



## Takeaways from the Manufacturing Roundtable Meeting on 11/31/16

How to Read: underlined are the Different Sections, red text are the **Gaps / Needs Improvements**, the green text are the **Possible Solutions / Recommendations**. Black text are the general comments that apply to the section.

### 1. What do you feel is missing from current applicants?

- A general lack of work ethic.
  - Applicants/new workers lack strong work ethic
  - No loyalty to the company
  - Lack of professionalism
  - Lack of commitment
  - Not being punctual.
    - Work ethic cannot be trained at work. They come with it or they will not have it.
    - Veterans have a lot of skills and characteristics that you're talking about.
      - Most employers don't know how to tap into Veteran hiring pools.
      - Some employers had experience with hiring veterans and would probably do it again
- Employees no-show,
  - The employee doesn't get prior approval for missing a day off
  - Simply doesn't show up and doesn't call in.
- Lack of interview skills.
  - Applicants have not done research on the company
    - They don't know anything about the company they are interviewing with
  - They do not know what questions to ask during the interview,
    - Such as starting with "how many holidays do I get?"
- Entitlement attitude
  - They want to set their own roles
  - They do not know their worth and grossly over estimate their importance
- Not having confidence in themselves
  - Bring parents or wife to interview
    - Have wife call to set up interviews



- Experience in the industry (especially in the specific part of manufacturing)
  - Lack of experience with a particular piece of equipment.
- Many applicants don't have necessary skills to do the work even after they finish a two-year training program (welder and painter).
  - Many job seekers have been trained within local training programs and "think" they have experience, but the employer sees that as education and not experience in a real-world setting.
  - Employer feel instructors only teach students to pass a test, not to be employed.
- Most schools don't have specific training programs (not just a single class, a more broad program)
  - Painters
  - General manufacturing mechanics
  - Non-aerospace CnC (Computer Numeric Control)
  - Manual manufacturing skills
- Lack of skills:
  - Interpersonal relationships,
  - Personal interaction,
  - Communication skills.
  - Being comfortable with difficult conversations.
- Multiple generations in the workforce.
  - The old-timers don't always "buy-in" to changes.
  - Trying to implement social activities (i.e. chili cook-offs) to build relationships, establish company loyalty, etc.
- Lack of technical skills
- Lack of repair skills
- Younger Generation / Millennials
  - The younger generation doesn't have the skills needed for manufacturing.
  - Their expectations are too high.
    - We within the system need to calibrate expectations related to wage potential
      - During training not always mention the average wage or normal career wage
      - Spend time explaining career growth
        - Entry level is a necessary step
        - Students will not start at average salary with no experience outside of school or certificate program



- There's a need to build appropriate expectations for starting pay.
  - Experience in the company and skills learned still determine pay
- Entry level applicants do not want to start as a machine operator,
  - They wish to go straight to programming machines.
    - The criticism is that if someone doesn't know how the machine operates, or how it is used within the shop, they will not be a good programmer regardless of their education or training.
    - The best programmers start as machine operators and are then trained as programmers.
- Millennials don't have the opportunity to work on cars, learn shop skills from their dads/uncles anymore so they don't have the innate experience that previous generations have had.
- Millennials see the world differently than others.
  - They don't have loyalty to a company.
  - They are seeing a model in the IT world, where it's expected to move around a lot and that's not the culture in manufacturing.
- Maybe we (businesses) can't expect the young to adapt to our world, we may need to make changes to adapt to their world.
  - In recruitment, benefits, company culture, and events
    - Possibly hiring managers could use training on how to recruit and retain millennials
    - Millennials are interviewing you.
  - But businesses need work ethic from the employees
- Entry level workers need to get over their "entitlement."
  - Businesses do not owe wages or even a position purely because a person is alive, they owe to those that show and produce value.
- There are many challenges when trying to hire millennials.
  - This is a generation growing up with a lack of vocational hobbies and skills. (lack of High School shop classes)
- Millennials aren't comfortable with face-to-face communication.
  - They are more likely to text or email.
  - They need to learn how to interact with colleagues.
    - There is often a communication gap.
- One employer gave a tour to local college students



- One kid acted as if he knew more than the employer did.
  - Arrogance is annoying and not desired.
- “They think they know everything.”
- What resources are available for companies to understand youth?

## 2. What are the issues with Manufacturing Retentions?

- Positions within shipping and warehouse
  - Very high turnover rate.
- All entry level positions are short people in their pipelines
- Welders and painters are in great demand.
- Job hopping is a serious issue.
  - Many employees jump from job to job for small amount of extra money.
  - Some will stay long enough to reset unemployment
- Employee turnover can be costly.
- Some companies state that there are less issues around retention, compare to recruitment which is a much larger issue.
- The “gray wave” (retirement age) has hit the local employers with massive retirements.
  - There are always open Engineering positions
    - With experience, some jobs pay over \$100,000 still cannot fill.
- Some companies are trying to focus on building a culture where people want to work there, and will stay with the company.
  - May not pay as much as the larger companies, but have better benefits, or vice-versa.
  - Providing an environment where people want to work
    - allowing for flex schedules (4x10s),
    - telecommute
      - Manufacturing shops still have to maintain shifts –
        - Flexible schedules don’t work in that environment.
- Employers provide employee the opportunity to move up to management, but many of employees aren’t interested.
  - They don’t want to take greater responsibility.
  - Employers identify workers to invest in through:
    - Their work quality
    - Their willingness to work
    - Their mechanic inclination
    - Their understanding of the work environment



