Attract, Develop and Retain
by Bob Zaruta, President/CEO, NWIRC

Three essential components for a successful business- attract, develop, and retain employees. It's in the news everyday- one of the top issues among manufacturers nationally is the difficulty of finding people and the exodus of retiring baby boomers. A recent New York Times headline read “Manufacturers Increase Efforts to Woo Workers to Rural Areas”. U.S. News featured a commentary called “Bridging the STEM Skills Gap Involves Both Education and Industry Commitments”. And there are numerous others every week. Surely everyone knows by now about this concern, but no one is living it more than the manufacturers. Let's take a brief look at these three essential components and their interdependency.

Attract. It's evident in Pennsylvania over the last several years that greater emphasis has been placed on career readiness education and programs to attract youth into manufacturing careers by both the public and private sectors. The PA Department of Education has Future Ready PA with a career readiness indicator requiring career exploration activities, including job shadowing. The PA Department of Labor and Industry recently awarded grants to support Teacher in the Workplace initiatives in workforce development areas in our (NWIRC's) 13-county footprint. The NWIRC is one of the program coordinators for the What's So Cool about Manufacturing student video contests helping to change perceptions about manufacturing among students, parents, and teachers and connect education with industry. During last school year across Pennsylvania, there were 12 contests with 174 middle school teams paired with 174 manufacturers and generated over 600,000 online votes to select Viewer’s Choice Award winners. Of course, national MFG Day is observed each year the first Friday of October which encourages manufacturers to open their doors for students, parents, and teachers, and there are many other events in October across the region recognizing this day.

Develop. This activity goes hand-in-hand with the other components because a plan to develop your employees will increase your success of attracting and retaining. The Work Institute’s 2018 Retention Report cites that the number one reason for employees leaving a company is no longer their supervisor, but rather lack of opportunities for growth and achievement. Developing internal career pathways, ongoing-training, and creating an internal company academy are initiatives we’ve observed of companies with a little to zero turnover rate. Developing employees improves their engagement, the overall company culture, and a company’s ability to stay competitive.

Retention. With so much focus today on attracting youth and ‘filling the pipeline’, it’s important to keep your sights on retention, especially because cost of turnover is estimated at one-third of the worker’s salary.* Company culture is an important factor to not only attract the new generations (millennials and Zs), but also to get them to stick around. One in four employees will change jobs in the next year and by 2020 it will be 1 of 3 changing jobs each year. The research shows 77% of those who quit could have been retained. * NWIRC’s strategic focus includes an increasing role and making an impact on the 21st Century workforce and organizational culture. And, we are here as a conduit to help connect companies with a plethora of resources (those mentioned and others) to address the need to attract, develop, and retain your employees.

*Source: Work Institute, 2018 Retention Report

MFG Day Forum & Luncheon

A special forum and networking luncheon event is planned in support of the manufacturing heroes in our region and their efforts to attain, develop, and retain employees. The program will be held on October 9, 2018 from 9:00am-1:30pm at the DuBois Country Club. The focus of the morning will be on assessing and
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enhancing company culture; generational diversity as a competitive advantage; developing internal career pathways, onboarding best practices, and a discussion of the Work Institute’s 2018 Retention Report. We’ll also hear from Penn United, a company that has been innovative with attracting, developing, and retaining employees. The program is presented by NWIRC, IMC, Greater DuBois Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development, and Workforce Solutions for North Central PA.

Cost is $25 and we encourage company owners, executives, human resource professionals, and anyone with a commitment to manufacturing in the region to attend. Register at www.nwirc.org/events.

Increasing Levels of Employee Engagement
by Craig Corsi, Lean Specialist

One common challenge that many organizations face is the ability to sustain their continuous improvement efforts beyond their initial deployment. One reason for this is the belief that these initiatives must be driven from the top down throughout the organization. Although it is critical that the commitment must be supported 100% by leadership, it does not mean it should be ‘owned’ by leadership.

While manufacturing organizations may take different paths for continuous improvement efforts- from Lean Six Sigma to 2 second lean and use of value stream mapping or 5S, a common misstep is that we undervalue the importance of employee engagement. According to a recent Gallup poll, more than 70% of employees are disengaged in their job in the U.S., and the trend is not improving. Why is this? It is hard to come to the realization that we need to loosen the reigns in order to help employees grow. In lean we recognize it is one of the eight major classifications of waste- not utilizing the employee’s knowledge, skills and abilities to their fullest potential.

Investing in human capital is one of the biggest ROIs a company can make. Empowering your employees through continuous training and education; involving them in your improvement efforts; and allowing them to make decisions and ‘own’ their successes and failures. Gallup poll statistics show that companies who have engaged and satisfied workforces realize improvements in the following areas; improved profitability (21%), higher productivity (17%), fewer defects (40%), lower absenteeism (41%), lower turnover (59%) and fewer accidents (70%).

So, no matter what path you take for continuous improvement, here are a few key attributes companies have embraced to increase their level of employee engagement (from the shop floor to the office);

**Foster Open Communication:** Leaders who have achieved results from empowerment are open and transparent with employees. Team collaboration is improved when everyone talks to everyone.

**Implement Team Meetings:** Gather employees together daily or weekly to share information. Guided by an agenda, discuss the important topics relevant to the company. Use this as an opportunity to educate and engage your employees.

**Measure and Improve:** Develop pertinent key metrics that are relevant to your employees. Ensure they understand them, how they’re calculated and more importantly how their work behaviors influence them.

**Ask Questions:** When you ask people about their ideas, you engage them in identifying what to do. This is at the heart of empowerment. For those organizations who have successfully introduced this concept, their leadership team leads with questions before ever considering what the answers might be.

