Manufacturing matters: The public’s view of US manufacturing

Manufacturing is consistently recognized worldwide as one of the industries that contributes most to the economic prosperity of a nation and its citizens. Why then are US manufacturers facing a gap—not only in finding the skills needed, but also in Americans’ interest in pursuing long-term careers in manufacturing? To explore this dilemma, The Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte have teamed up to conduct the 6th US Public Opinion of Manufacturing study. The study reveals Americans remain steadfast in their support of manufacturing. By leveraging these insights, US manufacturers gain opportunities to strengthen interest, support, and engagement in the US manufacturing industry.

Americans value a strong manufacturing sector...

83% believe manufacturing is important to America’s economic prosperity

7 in 10 believe the US should invest more in manufacturing

8 in 10 Americans believe US manufacturing is important to maintain America’s standard of living

64% believe the US manufacturing industry is high-tech

Yet Americans are reluctant to choose careers in manufacturing

One-third of Americans would not encourage their children to pursue a manufacturing career because...

77% Worried about security and stability

70% Not a strong career path

64% Does not pay enough

Yet only half believe a career in manufacturing provides good pay relative to other industries

67% believe manufacturing jobs are interesting and rewarding

88% require higher level of tech expertise and skills

81% cleaner and safer environments

77% more innovative

74% more creative

Americans believe targeted programs would increase interest in manufacturing careers

67% Internships and apprenticeship programs

62% Manufacturing certification or degree programs

Those familiar with manufacturing are nearly 2X as likely to encourage children to pursue a manufacturing career

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This survey was conducted online during December 2016, and polled a nationally representative sample of 1,000 Americans.

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Manufacturing matters: Top 10 US public opinions about the manufacturing industry

1. *Americans believe manufacturing is vital*
   - 83% Important to economic prosperity
   - 81% Important to American standard of living

2. *76% of Americans believe the US should further invest in manufacturing...*
   - 69% and 69% believe it should be a national priority

3. *Americans support manufacturing job creation*
   - Ranked #1 by parents of school age children, Gen X, and those familiar with the industry

4. *Perception of manufacturing is improving*
   - Manufacturing...
     - Is high tech: 43% in 2014 vs. 64% in 2017
     - Can compete globally: 49% in 2014 vs. 55% in 2017
     - Will continue to grow: 29% in 2014 vs. 41% in 2017

5. *Americans value benefits, pay, and interesting work*
   - 87% Good benefits
   - 85% Good pay
   - 84% Interesting and rewarding work

6. *One-third of Americans would not encourage their children to pursue a manufacturing career*
   - 77% Worried about security and stability
   - 70% Not a strong career path
   - 64% Does not pay enough

7. *Industry familiarity increases positive perception*
   - Those familiar with manufacturing are nearly 2X as likely to encourage children to pursue a manufacturing career

8. *Americans have a positive perception about future manufacturing jobs*
   - They believe manufacturing jobs will...
     - Require technical skills and expertise: 88%
     - Be cleaner and safer: 81%
     - Will require less manual labor: 77%
     - Will be more interesting: 77%
     - Will be more creative: 74%

9. *Americans indicate targeted programs would increase interest in manufacturing careers*
   - 67% internships, work study, or apprenticeship
   - 62% Certification or degree programs for manufacturing skills training

10. *Opportunity for manufacturers to build excitement about advanced manufacturing technologies and careers*
    - While US executives rank predictive analytics and advanced materials vital to future manufacturing competitiveness, the general public is largely not aware of these strategically important technologies.