- Their motivation and drive
    - Especially when given the opportunity
  - Their stated interest in progression
    - Be willing to ask management that they want to advance in the career
      - Not just pay:
      - With leadership, skill development
    - Matched with proving themselves
    - Managers engage them to ask about career plan
  - Some want to move quickly, and ask for a raise within 90 days.
    - Must have shown a spark and work ethic that most applicants lack
  - Without honest, well-designed reviews and constructive discussion, it is challenging, perhaps not even possible, to build a truly successful company for the long term.
    - This is limited because many cannot take or wish to listen to anything other than positive comments
    - We're willing to invest in the person if they're willing to work hard.
  - Lacking skill set: customer service
    - Everyone in the company has either internal or external customers
      - including engineers and project managers
  - Companies lack a clear career development plan.
    - At least one employer is working on implementing the structure.
    - Ask the employee for their career goals.
    - The hard skills are there, if they are mechanically inclined and want to work, they will do well.
  - If employees know that a career takes time they would be better prepared for occupations.
    - Younger generation wants quicker rewards.
    - Advancement takes time and experience.
    - Be patient. Work hard. Reward will come. "We're willing to pay you more if you're doing good work."
3. What could help develop the workforce in manufacturing?
- The work itself turns people off.
    - Need people who want to work with their hands
    - Many people don't want to get their hands dirty.
  - Skills needed to be developed
    - Project management,



- Interfacing with internal and external customers
- Networking skills
- Being able to identify internal customers
  - To understand our responsibilities that go to those customers
  - provide constructive communication
- Customer service
  - Asking customers what they need
    - (i.e. asking shipping how they want a box of parts loaded).
- Employers recognize “We need to do a better job internally with mentoring less experienced people.”
  - Typically less experience starts at night shift and there is less experienced mentors available on that shift.
- Manufacturing positions are suffering from "image problem" with younger generations.
  - Millennials, in particular, stigmatize blue-collar jobs.
    - As the result, millennial workers are largely turning away from jobs in manufacturing.
    - For many years, American education largely ignored the value of blue collar careers.
    - Advertising or outreach to the younger generation is needed to build interest
- Many schools only focus on the aerospace industry
  - This limits the structured pathways in to the broader manufacturing opportunities
  - Also limits the technical skill labor pool that many manufactures need.
  - Software specifically for aerospace
    - Other types of manufacturing use different programs
  - General manufacturing industry have different materials than aircraft.
  - Using different software from Boeing, so they would not hire some college graduates.
- Skill Centers
  - Kids get 1000 hours of training and “get it” so they move faster through training
- Robotics and mechatronics programs are helping
- Over time businesses have lost some employees to Boeing, but not that often.
  - Many employees regard Boeing as the golden ticket.



- Mentorship programs
  - It's hard to take people out of their work zone in a production facility for that kind of role.
- Mid to senior level positions need to know how to interview applicants.
  - There is interest in this type of leadership development
- Many companies don't have open machines for training.
  - Some jobs are specialized, so school can't really teach. Employers have to train the employee themselves.
- K-12 education changes are needed to focus on the importance of soft and basic skills.
  - Employers are open to having schools/students tour their facilities.
  - How many high schools still have shop classes? (Sedro Wooley, Arlington, Snohomish)
  - One father of 13-year old volunteered to have his son's middle school class tour their facility but there is no money for busses.
  - The earlier we can get kids interested the better. "There must be some kids like us out there."

#### 4. Recruitment?

- Some of the employers stated that WorkSource system truly helps
  - The business solutions staff have been very helpful
  - One employer states that since the switch to the new system they post every job posting on WorkSourceWA
    - Craigslist is still their primary hire from source
- Other employers had never heard of WorksourceWA or WorkSource Businesses Solutions
- Recruiters often use Indeed (white collar) and Craigslist.
- Pre-employment drug testing is often used.
- Lots of language barriers with applicants.
  - One company has a bilingual (Spanish) lead that can translate and give directions to other workers.
  - Most companies don't have those resources.
- Remote business locations can impact the employment
  - Such as businesses in Sultan are negatively impacted
  - Bus line access or operational schedule
- Many turn down the job after learning they will lose unemployment security benefits.
- Experience is the most important one for welder, painter, and mechanic.



- Assemblers can easily be trained, so soft skills are important.
- Employers are looking for candidates who are motivated and responsible.
- Hiring ex-offenders
  - Since most people who have spent time in prison find it difficult to get jobs and re-enter society, they'll likely be extremely grateful and loyal to any employer who gives them a chance.
  - Ban-the-box laws
    - The "box" refers to the question on job applications that asks applicants whether or not they have ever been convicted of a crime. Ban-the-box laws require employers to remove this question—as well as any other queries about criminal history—from job applications.
  - Employers still don't want to hire ex-offenders with serious criminal history. The risk is high for employer.
  - Some businesses have hired ex-offenders and felons.
    - They are not worse nor better than other applicants.
- Companies have open position but feel that they have not received enough qualified applicants.
  - Don't have large enough applicants pool to select from.
- How can applicants present themselves better?
  - Showering before interview and orientation.
  - Be able to speak for themselves and be confident.
    - To not bring wife/mom to interviews
  - Applicants should understand that total compensation is not just wage, also includes benefits, holidays, and so on.
  - If a job seeker can't spell "machinist" they won't get an interview. (Misspelled words and/or improper grammar will make it difficult to get an interview)
  - Employers stay away from job jumpers, even when they are desperate
  - It's hard to see if a person has "drive" in a resume. It takes a couple of interviews and often not obvious until the person has been on the job for a couple of months.
  - Don't know how to dress for an interview. Applicants come dressed too casually – in a t-shirt and jeans – and although that would be proper attire for the shop, it is still not appropriate for an interview.



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