



Martha Ponge
Director of Apprenticeship

Are You All In?

The manufacturing sector is facing the perfect storm when it comes to finding and developing the workforce of the future. If manufacturers hope to sustain a workforce, large enough and with the necessary requisite skills, to support their growth, they need to address their workforce challenges head on.

The challenges are not a big surprise to anyone in manufacturing. The Baby Boomers are retiring from all sectors at a rate of 10,000 a day in the United States. This is an enormous problem. Add to that, workers with enough education and training, ready to fill those spots is insufficient; or students with the necessary skills often choose careers in the “glitzier” computer tech sector.

Where does this leave us? What options for successfully recruiting talent do we have? My suggestion is to go all in! For example, when programs that address the workforce challenge solutions arise, such as registered apprenticeships, get involved with advisory panels and working boards. Be at the table when decisions about what will work best in a community are first being discussed. Instead of standing by the side and “sticking a toe in the water,” take a chance and “dive in” and be an early adopter.

Often, when communities are working together to discuss options, we will work with elected officials to help guide and support their efforts. When we looked for funding to support the New York State Manufacturers Intermediary Apprenticeship Program (MIAP), we turned to our State Legislature for support. Having community members who were involved in economic development, career pathway programs, and other community initiatives carried a lot of weight. The State Legislators we contacted knew we weren't looking for free money, instead, they recognized

that MACNY and the numerous manufacturers we support already had real skin in the game. When you are asked to write letters of support, please consider it. Take the time to truly understand the request and express what your company needs succinctly to those who are able to help. A letter to the editor is another way to bring more community awareness to an issue or call others with similar missions to action.

Finally, if you aren't spreading the word about the amazing things manufacturers in Central New York do – start today! Be your biggest advocate. Start a mini marketing campaign. Create a video to show to student visitors from middle schools, high schools, and even summer camp programs. Invite the media in to do a story about the shared learning happening on your manufacturing floor. Let millennials know you have a pathway designed for their professional growth. “If you build it, they will come” worked with the Field of Dreams and we manufacturers have to build a vision of the opportunities available at our companies. I believe that if we work together to build the vision and put it out there for all to see, they will in fact come.

Here are two examples of how you can “Go All In” this month:

Share our Apprenticeship Video with a person you know who may benefit from seeing manufacturing with their own eyes. View here: <http://bit.ly/pathwaystojobs>.

Attend the PEB Annual Awards Signing Day Ceremony. See High school grads and college grads sign their employment papers to begin their first job in manufacturing right here in Syracuse, NY. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/PEBAnnualAwards2019>.