

Skills Gap

Women in Manufacturing: The Untapped Talent

Jennifer Altimore, Kennametal | Jun 01, 2017

What You Need to Know

Why Aren't More Women Jumping Into the Industry?

how do we recruit, retain and advance women in manufacturing?

Recognizing Women in Manufacturing.



In a study done by the Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte of more than 600 women working in manufacturing, over 75% agreed that a manufacturing career is interesting and rewarding.

The manufacturing industry has historically been a male-dominated field. Though the number has increased over the years, women still only represent less than 30% of the industry's workforce.

With the reported manufacturing skills gap and half a million job openings, it is more important than ever to tap into manufacturing's largest pool of untapped talent - WOMEN

Then Why Aren't More Women Jumping Into the Industry?

Experts believe it may be due in large part to outdated and incorrect perceptions that manufacturing is a male-favored culture, with jobs that are dirty and labor-intensive. This simply is not the case.

In fact, as modern manufacturing becomes increasingly more technologically advanced, the majority of jobs in manufacturing are done behind a computer or in a lab coat.

So how do we recruit, retain and advance women in manufacturing? The study suggests these strategies to push this initiative forward:

1. Cultural change starting at the C-suite
2. Address gender bias head-on
3. Create a more flexible work environment
4. Foster support, mentorship and sponsorship
5. Promote personal development
6. Build a strong employer brand

With women increasingly outperforming men in acquiring advanced skills, manufacturing is now the new frontier for women.

Recognizing Women in Manufacturing

To change perceptions of the manufacturing industry, and create new opportunities for women in the sector, the Science, Technology, Engineering and Production (***STEP***) ***Ahead Initiative*** was established by the Manufacturing Institute, Deloitte, University of Phoenix, and the Society of Manufacturing Engineers.

This initiative also created the Women in Manufacturing STEP Awards to honor women in the industry who have demonstrated excellence and leadership in their careers in manufacturing. Honoring those from the factory floor to the C-suite, the STEP Awards aim to inspire the next generation of female leaders to pursue a career in manufacturing, while also showcasing the industry's amazing opportunities.

Key Takeaways

- Women can be a key resource in helping to fill vacant manufacturing jobs.
- There needs to be a change in mindset to help recruit women into the industry.
- A new focus is being created to recognize women currently in the industry.

Previously featured on the ***Kennametal Chronicle***.

www.mscdirect.com/betterMRO

Copyright ©2025 MSC Industrial Supply Co.