And, regardless of where your company is at on its lean or continuous improvement journey, take a moment to reflect and ask yourself, “how engaged are our employees in the process”? Chances are, there are some opportunities for improvement.

Craig Corsi is a Lean Specialist with over 20 years of experience in manufacturing operational excellence, supply chain and inventory management, and continuous improvement initiatives and is the facilitator for NWIRC’s Lean Together working group for operational excellence.

**Side Note:** Craig will be the instructor for upcoming sessions of Lean for the Office and a Lean Champion Series. Check www.nwirc.org/events for schedule and details.
**Triple Crown Series for Profitable Topline Growth**

For companies focusing on profitable topline growth, there is a lot of information to digest. For example, understanding the ideal customer profile for generating the most profitable margins, diverse solution options for finding new customers with needs that match the company’s capabilities, various technologies available for enabling sales growth, and knowing key attributes for an engaging website—just to name a few. NWIRC is pulling all of this information together in a Triple Crown Series of information briefings and dialogue with subject matter experts to help you make the right decisions for your company. Mark your calendar for these sessions scheduled at the Ambassador Conference Center in Erie:

**Session #1 Breakfast | Oct 23 from 8:30am-10:00am**
Assessing Current State: customers, margins, and value proposition

**Session #2 Lunch | Nov 6 from 11:30am-1:00pm:**
Solutions: market intelligence, inbound vs outbound marketing

**Session #3 Dinner | Nov 20 from 4:30pm-5:00pm**
Resources and Tools: lead management, website as a first impression, and other technologies to enable sales growth

Cost is $25 each session, or $60 for all three. Register and see more details at: www.nwirc.org/events.

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**WiM PA Chapter Planned at Franklin Industries**

The next WiM PA Chapter meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 27th from 10am to Noon at Franklin Industries, 600 Atlantic Ave., Franklin (Venango County), PA. (Please note this is a date change). Lunch is included and will follow the tour at the award-winning Bella Cucina’s Restaurant. Cost of members is $10 and non-members is $15. Find the Chapter event and register at www.womeninmanufacturing.org.

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**What’s So Cool About Manufacturing?**

What’s So Cool is a middle school student video contest to create awareness of cool manufacturing career opportunities in the region and will be kicking off this October with various contests across Pennsylvania. Teams of 7th and 8th grade students are paired with manufacturing sponsors to be featured in their video project. NWIRC, along with various community partners, will be introducing new counties to the program this year. The Northwest Contest will include Erie (participated last year) and Crawford Counties and the West Central Contest will include Mercer and Lawrence Counties. Another contest in NWIRC’s region is the North Central Contest coordinated by Workforce Solutions.

More information about participating teams, manufacturers, sponsors, and community partners will be announced soon at www.WhatsSoCool.org and www.nwirc.org.

Contact Laurie Knoll if you would like to get involved at 814-217-6066 or lknoll@nwirc.org.

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**Back to School with Teacher in the Workplace**

The PA Department of Labor & industry has awarded several Teacher in the Workplace grants to workforce investment areas throughout our region. Programs vary, but the coordinators are looking for manufacturers interested in connecting with educators. Here are some contacts to connect with a program in your region:

**Clarion, Forest, and Venango Counties:**
Joseph Reinsel, Riverview Intermediate Unit 6, (814) 226-7103, jreinsel@RIU6.org

**Crawford, Erie, and Warren Counties:**
Anne Leonard, (814) 734-8462, anne_leonard@iu5.org

**Mercer and Lawrence Counties:** Rebecca Moder, West Central Job Partnership, (724) 347-7855, rmoder@wcjp.org

**Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, and Potter Counties:** Workforce Solutions, Pam Streich, 814-245-1835, pstreich@ncwdb.org
YOUR STRATEGIC BUSINESS ADVISORS

If you have questions, or would like to speak with someone from NWIRC about services, please contact your Strategic Business Advisor (SBA):

Tom Weible  
814.590.5202  
Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean & Potter Counties

Susan Hileman  
814.572.2077  
Forest, Mercer, Venango, Clarion Counties & Titusville

Lisa Pustelak  
814.683.1034  
Crawford, Warren Counties, Corry & Edinboro

Andrew Idzik  
814.217.6068  
Erie County & Bradford

NORTH CENTRAL OFFICE  
103 BEAVER DRIVE  
DuBOIS, PA 15901

NORTHWEST OFFICE  
764 BESSEMER STREET, # 105  
MEADVILLE, PA 16335

Lean Champion Series

Oct 30 - Principals of Lean  
Nov 6 - Value Stream Mapping  
Nov 13 - SS/Key Performance Indicators  
Nov 20 - Setup Reduction/Kaizen/Kanban

Lean for the Office

Nov 7 and 14  
Locations: DuBois and Erie

UPCOMING EVENTS

Measurement Systems Analysis  
Sept 20  
Location: St Marys  
Another tool for your quality management system. Participants will learn the concept for assessing, measuring, and improving the reliability of the measurement system. You will review different sources of measurement variation and techniques to identify, isolate, and reduce measurement variation.

ISO 9001:2015 Internal Auditor  
Sept 11, 12, 13  
Oct 16, 17, 18  
Locations: Hermitage and St Marys  
A 3-day course provides a detailed review of ISO 9001:2015 quality standard, including the most recent changes. Participants will learn how to conduct an audit, write the audit report, take corrective actions, and more.

IATF 16949:2016 Internal Auditor  
Sept 25, 26, 27  
Oct 9, 10, 11  
Locations: St Marys and Meadville  
Training of this automotive standard will provide understanding of quality management principles in context with ISO 9001:2015 and the IATF 16949:2016, along with techniques of process-based auditing.

For more information or to register for training, visit www.nwirc.org