

# Myths and Facts About Jobs in Manufacturing

By Lauren Flick, Wednesday, 17 Jun 2015; adapted for ABE/ESL by Angela Locke, October, 2018

Adapted from "Debunking myths about manufacturing jobs" by Lauren Flick

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/06/17/debunking-myths-about-manufacturing-jobs-.html>

Note to teacher or student: Vocabulary words are capitalized in the following paragraphs. Under each paragraph, a definition of the vocabulary words is given. If a vocabulary word appeared in a previous section, it is noted the first time in parentheses. At the end of the sections, there are questions which the teacher may use to test a student, or a student may use to review his/her knowledge.

What is a MYTH\*? What is a FACT\*? A myth is something that *is not* true. A fact is something that *is* true, and there is EVIDENCE\* to show that it is true. Many people think bad things about manufacturing. People think that manufacturing jobs are always dirty, super-hard and low-paying. People also think that only men can work in manufacturing jobs. Let's look at some myths and some facts about manufacturing.



## \*VOCABULARY

1. **Myth:** Something that is not true, but often people think it is true.
2. **Fact:** Something that is true.
3. **Evidence:** Proof that something is true.

### Myth #1: Manufacturing jobs do not pay well.

**Fact:** The United States Department of Commerce is an organization in the government that keeps track of data (\*Section 2) in companies. Their data shows that workers in manufacturing make more than other workers, 16.5% more by hour. What does this mean for annual (\*Section 2) salary? The average (\*Section 2) annual manufacturing salary, including pay and BENEFITS\*, was \$79,602. The United States Joint Economic Committee is a group of business leaders and government workers such as senators. They also keep track of data. Their

evidence shows that manufacturing jobs have more **BENEFITS\*** than workers in **SERVICE\*** jobs. Manufacturing jobs often offer on-the-job training. Senator Amy Klobuchar, a Democratic senator from the state of Minnesota, who worked on this committee, said that United States Manufacturing is 12% of the **GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT**, or **GDP\***. 12 million people throughout the United States work in manufacturing.

**\*VOCABULARY**

1. **Benefits:** “Extras” at work such as medical insurance, paid sick time, etc.
2. **Service jobs:** Jobs that provide a service to customers, such as hotels, banks, the health industry, etc.
3. **Gross Domestic Product (GDP for short):** The total dollar value of everything that a country produces, including services, every year.

**Myth #2:** Manufacturing jobs take no **SKILL\*** and have no **OPPORTUNITY\***.

**Fact:** Many manufacturing workers need to know how to use a computer. They may need to know math. A report released from two groups, *Deloitte* and *The Manufacturing Institute* had interviews with 84% of manufacturing leaders. They said they need more workers with more skills. Between now and 2022, there will be 2.2 million jobs for production workers. Half a million will be for engineers. We don’t even know how many jobs will open in new areas of manufacturing.

Because of this need for workers, former President Obama started an organization called the Nationwide Network for Manufacturing Innovation. That organization works with manufacturing schools and businesses that get money from the government and other place. These schools and businesses also talk to universities and colleges about training workers that manufacturers need now and in the future. Dr. Frank W. Gayle is a director of the Advanced Manufacturing National Program Office. This is a team that works with different manufacturing companies, schools, and government groups. He said that it helps if a worker has a degree in engineering or another degree from a university, but it is not necessary. He wants young people to know there are many good, **STABLE\*** jobs in manufacturing. He also said that many areas of the country now have centers to help people find information, and there will be more over the next 10 years.

**\*VOCABULARY**

1. **Skill:** Abilities you have to learn
2. **Opportunity:** At work, a chance to find good work or a chance to move up in a company because of your skills
3. **Stable:** At work, a job that is going to be secure. It is probably not going to change.

### Is it a myth or a fact that manufacturing is a MALE-DOMINATED\* industry?

**Fact:** Most workers in manufacturing are men. General Motors' CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, OR CEO\*, is a woman, Mary Barra, but she is an EXCEPTION\*. According to the U.S. Joint Economic Committee (see above), women only have 27% of all manufacturing jobs; only 17% are on the BOARD\* of companies; only 12% are Executive Officers; and only 6% are CEOs.

Why is this? In August 2014, a group called Women in Manufacturing (WiM) asked 877 women to figure out why many young women did not want to go into manufacturing as a career. Less than 10% of women between 17- and 24- years of age chose manufacturing as a career they might like. They said it would not be interesting.

That is very different from what women think who already work in manufacturing. 82% of women who work in manufacturing said that manufacturing is interesting. 74% of women who work in manufacturing said there were many different career opportunities in manufacturing.

Senator Klobuchar said that we need to create more MENTORING\* programs, improve training programs, and make STEM\* programs strong so that women and girls will be interested in the high-tech (\*Section 2), creative and economically strong field of manufacturing.

#### \*VOCABULARY

1. **Male-dominated:** More men than women.
2. **Chief Executive Officer (CEO for short):** The highest person in a company.
3. **Exception:** Different than most.
4. **Board (of a company):** The group of people in a company who make the important decisions for that company.
5. **Mentor:** A person with more experience who helps a person with less experience to learn their job. *Mentoring programs* are programs that set up a less experienced person with a more experienced person.
6. **STEM:** Short for **S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering and **M**ath.

#### For teacher or student:

Use the following questions connected to each section to review or test.

#### Myths and Facts about Manufacturing (Review or test)

1. What is a myth?
2. Give one example of a myth about manufacturing.
3. What is a fact?
4. Give one example of a fact about manufacturing.

**Myth #1 (Review or test)**

1. What is the myth about the pay for jobs in manufacturing?
2. What is the fact about the pay for jobs in manufacturing?
3. Give one piece of evidence to support your answer to #2.
4. Is manufacturing important to the United States economy? Why?

**Myth #2 (Review or test)**

1. What is the myth about job skills for jobs in manufacturing?
2. What is the fact about job skills for jobs in manufacturing?
3. Give one piece of evidence to support your answer to #2.
4. Is it necessary for a worker in manufacturing to have a degree from a university? How do you know?
5. Are jobs in manufacturing increasing or decreasing? How do you know?

**Male-dominated Manufacturing (Review or test)**

1. Give two pieces of evidence that more men than women work in manufacturing.
2. Why did many women say they would not choose manufacturing as a career?
3. What do many women who work in manufacturing think about their career?
4. Name two things that Senator Klobuchar thinks would help bring more women and girls into the field of manufacturing.