



UNITED STATES MANUFACTURING COUNCIL

March 16, 2016

The Honorable Penny Pritzker
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Madam Secretary:

A public perception problem exists in the United States toward manufacturing careers. A recent report, U.S. Public Opinions on the Manufacturing Industry¹, released in 2015 by the Manufacturing Institute, shows that overall manufacturing remains less popular than other industries as a career choice (ranked fifth out of seven provided industries, and dead last for millennials—those 19 to 33 years of age). Moreover, only 37 percent of survey respondents would encourage their own children to pursue a manufacturing career, and only 19 percent of respondents indicated their parents encouraged them to pursue a career in manufacturing.

We must improve the perception of manufacturing as an industry to create positive awareness of the many benefits and rewards offered to the next generation of American workers by the U.S. manufacturing sector, the foundation of our nation's prosperity.

A critical aim of the U.S. Manufacturing Council (hereinafter "Council") is to encourage young Americans to pursue exciting and lucrative manufacturing career paths that will help them learn advanced skills and secure their futures and to ensure a healthy manufacturing talent pipeline for future manufacturing job needs in the United States.

The Council has carefully reviewed the past work and recommendations of previous Councils and seeks to build upon their efforts by recommending a major marketing initiative that leverages Manufacturing Day, supported by the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, to improve the public's perception of manufacturing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Building on the successful Manufacturing Day public-private partnership, we recommend launching a much needed national pro-manufacturing advertising campaign.

A public-private partnership between manufacturing industry stakeholders, the Manufacturing Institute, a 501c3 nonprofit, and the U.S. Department of Commerce is meant to facilitate the development of a national pro-manufacturing advertising campaign aimed at middle and high school students, along with their parents and educators, via traditional, digital, and social media, in an effort to address pervasive public misperceptions about manufacturing, thereby promoting career opportunities in the U.S. and revitalizing manufacturing's contracting talent pipeline. We strongly recommend using Manufacturing Day as the campaign's centerpiece for message development and cohesion. The benefits of using Manufacturing Day as a platform include enhanced recognition in

¹ 2015 Public Perception of Manufacturing Report (by The Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte)

markets already familiar with this initiative, and also increased involvement in regions that have not participated in the past.

- a) To ensure message appropriateness and consistency, and to guarantee equitable representation of all stakeholders, we respectfully ask the Secretary to support the Council's recommendation to engage an organization such as the Manufacturing Institute to serve as the national pro-manufacturing advertising campaign's fiscal agent, acting as a conduit between the public and private sectors, and to assume the role of creative project lead, guiding the work of a national advertising firm. Specifically, the Secretary could direct Commerce Department resources for joint campaign development by MEP/NIST and the Manufacturing Institute for a late summer/early fall 2016 launch. Contributions to fund this perception campaign would be provided by U.S. manufacturers.
- b) We recommend leveraging key existing media and creative partnerships of MEP/NIST for distribution of multimedia (traditional, digital, and social media) targeted to middle and high school students, their parents, and educators for this national pro-manufacturing advertising campaign.

A proposed framework for a national pro-manufacturing advertising campaign can be found in the Appendix of this letter.

Private funding from major U.S. manufacturers for a national advertising fund to support development of marketing and advertising assets is critical to the public-private partnership becoming a reality. The Council acknowledges a funding requirement to launch and execute this recommendation. The amount of funding needed will be dependent upon the approved scope and objectives of the campaign. Council members have conducted preliminary research to identify companies in various industries such as automotive, aviation, engineering, and metals that may be willing to make contributions to a joint advertising fund.

2. Expand Manufacturing Day and its nationwide collective of events and activities; we ask the Secretary to put the full force of the Commerce Department's weight and power behind Manufacturing Day, by asking other government agencies to participate.

Manufacturing Day, an existing successful platform, provides Americans, particularly middle and high school students, an opportunity to walk into a manufacturing facility and see with their own eyes what manufacturing is about, to learn how advanced technologies are used, and to have a face-to-face talk with manufacturing workers about the potential for attractive careers in manufacturing. Therefore, Manufacturing Day is an ideal premier vehicle to bridge the gap in communication and collaboration between the manufacturing sector, the academic community, and American families with children at home.

- a) Specifically, we recommend engagement of the White House, the Department of Education, and Department of Labor. We also ask other government agencies— in addition to manufacturing facilities, laboratories, and research centers – to join Manufacturing Day efforts to stimulate increased participation across our nation among manufacturers. Agencies such as the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, and NASA could allocate optimal staffing and resources to support the bold and successful execution of Manufacturing Day, annually.
- b) In addition to encouraging manufacturers to host annual Manufacturing Day events at their facilities, we also ask the Secretary to promote “company neutral” Manufacturing Day initiatives hosted by other manufacturing stakeholders such as the 24 designated Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) groups, industry associations (e.g., Society of Manufacturing Engineers), nonprofits (e.g., Michigan Science Center) and education institutes focusing on manufacturing skills training (e.g., Focus: HOPE) in their regions of the country.

