

THE RESOURCE

Labor & Industrial **INSIGHTS**  
VOL. VIII, ISSUE II  
magazine

*Navigating the Manufacturing Skills Gap*

**INSIDE**

How the World's Best Workplaces  
Are Changing the World of Work

6 Steps of Effective Problem Solving

Overcoming Leadership Fatigue

AND MORE...

# **Our Mantra for 2022** ...and our Challenge for You



**Don't wait for things to get easier, simpler, better. Life will always be complicated. Learn to be happy right now. Otherwise, you'll run out of time.**

# **THE RESOURCE**

# Labor & Industrial **INSIGHTS**<sup>®</sup> magazine

## LEADERSHIP

# 4

### 6 Steps of Effective Problem Solving

By Terri Klass

## WORKPLACE TIPS

# 6

### How the World's Best Workplaces Are Changing the World of Work

By Claire Hastwell

## RECRUITING

# 8

### Navigating the Manufacturing Skills Gap

By Jonathan Trout

## RETENTION

# 10

### 8 Effective Employee Retention Strategies for Countering the Great Resignation

By O.C. Tanner

## WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

# 12

### What Generation Z Really Wants in the Manufacturing Workplace

By Heather Badower

## LEADERSHIP

# 14

### Overcoming Leadership Fatigue

By Kevin Eikenberry



Labor & Industrial **INSIGHTS**<sup>®</sup>

#### PUBLISHER & EDITORIAL DIRECTORS

Haley Marketing Group

EDITOR IN CHIEF  
Mackenzie Froese

MANAGING EDITOR  
Marsha Brofka-Berends

#### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Heather Badower

Kevin Eikenberry

Claire Hastwell

Terri Klass

O.C. Tanner

Jonathan Trout

#### DESIGN

Matt Coleman

# 6 STEPS

## OF EFFECTIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

BY TERRI KLASS



# S

ometimes, when a group is working on a problem (and especially when the challenge

they're trying to resolve is a complicated one), different perspectives and opposing suggestions can give way to heated discussion, which in turn can lead to an impasse. Such roadblocks aren't inevitable, though: disagreements are common, but how participants approach problem solving is the key to a meaningful outcome. By implementing certain best practices in a six-step process, teams can be better positioned to tackle their problems straight on and therefore achieve solutions that all team members can live with.

# T

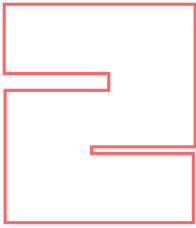
### DEFINE THE TRUE PROBLEM

To end up with the most effective solution to a problem, the team must clearly identify the real issue at hand. (This sounds like common sense, but, unfortunately, people often fail to do this.) For example, if a team starts with the assumption that the problem with a deliverable is due to a delay in the work being shared, but the problem is actually due to the process being used, then the solution it comes up with will never resolve the issue.

Questions that can help get to the real problem might include:

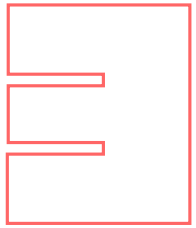
- Why is this a problem?
- Whom does this problem affect?
- What isn't the problem?
- What are the different elements of the problem?





## **BRAINSTORM A LIST OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

Once the true problem is clearly defined, the team can then attempt to identify possible solutions to it. The most effective way to start this process is brainstorming—that is, throwing out as many ideas as possible without making snap judgments about them or discounting any of them right off the bat. (For some team members, brainstorming can be difficult if they are unable to refrain from sharing their comments.) This step is all about quantity, not quality.

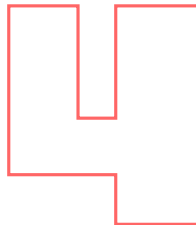


## **INCLUDE ALL STAKEHOLDERS**

The brainstorming process must include all team members so that everyone feels buy-in with the end result. When people see themselves as part of the problem-solving process, they will keep sharing their important ideas. To ensure that all team members are included:

- Ask each person how they would go about resolving the issue. (Encourage them to keep their emotions at bay and to focus on actions.)
- Validate all the suggestions and opinions being shared.

Also, think about stakeholders who may not be part of the team but may be helpful in resolving the issue. Ask for their input, too: their insights may lead to a more inclusive solution.



## **WEIGH THE PROS AND CONS OF THE SOLUTIONS**

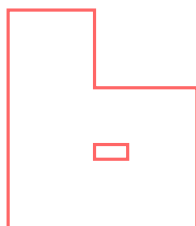
When all the solutions are on the table and all the stakeholders have been consulted, it's time to analyze the options. At this point, a back-and-forth discussion of the positives and negatives of each solution should take place (keeping in mind that some of the possible solutions could lead to further challenges). Ask participants to be honest with one another and open-minded to different alternatives as they take the time to look at all sides of each possibility.



