

NEW Manufacturing Alliance
COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE – MS TEAMS MEETING MINUTES
May 18, 2022 – 8:00 to 9:00 AM

ATTENDEES: Pete Bilski-McClone, Kate Bruns-Insight Publications, Megan Dorsch-NorthCoast Media Group, John Giesfeldt, Kelli Karpinski-MPTC, Mike Kawleski-Georgia-Pacific, Lori O'Connor-Vye, Jennifer Odette-Atomic Research, Carrie Rule-UWO-CCRS, Stacy Stanton-Runge-Atomic Research, Jessica VanDenPlas-FyterTech Nonwovens, Ann VandeHei-Zepnick Solutions, Ann Franz-NEWMA, Debbie Thompson-NWTC

ALL STAR FOCUS GROUP REPORT BY ATOMIC RESEARCH – STACY STANTON-RUNGE

See attached report. | The focus group consisted of experienced manufacturing workers, five males and two females. Participants were open and felt comfortable with one another. A lot of useful information was shared. The following is a summary of the report.

Path to Manufacturing

All participants began working in other industries before making the switch to manufacturing. The ability to translate their skills, higher wages, and avoid college debt were among the reasons they pursued a manufacturing career. Some knew they preferred hands-on work. Friends, parents, and/or teachers were influencers in their career decisions. Recommendations by friends was significant.

A Need for Better Tech Ed

Participants felt their middle and high schools fell short of preparing them for a career in manufacturing. However, since they were in middle/high school, this could have improved. Job shadows, field trips, tours and hands-on education help define the industry. They felt tech ed courses should be part of general education, versus an elective.

Retention & Engagement - How Companies Contribute

Wages, with the ability to invest, are a top motivator for staying in their manufacturing career. This resurfaced for many of the focus group topics. They prefer being hourly vs. salary, giving them the ability to accrue overtime. Quality of life and pride for the products they help manufacture are other important variables. Authenticity, being able to be themselves, is important. This includes wearing jeans, making the manufacturing environment more relaxed. Participants genuinely enjoy their career because it taps into their unique talents, learning style and/or personality type. It was noted not everyone wants to advance. Some employees just want to plateau.

Company culture and employee experience contribute to their success and satisfaction. Supervisors play a critical role in engagement and retention. Good supervisors help their employees by noticing their talents, developing their skills, caring about them (showing empathy), questioning their goals, and are patient when they are learning new skills. Having good supervisors was key to their success. **Participants' top rated attribute statements were *my supervisor supports my success and company leadership sincerely cares about me.*** They like the ability to problem solve and work on process improvement. Tuition reimbursement is another strong differentiator for companies and a great benefit to promote.

Obstacles

Obstacles included being afraid the work would be too difficult or they would “mess up.” That they would be viewed as a number, not a person, because so many people work at a company was another barrier. Although most seemed satisfied with working in manufacturing, one woman noted that the work can take a physical toll on one's body. This can make it harder to transition to other types of work.

Participants described dichotomy, a wall between office and production personnel. Some feel this separation perpetuates misconceptions of blue collar versus white collar, as well as the assumption a four-year path is superior to a skilled trades path. Empathy and respect can help bridge this divide, in addition to in person co-mingling.

What makes a person a good fit for manufacturing?

- Is driven and a problem solver.
- Likes to work with their hands and see the end product.
- Does not want to sit at a desk the rest of their life.
- Someone that may have gotten into some trouble can often find success in manufacturing.

Marketing & Messaging – Promoting Manufacturing to Young Job Seekers

Young job seekers want an authentic message. If the job is dusty and dirty, with negative odors, show that to them before they are hired. Bring them out on the floor as part of their job interview. Show them what employees look like at the end of the day. Be cognizant of workplace generational differences.

Let job seekers know the employer will pay for their college before they graduate high school and go off to college. Emphasize the earning potential of working in manufacturing. Show the future long-term financial benefit and rewards. Add humor when possible.

How to Connect

- Streaming music was dominant, with Spotify as the top platform.
- On-the-job Instagram reels and TikTok videos participants have watched were appealing because they were short, authentic, educational, and entertaining.
- Participants are regular social media users.
- Social media outreach needs to start in schools.
- YouTube, although widely used, was not considered to be as effective for marketing to young people. Short-form, minute-or-less videos are what best capture their attention.
- Using a QR code on posters can help gain targeted followers.
- Videos should be short, unscripted, edited, capture humor and personality.
- Show the diversity that exists in the workplace.
- Emphasize no college debt and that manufacturing is not a one size fits all path.

How They Job Seek

The majority of their job searching is done by word-of-mouth, job posting sites (LinkedIn & Indeed), and review of company websites. Employee (or former employee) reviews about a company are generally not seriously considered. They look for trends.

Future Research Suggestions

Other potential focus groups were discussed. For example, a group of Gen Z manufacturing employees could unite to better understand the experiences and perceptions of this age group.

Next Steps

Members will continue to look at how these findings can be further studied, shared, and utilized. Ann will schedule a lunch and learn to share the findings with the full membership. Some of this information will be included on the 2023 All Stars individual questionnaire.

2023 ALL STAR NOMINATION FORM REVIEW

Attendees reviewed the nomination form for any changes. The request for the potential All Star to participate in

'Facebook' will be changed to 'social media,' encompassing all forms of social media. The form will be adjusted to allow space between paragraphs. Nominations will begin June 2, with the deadline to nominate June 30.

TALENT RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

NEWMA Minute Radio & WI Timber Rattlers Promos – Both promotions have been running with remarkable success. There has been an over 200% increase of people going to the www.manufacturing.careers website since the start of these campaigns.

City Bus Ads & Bus Stop Promotional Signs – Pam Blazei has been researching city bus ads, in addition to researching geofencing at some of the colleges to promote Internship Draft Day. Pam will be giving an update on all of the talent recruitment strategies at the 7/14/2022 meeting.

UPCOMING NEWMA EVENTS

June 1 – President's Cup Scholarship Golf Fundraiser at Blackwolf Run

June 2 – 2023 All Star Nominations Kickoff

June 9 - NEWMA Quarterly Membership Meeting at Lambeau Field

June 10 – Deadline to Nominate for the Excellence Awards

June 30 – Taps + Tours at Sure Controls

June 30 – Deadline to Nominate for the 2023 All Stars

NEXT MEETING

The next Communications Task Force MS Teams meeting is scheduled for July 14, 2022, 8:00 a.m.

- ✓ All Star Focus Group Report Follow-up
- ✓ 2023 All Stars voting
- ✓ Talent Recruitment Strategies
- ✓ Upcoming NEWMA Events
- ✓ Next Meeting Date/Time/Agenda