The huge success of 2015 Manufacturing Day activities initiated by Council members in Metro Detroit proves this approach can result in a significant increase in awareness and participation. These Council members executed a variety of initiatives:

- Organized Manufacturing Day events for their own companies
- Communicated to suppliers to encourage Manufacturing Day participation
- Enlisted the support of related organizations or “company neutral” sites such as The Henry Ford, Focus: HOPE and the Michigan Science Center with strong manufacturing-focused programs to host Manufacturing Day events at their facilities
- Conducted outreach to local stakeholders such as the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, tri-county agencies, elected officials, and business and community leaders to launch for the first time a joint kickoff at a company neutral site in Detroit

The event’s prominence drew the attention of federal government administrators, which led to participation by the White House, the Commerce Department and Congressional officials.

As a result of Council members’ efforts, more than 4,000 schoolchildren attended events in the Southeast Michigan tri-county area, and the state of Michigan rose to number one among all states for the most Manufacturing Day events on October 2 with a total of 176.

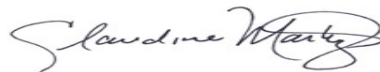
Of note, Council members in other parts of the country hosted company-specific events such as Whirlpool’s four-state effort to engage high school and college students, as well as educators and administrators with a video presentation and plant tours. In Wisconsin, a military manufacturer welcomed guests for technology demonstrations, video presentations and a panel discussion about the benefits of manufacturing careers. More than 2,000 students participated in these and similar special events hosted by Council members.

In summary, the Council strongly believes that developing and launching a national pro-manufacturing advertising campaign and boosting the participation of Manufacturing Day will help reshape public misperceptions about manufacturing; encourage America’s youth, parents and educators to consider manufacturing careers as a practical and exciting way to achieve the American dream; accelerate the revitalization of our nation’s manufacturing talent pipeline; and ultimately, reduce or eliminate the skill gap that is expected to result in two million of manufacturing jobs going unfilled over the next decade².

Respectfully submitted,



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Chair, Manufacturing Council



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Vice Chair, Manufacturing Council



Shirish Pareek
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² The skill gap in U.S. manufacturing 2015 and beyond (by The Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte)

APPENDIX

NATIONAL PRO-MANUFACTURING IMAGE CAMPAIGN FRAMEWORK

“Today’s young people want to solve problems, start businesses, make waves and make money.

But, to accomplish these things, they think they have to be surgeons, lawyers or Steve Jobs. They don’t understand that manufacturing careers offer real opportunities to do work that saves lives, puts men on Mars, and creates our quality of life.”

-TheManufacturingInstitute.org

Current Situation:

Though many parents say they would like to see manufacturing job opportunities in their communities to help stabilize the local economy, they are unwilling to encourage their own children to pursue manufacturing careers, according to the Manufacturing Institute’s perception study. When asked if their parents encouraged them to pursue a manufacturing career, only 19 percent of students say yes.

The manufacturing sector’s consistent expansion and aging demographic will lead to 3.4 million available manufacturing jobs by 2025, but only 1.4 million will be filled unless this perception issue is overcome.

Many parents and educators are unaware of this sector’s rewarding career opportunities and its multiplier effect on the nation’s wealth and resources:

- On average, manufacturing jobs pay \$77.5K a year versus \$62.6K for all other industries – or 24 percent more
- Manufacturing relies on advanced industrial technology and high-skill labor
- For every dollar invested in manufacturing, another \$1.37 is added to the U.S. economy

Source: Manufacturing Institute

Challenge:

Addressing the skills gap among American workers is a complex issue, compounded by ineffective coordination and dialogue among stakeholders, especially skills training entities and employers. Though pockets of excellence exist across the country, few programs operate under a broader mission or purpose to affect widespread change in perceptions about manufacturing.

No employment or training program will be fully realized or utilized, however, if the next generation of workers is unwilling to take advantage of these opportunities because they believe manufacturing is an option for those they view as socially or socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Strategy:

Launch a national multi-pronged advertising campaign endorsed by the U.S. Department of Commerce to drive a shift in perceptions about manufacturing, in partnership with the White House, the Department of Education and the Department of Labor, led by the Manufacturing Institute for fiscal agency and campaign creative development.

Campaign Objective:

Build awareness of manufacturing sector as an innovative industry that heavily relies on advanced industrial technology, continues to grow, offers significant opportunities for good-paying, high-tech and exciting careers, and serves as the foundation of U.S. economic prosperity.

The proposed public-private partnership for the national pro-manufacturing advertising campaign, directed by the campaign's fiscal agent, would seek to develop campaign messaging to achieve the following:

- Position manufacturing sector and related careers as the vanguard of advanced industrial technology, which facilitates one's ability to make things that solve problems, while making good money and creating a comfortable lifestyle.
- Generate excitement among middle and high school students and also resonate with parents, classroom educators and other key influencers such as guidance counselors, and local and state school boards.
- Conduct outreach to stakeholders in education and workforce development to announce campaign and distribute collateral material to help seed and disseminate the overarching message.