## **CLEARLY IDENTIFY THE BEST OUTCOME**

When the evaluation of all the proposed solutions is complete, choose the best one and go with it. That means being clear about the decision and what it might entail for the rest of the team and the organization. A professional report should be generated that includes:

- The clearly defined problem
- The stakeholders involved in the solution reached
- The process undertaken to arrive at the decision
- A concise and purposeful statement of the solution



## **PRESENT THE SOLUTION CLEARLY AND CONFIDENTLY**

Finally, determine which stakeholders should share the results of this process. Those team members should carefully prepare an impactful presentation that maps out how the problem was resolved and why that particular solution was selected. Presenting the solution with conviction and clarity will help the team gain more support for it. ■

*Terri Klaas is a highly sought-after leadership skills facilitator, trainer, coach, and speaker who helps organizations develop influential leaders and retain their experienced talent. She can be reached at [www.terriklaclassconsulting.com](http://www.terriklaclassconsulting.com).*

# HOW THE WORLD'S BEST WORKPLACES ARE CHANGING THE WORLD OF WORK

BY CLAIRE HASTWELL

**A**ustralian-based software company Atlassian (the maker of popular digital tools Jira and Trello) has proudly put in place a workplace culture that prioritizes transparency, honesty, and two-way dialogue, while also acknowledging that management isn't infallible. "We don't get all the decisions right, but we are always open," explains Erika Fisher, chief administrative officer and general counsel at Atlassian. "We believe that owning up to not knowing something as a leader or admitting a mistake helps foster trust across the company."<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, Atlassian is also

not afraid to ruffle a few feathers. For example, the company has taken public stands on issues such as climate change, racial justice, and voters' rights. Most recently, Atlassian signed a public statement against the anti-abortion heartbeat bill in Texas. Fisher explains:

*Our employees trust us to do the right thing and ultimately contribute to healthy communities for them to live in. We know that access to healthcare is a huge concern... It's our responsibility to use the platform that we have as a global company to stand up and fight for their rights.<sup>2</sup>*

With that kind of leadership and social justice ethos, it's no surprise that in 2021 Atlassian made its debut (at rank 23) on Fortune's latest list of World's Best Workplaces.<sup>3</sup>

The 25 companies that made the 2021 list stood out for criteria such as supplying special and unique benefits, providing fair pay, and offering robust training opportunities for employees to develop professionally. On average, 85 percent of employees at the World's Best Workplaces say that they experience well-being at work, and over 90 percent say that they are proud of their employer, and that their management is honest and ethical in its business practices.

## The World's Best Workplaces Lead with "Head and Heart"

Other companies on the list include IT brand Cisco, hotelier Hilton, and cloud software company Salesforce, all of which made it to the top five for the third year in a row. Shipping and logistics behemoth DHL Express replaced Cisco in the number one spot on the 2021 list, standing out for, among other things, including employees in decision making that affects them. Regine Buettner, global head of HR for DHL, explains the company's bold policy of "leading with head, heart, and guts":

*The head is really the performance-oriented area. The heart is "what do you really feel" and "what can we do better." And guts is to really stand up and follow your company goals. If times are difficult, you need to manage it.*

DHL encourages all of its employees—from managers to frontline workers—to follow this "head, heart, and guts" model by allowing them to be entrepreneurial.



For example, DHL staff are encouraged to proactively collect and act on customer feedback, rather than stick to an up-the-chain protocol of traditional customer service. By granting employees the autonomy and initiative to represent the company in a way they can feel proud of, employees deliver better quality service to customers, creating a win-win situation all around.

1. Erika Fisher. 2021. "Building a Best Place to Work." Atlassian website, October 19, [www.atlassian.com/blog/announcements/atlassian-great-place-to-work](http://www.atlassian.com/blog/announcements/atlassian-great-place-to-work).  
 2. This and all following quotations are from personal communication.  
 3. Fortune. 2021. "World's 25 Best Workplaces." Fortune website, [fortune.com/worlds-best-workplaces/](http://fortune.com/worlds-best-workplaces/).



## Global Companies Need Global Thinking

With more than 100,000 employees in 220 countries and territories, DHL is a truly international company—which means it faces plenty of challenges when it comes to rolling out a unified strategy and common core values. “For multinational company leaders, it’s vital to consider the varying regional and country-level perspectives,” says Buettner. “You need to really get to know and understand local cultural sensitivities.”

