

Engaging the Next Generation in Manufacturing Careers

There is a large employment gap in the manufacturing industry, with an estimated 2 million going unfulfilled by 2020. It's a real problem that needs to be tackled. Manufacturing is dying, this is the narrative we hear almost every time we hear about the industry. It's a narrative that isn't true. Manufacturing continues to hold a steady share of the US GDP, mainly because manufacturing plays a leading role in innovation and productivity. However, manufacturing's share of employment has been on the decline. The decline has created a sense of instability for employees in this sector as the skillset required to work in manufacturing is changing. The goal of this project is to slow the decline by demonstrating that manufacturing is not facing extinction but has evolved with the evolution of technology. The sector is now seeking the best and the brightest to encourage innovation. and this is the area we are trying to address with our project.

Engaging the next generation in manufacturing careers as early as elementary School, is imperative in order to close the gap we are currently facing in the rapidly changing workforce. By connecting to resources in the private, social and public sectors we hope to address goals eight and nine of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which are decent work and economic growth and industry, innovation and infrastructure. Our objectives are to host tours at Newark based manufacturing companies for students in high school, giving them the opportunity not only to learn about manufacturing but also to "touch and feel" the job opportunities that could be available to them. ZaGo Manufacturing, a leader in sustainability and a Newark based manufacturing company is our partner for these efforts and have hosted the first set of manufacturing tours this semester. The feedback we have received from students has been overwhelmingly positive and has let us know this is the right path towards attaining our goal. Special thanks to Jackie Luciano, of ZaGo Manufacturing and Sharon Hellman, our faculty advisor for their support in helping us every step of the way.