CLOSE THE SKILLS GAP
OHIO, KENTUCKY, INDIANA
TRI STATE REGION

A Framework to Address the Current and Future
Skills and Workforce Development Gaps
Manufacturing is revitalizing the economy and making the Greater Cincinnati tri state region strong again. And, when manufacturing investments are strong, a multiplier effect ripples across the economy, creating jobs and growth in other industries. Simply put, manufacturing creates jobs, and manufacturing boosts the economy. In fact, for every dollar invested in manufacturing, another $1.37 in additional value is created in other sectors.

Manufacturing is the second largest private sector employer in the tri state region with innovative and rewarding jobs that include salaries and benefits well above the national average. In May 2014, the Southwestern Ohio Region along Interstate 75 with 27 counties stretching into Northern Kentucky and Indiana applied as the Southwest Ohio Aerospace Region and received a Department of Commerce designation as one of only 12 Manufacturing Communities in the U.S.

Despite demonstrated opportunities in manufacturing, the supply side of the manufacturing equation (workforce) struggles to keep up with demand (open positions). The industry suffers from negative perceptions such as being low tech, repetitive, dangerous and an unwelcoming culture, which impacts educational recruitment of millennials and the talent pipeline. Although nine out of 10 Americans believe manufacturing is among the most important domestic industries, only four in 10 parents would recommend their children to pursue manufacturing careers. These attitudes coupled with a lack of understanding of advanced manufacturing of the 21st century drives potential young talent towards other industries.

In response to projected workforce shortages in the advanced manufacturing industry, Partners for a Competitive Workforce (PCW) convenes the Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership team to meet the needs of employers and employees in the industry. The partnership includes regional employers, educators, workforce investment board representatives and community based organizations with the objectives of aligning education with industry, developing career pathways for job seekers and utilizing industry intelligence to develop the talent supply chain.

PCW is aggressively addressing the skills gap with initiatives focused on changing the perception of careers in manufacturing; re-establishing the U.S. as the global leader of manufacturing education; and advocating for education and job training policies that strengthen the U.S. manufacturing workforce.

In order to maintain a prosperous economy and increase productivity, U.S. manufacturing must remain globally competitive. We need to be innovative, adaptable, and accountable in order to take control of our future.

The framework laid out in the following pages is the path to do just that. This is our call to action. This is how we make the Greater Cincinnati tri state region strong.

Cheryl Neiheisel    Stephen Tucker
Employer Chair Person   Director, Industry Partnerships
Richards Industries    Partners for a Competitive Workforce
GOAL 1

Promote a world-class image of manufacturing to tri state schools, teachers, parents, and elected officials.

DID YOU KNOW

Did you know: In the United States, women make up about 47 percent of the labor force, but only 27 percent of the manufacturing workforce.
To close the manufacturing skills gap in the tri state region, Partners for a Competitive Workforce works to promote a world-class image of manufacturing to schools, parents and elected officials in order to reach the young minds of manufacturing’s future.

It is crucial to promote a positive message of the industry throughout communities to showcase the value of manufacturing careers to all potential workers. We recognize the need to connect with state schools, local parents and community leaders to amplify this message to these influential voices that will ultimately help strengthen manufacturing in the tri state area.

The Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership launched Dream It. Do It. Ohio, Cincinnati Region OKI, to promote the image of manufacturing among next generation workers as a high-tech, creative, and rewarding career option. Dream It. Do It. OKI offers students connections to colleges and training, inside looks into manufacturing careers, hands-on activities, and more.

We have also connected with the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, committed to growing and developing the manufacturing industry in our region.

**WHAT CAN EMPLOYERS DO?**

- Partner with the Dream It. Do It. OKI campaign, which communicates to our young people the many options available for great career opportunities within manufacturing.
- Tell your company’s story and career opportunities to students, parents, teachers, counselors and the community – in person and via local media – on National Manufacturing Day and throughout Manufacturing Month.
- Form meaningful and long-term partnerships with schools at all levels (K-16): hold open houses, sponsor students and teachers in internships.

**WHAT CAN EDUCATORS DO?**

- Learn about modern manufacturing by visiting plants on Manufacturing Day, participating in externships, etc.
- Promote manufacturing as a viable career choice: emphasize advanced and emerging technologies and stress the high-wage career pathway.

**WHAT CAN COMMUNITY LEADERS DO?**

- Stress the impact of manufacturing on the local and regional economy, including high-wage careers and quality of life.
- Join the Dream It. Do It. network, support Manufacturing Day, promote women in manufacturing, and demonstrate that manufacturing is cool!

