

Talent Task Force Meeting

February 12, 2026

Teams

8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Agenda

Topic 1: 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.

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. **Best Practice: Green Bay Packaging De Pere Shipping Container Division: Engagement and retention through onboarding and continuous improvement initiatives.** NWTC Corporate Trainer, Heidi Jackson will be co-presenting.
2. **Financial Wellness as a Retention Strategy: A Practical Approach for Manufacturing Employers** presented by Goodwill North Central Wisconsin. It will share how it partners with employers to provide accessible financial workshops, on-demand learning, and 1:1 financial counseling that complement existing benefit offerings for employees. Hear from 4imprint about why they chose to deepen their partnership, lessons learned through implementation, and best practices for introducing financial wellness in a manufacturing environment.
3. **Leading Through Conflict: Tools to Strengthen Teams and Retain Talent** – Kristen Jonas with Kinesiology HR. 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

Why Culture Wins: The Hidden Advantage in Manufacturing Description: A manufacturing organization's greatest competitive advantage is its people. This presentation focuses on how an empowering culture—one built on trust, respect, and engagement—drives operational excellence. See how involving employees in decision-making, problem-solving, and improvement creates accountability, resilience, and sustained performance. Presenters: Sue Roettger, Economic & Workforce Development Leadership Instructor, Moraine Park Technical College; Emily Ruether, Director – Manufacturing HR, Alliance Laundry Systems LLC

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.

Removing Frustration: How Lean Reduces Daily Pain Points That Drive Employees Away presented by Katie Labeledz with Learning to Lean. 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

Leading with Curiosity: How Questions Drive Performance | Yvonne DeGroot, FVTC Organizational Excellence Training. Turn powerful questions into a catalyst for engagement and problem solving. Key learning outcomes:

- Understanding the power of questions in engagement & problem solving
- Identifying types of powerful questions
- Practice framing and asking better questions
- Apply questioning techniques in real scenarios

Breakout #3

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

Talent Planning

Develop the “Whole” Person

Feed their ‘Why’

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.

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.

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.

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, Tiletown 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 2: Faculty plant tours in May 2026

The faculty tour/dialogue event will be held on May 20, 2026. Ann will recruit companies to host the faculty on a plant tour. After the tour, everyone will come together for a program that includes:

1. Recap of what was learned and what stood out on their tour.
2. A former intern's story on the impact on their life of having the internship and now full time employment after graduation.
3. Discussion on best practices in internships, co-ops and registered apprenticeship with a panel of manufacturers.

4. Discussion from faculty on suggestions on how companies can improve their internships, co-ops and registered apprenticeships.
5. Overview of Internship Draft Day and how we can improve it.

The taskforce will work on this event at its next meeting.

Topic 3: Training grants

There is currently no information available regarding a grant that the state should be announcing soon. Ideas for the grant will be part of the work product of this taskforce. Once we understand the requirements of the grant, we will work on a project. Lakeshore College shared a training they offer for individuals with limited manufacturing experience:

<https://lakeshore.edu/business-and-industry/40-hour-manufacturing-job-skills-upskilling>

Topic 4: NEWMA upcoming events and programs

- February 18 & 19: Mind Trekkers STEM Expo at Fox Valley Technical College
- March 17: NEWMA Lunch & Learn: Cybersecurity
- March 19: NEWMA AI training

Topic 5: Next steps & agenda for the March 12, 2026 at 8:30 a.m. meeting