

# State of the Workforce

## Real Talk Discussion Notes

*Real Talk* facilitated discussions at the Northwest Indiana State of the Workforce Breakfast event on April 10, 2019 were intended to be organic in nature, allowing participants to learn, share, or simply listen. They provided an opportunity for employers, educators, and training providers to engage and share workforce trends and challenges related to skilling up the workforce and creating a talent pipeline. We are happy to share with you notes compiled from from these discussions.

TECHNOLOGY

HEALTHCARE

MANUFACTURING



Northwest Indiana  
**WORKFORCE  
BOARD**

## Technology

### Words that came up when defining IT:

- Simplify
- Efficiency
- Engaging
- Connectivity
- Ever changing
- Information
- Tool efficiency

### Traditional tech jobs include:

- Analytics
- Coding
- Staff/program management
- System administration
- User support
- Web development

It can take up to 102 days to fill these positions. When you discuss requirements for many of the positions, it can require up to 44 distinct skills. And up to 183 regional employers are competing for these positions.

### Hardest positions to fill:

- Data processing
- Data Scientist
- Web Developer
- Project Lead The Way (PLTW) teachers, especially for manufacturing and coding experience

### Some of the skills required for hard to fill positions include:

- Microsoft Office/Excel, analytical thinking, and efficiency in software
- CT-analytical ability, teachers-coming with tech instructors (licensed)
- Interfaced with system, case management—sales force
- Communication with people and techs
- LC/PC maintenance tech-critical thinking and interface with tech
- IT-coding multiple languages, analytics, and multi-platforms
- CAD
- Willingness to learn new/raw technology

### Required technologies for new 2025 jobs:

- Enterprise Resource Planning-SAP
- Computer aided design -AutoCAD
- Data base user interface-Excel/Access
- Office interaction and productivity-Microsoft Suite
- Web platform development-Baseline HTML

### Additional Comments and Takeaways:

- Regional economic engine is reliant on manufacturing and IT drives automation
- Employers need to consider remote work arrangements and consider Internet access and WIFI access
- A continued struggle remains when looking at a more virtual access to employment
- In order to leverage technology to drive automation systemically, all jobs are mutating into new and unexpected forms.
- 1 in 8 job postings is now highly hybridized with more than 250 different occupations.
- Hybrid roles are projected to grow twice as fast as jobs overall (21% vs 10%).

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### Healthcare



#### What are some challenges/issues you are facing with your workforce?

- Difficult to fill open positions at all levels/areas
- Problem with soft skills/work ethics in long-term care facility. This is important because reimbursement can be affected based on patient surveys
- Problem with employees showing up on time, in particular with entry level positions
- Many time it's the seasoned workers who don't feel soft skills are important or feel their soft skills are good enough

#### Discussion on Graduation Pathways

- Graduation Pathways is being implemented in the school systems and they need and want partnerships with healthcare employers
- Some healthcare systems provide training, ensuring students can start on a healthcare pathway--primarily through CTE programs
- Replicate the work being done with CTE programs
- Employer stated they are having difficulty to connecting to schools

#### Discussion on hard to fill jobs

- Look at ways to help people gain transferable skill
- Help individuals work to gain workplace skills and continue picking up those skills as they create value for a company and educate themselves in doing what they love doing so they continue to learn and progress as technology does. Technology will both create and destroy jobs, and the jobs that are created will require higher level skills.
- Attendees were introduced to business service representatives who may be able to assist
- Entry level positions in culinary arts and for CNAs remain very hard to fill
- Employees will move from one healthcare facility to another for a \$.25 raise; the need to look at an employee's current skills along with the introduction of other career options within the company becomes important
- Training is imperative and various funding streams available to employers were discussed
- Need for soft skills training

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### Manufacturing



#### Getting students and sometimes their parents, excited about manufacturing

- From a high school's perspective, in the 1990s students were being pushed into the college route and now parents in their 40s still have a college mind-set for the children, instead of looking at current high-demand manufacturing positions.
- There needs to be a mindset reset to show that manufacturing as a viable option; not an alternative to college, but another route to higher education
- Work and training with school counselors to share message with parents; change the conversation to get them to understand and promote different occupational options within manufacturing