**SPOTLIGHT**

The Dream It. Do It. campaign sponsored locally by PCW, the Northern Kentucky Industrial Park Association and TechSolve, is a national platform being used locally to change the perception of manufacturing and inspire the next generation of workers to pursue manufacturing careers. During 2014, DIDI OKI engaged over 800 students, 50 educators and more than 100 manufacturers. Over 1000 individuals visited the dreamitdoitoki website as well. During manufacturing month PCW and TechSolve sponsored several events and open houses where over 15 educators and over 700 kids between grades 6 – 12 connected with and toured area manufacturing companies. Students also had the opportunity to meet with representatives from Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, Sinclair Community College and the University of Cincinnati to learn about educational programming offered at these institutions.
GOAL 2

Encourage tri state education to utilize nationally recognized, industry-validated credentials

DID YOU KNOW

Did you know: An estimated 2.7 million jobs are likely to be needed as a result of retirements of the existing workforce while 700,000 jobs are likely to be created due to natural business growth.
The Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership has adopted and promoted the use of the National Association of Manufacturers Skills Certification System, and have gained alignment within local community colleges to the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), as well as the Manufacturing Standards Skills Council Certified Production Technician Credential. More than 1,500 NCRCs have been delivered to date, and current providers of the MSSC CPT curriculum include: Butler Technology and Career Development Schools, Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency, Easter Seals TriState Work Resource Center, Gateway Community and Technical College, and several Ohio Means Jobs Centers. With that, more than 750 individuals have participated in entry-level manufacturing training based on this industry-recognized curriculum.

Since 2009, network providers of the AMIP enrolled more than 2,100 individuals into occupational and job readiness training, with 83% completing training earning more than 2,600 credentials. Seventy-one percent of completers obtained employment in manufacturing or related industries. Industry credentials provide an opportunity to clearly articulate a path from being a student to having a career in manufacturing.

**WHAT CAN EMPLOYERS DO?**

- Prefer certifications as part of the HR screening process for hiring and promoting workers. Ask your education partners to deliver nationally-certified students.
- Become a partner in our apprenticeship program to give students real-world, industry experience.

**WHAT CAN EDUCATORS DO?**

- Align manufacturing programs with industry-based standards and certifications and employer needs.
- Support faculty development, including certifying instructors.
- Recruit and maintain highly effective teachers and administrators.
- Become a partner in our apprenticeship program, allowing your students to get hands-on experience with local manufacturers.

**WHAT CAN COMMUNITY LEADERS DO?**

- Promote skills certification as an economic development tool.
- Support the implementation of the tri state area’s college and career ready standards with appropriate resources and training.
- Support Career and Technical Education (CTE).

---

**SPOTLIGHT**

Partners for a Competitive Workforce, the Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board and the Workforce Investment Board of Butler, Clermont and Warren counties in Ohio partnered to fund hybrid apprenticeship programs for welders and machine operators. Apprentices receive employer sponsored benefits, college credit, nationally recognized industry certifications and participate on a hybrid wage progression scale. Butler Technology and Career Development Center and Cincinnati State Technical and Community College deliver related technical instruction for the two tracks and apprentices benefit from a user friendly apprenticeship schedule. A public/private investment of $105,504.00 is projected to generate $477,000.00 in apprenticeship wages over the first 2 years and provide participants with skills to advance in their careers and businesses with a qualified workforce.

---

“I was given a raise after just 6 months which was higher than all of my increases combined over the last 5 years. This program has literally changed my life because I now have marketable skills and a career.”

- Chelsee Reese, Welding Apprentice
GOAL 3

Serve as the liaison between manufacturing needs and education articulation

DID YOU KNOW

Did you know: If given an opportunity to create 1,000 new jobs in their community, Americans put manufacturing as their first choice.
The Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership acts as an organization that helps education better understand the needs of their local manufacturers and adapt their programs to better fit those needs. In return, we take action to help provide manufacturers’ participation in supporting education activities. Manufacturers provide resources and assets, establishing opportunities for facility tours and presentations, and are active with leadership and consultation.

The Partnership also supports state and local policies that strengthen innovation, educational opportunities in technical fields, and access to a certified manufacturing workforce for employers.

**WHAT CAN EMPLOYERS DO?**

- Highlight the return on value of internal HR policies that promote certifications.
- Advocate for federal, state, and local policies toward alignment with industry certifications, requiring third-party skills validation.

**WHAT CAN EDUCATORS DO?**

- Redefine “completion” to include award of industry certifications.
- Support public funding for sector partnerships and training funds for industry recognized credentials.

---

**SPOTLIGHT**

Partners for a Competitive Workforce and Duke Energy provided scholarships enabling Northern Kentucky high school students to attend Manufacturing Skill Standards Council’s (MSSC) Certified Production Technician (CPT) training at Gateway Community and Technical College. Students who successfully complete the course by passing four required assessments earn six college-credit hours along with MSSC CPT Certification. This program provides students with the opportunity to complete their high school graduation requirements while concurrently taking college-level courses.

“This model allows us to simultaneously address two of manufacturing’s most critical issues, the skills gap and the talent pipeline.”
- Stephen Tucker, Director of Industry Partnerships, Partners for a Competitive Workforce
Partners For a Competitive Workforce
Stephen Tucker
(513) 762-3720
stephen.tucker@uwgc.org

TechSolve
Gary Conley
(513) 948-2000
conley@techsolve.org

Northern Kentucky Industrial Park
Dallas Trinkle
(859) 525-8811
drtrinkle@acramold.com