DHL relies on an annual employee survey to assess employee trust across the company, examining responses at the local level and then looking for patterns within regions and globally. A sounding board and steering committee featuring members from different countries also act as liaisons between the regions and the global management board to review topics such as employee engagement and diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Buettner explains:

*The main focus is really on trust, and how our people feel. It’s not important what we as a management team want. . . What’s important is how people feel, how people understand. And this is why we get feedback: to see what we can do better.*

Although Atlassian isn’t nearly as large as DHL, it’s still a global organization, with nearly 6,400 employees across 13 countries.

The company over-indexed Great

Place to Work’s U.S. benchmark on employees “feeling proud to work there,” and staff scored the company high for “people being treated fairly regardless of race or sexual orientation.” Atlassian has made DEIB (diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging) a major priority—with particular emphasis on the I. “For every dollar you spend on diversity, spend two on inclusion,” Fisher says. “Leaders often forget that equity isn’t just about hiring diverse people. It needs to live throughout the employee life cycle.”

Atlassian’s performance reviews, promotion paths, and compensation plans are designed to mitigate bias from the outset. Fisher explains, “We’ve worked with researchers to quantify an inclusion index, helping us measure our successes and failures.”

For DHL, inclusion means adjusting diversity efforts to fit local cultural norms in its 220 countries. For example, in Saudi Arabia, DHL wanted to hire more women, but women were forbidden to share a workspace with men. As a workaround, DHL created a dedicated workspace that made it possible for women to join the team. (Currently, DHL’s sales director and HR director in Saudi Arabia are both women.)

Promoting DEIB also means understanding the difference between equality and equity. For example, after the COVID-19 pandemic hit, DHL decided to pay out a €300 bonus to everyone in the

company. Following initial discussion about adjusting payouts regionally to reflect exchange rates and local costs of living, in the end DHL opted to pay everyone the same amount, the rationale being that employees in developing countries were likely struggling more than their colleagues in more developed places.

## What’s Good for the World Is Good for Business

At DHL, employees aren’t recognized just for the work they do on the job, but also for volunteering outside their working hours. Every year, the company selects country and regional winners for their personal volunteer work, with DHL making financial donations to those employees’ charities of choice. In addition to its social justice and environmental work, Atlassian has its own foundation, which offers donation matching and five days of volunteer time to every employee.

Among the World’s Best Workplaces of 2021, 91 percent of employees feel good about the ways their companies contribute to the community. Corporate giving and social responsibility are top drivers of employee experience: when employees can connect their work to what is happening outside in the broader community, they feel an increased sense of purpose. An employee who feels good about how their company contributes to the community is 1.9 times more likely to feel proud of their organization and 1.7 times more likely to say their work is more than “just a job.”

“Organizations need to do more than focus on delivering profits for shareholders,” says Fisher. “Times have changed. Employees expect more. The world deserves more.” ■

*Claire Hastwell is the content marketing manager at Great Place to Work and the coauthor of its report “Women in the Workplace.”*

# Navigating the Manufacturing Skills

**T**oday's manufacturing companies are facing a "perfect storm"—but not of weather phenomena (such as the nor'easter that took down the fishing vessel Andrea Gail in 1991 and made "perfect storm" part of the vernacular). Instead, it's issues such as "an aging workforce," "a compromised educational system," and "the lack of technical apprenticeships"<sup>1</sup> that threaten the industry's survival.

According to the 2021 Plant Services Workforce Survey, "finding and recruiting skilled workers to fill open positions" is employers' most pressing issue, followed by "retraining/upskilling workers due to evolving roles and responsibilities" and "planning to meet future hiring needs."<sup>2</sup> Thanks to a mix of Baby Boomer retirements and ever-changing roles (such as the ability to use advanced technological tools on the job), there's a substantial gap between supply and demand for manufacturing jobs. This gap could leave

2.1 million manufacturing jobs unfilled by 2030 and significantly affect the U.S. economy.<sup>3</sup>

To address this skills gap, the manufacturing industry is tackling two of its biggest contributing factors: problems with the education system and the lack of technical apprenticeships. Realizing the importance of staying on top of new skills and technological trends, younger workers are looking for jobs where employers provide a decent paycheck as well as continuing education in their field. A recent workforce survey reveals that nearly 66 percent of workers have "participated in or taken advantage of any career development programs/assistance [their] employer offers," and nearly 44 percent say they are "very likely" to "engage with a mentor/coach, if [their] company provided the opportunity."<sup>4</sup>

Given this realization and the current national discussions about supporting trade schools and manufacturing training programs at community colleges, many employers are partnering with

educational programs for outreach efforts. Not only are many organizations working directly with two- or four-year universities to find new talent, but they are also turning to adult education or retraining organizations to develop current employees' skills or to ensure that potential candidates from high schools have the necessary skills to work in manufacturing. Working directly with technical colleges and adult education organizations not only helps manufacturers guarantee that the appropriate skills and training are being taught, but it also allows for opportunities—such as apprenticeship programs—in which students can learn precise skills through on-the-job training.

