfying their financial obligations, including fines, family support, and

victim restitution. The balance of their pay may be spent in prison commissaries, which sell items supplied exclusively by private sector vendors within the local communities.

To truly achieve the full potential of FPI's work skills development program, our way of thinking must be changed. Under the appropriate terms and conditions, providing as many inmates as possible the chance to engage in productive, meaningful work is sound public policy. It is a responsible course of action which will achieve benefits for inmates and their families, the taxpaying public, businesses of all types and sizes, labor organizations, and the criminal justice system.

"I learned that it takes hard work to survive on the outside. Easy money is good, but earned money makes you appreciate what you have achieved. UNICOR makes my time here a little less stressful, and a lot more dedicated to want to be someone important when I get out. So if you have a chance to work for UNICOR, check it out, it may change your life forever."

*Male Inmate, UNICOR Business Office, USP Leavenworth, Kansas*



# Positive Outlook

## PROFILE

Forty-three months ago I was sentenced to Federal prison. Only the worst of thoughts ran through my mind. At the time I did not know how anyone could survive being incarcerated. I thought "God, if I ever really survive prison, how will I support my two young children as a single mother without the ability to practice nursing again?"

In 1998, I started working for the UNICOR in Coleman, Florida. The money I made working in the UNICOR Warehouse greatly helped me earn my financial independence while being incarcerated. But I knew at this time I had not learned any new skills to help with "life after prison." In 1999, I transferred to the prison camp in Marianna, Florida.

This transfer has truly changed how I look at the future. I no longer fear being released with no career opportunities, thanks to UNICOR Recycle and the Education Department at FPC Marianna.

Over the last twenty-one months, I have been fortunate to work in the laptop department at UNICOR Recycle. My future career was developed by working with professional officers who are highly skilled in many areas of the

computer industry. Some of my daily duties involve salvaging parts from damaged laptops, to refurbishing complete computer systems to perfect performance. The position I hold at UNICOR had given me a newfound self-confidence, but I was still unsure if I could build a career in the computer field with my experience alone.

I am no longer concerned with that thought. As I understand it, the Education Department, in a joint effort with UNICOR, at the A+ Certification program available to FPC Marianna. I am proud to say I completed the course and I now hold the A+ Certification. My release date is five weeks away, and I have already received many job offers in the computer field. Therefore, when I leave FPC Marianna on November 7, 2001, I will not be troubled over not having a career. I will contemplate which potential employer will best suit my needs. Or perhaps I will even consider the possibilities of becoming self-employed.

PROFILE

My many thanks will forever be extended to the Education Department and UNICOR at FPC Marianna for providing such professional courses as the A+ Certification program to inmates. The course was a strenuous twelve weeks. If I had not been privileged enough to receive this additional training, I would have never taken the time to learn so many important aspects and details about computers. If given the chance, I would highly recommend the A+ Certification to anyone with the desire of starting a new career.



*Female Inmate, Cut & Sew Factory,  
FCI Dublin, California*

*Female Inmate, Computer Recycling Factory,  
FCI Marianna, Florida*



**"My future career was developed by working with professional officers who are highly skilled in many areas..."**



# Program Benefits

>> **to society**—Rigorous research demonstrates that participation in prison industries/vocational training programs has a positive effect on post-release employment and recidivism for up to 12 years following release. Inmates who worked in prison industries or completed vocational and apprenticeship programs were 24 percent less likely to recidivate than non-program participants and 14 percent more likely to be gainfully employed. These programs had an even greater positive impact on minority offenders, who are at the greatest risk of recidivism. FPI is entirely self-sustaining and operates at no cost to the taxpayer.

>> **to the courts, crime victims, and inmate families**—In FY 2003, inmates who worked in FPI factories contributed approximately \$2.8 million of their earnings toward meeting their financial obligations, e.g., court-ordered fines, child support, and/or restitution. Many inmates also contributed to the support and welfare of their families by sending home a portion of their earnings.

>> **to thousands of incarcerated men and women in Federal prisons**—For many inmates, working in Federal Prison Industries

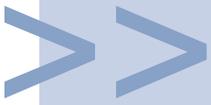
represents an opportunity to learn a marketable skill and gain valuable work experience that will substantially enhance their ability to successfully reintegrate into society following release from prison. The program teaches inmates pro-social values including the value of work, responsibility, and the need to respect and work with others. Many inmates gain a sense of dignity and self-worth that they had lost or never before experienced.

>> **to private sector businesses**—During FY 2003, FPI purchased approximately \$497 million of raw materials, supplies, equipment, and services from private sector businesses. Over 53 percent of FPI's purchases were from small businesses, including businesses owned by women, minorities, and those who are disadvantaged.

>> **to the Bureau of Prisons**—FPI contributes significantly to the safety and security of Federal correctional facilities by keeping inmates constructively occupied. Inmates who participate in work programs and vocational training are less likely to engage in institutional misconduct, thereby enhancing the safety of staff and other inmates.

