

Leading2Lean

WHY LEADING2LEAN CHOOSES TO SUPPORT MANUFACTURING

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Leading2Lean Launches The Manufacturing Scholarship Fund

By: Keith Barr

If you ask a young person today what they aspire to be when they grow up, how many would say that their dream job is in manufacturing? Unfortunately for the U.S. economy, the reality is that young people are not rushing to join the manufacturing industry, even though there is an abundance of high paying jobs available.

They're not entirely to blame for their thinking. Misconceptions about the manufacturing industry are rampant. Many Americans, from Generation Z to Baby Boomers, envision manufacturing as being dirty, unsafe, monotonous, unreliable, and unfulfilling. The image in the minds of most potential workers is a drudging life

of repetitive tasks; doing the same thing over and over. According to a recent Deloitte study, fewer than half of Americans surveyed believe U.S. manufacturing jobs are interesting, rewarding, clean, safe, or secure.

Interestingly, while American workers are opting for other careers, most view manufacturing as being critical to the U.S. economy. The same Deloitte study found that 8 in 10 Americans believe that U.S. manufacturing is important to maintain the nation's standard of living. Americans know that manufacturing is vital, but there is little encouragement to pursue manufacturing careers. There should be.

In 2016, the average manufacturing worker in the U.S. earned an annual salary of \$82,023, including pay and benefits according to the National Association of Manufacturers. That's much more than the \$50,556 average salary of college graduates, according to a 2016 study by the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

And there are currently jobs available. In fact, there are 400,000 vacant high paying manufacturing jobs available in the U.S., per the National Association of Manufacturers. That's contrary to what many Americans imagine when they consider jobs in the industry.

The modern manufacturing plant is dynamic, technologically advanced, innovative and challenging. Artificial Intelligence and robotics have revolutionized the plant floor. Manufacturing is more efficient, competitive and profitable.

Humans and human creativity are fundamental to this transformation of the manufacturing industry. Humans have what machines lack: the ability to act quickly when problems arise and the innate ability to analyze across a wide field of data. The modern factory worker is already accustomed to using various technologies in their daily lives. With modern manufacturing, this new workforce seeks and expects to use technology in their work lives as well.

The question remains why, in this environment, jobs remain unfilled despite being

financially rewarding and intrinsically interesting? The obvious answer is that a new story about manufacturing must be put forward.

Beginning this year, Leading2Lean, a software technology company and creator of CloudDISPATCH, a Lean Execution System (LES), is launching the Leading2Lean Manufacturing Scholarship Fund to encourage and financially support the next generation of plant floor workers. Four scholarships will be awarded to students enrolled in post-high school manufacturing programs in the state of Michigan and at the Lake Washington Institute of Technology in Kirkland, Washington. Two \$1,250 scholarships will be given to students across Michigan, and two \$1,250 scholarships to students at the Lake Washington Institute of Technology to be put towards their education. The company hopes to grow this fund in the future and encourage other technology companies and manufacturers to join the effort.

The Leading2Lean Manufacturing Scholarship Fund represents an investment in the future of American manufacturing. Our customers are manufacturers and our software was created in a manufacturing environment. For us, the fund represents a belief in the American worker.

As members of the manufacturing industry, we must ask ourselves what we can do to propel our economy to prosperity. Educating young people about the realities and benefits of manufacturing careers is a start. Investing in them and their futures is the next step, and the path forward.

For more information about Leading2Lean's Manufacturing Scholarship Fund, please visit: <https://www.leading2lean.com/scholarships/>.

About the Author

Keith Barr is CEO of Leading2Lean, a software technology company and creator of CloudDISPATCH, a Lean Execution System (LES) used by manufacturers to analyze and improve their production, maintenance and quality operations.

CloudDISPATCH is used by manufacturers in all verticals and around the world to improve critical KPIs, including cost-of-product, throughput and OEE by providing factory workers the insights they need to solve problems and improve efficiency on

the plant floor.

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