Lastly, it's important to consider employee retention as another factor contributing to the building perfect storm on the horizon. Although 81.8 percent of the surveyed employees say they'd be happy to "remain with their current job over the next two years," many employees also say they could be lured away by "better pay or benefits" (76 percent), "new or more attractive job responsibilities" (37 percent), or "better career advancement potential" (32.5 percent).<sup>5</sup>

Workplace culture plays a major role in recruitment and

1. Terry Wireman. 2009. *Training Programs for Maintenance Organizations*. Industrial Press, Inc.: South Norwalk, Conn., p. 23.

2. Thomas Wilk. 2021. "Plant Services 2021 Workforce Survey: Is the Grass Always Greener?" Plant Services website, September 22, [www.plantservices.com/articles/2021/plant-services-2021-workforce-survey-is-the-grass-always-greener/](http://www.plantservices.com/articles/2021/plant-services-2021-workforce-survey-is-the-grass-always-greener/).

3. Paul Wellener et al. 2021. "Creating pathways for tomorrow's workforce today- Beyond reskilling in manufacturing." Deloitte website, May 4, [www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/manufacturing/manufacturing-industry-diversity.html](http://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/manufacturing/manufacturing-industry-diversity.html).

4. Wilk. 2021.



retention. When asked about this three years ago, 80 percent of Millennials said “dissatisfaction with the corporate culture would be a top factor affecting their stay-or-go decisions” in the next two years, whereas only 51 percent of Baby Boomers felt that way.<sup>6</sup> This difference could be attributed to a shift in leadership styles as more Millennials become managers who lead in more collaborative and inclusive ways than their predecessors have.

Despite their wariness of corporate culture, Millennials have a much more positive outlook than Baby Boomers on the use of technology to make their jobs easier. Technology, such as condition monitoring and asset management, are improving their teams' efficiency and simplifying daily tasks. With this outlook comes an eagerness to keep learning new skills in order to remain valuable in the industry.

Education and training can help the manufacturing industry replace its aging workforce. The manufacturing industry is experiencing a rapid onset of technology with advancements in artificial intelligence, robotics, and the Internet of Things. This technology is changing the entire industry, including job skills and current roles. Many fear that these shifts will result in some positions being eliminated, but helping employees reskill and develop “a portfolio of skills that are applicable across an evolving set of jobs across an organization” can mitigate some of those changes.<sup>7</sup>

Of the millions of jobs potentially going unfulfilled over the next decade, those positions dealing with digital talent, operational management, and skilled production are likely to continue to be difficult to fill over the next few years. In fact, a 2019 survey found that lack of personnel with the ability to interact with integrated technology was the biggest concern among maintenance managers when it comes to performing predictive maintenance tasks.<sup>8</sup>

To avoid hitting 2.1 million unfilled manufacturing jobs by 2030, the industry needs to consistently invest in training by developing a positive relationship between workforce development and highly skilled employees. It's important for manufacturing companies to ask themselves where they stand in terms of attracting and training the up-and-coming workforce. According to manufacturing employees, the biggest trends they see in their plants revolve around expanding digital and soft skills, leveraging the digital toolbox, and keeping humans in the loop while working alongside technology.

The good news is that the manufacturing industry knows what it needs to do to weather the perfect storm on the horizon. The better news is that current and potential workers are willing and even eager to develop and continually advance their skill sets in the manufacturing industry. ■

*Jonathan Trout was formerly a technical writer at Noria Corporation. For more than 20 years, Noria has changed how organizations manage and monitor lubricants for maintaining optimum reliability and safety.*

5. Wilk. 2021.  
6. Christine LeFave Grace. 2019. “Plant Services 2019 Workforce Survey: What Have You Done for Me Lately?”  
7. Wellener et al. 2021.  
8. Jonathan Trout. Undated. “While Predictive/Preventive Maintenance Is Still King, Maintenance Personnel Are Reluctant to Use Internet-based Maintenance.” Reliable Plant website, [www.reliableplant.com/Read/31707/predictive-maintenance-survey-2019](http://www.reliableplant.com/Read/31707/predictive-maintenance-survey-2019).