# Making a Difference

PROFILE



**“UNICOR has become the best medicine for me. I pray that others can receive the same prescription”**



Opportunities sometimes arise in surprising places. When confronted with a prison term in excess of 10 years, I knew that my life was going to change dramatically. Ironically, change has been in the form of increased employability, better communication skills, and a confidence that even I can make a meaningful, productive contribution to the world—a totally new concept for me!

The thought of wasting an entire decade can erode the soul and transform the will to survive into a secret negativity, which if left unchecked can destroy. UNICOR provided not only the opportunity to learn many things, but a chance for me to beat the oppressiveness of isolation from a world which threatened to pass me by. I got the chance to develop a professional knowledge of Sheet Metal Product manufacturing and knowledge of various clerical and managerial functions. Typing, organizational skills, computer skills, and Spanish learned through hands-on training have combined with formal business courses to transform me into a working professional. Through my employment at UNICOR, productivity has become reality, not fantasy. Skills perfected here

are a metamorphosis to a better, meaningful and productive “free-life”; something I never thought possible. “Success” is now a word I ponder subjectively; not objectively. My fears of becoming just an animal trying to survive, have been gradually replaced by confidence.

Staff here have provided encouragement, showing patience and understanding, making this factory an escape from everyday yard pressures and protocols. Anybody wishing to, can excel and learn virtually every aspect of sheet metal product manufacturing; provided of course that they are willing to work. I have seen many inmates start with menial jobs and become skilled tradesmen through experience—there is still hope. Many who are released seek employment in areas learned here. There is no ceiling at Terminal Island UNICOR; through apprenticeships and continuing education, people who used to be burdens on society have become productive and useful. I, myself will be one of the first Powder Coating Journeymen in the United States, because of opportunities here in UNICOR. Not only did I complete this

apprenticeship program, but I mastered it. A monumental accomplishment in a life having none.

My independence has unburdened my family and friends. Where they were once embarrassed by my incarceration, they are now proud of my accomplishments, and are happy—rather than reluctant—to discuss them with myself and others. Not a single conversation between us passes without confirmation of this. I no longer call home for assistance. And, pre-paid calls are gladly accepted.

My fear of confinement and rejection from society has gradually been replaced by an eagerness for the chance to begin life anew; a chance that few normal people ever get. UNICOR has become the best medicine for me. I pray that others can receive the same prescription. In a system that has been scaling back on luxuries and programs, UNICOR is the best thing we have going for rehabilitation. For those who want change, it is still available, although it takes work—UNICOR. UNICOR is making the difference for me!

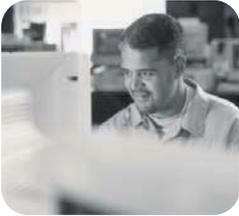
# FPI & Small Business



Federal Prison Industries (FPI) believes that growing small business opportunities and returning inmates to society with job skills can and should be complementary, not mutually exclusive objectives. To this end, we have established a website that will provide those interested in partnering with FPI information about:



- >FPI's Business Development Program
- >How the acquisition process works
- >How to contact contracting personnel within each business group
- >Upcoming and current solicitations/business opportunities
- >Sample joint venture agreements
- >Quarterly updates of total procurement dollars awarded to small businesses



In addition, to help small businesses better understand FPI's manufacturing and service capabilities, we plan on developing a "capability statement." FPI staff are also willing to offer consultation to small businesses to critique, assess, and recommend best approaches for facilitating teaming arrangements and partnerships with FPI.

FPI's leadership, procurement, and product managers are strongly committed to expanding its outreach to small businesses as either direct vendors, subcontractors to FPI vendors, or prime vendors with FPI fulfilling a subcontracting role.

**DID YOU KNOW...** that in FY 2003, FPI awarded 53 percent of its contracts to small businesses. This is in addition to credit card purchases, which generate significant sales for small businesses as well.

**DID YOU KNOW...** that each year procurement preference agency goals are established by the Small Business Administration and FPI's aim is to not only meet the statutory requirements, but to exceed them? We are proud of the fact that for the past 5 years, FPI has been recognized by the Department of Justice for its support of small businesses.

**DID YOU KNOW...** that all new product proposals or significant expansion recommendations are reviewed by FPI's Board of Directors? The Board welcomes and takes into consideration comments from private industry, to include small businesses and the SBA, and has on several occasions denied or limited production

## FPI HAS A STRONG RECORD OF COMMITMENT TO SMALL BUSINESS

Federal Prison Industries (FPI) has met or exceeded its goals in both prime contracts and subcontracts over the last five years. FPI has received numerous awards from the Department of Justice, Office of Small Business Disadvantaged Utilization.

