

**Talent Task Force Meeting**  
January 8, 2026  
Hart Design & Manufacturing  
8:30 a.m. - 10 a.m.  
*Minutes*

**ATTENDEES:** Heather Marconi-HART Design & Mfg., Alex Auch-Lakeshore College, Marney Verhasselt-NWTC, Paige Vanden Busch-Sartori, Raisa Ramas-Find Joy Off the Path, Craig Coleman-Forward Services, Ava Seifert-Vizance, Cassie Diedrich-Titletown Mfg., Ann Franz-NEWMA

**Topic 1: 2025 taskforce initiatives including Internship Draft Day**

- 11 Lunch & Learns were hosted.
- Created and administered the Aging Workforce survey with 65 completed surveys
- The Future of Work – Succession Planning held on 5/2/2024, with 149 attendees.
- Content speakers discussed training initiatives, including Curative Connections and Goodwill.
- 2 cohorts of a new industrial maintenance technician training program funded by DWD.
- Discussion of promotion of industrial maintenance/machining careers.

**11<sup>th</sup> Annual Internship Draft Day | November 5, 2025 | Lambeau Field**

- 42 member organizations participated.
- 242 student profiles, representing 16 colleges, were activated on the IDD website.
- There were over 40 walk-in students.
- 131 students prescheduled interviews – most ever!

**Topic 2: Plan 2026 taskforce initiatives**

- Future of Work – Employee Retention, April 14, 2026, 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM
- 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Internship Draft Day at Lambeau Field, November 4, 2026
- Lunch & Learns (One to Two per Month) - Members are encouraged to send Ann any potential Lunch & Learn topics.
- College faculty plant tours in May – previously done in 2024 as a means to promote Internship Draft Day – there is interest in hosting an event in 2026.
- Training initiatives funded by upcoming grants.
- Creating a document on how to support your child in career exploration.

**Topic 3: Future of Work – Employee Retention on April 14, 2026 at FVTC**

Heather will be the emcee for the Summit. She will talk about the cost of turnover. T

**Below is a list of confirmed topics:**

**Keynote: Meaningful Work, Optimism, and Relationships presented by Kathy Miller.** This keynote equips leaders at every level to build cultures where people thrive, and results follow

**Breakout #1**

1. Green Bay Packaging De Pere Shipping Container Division along with NWTC Corporate Trainer, Heidi Jackson, presenting on **engagement and retention** within their facility through their **onboarding and Continuous Improvement initiatives**
2. **Financial Wellness as a Retention Strategy: A Practical Approach for Manufacturing Employer** presented by Goodwill & 4Imprint.
3. **Leading Through Conflict: Tools to Strengthen Teams and Retain Talent – Kristen Jonas.** Addressing the high cost of unresolved workplace conflict, from low employee engagement to staff turnover. Explore eight most common reasons for conflict at work and offer practical solutions as well as proactive strategies.

#### 4. **AI in Recruiting: Balancing Benefits and Risks**, Mark Leupold, Express Employment

##### Breakout #2

1. **MPTC's presentation on Culture:** leadership instructor, Sue Roettger, MPTC & Emily Ruether, Director of Manufacturing HR at Alliance Laundry Systems. Sue retired as VP of HR at Mid-States Aluminum in Fond du Lac (now Mayville Engineering Co.). Before that, she was at Kohler.
2. **Chaos to Clarity: How to Fix Your Front Line People Operations, Mike White, Secchi.** This session challenges traditional models and explores how engagement can be operationalized and measured in real time. Drawing from implementation experience across more than 65 manufacturing facilities worldwide, this presentation offers field-tested methods for identifying and addressing disengagement before it becomes turnover.
3. Katie Labeledz, **Removing Frustration: How Lean Reduces Daily Pain Points That Drive Employees Away.**
  - Employees don't leave jobs—they leave broken processes. They are burnt out from the "herculean efforts" that they take every day to keep inefficient processes going.
  - How eliminating waste (defects, overproduction, waiting, non-utilized talent, transportation, inventory, motion, excess processing) improves morale
  - Using employee led kaizen to fix what frustrates them most
4. **Leading with Curiosity: How Questions Drive Performance:** Turn powerful questions into a catalyst for engagement and problem solving by FVTC.

##### Breakout #3

1. **4 Strategies to Increase Retention from the Leadership Team to the Shop Floor** presented by Steve Van Remortel
  - Make the Right Hire the 1st Time Using Science
  - Develop the "Whole" Person
  - Talent Planning
  - Feed their 'Why'
2. **From Offer to Loyalty: Securing Commitment Before Day One** presented by Raisa Ramos  
The truth: people leave managers, not companies. Are you prepared to win loyalty before a new team member steps on the floor? This focused session provides front-line manufacturing leaders with high-impact, actionable tools to stabilize their workforce by closing the critical engagement gap between an offer acceptance and their start date. We will explore this vital period—your greatest opportunity for employee commitment—and provide practical, ready-to-use templates like the Manager's Pre-Boarding Checklist and a Stay Interview guide. By focusing on intentional leadership and early, structured engagement, you will gain the power to dramatically influence new hire retention, shifting your operation from reacting to turnover to proactively building loyalty.
3. **Hearing the Ask Behind the Words"** Supporting Team Members Beyond the Surface by Paige Vanden Bush with Sartori, The presentation helps leaders hear the "ask behind the words" when team members share personal challenges. Leaders will learn how to respond with confidence, connect employees to resources, and create a culture where people feel supported — without overstepping or taking on the role of HR.
4. **Turn Your Managers into Retention Multipliers: A Practical Employee Value Growth System** presented by UW Green Bay Walt Melcher. Most retention strategies fail because they treat employees like recipients of programs and compensation instead of creators of value. What if the same system that grows customer loyalty works even better for employee loyalty? In this session, you'll learn the Employee Value Method, a three-step framework that turns your managers into retention multipliers. Leave with two practical tools: a diagnostic to pinpoint where value is breaking down and a coaching quick-start your managers can use immediately. Apply this system and you create the Talent Incubator Effect: grow employees so well they never want to leave and watch them become magnets who pull in top talent because word spreads that this is where your career value grows.

**Other potential speakers:** Benefit options & awareness – How are benefits being communicated? Show the cost effectiveness of any benefits. Focus on benefits beyond insurance.

**Last session is an employer panel discussing onboarding and or employee engagement survey best practices.**

Members are asked for suggestions for manufacturing panelists. Suggested panelist from AK Crust, Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry, Green Bay Packaging, Titledown Mfg., Satori and Carblis.

Seeking a sponsor at \$2,000, to facilitate the employer panel and be recognized as the presenting sponsor. The cost will offset the food at the event and part of the keynote speakers fee (\$3,500).

**Topic 4: NEWMA upcoming events and programs**

1/20: NEWMA Lunch & Learn: Designated Employer Representative (DER) Training presented by Leslie Prince, Managing Director at Compliance Systems sponsored by ARCpoint Labs also provides CEU credit. I.ARC Labs

1/21: NEWMA Project Management training

1/22: NEWMA Lunch & Learn: Managing First Aid and OSHA Recordable injuries using enhanced recovery that accelerates healing and prevents escalation presented by BayCare Clinic.

**Topic 5: Next steps & agenda for the February 12, 2026 meeting will be virtual**