

Pennsylvania Manufacturing Advisory Council Releases Playbook for Competitiveness

written by Lauri Moon | September 21, 2022



As Pennsylvania's third-largest employment sector - with more than 560,000 full-time workers generating nearly \$115 billion of goods last year alone - manufacturing drives Pennsylvania's overall economy. On August 31, 2022, the Pennsylvania Manufacturing Advisory Council, a nonpartisan partnership

of manufacturers and industry experts, released Pennsylvania's Manufacturing Competitiveness Playbook - an actionable strategy document that identifies three game changers and 10 specific recommendations to make Pennsylvania's manufacturing economy more robust and resilient - thus creating more good-paying jobs for Pennsylvanians.

The efforts of the industry-led, 25-member Pennsylvania Manufacturing Advisory Council were focused on developing recommendations that government leaders across the Commonwealth should consider as ways to expand Pennsylvania's manufacturing economy. The Council's resultant Playbook includes data and advice derived from insights and commentary offered by more than 500 Pennsylvania manufacturers.

"Over the course of the past year, the Council conducted industry roundtables, one-on-one interviews, and surveys to learn directly from manufacturers what statewide policy and programmatic or procedural changes would most immediately and dramatically enhance their ability to compete, win and grow in today's economy, and the Council's report reflects that knowledge and insight," said Eric Joseph Esoda, Council Co-Chair.

Through careful analysis of industry input, the Council, within its Playbook,

recommends three game changers for strengthening Pennsylvania's manufacturing competitive position:

- Recapture Pennsylvania's manufacturing competitive advantage by aggressively pursuing manufacturing growth sectors to drive prosperity.
- Invest in the factory of the future to boost the performance of small and medium-sized companies, improve the quality of manufacturing jobs and provide better career options for more of Pennsylvania's citizens.
- Unleash the power of advanced manufacturing to drive regional prosperity through policies and services that are more responsive to the needs of manufacturers.

The Playbook builds on Pennsylvania's historic strengths in manufacturing and captures a vision for Pennsylvania's future as a global leader in advanced manufacturing.

"It's vital that we do more for manufacturing because it represents one of Pennsylvania's largest sectors, pays better than most others and offers good benefits," said Dan Fogarty, Council Co-Chair. "The Playbook is a great first step toward coming together around how we can be there for the sector and for communities across the Commonwealth that both support and benefit from our great industrial employers," he added.

The full report can be downloaded on the Manufacturing Advisory Council's website: <https://www.pamanufacturingcouncil.com/playbook>.

Picking Area Error Reduction Efforts Successful at Diamondback

Automotive Accessories

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Diamondback Automotive Accessories, located in Philipsburg, PA with 117 employees, manufactures load-bearing pick-up truck covers and accessories used primarily by outdoor enthusiasts.

Diamondback continues at a rapid growth rate at their Phillipsburg facility, experiencing 25% growth in 2020, followed by 45% growth in 2021. As the company enjoys rapid growth, it also experienced an increase in customer complaints. The main reason for the customer dissatisfaction was errors in picking the right parts to be shipped along with the truck cover. As a percentage of orders, greater than 2% contained picking errors.

IMC's Continuous Improvement Expert, Jeff Kopenitz, facilitated a dedicated team of Diamondback employees to focus on the errors in the picking areas. Over the course of eight days of on-site facilitation plus off-site coaching, Jeff guided the team through various Lean tools such as A3 thinking, PDCA cycles, DMAIC projects, FEMAs and Coaching Katas.

As a result of these efforts, manufacturing communications were improved, key parts visualization was enhanced using shadow boards, labelling was enhanced, equipment such as scales were deployed, and processes were changed and improved. In one year, the picking errors percentage has dropped from 2.29% to 1.29%. Diamondback is well on their way to achieving their next target goal of less than 1% picking errors.

"The results of this project far exceeded my expectations. Every minute and every dollar spent with IMC has resulted in tremendous returns. With IMC's help, we are achieving our mission of being a company that people love to buy from." Gerald Gardner, Quality Manager

Central Susquehanna What's So Cool About About Manufacturing? Award Winners Announced

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The What's So Cool About Manufacturing? program is a video based educational tool that increases awareness of career paths in manufacturing. This innovative career awareness program is "peer marketing" - kids telling kids what's so cool about manufacturing and manufacturing careers.