>> Awards for the highest total procurement dollars to small businesses in four of the last five years

>> Total procurement dollars for FY 2003 was \$497

million, and awards to small businesses were more than 53% of that total.

>> Consistently exceeds Department of Justice small business goals.

>> Consistently exceeds Small Business Administration goals.

Visit us at [www.unicor.gov](http://www.unicor.gov) to review our small business accomplishments (updated quarterly).

of products that could have had an adverse impact on the small business community (e.g., electric portable/hand lighting equipment; aluminum and steel shipping/storage containers; and gloves).

**DID YOU KNOW...** that FPI is willing to consider waiving its mandatory source preference when Federal customers want to contract directly with a specific small business?

**DID YOU KNOW...** that FPI has an active Business Development Program that has produced numerous teaming agreements and partnerships with small businesses? Examples include partnerships for interior/exterior signs, dorm and quarters furniture, print services, cut fabric, customer services and sales support for promotional items, industrial filters, glass recycling, and task lights.

In one of the most recent examples, FPI entered into a partnership to produce perimeter security systems with a network of small businesses. To maintain maximum customer discretion and minimize impact on other private sector providers, this product was added without making it a mandatory source item. Design, testing, installation, and customer services will be provided by small businesses and FPI will manufacture the systems. Together, the partnership will provide turnkey solutions to meet the Federal Government's needs.

To learn more about FPI procurement and growing jobs to support both the small business community and FPI's mission, log onto [www.unicor.gov/procurement](http://www.unicor.gov/procurement).



# A Fresh Start

## PROFILE

Demetrio “Dino” Ricciardone was a typical youth until he reached the age of 18. Then his world collapsed when he was arrested for assault and battery and attempting to murder his father. Why? “I was defending my mother from a severe beating by my father,” he says.

Ricciardone was convicted and served nearly 2 years in the state penal system. Yet, his time in prison only hardened him and left him bitter. As a young inmate, he was often forced to defend himself against sexual “predators.” This fact, along with a chip on his shoulder that “clouded my judgment and gave me delusions of invincibility,” led to more trouble. He was later convicted of two Federal crimes that sent him into the Federal prison system for 17 years.

In 1995, while drawn to the prison chapel at the Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) in Fairton, New Jersey, to pray for his ill sister, Ricciardone had a spiritual conversion that “changed his life completely.”

During his incarceration, Ricciardone spent time at the following Federal institutions, each of which had UNICOR cable factory operations: FCI Memphis, Tennessee; FCI Oxford, Wisconsin; and FCI Fairton, New Jersey. Ricciardone credits staff in each of the UNICOR factories, especially Fairton, for teaching him meaningful skills in the cable manufacturing process, enabling him to take a project from the drawing board to the customer. “I found that I had a knack for reading and understanding

blueprints and military specifications, and I enjoyed troubleshooting.”

While working at FCI Fairton, Ricciardone was interviewed for a job by the owner of a cable manufacturing company called Power Connector, Inc., in Bohemia, New York. Up until this point, “I did not think a private employer in the cable assembly field would hire an ex-convict.” The employer, however, had no such concerns. Within a week of release from prison, Ricciardone was hired as a Product Development Manager. Today Ricciardone is responsible for analyzing, costing and defining the bill of materials for cable and box assemblies and other company products. He is also directly involved in material procurement and quality assurance for the company.

“It is clear to us,” says the company owner, “that the skills and methods Mr. Ricciardone is utilizing on the job were developed and acquired while he was working for UNICOR. It is a distinct advantage that Mr. Ricciardone brought these skills with him to the job rather than first having to acquire them upon his arrival. The range of skills he possessed, and their appropriateness, made ‘Dino’ a desirable candidate for our firm.”

Ricciardone agrees. “UNICOR was able to teach me training skills in order to think outside the box, plan a career, and thereby open up a niche for me. I knew I could hold my own and not embarrass myself.”

# The Road to Success

## PROFILE

In 1988 Atlas Phillips was dealing drugs in Beaumont, Texas. “The money was easy and it was easier than working,” says Phillips. But it ended when he was convicted of drug trafficking and sentenced to nearly 13 years in the Federal prison system.

Today, newly released from prison and back in the community, Phillips is a changed man. He recently formed his own company, AP Computers, in Cleveland, Ohio. The company sells computers and provides system upgrades, repairs, and training to local schools, churches, and area residents.

Deciding to start a business was a major adjustment for Phillips, especially after spending years in an isolated environment where most of his decisions were made for him. He was also afraid—especially of the rejection that typically awaits many ex-offenders from society, friends, and even family.

