

Talent Task Force Meeting

March 12, 2026

Teams

8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Minutes

ATTENDEES: Heather Marconi-HART Design & Mfg., Marney Verhasselt-NWTC, Lisa Pichotta-Nicolet Plastics, Derek Jablonicky-DWD, Aria Ard-Georgia-Pacific, Tim Lisowe-M3 Insurance, Amy Jurek-AK Crust, Jill Fuss-McClone Insurance, Bobbi Miller-BAWDB, Darren Wilcox-AK Crust, Ann Franz-NEWMA

Topic 1: Future of Work – Employee Retention on April 14, 2026 at FVTC planning

The event has had great interest with the NEWMA membership with already 127 people registered. Special thanks to Employment Resource Group for sponsoring the event. All breakout sessions have people registered to attend.

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. 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. Goodwill – **financial literacy for your employees.**
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.

Last session is an employer panel discussing onboarding and or employee engagement survey best practices with Green Bay Packaging, Titledown Mfg., Satori and AK Crust.

Ann requested taskforce members volunteer at the registration desk and monitor needed for each breakout room.

Topic 2: Faculty plant tours in May 2026

The faculty tour/dialogue event will be held on May 20, 2026. This event is similar to an event that was held in 2024, in which 70 faculty/staff members attended. College staff will choose one plant tour from 7-10 choices. Ann contacted companies that sponsored last year’s Internship Draft Day. She will also be reaching out to other companies, including members of this taskforce. Tours will begin at noon to 12:30 p.m. with everyone coming to Lambeau Field for a program from 2:30 p.m. – 4 p.m. After the tour, everyone will come together for a program that includes:

- Recap of what was learned and what stood out on their tour.
- A former intern’s story on the impact on their life of having the internship and now full time employment after graduation.
- Discussion on best practices in internships, co-ops and registered apprenticeship with a panel of manufacturers.
- Discussion from faculty on suggestions on how companies can improve their internships, co-ops and registered apprenticeships.
- Overview of Internship Draft Day and how we can improve it.

Companies that are interested in serving on the panel sharing best practices in hosting an internship program should contact Ann. The invite will go out to faculty/administrators in early April. The taskforce members are encouraged to attend the March 20th event.

Topic 3: Training grants

A new grant opportunity from the state should be announced in May. The taskforce will work on this grant if released.

Topic 4: NEWMA upcoming events and programs

- March 17: NEWMA Lunch & Learn: Cybersecurity
- March 19: NEWMA AI training
- April 14: Future of Work-Employee Retention Summit
- May 6: 2026 All Stars & Future All Star YA Awards
- June 17: NEWMA 20th anniversary membership meeting

Topic 5: Next steps meeting will be April 28 at 8:30 a.m. via Teams