This contest gives students the opportunity to connect with local manufacturers, document their experiences and present them in an educational and "cool" way. The contest was created to generate excitement that draws students towards manufacturing career paths, and CTE and STEM education. The Central Susquehanna WSCM contest is made possible by the Innovative Manufacturers' Center (IMC), The Foundation of the Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce, Advance Central PA, Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) and BLaST Intermediate Unit.

This year's Central Susquehanna contest featured schools from Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union counties and the following manufacturers:

- BrightFarms
- Girton Manufacturing Co., Inc.
- Kawneer
- Playworld Systems, Inc.
- PMF Industries, Inc.
- Ralph S. Alberts Co., Inc.
- Strong Industries, Inc.

AND the Awards go to! (click here to view all the videos)

- **Outstanding Overall Program:** Selinsgrove Middle School/Bright Farms
- **Viewer's Choice:** Selinsgrove Middle School/Bright Farms
- **Outstanding Team Spirit:** Danville Middle School/Strong Industries, Inc.
- **Outstanding Brand Placement:** Lewisburg Donald H. Eichhorn Middle School/Playworld Systems, Inc.

Two district and manufacturer partners will also be moving on to the statewide competition May 18th in Harrisburg: Selinsgrove Middle School/Bright Farms and Central Columbia Middle School/Kawneer.

CONGRATULATIONS to all!



Central Columbia Middle School/Kawneer



Danville Middle School/Strong
Industries, Inc.



Lewisburg Donald H. Eichhorn
Middle School/Playworld Systems,
Inc.



Selinsgrove Middle School/Bright Farms

The Manufacturers' Guide to Finding and Retaining Talent

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As part of their annual survey, NIST MEP asks clients from the 51 MEP Centers, including IMC, to identify the top three challenges their companies will face over the next three years.



**The Manufacturers' Guide to
Finding and Retaining Talent**

Not surprisingly, manufacturers continue to report that employee recruitment and

retention are their greatest challenges. In fact, these concerns have heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent workforce disruptions. The market forces driving these challenges are not likely to improve soon. Based on a Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte study, the National Association of Manufacturers estimates that manufacturers will need to fill 4.6 million jobs by 2028.

In this guide, we outline steps that will help you improve and enhance your employee recruitment, retention and engagement. We'll look at:

- Strategy
- Attracting and retaining talent
- Training and development
- Workplace culture

MEP Manufacturers Guide to Finding and Retaining Talent Whitepaper

Penn College Apprenticeship News

written by Lauri Moon | September 21, 2022

New Apprenticeship Cohorts Forming

Penn College Apprenticeship Cohorts to begin in August 2022! Topics include:

- Industrial Manufacturing Technician (IMT)
- Intro-Mech
- Machining Fundamentals - CNC Machining Year 1
- Mechanical Components - Mechatronics Year 1
- Robotics - Year 1

IMT is DESIGNED FOR NEARLY ANY OPERATOR OR TECHNICIAN. The Industrial Manufacturing Technician (IMT) program emphasizes foundational skills for a broad

range of manufacturing roles. Technical competency development is combined with communication, teamwork, and other business skills to train a well-rounded apprentice.

Intro-MECH is a one-year introduction to mechatronics and maintenance aligned to NIMS Industrial Technology Maintenance (ITM) credentials. This course consists of four, 36-hour modules (144 hours total) each dedicated to one of four core mechatronics competencies: Mechanical Systems, Fluid Power-Pneumatics/Hydraulics, Electrical Systems and Electrical Controls (PLCs & VFDs).

Machining Fundamentals provides a fundamental knowledge of machining processes. Topics include machining technologies, shop safety, understanding drawings, layout work, hand tools, processes of drilling, lathes, grinding and milling machines. Emphasis is on production performance as a basic machinist or CNC operator who is training for advancement in the CNC precision machining field.