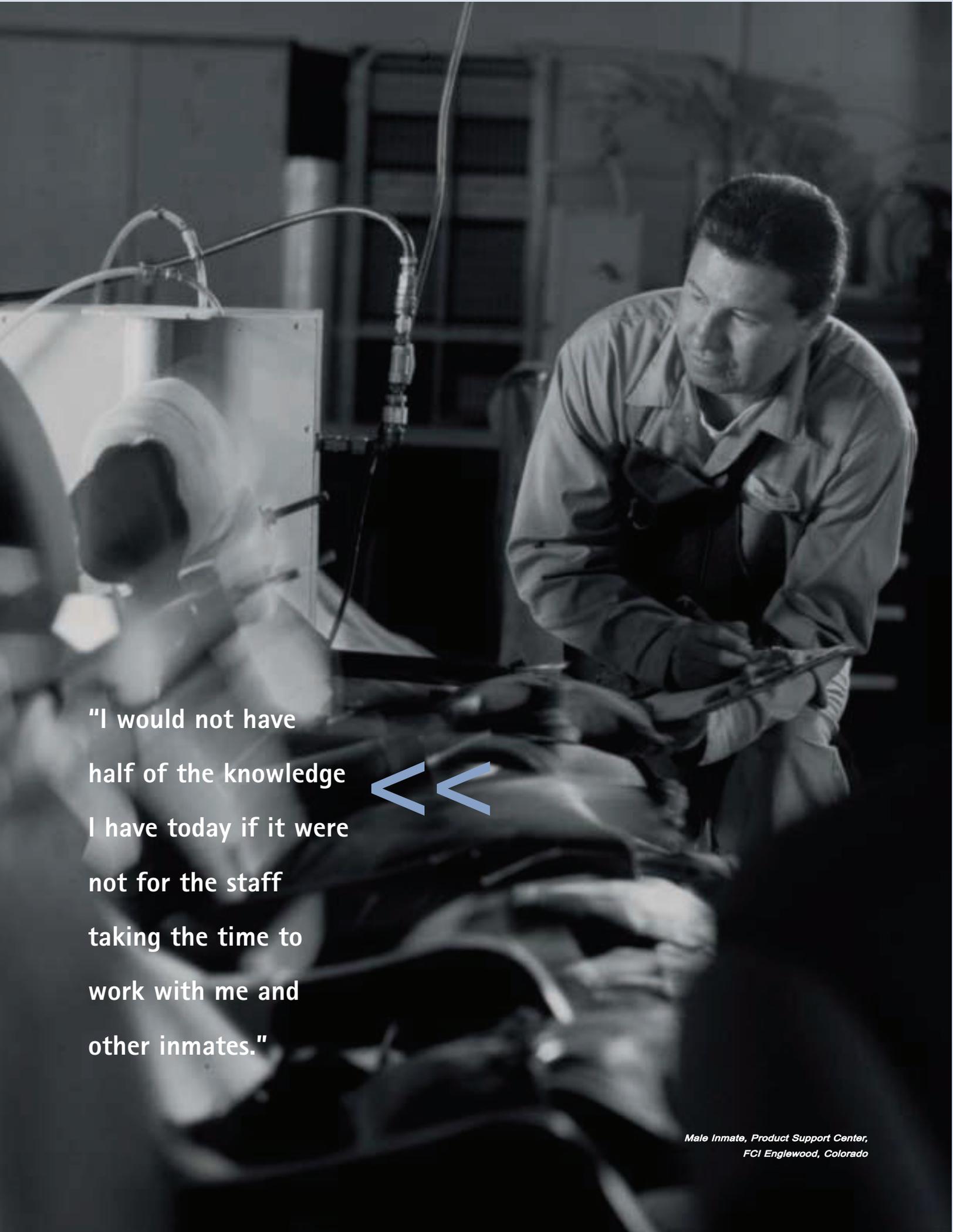
Phillips has been lucky. “My family has been different. Besides never giving up on me, they encouraged me while I was away, which helped me to stay focused on preparing to come home.” He credits his sisters, his brother, and his “significant other” as those who have truly supported him over the years.

Phillips’ interest in computers began while in prison. He wanted to go home

after release, to start his own business. He attributes his success to positive feedback given him by the Assistant Factory Manager at the Federal Correctional Institution (FCI), Elkton, Ohio. “He was very inspirational in giving me the opportunity to learn how to troubleshoot and repair computers,” says Phillips. “He was impressed by my desire to learn and my persistence. I would not have half of the knowledge that I have today if it wasn’t for the time UNICOR staff took to work with me.” The positive influence they have had on a number of inmates who have come through the recycling factory at Elkton has been significant.

It has not been easy, but Phillips remains optimistic about his new life. “I still have a long way to go in building my business,” he says, “because I don’t have the capital I need to get some of the equipment and merchandise to take AP Computers to the next level for myself and the community.”

Phillips is determined, however, to rebuild his life, and “with God’s blessing and the support of my family and friends,” he has laid the foundation for a new beginning for himself, for his business, and for the community he serves.



"I would not have  
half of the knowledge  
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FPI-PET

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