

NEW Manufacturing Alliance

Communications Task Force

September 16, 2026

Teams

8:30 a.m.

Minutes

ATTENDEES: Ann Franz, NEWMA; Nate Vandergrift, Lawton Standard; Jill Fuss, Brown & Brown; Kelli Karpinski, Moraine Park College; Brad Cebulski, BConnected; Sarah Putbress, NEWMA; Christopher Brennan, Georgia-Pacific; Ava Thron, Vizance;

Topic 1: Discuss campaign for machining & electro mechanical careers

The Carlos day-in-the-life video has received more than 27,000 views; the CMD machinist video has received approximately 5,000 views.

- Sargento and Rockline videos are launching this week. Additional filming is planned with a new staff members from Trilliant Foods, Nicolet Plastics and W.E. Hoban.
- The mobile-first videos are distributed through Meta, YouTube Shorts and TikTok, with paid targeting focused on ages 18-25.

Discussion on initiatives for taskforce to work on in 2027 (ideas were generated this past year, items listed in bold were preferences discussed in the meeting).

1. Offer mentorship programs in these career fields for employees and youth.
2. **Work with math, tech ed and physics teachers to show them how their curriculum relates to manufacturing careers. Demonstrate hands-on activities using the core skills taught in their classes. Utilize LTC, MPTC, and NWTC's electro-mechanical and CNC labs at the schools.**
3. **Unite electro-mech and machinist workers in a brainstorming event to learn what influenced them to go into their career. Get their help in promoting their career.**
4. **Engage 19-24 year olds to help them see, if they have an aptitude for the career, the opportunities available to them. Communicate earning potential.**
5. Create training programs to upskill employees working in general labor and assembly to industrial maintenance and machining.
6. **Promote manufacturing careers to people working in hospitality / retail. Host a free training program to get them started in manufacturing, such as a welding boot camp.**
7. Focus on late 20 to 30 year olds looking to reinvent themselves. They may be underemployed, reentering the job market, or desiring a career change. They can be reached through employment offices, job fairs, summer concert series, and county business services initiatives, in addition to other means.
8. Create a video and information page for students curious about electro-mechanical / machining jobs.
9. **Work with the regional business services teams that are part of the Wisconsin Job Centers to identify opportunities to partner in job fairs and other outreach activities. Create materials and programs the business services teams could use to discuss career opportunities with job seekers - possibly have a monthly employer feature.**
10. Provide outreach to manufacturers not hiring individuals before they graduate. Discuss allowing the individual to continue their education as they work for the manufacturer.
11. Potential next priorities discussed from ideas generated earlier in the year:

Other suggestions:

- Create in-person experiences, including job shadows, to help people understand unfamiliar occupations before deciding whether to pursue them.
- Develop high-school football promotions by sponsoring booster clubs, partnering with technology education departments on game-day booths and distributing mini footballs with QR codes.
- Explore a Timber Rattlers video-board commercial or promotion, a spring email through school systems directing students to manufacturing.careers, and a presence at Appleton's License to Cruise event.

Ann will circulate the updated list to all task forces for feedback; the Communications Task Force will narrow the options and make the final selection at its next meeting.

Topic 2: 2027 All Stars magazine review - tabled

Topic 3: October is Manufacturing Month

- **October 1:** NEW Manufacturing Insights podcast third-anniversary live recording at Robinson Inc., 8:00-10:00 a.m.
- **October 27:** Connecting to Young Talent meeting at Great Northern Commons.
- **October 27:** Excellence Awards dinner and program at Great Northern Commons.
- **October 28:** Manufacturing First Expo, conference and student event at the Resch Expo.
- WIXX commercials will run before, during and after each Packers game and direct listeners to the manufacturing.careers website.
- NEWMA is paying for student transportation to October plant tours.
 - Gresham High School will tour Marion Body Works in Shawano
 - Denmark students will tour Lindquist Machine and Belmark.
- The K-12 student outreach event tied to Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce's Coolest Thing Made in Wisconsin remains in the company-voting stage.
- NEWMA can promote member companies' Manufacturing Month activities. Members should contact Ann Franz with details.

Topic 4: NE WI Manufacturing Vitality Index study and December Membership meeting

- The annual study is entering its 17th year and is conducted with the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.
 - The member survey will be emailed Thursday
 - College students will also call companies
 - The study typically receives responses from more than 100 companies.
 - Questions cover company financial health, sales, expectations for the coming year, expansion and modernization, hiring plans, talent concerns and hard-to-fill occupations.
 - BMO is sponsoring the study this year.
- **December 8:** Invitation-only breakfast with CEOs for an advance look at the results.
- **December 15:** Quarterly membership meeting, including the public release of the study results and a review of the past year and plans for 2027.
- Keynote speaker recommendations are requested.
 - A topic related to change management or leading through change could align with the April 14 Future of Work Summit.

Topic 5: Brainstorm 2027 taskforce work product - tabled

Topic 6: Upcoming NEWMA Events

September 23: **NEWMA Cyber & Suds** held from 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. at Black Sheep event center at 3675 Algoma Road, New Franken. There is no cost to attend: <https://form.jotform.com/262253289911158> .

September 30: **NEWMA Lunch & Learn: Youth Apprenticeship**. Register for this free event: <https://form.jotform.com/262253537079159>.

Topic 7: Set agenda and next meeting on November 25 at 8:30 a.m. via Teams