Mechanical Components provides apprenticed and associate technicians with fundamental knowledge of industrial mechanical systems and component topics considered necessary by subject matter experts for successful completion of routine mechanical maintenance and troubleshooting tasks on advanced manufacturing equipment.

Robotics provides maintenance technicians with robotic and automation systems repair responsibilities, the skillsets for troubleshooting the PLC interfaces comprising most modern manufacturing robotic/automation systems. This course strengthens existing PLC knowledge with emphasis on the control interface between PLC's and robotic automated process equipment.

Sessions attended via two-way live streaming internet at employer's site via the iris system. All sessions are recorded and available 24/7 through Penn College's Learning Management System so off-shift technicians may join in!

Note: Manufacturers are eligible for grant funding through Penn College's Modular Industry-Driven Apprenticeship Strategies (MIDAS) Grant that will cover a significant portion of the tuition. Anyone can participate at the full tuition.

For more information contact apprenticeship@pct.edu or call 570.327.4775.

Pennsylvania Manufacturing Advisory Council Seeks Input From Manufacturers

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The Pennsylvania Manufacturing Advisory Council was formed last year as a public-private consortium. Its goal is to provide the Commonwealth's legislative leaders and leading gubernatorial candidates with policy, program and legislative priority recommendations that will enhance the competitiveness of Pennsylvania's nearly 15,000 manufacturing firms and their 585,000 employees. The Council has heard from more than 130 PA-based manufacturers through roundtables, town halls and other venues and **now wants to hear from other manufacturing leaders through their completion of a short survey.**

Manufacturers all across the Commonwealth are being asked to invest 8 minutes of their time to take an online survey that asks their opinions and experience in the areas of workforce, supply chain, technology and the Commonwealth's overall business climate. **Please submit responses by April 8.**

Manufacturers, [CLICK HERE](#) to access the survey. More information about the Pennsylvania Manufacturing Advisory Council can be found [here](#).

Success Story: Custom Container Solutions, LLC Surpasses Production Objectives with IMC Support

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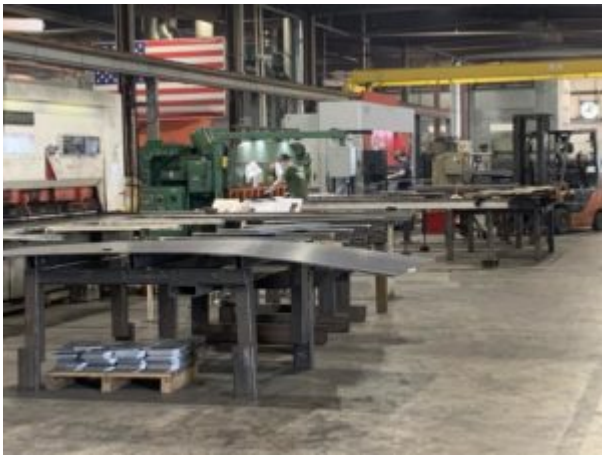
IMC has been working with Custom Container Solutions (CCS), an area manufacturer of industrial roll-offs, for several years. Past projects have included operational improvements, ERP selection, HR policies, hiring and selection practices and improved job training.



As CCS has grown, they transitioned to a larger facility and now have three production lines instead of one. Each line makes a certain type of unit.

One of the lines makes smaller roll-offs and has proved to be most challenging in terms of reaching desired throughput quotas. The company contacted IMC to provide support for their efforts to improve production results on the small roll-off production line.

IMC proposed a 3-day value stream mapping (VSM) initiative that also included the supporting fabrication area. The VSM involved workers and supervisors from both production and fabrication along with CCS management and IMC facilitators. The VSM effort started with a map of the current state of both the fabrication support and production operations including critical facts and data on task times, wait times, throughput history and layout, sequence and flow.



A direction and quantitative goals were established, and a future state map developed. Within the initiative, numerous opportunities for improvement were identified, prioritized and structured to ensure successful implementation. Included were multiple visits to the factory floor and many coaching opportunities by IMC's VSM facilitator.

The result to date (2 months following the end of the initiative) is that the line has surpassed the production objectives and is now operating at a consistent level of 25-30% above pre-initiative throughputs. The improvements made in fabrication have also led to improved operations for the other production lines.

