



San Antonio Manufacturers Association (SAMA) Workforce Assessment Meeting December 14, 2011

Executive Summary

On December 14, 2011, SAMA hosted a town hall type meeting for the purpose of assessing regional manufacturing industry immediate workforce needs. Session objectives included:

1. Estimate existing shortages for new hires including growth and turnover;
2. Estimate the workforce skills debit;
3. Identify the most critical open positions;
4. Identify skills required for the most needed positions;
5. Provide suggestions for workforce training and education programs.

The consensus of the attending manufacturers indicated that the shortage of skilled labor is more intense than previously acknowledged in local and state reporting agencies and that immediate action is needed to address and resolve this crisis. Current skilled labor shortages are hindering regional manufacturers' ability to efficiently meet existing workload demands and are also impacting their ability to pursue future business growth.

The manufacturers had the greatest demand for *highly trained, multiskilled personnel* that could support *facility equipment maintenance* and related *industrial control systems*. The balance of the top five high-demand occupations identified by participants included a significant demand for *skilled assemblers, manufacturing technologists* and *machinists*.

Immediate, intermediate and long-term manufacturing workforce needs were also discussed during the meeting. Recommendations for addressing each of those demands are identified in the enclosed assessment.

Attendees made a number of suggestions intended to improve the workforce shortages situation, including assessment of general and specific occupational skills required for existing vacancies, implementation of tailored skills development programs, utilization of established manufacturing instructional and certification programs as well as the screening and training process applicants seeking to enter the manufacturing industry or those seeking to improve or develop additional skills.

Attendees also identified that any skilled position in manufacturing and applied technology required basic social skills, competency in personal communication skills, ability to read with comprehension, and the ability to perform basic mathematical computations. Entry-level positions in manufacturing required a broad based grounding in technical skills covered by the Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Academy program and the Manufacturing Skills Standard Council competency certificates.

In conclusion, the December 14th meeting indicates that a skilled workforce shortage currently exists for regional manufacturers and is projected to continue into the future unless manufacturers, workforce agencies and educational institutions can take the initiative to jointly address and implement workforce development programs.