#### What can be done to better sell/package manufacturing as a viable career option?

- Use social media platforms
- Develop a career and trades newsletter in schools (Career newsletter through Hobart H.S. is getting as many hits as their scholarship newsletter)
- Schools need to connect teachers, counselors, and students with employers to see where students can work
- Need employers in the cafeteria recruiting as much as the colleges and military
- Help individuals work to gain workplace skills and continue picking up those skills as they create value for a company and educate themselves in doing what they love doing so they continue to learn and progress as technology does. Technology will both create and destroy jobs, and the jobs that are created will require higher level skills.
- Schools are starting to push career alignment that connects technical education with traditional liberal arts--but they can do a better job of it
- Change the perception--break the negative stereotype and quit tearing down manufacturing
- Connect manufacturing excitement to areas of student interest, such as the green movement and social causes
- River Forest is developing an advanced manufacturing pathway. River Forest does not have the negative obstacle. Their biggest obstacle is money for an instructor and connections to employers.
- Past two years, La Porte County has provided more career exploration in elementary and middle schools and not just high school

#### Would employers be open to an incentive from the state to allow employees to help teach at the school?

- Employers want high school counselors, teachers, and administrators to ask questions of them
- They want someone to come to them with programs
- Open to help pay students for internships to expose and help encourage young to stay in manufacturing
- Incentive might be for people who are not ready to retire to teach
- There is an Office of Work Based Learning & Apprenticeships that will work with employers to help train students

#### Pain points for teachers and employers

- Teachers already have heavy workloads
- Encourage teachers to help spread the message with additional pay
- State is reviewing CTE, which is underutilized method
- State is working on a way to get employers into schools to teach, with few barriers to entry
- Looking to more ways to get students dual credit--in some cases obtaining college completion/degrees and/or certifications at the same time as high school graduation
- Finding people with the experience and credentials to teach
- Salary and benefits

# Manufacturing (cont'd)



## What are barriers to moving current employees up?

- Union contracts
- Exposure and interest in moving them
- Keeping them informed on what is available

## How do we stay ahead of technology and help a 20-year old training for a job now train for a job in the future?

- Look at least 10 years in the future
- Help people gain transferable skills
- Help individuals work to gain workplace skills and continue picking up those skills as they create value for a company and educate themselves in doing what they love doing so they continue to learn and progress as technology does. Technology will both create and destroy jobs, and the jobs that are created will require higher level skills.

## What are employers doing now to transition their current workforce to a more tech saavy workforce?

- ArcelorMittal took advantage of the state's NextLevel Jobs Program to train welders; have a pilot program at Boone Grove, letting students get hands-on experience and provides them an idea of relevance on what they do at their training center; reach out high schools and middle schools to help find students on industry-like career path

## How do we spread a regional message about manufacturing?

- Boot camp for counselors
- Encourage teachers to help spread message; teachers have guaranteed face time with students; experience from teachers is that they went to college, so they teach from that perspective)
- Repackage message (manufacturing is cool; how it's not killing the environment; how does it meet my needs for social awareness)
- Challenge manufacturers to send people into high schools and colleges (Send someone they can relate to, like a younger worker; send workers who have good skills, make money, and can show students a path to success in the sector)
- Send people from an apprenticeship program or the energy program to tell students and parents about their success
- Talk about the revolution in manufacturing and how it has changed, e.g., cleaner, technology driven, room for advancement
- Direct them to the READY NWI career videos
- Have teachers attend state program on work based learning experiences
- Companies could consider offering a stipend to teachers to job shadow (state is working on something currently)

## Additional closing comments from attendees:

- In NW Indiana we are poised for great things. We have opportunities with railway double-tracking, convention centers, etc., and we need to have construction workforce on our side.
- Teach kids the importance of making things early.
- If we had more talent, companies say they would be able to expand.
- Everyone is competing for talent. When labor unions talk to people about apprenticeships, they ask about how much they would make and benefits. It's about what we are willing to offer to new employees. Some apprenticeships lead to dual credit with Ivy Tech.
- As a community, we need to let elected officials know what manufacturers are doing. Awareness efforts need to go way beyond just teachers and counselors. Getting elected officials in to celebrate what these companies are doing is important.
- Manufacturers said that they would be interested in having students and teachers tour facilities. We need to continue to do more of this.
- Do you love this region? Do you believe it can be better than it was in the past? Are you willing to get on top of negating the negative news about the region? Everyone needs to become an ambassador for the region.