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Expanding the Talent pipeline

“The Skilled Labor Crisis in the U.S.”, the opening learning session at HMA’s National Conference and Expo, was presented by economist, author and former president of the National Association of Manufacturers and the Manufacturing Institute, **Jerry Jasinowski**. Regarding the skills shortage being felt by the manufacturing sector, Jasinowski said,

“The causes of the manufacturing skill gap range from the negative perception of manufacturing to the retirement of the baby boomers, to the lack of basic skills among many new workers entering the labor force, to the need for more advanced skills associated with STEM: science, technology, engineering and mathematics. To expand the talent pipeline, we have to:

- Strengthen our efforts to back basic **K-12 and post K-12 education reform** - improving the quality of teachers, more professional school management, using charter schools to spur innovative change, **a greater focus on curriculum embracing technology and innovation**, more workplace skill training for K-12 and post K-12 young people.
- Look at how new technologies - mobile learning, tablet utilization, games, 3D printing, online and workplace curriculum - can become a platform for new learning. Check out **EverFi**, a company with a high tech platform that provides needed curriculum to classrooms on issues that include financial literacy and STEM skills. EverFi has a national infrastructure of over 6,000 K-12 schools and 1,000 corporate and non-profit partners.
- Close the skills gap by working with community colleges and technical schools to provide two year certifications in a whole range of skills, including a full range of advanced manufacturing skills. The Manufacturing Institute has a wonderful program called **Dream It, Do It**, which is now operating **worker training partnership programs in 35 states**. They work with local schools, community colleges, businesses and community groups to **train candidates to work in industries specific to their communities**.
- Bring the workplace to the classroom and give students a look at future jobs through internships, mentorships, and apprenticeships. Many corporations have apprenticeship programs to train workers and specific skills including STEM related skills. Companies are now certifying workers in particular skills programs like that established by the Manufacturing Institute where almost 300,000 workers have been certified in specific skills.

- Do a better job of highlighting the exciting and 'good jobs' that can be found in manufacturing - digital communications, 3D manufacturing, and robotics. This applies to the Hardwood Manufacturing industry, which has new technology and sustainable green products.
- Consult Eric Chester's Book, ***Reviving Work Ethic: A Leader's Guide to Ending Entitlement and Restoring Pride in the Emerging Workforce***, to find ways to better understand your workers and ways to recharge their motivation and work ethic. Be sure your employees know how important their job is to satisfying customers and achieving success. And that means you have to also explain how your product is good for society and the economy. This is particularly true for the millennials who want to do good work, as well as make money in their jobs."

Bottom line: "Today's manufacturing company requires a high performance workforce to achieve both basic and advanced manufacturing production and distribution. **Education** is key in expanding the talent pipeline."