# 8 EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES FOR COUNTERING THE GREAT RESIGNATION

BY O.C. TANNER



**R**etention—the ability of companies to keep their employees from quitting their jobs—suffered a devastating blow during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the USA alone, nearly 4 million people quit their jobs during April 2021; by November 2021, that number soared to a record 4.5 million.<sup>1</sup> In the wake of this mass exodus of employees, dubbed “the Great Resignation,” how can organizations reduce turnover and keep their employees working?

First, it's helpful to understand why employees stay. A recent study by the Society for Human Resource Management<sup>2</sup> identified the five leading factors that keep employees happy and satisfied with their jobs:

- Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels
- Compensation/pay, overall
- Trust between employees and senior management
- Job security
- Opportunities to use [their] skills and abilities in [their] work

To retain top employees in 2022 and beyond, employers must implement effective employee retention strategies that support the five factors listed above (and other crucial areas). Instead of trying to retain employees by doing the bare minimum (such as offering more compensation opportunities with tenure), successful employee retention strategies focus on multiple areas of the work experience and take steps that are proven to combat high turnover rates and keep employees longer. They explore why employees are leaving the organization (e.g., unhappiness with advancement changes, decreased engagement, dissatisfaction with the work, negative experiences with a manager or co-worker, toxic workplace culture) and actively work to address those reasons.

No single strategy can guarantee that employees will choose to stay longer with the organization. But combining modern leadership principles with focused drivers of retention will not only help reduce the turnover rate, but also increase the organization's productivity. The

following seven strategies can be especially effective at improving the employee experience and making employees want to stay.

## IMMERSE EMPLOYEES IN THE CULTURE

# 1

Large businesses and small businesses alike continually find that company culture is a significant contributor to how employees feel and whether they are satisfied with their jobs, with one survey of 615,000 Glassdoor users finding that the top predictors of employee satisfaction are “culture and values of the organization.”<sup>3</sup> Building an organizational culture in which employees can thrive can do more to help employees want to stay than almost any other

factor. Instead of just educating new hires about their health benefits and 401(k) plans, HR leaders should introduce new team members to the workplace culture and let them know how that culture will help them prosper throughout their careers at the organization.

## FOCUS ON MAKING CONNECTIONS

# 2

When companies have a work environment in which employees form strong connections with their teams, leaders, and organizations, those employees are likely to stay longer (even as much as six or more years, according to one study<sup>4</sup>).

Leaders can encourage greater connection

by focusing on efforts such as team building, holding regular one-to-one meetings, and connecting employees' work to the purpose of the organization. They can also check in frequently with employees and trigger meaningful conversations.



### RECOGNIZE AND APPRECIATE EMPLOYEES

# 3

It's no secret that employee recognition plays a significant role in keeping employees happy and motivated to stay with the organization, and stronger connections result "when recognition for great work and extra effort is a consistent part of everyday culture."<sup>5</sup>

This is most effectively done through a formal program that allows employees to use peer-to-peer recognition applications and other tools to appreciate their colleagues' great work as it happens. Employee appreciation works best when it is a constant, integrated element of the organization's culture and personalized to fit each employee. Most importantly, it should always connect employees to purpose, accomplishment, and one another.

### PROVIDE ONGOING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

# 4

By offering opportunities for professional development, organizations demonstrate their commitment to employees' long-term career paths. Such opportunities can include company training programs, tuition support for college courses or degrees, participation in trade shows, software certification, and even mentoring.

Another option is to "design development into everyday experience" and "build learning and advancement right into people's roles," as illustrated by this example:

One organization started a program they called "Walk in their shoes," intended to strengthen connections between employees from different parts of the organization. It consisted of weekly peer-mentoring sessions between people in adjacent functions that regularly worked together. The HR executive from that company told me, "Our initial intention was to make sure cross-functional collaboration remained strong despite remote work. What we hadn't planned on was how much people would learn in the process, changing how people perform their own jobs, and opening lateral career paths we hadn't considered." Building on the unexpected success, they now offer job shadowing of higher-level jobs and training programs taught by those who've completed rotations. It's become a regular part of the company's career-development efforts.<sup>6</sup>

### PROVIDE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

# 5

Elevating the well-being of workers and creating a healthy work-life balance can make a significant difference in how employees feel about job satisfaction in their place of work. Factors that can lead to burnout include "decreased work/life balance, feeling like work has a negative effect on health, or a decreased sense of belonging," and with "40 percent of employees

experiencing moderate-to-severe burnout," it's clearly a problem that companies need to address.<sup>7</sup> One solution is to help employees create clear boundaries between work and home life, especially when they are working remotely.

