



Manufacturing Has Changed – So Should Your Hiring.

Attracting and keeping skilled talent in manufacturing is a daunting challenge. The sector suffers from a “skills gap:” mature workers are retiring and the number of younger workers necessary to fill the empty positions have not kept up.

The good news is that many manufacturers have made strides – technologically – to an exciting new level. Today’s advanced facilities are nothing like the dark and dirty factory floors of yesteryear. Excitingly, the more forward-thinking facilities are bright, clean and streamlined, with cutting-edge processes and techniques: 3-D printing, robotics, mobile internet, cloud computing and more – key things they count on to gain an edge in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

How can today’s most forward-thinking, well-equipped manufacturers get the word out to potential employees about manufacturing as an attractive option, and recruit the appropriately-skilled workers to fill the gap? Here are a few things to consider:

Right messaging, right time.

In the recent past, parents and secondary school officials have emphasized four-year higher education as the preferred path, de-emphasizing vocational education as an option. This, combined with the still-held perception of factory work as manually-intensive dirty work, has created a unique challenge. In order to turn the tables on this inaccurate outlook, manufacturers would be wise to communicate the advantages of their modern workplaces starting early at the secondary school level.

How? Work with local schools and communities to change those attitudes. Participate in “Industry Week” facility open houses. Be visible at local school “Career Week” activities, and develop relationships with school guidance counselors to encourage them to spread the word – early and often – about the bright opportunities that exist in manufacturing.

All about the benefits.

Next, young candidates need to be shown what modern manufacturing is like and the advantages it offers. Bring photos and videos to show the environment is clean, climate-controlled, streamlined and automated front-to-back. Help them envision working in a position in which they’ll use today’s technology at a high-end level.

Point out the advantages of not just the job, but also the wider benefits. Make sure they know that the compensation, healthcare and retirement benefits rival those of many entry-level white collar jobs. Point out that manufacturing work today is quite stable, with regular daily/weekly scheduling that makes for good work/life balance.

Emphasis on training.

With the right individuals recruited and secured, wise manufacturers will turn to retention of skilled employees through robust training programs. Initial and ongoing training tells an employee that the company values them and is willing to invest in their future – that’s of high importance to today’s young people.

The manufacturing skills gap can be closed by today’s employers. With a few key ideas in mind, the right candidates can be secured, trained and retained, helping the company – and the employee – stay cutting edge of today’s manufacturing renaissance.

"4.6 million manufacturing jobs will need to be filled within the next decade, with a shortage of at least 2.4 million skilled workers."

- Deloitte Skills Gap In Manufacturing Study