



Myths and Facts About Jobs in Manufacturing

By Lauren Flick, Wednesday, 17 Jun 2015

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

Manufacturing jobs have a reputation—and it's often not a good one. The typical image of a Manufacturing job is of dirty, backbreaking, low-paying labor. It's also thought to be an industry dominated by men. But separating fact from fiction about the actual people behind the welder's mask and on the assembly line can be tricky.



Image: <http://cdn.moneyfeedsme.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/13155739/Production-Workers.jpg>

Manufacturing jobs are low-paying.

MYTH: According to a report by the U.S. Department of Commerce, hourly compensation is 16.5% percent higher on average in Manufacturing than in other industries. What does that translate to as an average annual salary? More than you might think. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, the average Manufacturing worker in the United States earned \$79,602 annually, including pay and benefits.

A congressional report by the U.S. Joint Economic Committee also noted that "Manufacturing jobs are more likely to come with benefits, including medical and retirement benefits, than service-sector jobs. They also are more likely to require on-the-job training than jobs in other segments of the economy."

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), who led the congressional report, noted that U.S Manufacturing accounts for 12 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) and employs 12 million workers nationwide.

Manufacturing jobs tend to be low-skill positions, with limited opportunities.

MYTH: "The reality is that today's Manufacturing workers are as likely to operate robots as they are wrenches, and use math more than muscle—this isn't your grandpa's factory floor," Sen. Klobuchar said in her email.

A report released this February from Deloitte and The Manufacturing Institute, which included interviews with 84 percent of Manufacturing executives, said there is a significant talent shortage in the sector. Between now and 2022, the

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Manufacturing sector will need to fill 2.2 million openings for production workers. Half a million of those openings will be for Engineers, and an untold number of job openings will be for new, emerging occupations.

In an effort to address this shortage and improve Manufacturing technologies, former President Obama created the Nationwide Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI). It works with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) on a network of Manufacturing centers that receive government funding and private-matching funds and connect to colleges and universities to educate and train workers in the Manufacturing-related technology that will be necessary for the future.

Dr. Frank W. Gayle, deputy director of the Advanced Manufacturing National Program Office (AMNPO) said, “You don’t need an Engineering degree, or even any degree, to work in advanced Manufacturing, although of course it is helpful. We want kids to know that these jobs are available, that they are plentiful, and they lead to a rewarding and reliable career.”

Gayle said there are a handful of regional centers operational right now, but the initiative is expanding nationwide, with 45 centers planned over the next 10 years.

Manufacturing is a male-dominated industry.

FACT: Manufacturing is a male-dominated industry. Mary Barra, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of General Motors, might be a high-profile head of a well-known Manufacturing company, but she’s an exception. Women currently hold only 27 percent of Manufacturing jobs, according to the congressional report—only 17 percent hold board seats, only 12 percent are executive officers, and just 6 percent are CEOs.

For an occupation that offers so much opportunity, why aren’t more women in this sector? In August 2014, Women in Manufacturing (WiM) surveyed 877 women to uncover the divide between young women choosing a career and women with experience working in the Manufacturing industry. Less than 10 percent of women in the 17-to-24 age range selected Manufacturing among their top five career fields—less than half thought the work would be interesting or challenging.

However, among women already working in the Manufacturing sector, 82 percent said they found their field offered interesting and challenging work. Additionally, 74 percent of women in the field felt it did in fact offer multiple career opportunities. “We need to expand mentoring programs, improve workforce training and strengthen science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education so that more women and girls can see this sector for what it is: increasingly high-tech, innovative and critical to the future of our economy,” Sen. Klobuchar said. •

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