# ”

**SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES FOCUS ON MULTIPLE AREAS OF THE WORK EXPERIENCE.**

### OFFER THE FREEDOM TO WORK REMOTELY

There's no question that the increased ability of workers to work remotely has contributed to the scale of the Great Resignation. To accommodate the need for employees to isolate during the pandemic, employers had to offer more flexible work and make new policies on remote work or hybrid work. At the same time, though, increased freedom to engage in remote work or hybrid work has actually improved employee experiences and engagement.<sup>8</sup>

# 6

### DELIVER PEAK EXPERIENCES

These big, impactful events build lasting connections and lead to greater employee satisfaction in the workplace. Some examples of peak experiences include leading a big project, receiving company-wide recognition for making a significant contribution, or getting a chance to apply skills and knowledge in new ways. "When an organization meets an employee's needs of autonomy, connection, and mastery," the employee experience is dramatically improved.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, leaders who act as mentors, advocate for employee development, and connect employees to meaningful opportunities help employees (and themselves) feel a greater sense of purpose, accomplishment, and connection with each other, which in turn can lead to greater employee morale and feelings of success.

# 7

### CREATE RETENTION STRATEGIES THAT FIT

The most successful employee retention strategies address the reasons why people are leaving. HR retention strategies that are the best for retention at one organization may not be the best strategies at another. (For example, improving compensation and benefits is likely to have the most impact in organizations that lag behind their competitors in those areas but might not be feasible in companies that already pay highly.) The best, most generally useful approach is to focus on strengthening and reinforcing workplace culture, then to implement strategies that will provide the kinds of employee experiences (including meaningful work and regular recognition) that people want. ■

# 8

*O.C. Tanner helps organizations inspire and appreciate great work. Thousands of clients globally use its cloud-based technology, tools, and awards to provide meaningful recognition for their employees. Learn more at [www.octanner.com](http://www.octanner.com).*

1. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2022. "Number of Quits at All-time High in November 2021." BLS website, January 6, [www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2022/number-of-quits-at-all-time-high-in-november-2021.htm](http://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2022/number-of-quits-at-all-time-high-in-november-2021.htm).  
2. SHRM. 2017. "Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement: The Doors of Opportunity Are Open." SHRM website, [/www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Documents/2017-Employee-Job-Satisfaction-and-Engagement-Executive-Summary.pdf](http://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Documents/2017-Employee-Job-Satisfaction-and-Engagement-Executive-Summary.pdf).  
3. Patrick Wong. 2017. "Does More Money Change What We Value at Work?" Glassdoor website, January 17, [www.glassdoor.com/research/more-money-change-value-at-work/](http://www.glassdoor.com/research/more-money-change-value-at-work/).  
4. O.C. Tanner Institute. 2022. "Rethink: 2022 Global Culture Report." O.C. Tanner website, [www.octanner.com/content/dam/oc-tanner/images/v2/culture-report/2022/home/INT-GCR2022.pdf](http://www.octanner.com/content/dam/oc-tanner/images/v2/culture-report/2022/home/INT-GCR2022.pdf).  
5. Ibid.  
6. Ron Carucci. 2021. "To Retain Employees, Give Them a Sense of Purpose and Community." Harvard Business Review website, October 11, [hbr.org/2021/10/to-retain-employees-give-them-a-sense-of-purpose-and-community](http://hbr.org/2021/10/to-retain-employees-give-them-a-sense-of-purpose-and-community).  
7. O.C. Tanner Institute. 2020. "Experience: 2020 Global Culture Report." O.C. Tanner website, [www.octanner.com/content/dam/oc-tanner/documents/white-papers/2019/INT-GCR2020-12.pdf](http://www.octanner.com/content/dam/oc-tanner/documents/white-papers/2019/INT-GCR2020-12.pdf).  
8. O.C. Tanner Institute. 2022.  
9. Ibid.



# What Generation Z Really Wants in the Manufacturing Workplace

BY HEATHER BADOWER

**W**ith Baby Boomer retirements picking up steam, there's a staffing crisis looming on the horizon for the manufacturing industry. Manufacturers need to figure out how to entice younger workers who might not otherwise consider this type of work. Typically, HR is responsible for developing strategies for recruitment and retention as well as initiatives focused on company culture. Because the workforce has such a strong impact on driving value within the organization, however, other parts of the company—in particular, operations, finance, and the C-suite—should work together with HR to tackle the manufacturing talent crisis, starting with figuring out how to capture even a small percentage of the estimated 61 million members of Generation Z who are geared to enter the workforce.