"IMC has played a crucial part in the success of CCS - it's like the gift that keeps on giving. IMC has helped us recognize system failures and ask the right questions of our team members without fear. Jeff, Russ and Jen spent multiple days working with our team digging deeper than we could ever dig because we needed outside eyes to see the problems. By implementing workflow processes that are cyclical, we are able to pull the work down the line versus pushing it down the line, which creates a more efficient and happier workforce which, in turn, increases productivity and reduces absenteeism significantly. As we identify areas of improvement, we utilize IMC and its expertise to improve. We are grateful for the help and we look forward to working with IMC again in the future." Chuck Williams, General Manager, Custom Container Solutions

This project was funded, in part, by a grant made available by PennTAP.

IMC Announces Winter 2022 Lean Manufacturing Level One Certification Graduates

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IMC is excited to announce the latest graduates of our Lean Manufacturing Level One Certification program.



Congratulations: Strong Spas, Timberhaven Log Homes, LLC, Susquehanna Mills, Pik Rite, Inc., Jersey Shore Steel Company, High Steel Structures LLC, Q.E. Manufacturing, Atlantic Culinary Environments, Inc., ANDRITZ, Actuated Medical, Inc., Philips Ultrasound, TRS Technologies, Remmey - The Pallet Company, SilcoTek Corporation, DiamondBack Covers, Steller Floors and Architectural Precast Innovations, Inc.

IMC Hosts PA House Democratic Policy Committee Meeting & Manufacturing Roundtable

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On Tuesday, February 1, 2022, IMC and the PA Industrial Resource Center (IRC) Network had the opportunity to host the PA House Democratic Policy Committee Meeting and Manufacturing Roundtable at Penn State University's Innovation Hub. Attracting and retaining a qualified workforce, implementing advanced manufacturing technologies (AMTs) and creating localized supply chains were among the topics discussed during the Policy Committee Meeting.

Thanks to Rep. Scott Conklin and all the Representatives for taking the time to hear from manufacturing leaders across Pennsylvania. We appreciate the Policy Committee's support of PA manufacturing and the mission of the IRCs. Special thanks to Daniel Lutz and Marc Dagata from Metal Integrity, Dr. Tom Kane from Restek Corporation, and Ben Eltz from DiamondBack Covers for their participation on the manufacturing roundtable.

020122 PA House Democratic Policy Committee Mtg Press Release





IMC Supports Shop-Vac in Williamsport Plant Reopening

written by Lauri Moon | September 21, 2022



Photo Credit: Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Shop-Vac is the brand leader in wet / dry vacuum systems for consumer and commercial use. In 2020, the company abruptly shut down, but was recently purchased by Great Star Industrial, Inc. Shop-Vac rehired many previous employees and is currently operating with about 150 people. Given the shutdown, the company's emphasis at this time is to increase sales quickly by re-establishing

relationships with customers that range from big box retailers such as Lowe's and Home Depot to smaller sellers and industrial purchasers. Additionally, Great Star acquired the well-established SK Hand Tools. As part of the SK acquisition strategy, SK tool-making equipment has been relocated from Chicago to the Shop-Vac facility on Reach Road in Williamsport. With the equipment onsite and ready to start production, Shop Vac is hiring and training about 15 additional people to produce SK Tools.

To support the re-establishment of customer relationships for Shop-Vac products and to begin selling and supporting the SK brand locally, Shop-Vac is working with IMC to make improvements in their Customer Service operations. IMC will be working with the Customer Service team to perform a three-day value stream mapping (VSM) initiative that will include training in continuous improvement principles and practices to enable the group to work on improvement opportunities, defining the current state of operations, identifying opportunities for improvement, creating a future / desired state, and then continuous work towards the future state.

To support the implementation of the value stream initiative, IMC and PennTAP are also working together to implement an E3 (energy, environmental, efficiency) initiative that will both support the of the VSM as well as provide energy reduction and environmental improvement opportunities.



Sandy Fox assembles a Shop-Vac vacuum cleaner on the company's assembly line in Williamsport, Pa. Photo credit: Steven M. Falk, Williamsport Sun-Gazette