

6-Month Self-Reflection

Thomas Schmidt

January 27th, 2026

I appreciate the opportunity to reflect on my first six months working on the Solder Mask and DES line. From the beginning, I noticed and valued the strong focus on quality, safety, and continuous improvement. My trainers and peers emphasized the importance of understanding each stage of the DES process and how it directly affects final PCB quality. With their guidance, I set a personal goal to become a dependable operator who consistently supports high-quality output and stable production. I believe I have met this goal.

My primary focus throughout these six months has been producing quality work. Early in training, I learned how critical chemical balance, machine cleanliness, and proper line settings are to preventing defects. This mindset motivated me to take ownership of my responsibilities and develop a deeper understanding of the develop–etch–strip process. I wanted to ensure that every panel leaving the line reflected the standards expected by our customers and our company.

I began my time in the solder mask area, where I learned the fundamentals of 5S, SEL values, and proper panel handling. During this period, I became comfortable calibrating printers, troubleshooting equipment, and performing the full range of duties required of a solder mask operator. This experience helped me build a strong foundation in process control, equipment operation, and quality-focused work habits.

My goals as a new DES operator were to learn how to run the line effectively, perform job changeovers effectively, and understand how adjustments impact the overall process. I experienced steady growth as I progressed from basic line operation to handling more complex situations such as MES issues, chemical imbalance, and line width adjustments. I became more confident in communicating with Process Engineers and Equipment Maintenance.

I am excited to continue growing in my role. Setting new goals and achieving them has motivated me to keep developing my technical knowledge. My growth moving forward will be supported by the experienced operators and technicians who have been willing to share their knowledge with me. I also showed interest in pursuing additional training opportunities to better understand the chemical and mechanical systems behind DES operations.

I am grateful for the opportunities I have been given and for the support of my team. I am proud to say that I believe I have met my initial goals of becoming a contributing member of the DES team, and I look forward to continuing to build my skills, improve efficiency, and uphold the quality standards expected in our PCB manufacturing process.