To understand which talent management strategies HR executives are using today and uncover what Generation

Z wants in a workplace, one recent study<sup>1</sup> surveyed HR executives across the manufacturing industry about what they are doing today—two years into the pandemic—to attract and retain the youngest members of the workforce. It also gathered feedback from Generation Z employees currently working in manufacturing to find out what is getting them through the door in today's environment.

## HR EXECUTIVE INSIGHTS

Many of the HR executives who participated in the study specialize in recruitment, compensation and benefits, and diversity and inclusion. Talent is top of mind for this group, and given the organization-wide lens on worker shortages in the last year, there's no doubt they are facing more pressure than ever to build a talent pipeline while nurturing their current workforce.

1. All of the data in this article was obtained from "The 2021 Future Manufacturing Workforce Study," a UKG study conducted in partnership with Industry Week and Endeavor Business Media ([www.ukg.com/sites/default/files/media/files/The%202021%20Future%20Manufacturing%20Workforce%20Study.pdf](http://www.ukg.com/sites/default/files/media/files/The%202021%20Future%20Manufacturing%20Workforce%20Study.pdf)).



“

**Manufacturers need to figure out how to entice younger workers who might not otherwise consider this type of work**

”

In fact, two of the top three challenges reported were both attracting and retaining Generation Z employees. Here's what HR leaders are doing to move the needle in those areas.

#### **Top 5 HR Strategies for Attracting Generation Z**

- “Collaborating with local schools and colleges to develop programs and/or coursework focused on teaching technical skills related to manufacturing work.”
- “Offering flexible job schedules ([such as] alternative shift schedules, flexibility to swap shifts when needed).”
- “Supporting apprenticeship programs that offer job experience and professional development.”
- “Recruiting Gen Z individuals with nontraditional experience and providing the necessary education or technical training.”
- “Providing competitive wages for [the] local market (geographically speaking).”

#### **Top 5 HR Strategies for Retaining Generation Z**

- “Actively building employee development programs for current employees.”
- “Offering flexible job schedules ([such as] alternative shift schedules, flexibility to swap shifts when needed).”
- “Offering mentorship programs to allow younger employees to expand their knowledge.”
- “Providing competitive wages for [the] local market (geographically speaking).”
- “Cross training current employees so they learn multiple skills / perform a broader set of tasks (i.e., multiskilling).”

## **GENERATION Z INSIGHTS**

The biggest takeaway from the study is that the members of Generation Z are looking not just for jobs, but for places where they belong, can develop career paths, and feel valued and trusted on the job. Flexible schedule options, employee reviews on Glassdoor, and pay rates may get these workers through the door. But it's just as important for the industry to continue to build out a modern, technology-focused experience to streamline onboarding, promote employee development programs, manage performance reviews, and offer employees access to the real-time information they need to make decisions that affect their work.

For example, the industry could do a better job of using Generation Z's preferred communication tools: these digital natives are accustomed to using mobile devices for many of their tasks, yet half of the Generation Z respondents reported having had mobile access to onboarding forms and HR documents when they were hired. Although most members of Generation Z prefer electronic communication options, they still place a high value on in-person feedback from their managers.

Organizations across all industries are trying to figure out how to accomplish more with fewer people. By driving recruitment and retention strategies to align with Generation Z's needs and interests, HR can better attract (and keep) the incoming workforce. ■

-----  
*Heather Badower is the lead industry marketing manager at UKG (Ultimate Kronos Group), where she leads strategic content creation, messaging, and sales support for the manufacturing industry.*

# OVERCOMING LEADERSHIP FATIGUE

BY KEVIN EIKENBERRY

Leading is hard enough in “normal” times—and is even more difficult in today’s challenging times. Dealing with supply chain disruptions, viruses, economic changes, and shifts in expectations, needs, and demands can drive leaders to exhaustion. A big challenge can create a spike in engagement and focus, but no one can survive solely on adrenaline for long. Chances are good that most of today’s leaders are experiencing at least some leadership fatigue. However:

A leader who is fatigued can’t do their best work for any sustained amount of time.

A leader who isn’t at their best can’t give their best to the team – and they deserve it.

It’s critical for leaders to overcome their exhaustion. Here’s how.

