

Tips for Recruiting Top Talent in Manufacturing Industry

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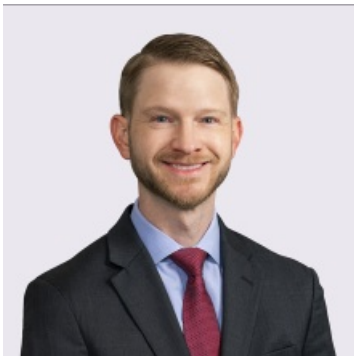
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Finding qualified and motivated people to fill open positions is not a new challenge for manufacturers. This task, however, has become harder due to the industry's rapid rebound post-COVID-19 pandemic and a significant reduction in the U.S. manufacturing workforce. Now, as the industry continues to exceed its pre-pandemic status and contends with the gradual retirement of the baby boomer generation, many manufacturing employers are struggling to fill open positions with qualified workers. Manufacturers can take practical and strategic steps to make their hiring efforts more fruitful. They should review their collective bargaining agreements, if applicable, to ensure any hiring efforts they take are compliant. Then, consider the steps discussed below.

Perception

Many job seekers often dismiss employment opportunities in manufacturing because of outdated, inaccurate perception of the industry. No longer composed of tedious factory assembly lines, modern manufacturing has incorporated state-of-the-art technologies and distinctive and innovative roles. The industry includes exciting positions in software and computer programming, engineering, robotics, quality testing, logistics and supply chain management, sales and marketing, maintenance, and many other capacities.

To attract a wider range of interested and qualified applicants, manufacturers should ensure their marketing materials and job postings accurately convey the 21st century manufacturing industry landscape, full of advanced and state-of-the-art opportunities.

Culture and Community

Certainly, manufacturers need to offer competitive compensation and benefits to attract top talent. Manufacturing employers should also recognize that prospective employees care deeply about the workplace environment. An employer needs to have a good answer – beyond compensation – to “Why should I work for you rather than someone else?”

Manufacturers can showcase compelling aspects of their workplaces, safety-first approaches, and tap into people's pride in local production. Candidates will appreciate a company with close community ties.

Referrals

Many employers find success in hiring applicants referred by existing employees. Current employees often have their own network of friends and family who may be qualified and motivated. Most employees will not recommend a candidate unless they are confident the prospect will reflect positively on them.

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Manufacturers should consider implementation of an effective and easy-to-use employee referral program. This is a winning strategy to incentivize and reward current employees for recommending qualified candidates resulting in a successful placement. Such programs generally offer a referral bonus that accrues once the referred employee has been successfully working at the company for a specific period of time, usually somewhere between 30 days and 90 days.

Job Descriptions

Prospective employees often compare companies' job descriptions. Manufacturers should avoid posting a bland list of tasks, qualifications, and physical requirements.

An effective job description should be engaging. It should accurately reflect the work and essential functions while highlighting what makes the company and the open position appealing. Modern manufacturing involves diverse and exciting roles, and job descriptions should reflect those qualities.

Diversify

Manufacturers can attract a broader pool of qualified applicants if they broaden their recruitment efforts. An employer that is not seeing diverse applicants should carefully consider where and how it is reaching out to potential candidates. To begin drawing the attention of more varied applicants, manufacturers can post on different job sites, update career pages, optimize websites for mobile users, leverage social media, partner with technical schools, and use recruiters. Engaging testimonials from employees of a variety of backgrounds can also help to effectively promote open positions to a broader range of people.

Employee Surveys or Audits

Understanding how existing employees perceive the company is essential. Conducting employee surveys can reveal insights regarding workplace culture, reputation in the community, and areas for improvement. To attract job candidates, it can be invaluable to know why existing employees chose to work at the company.

Manufacturers planning to enhance their hiring process by promoting a positive perception of the industry, highlighting the workplace culture, and revamping job descriptions will benefit from their employees' insights on those topics. Be mindful that employee survey feedback may be discoverable in employment legal proceedings. Negative feedback should be addressed, not ignored.

When implementing or changing hiring efforts, manufacturers must remember that federal and state laws require companies to provide equal employment opportunities and a non-discriminatory hiring process. Union contracts may impose additional requirements or restrictions. Employers should seek legal counsel when considering changes to their hiring process. Jackson Lewis attorneys are ready to advise manufacturing employers on best practices to improve their hiring practices and attract top talent.

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