

Now Hiring



Publisher & Editor-in-Chief
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Raise your hand if you have a staffing shortage.

Keep it raised if you don't know what to do.

Manufacturers have long been plagued by the difficulty of finding skilled labor. The refrain of the past decade might as well be "I could make more gears if I could hire more qualified machinists." We've been talking about this problem for years.

But it's not just manufacturers anymore. Restaurants, retailers and grocery stores just can't hire enough people to sustain the level of business they're used to. We've all seen the results. I drove up to a major fast food restaurant the other day, and the sign on the window said they were now closed at 7 p.m. instead of the normal 10 p.m. I've walked through the aisles of big box stores and seen piles of merchandise sitting on the floor because there's no one to stock the shelves.

What used to be a problem facing just us in the manufacturing industries is now everywhere. It's not just that no one wants to work in manufacturing anymore. It seems almost as if no one wants to work at all.

I mean, who wants to drive to work every day? Who wants to have a boss? Who wants five days per week of their life dictated by someone else?

We can blame it on COVID. We can blame it on the attitudes of millennials or Gen-Zers who would rather make money (or not) on TikTok than get a job where someone tells them what to do all day. We can blame it on the government. Or we can blame it on the fact that people got used to working at home, and now there's no going back. There's a lot of blame to go around and no single cause. But the phenomenon is real.

Unfortunately, I don't have any answers, and I haven't heard from anyone else who has, either.

But with your help, I'd like to start a dialogue. I want to hear from you about what you've tried, how you've failed, and hopefully a little bit of what's worked. Who have you hired, trained, or convinced to stay? What changes did you have to make? Just as importantly, who has left, and why?

Just as importantly, what are you doing to cope with these issues? Are you losing sales? Are you outsourcing? Are you investing in more automation? What answers have you come up with to keep the gears turning?

Even if you don't have answers either, I'd still love to hear from you. The dialogue starts with an e-mail. Just send me one at stott@agma.org. I promise I'll write back, and if you DO have ideas, I promise I'll share them with the community.

Let's talk.

P.S. You can put your hands down now.

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