## Step 1: Acknowledge It

The last two years have been hard for all leaders (and not just as leaders—as humans, too!). Saying “I’m fatigued” doesn’t make someone less of a leader. Until someone admits that they have at least some leadership fatigue, they have no chance of overcoming it. In short, denial isn’t a good strategy.

## Step 2: Deal with the Achiever Mindset

Leaders have a better than average chance of having an achiever’s mindset: they are motivated to succeed, are goal oriented, and have high expectations of themselves. Usually, they are wonderful traits, but that achiever’s mindset can become an Achilles heel, especially when a leader fails to see their own exhaustion or the effects it is having on their abilities:

“I can work past this fatigue—I have too much to do.”

“I have done this before. I just need to work harder.”

“What is wrong with me? I just need to focus.”

“Fatigue? I’m not fatigued. I’m fine.”

Although having an achiever’s mindset can serve someone well, in these cases it is getting in their way. For a leader to achieve at their highest levels (to their own expectations and to help their team succeed), they need to “get over themselves” and admit when they are fatigued and not at their best.

## Step 3: Recognize Fatigue Types and Levels

Not all fatigue is created the same. There are many different varieties (e.g., daily fatigue, chronic fatigue, psychological fatigue, clinically defined fatigue), which can be measured on a fatigue scale. Many people (especially leaders with an achiever’s mindset) tend to think of fatigue as binary: either someone has it or they don’t. But the reality is far more nuanced than that. Rather than “Am I fatigued?” better questions to ask include “How fatigued am I?” and “To what degree is fatigue affecting my performance?” By shifting the focus from the presence of fatigue to the level of fatigue, leaders stop being in denial and can start solving the problem.

## Step 4: Take Action

Get more sleep. The number one way to reduce fatigue (both in the short term and in the long term) is to get more quality sleep. This one change can have a tremendous positive effect on a person’s mood, emotions, and productivity.

Take more breaks. Possibilities include a ten-minute walking break, a real lunch break, and a shift in what someone is currently working on—there are plenty of ways to take a break, none of which mean that someone is being lazy or unproductive.

Find fulfillment. Do more of the things that bring rejuvenation and enjoyment—reading, doing a hobby, having a regular chat with a friend, etc.—and do more of those things.

When fatigue becomes chronic or unmanageable, a leader may need help from a doctor or specialist to help them regain their ability to lead and live healthier lives. But for most people, leadership fatigue can be managed by being aware of it and taking certain steps to mitigate it. ■

*Kevin Eikenberry is the chief potential officer of the Kevin Eikenberry Group, a leadership and learning consulting company that has been helping organizations, teams, and individuals reach their potential since 1993. His specialties include leadership, teams and teamwork, organizational culture, facilitating change, and organizational learning. He can be reached at [info@kevineikenberry.com](mailto:info@kevineikenberry.com).*



# THE RESOURCE

## FOR YOUR PEOPLE

### **STAFFING Services**

**Hiring shouldn't be a risk.**

We do the searching & vetting so you don't have to. We work to ensure the greatest ROI on every employee. Reduced time to hire, pre-screened & tested candidates, increased employee retention. Your trusted partner for Contract & Contract-to-Hire Positions.

### **DIRECT HIRE & HYBRID**

**Our team specializes  
in your business.**

You already know it costs too much to hire the wrong person. That's where we come in. We take it as our personal mission to help create and build a workforce tailor-made just for your business.

### **Contract RECRUITING**

**Quality. Quantity. Quicker.**

Replaces the old model of Hiring - that no longer works - with a new, alternative solution that will work! You get a team of experienced Recruiters, armed with the tools and expertise to tackle your toughest hiring challenges - and succeed!

### **HR Consulting**

**Attract. Retain. Engage. Comply.**

Affordable Expertise to solve your People Problems - So you can get on with Business. We offer a full suite of customized solutions to meet your organization's specific needs. Helping individuals & teams elevate performance and achieve excellent results.

### **PAYROLL & ACCOUNTING**

**We'll take care of the back office so you can focus on growing a successful business.**

We work to determine your needs & customize our services. Whether you're a new or established business, outsourcing may be the right decision to reduce overhead, increase productivity, and ensure compliance.

### **CORE Assessment™**

**Start at the CORE and maximize your employee ROI.**

The CORE is a single tool; a groundbreaking assessment that allows you to hire smarter, create dynamic teams, develop leaders, and create a culture of top performers.

336.896.1000

INFO@THERESOURCE.COM

THERESOURCE.COM

# THE RESOURCE

FOR  
YOUR  
PEOPLE

