

The Business Case for an Age-Diverse Workforce

AUGUST 27-September 2 2018

# Manufacturing Marketing

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## Last week we linked to a WSJ article about John Goodenough, the 96-year old inventor who wants to solve a lithium ion battery problem before he retires.

THAT STORY BRINGS UP a really good question: who made 65 the cutoff age for doing valuable work?

In Part 2 of our series about attracting skilled labor, you'll learn how smart companies, such as shipbuilder Huntington Ingalls, are using age as a competitive advantage. Not in terms of hiring only younger workers, but in terms of retaining experienced (aka "older") workers for mentoring and transfer of knowledge.

And, as you'll learn, offering younger workers mentorships with older workers helps with job recruitment and retention.

We're taking a break over Labor Day, so the next issue will arrive Monday, September 10, 7:30 AM. Have a fantastic week and holiday.

– Dianna Huff, Editor and Rachel Cunliffe, Designer

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### Weekly Sponsorship Opportunities

We're offering **ground floor sponsorship pricing** from now until December.

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# Manufacturing Marketing

Issue 12



#### COVER:

Retaining experienced workers is a competitive business advantage.

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**IN BRIEF**

- Forbes releases list of top 25 two-year trade schools. Learn about the benefits of technical schools, including learning in-demand, high-tech skills. [Read more](#)
- Automotive supplier Lear opens \$29M plant in Flint, Michigan. The company is expected to create 600 new jobs. [Learn more](#)
- Small business optimism at 35-year high. Finding qualified workers continues to be a challenge. [Read more](#)
- It started with a humble piece of plastic. SchureMed now creates surgical positioning devices used all over the world. [Watch the video](#)
- People of the Plant Floor videos: Software firm Leading2Lean has a great showcase series. [View on YouTube](#)

# The Business Case for an Age-Diverse Workforce



Urethane Innovator's Charlie Liland, affectionately referred to by all as "Uncle Charlie."

In 2016, the AARP's Public Policy Institute issued a report, *Disrupting Aging in the Workplace: Profiles in Intergenerational Diversity Leadership*.

The report makes the case for why age diversity is so important by featuring case studies of five companies engaged in promising practices of disrupting aging in the workforce. (The following points and data come from this report.)

According to PwC's 18th Annual Global CEO Survey, 64% of CEOs have a strategy to promote diversity and inclusion.

*Diversity* can include dimensions such as age, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender,

sexual orientation, religion, and disability status.

*Inclusion* is defined as "creating an environment in which people feel involved, respected, valued, and connected."

According to the survey, today's workforce consists of workers from five generations – Gen Z, millennials, Gen Xers, baby boomers, and the Silent Generation.

However, only 8% of CEOs include age as a dimension of their diversity and inclusion strategy.

**AGE: A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

"How companies view experienced workers is changing rapidly," states Todd

Fahey, State Director for AARP New Hampshire.

“The smart companies have realized that workers age 50 or older are not a liability. In fact, they’re an asset and a competitive advantage.”

Research is showing that age diversity can improve business performance and lower employee turnover. One study found that productivity for younger and older workers is higher in companies that utilize mixed-age work teams.

“We constantly reinforce the story that we don’t have enough workers,” says Fahey, “but ‘working age’ doesn’t end at age 65. Huge numbers of people work beyond that age. The New Hampshire labor force participation rate, for example, is ranked third in the country for ages 65 to 75.

“Instead of talking about a labor shortage, *we need to find a way to entice these experienced workers to remain engaged.*”

### ATTRACT EXPERIENCED WORKERS

When asked how small manufacturers can make experienced workers feel welcome in applying for jobs, Fahey said simply “feature them in your advertising.”

The company website is the easiest way to start, as most small manufacturers already have an incredibly diverse team.

Photos of your employees at work, and especially showing

the various generations, go far in communicating the messages that experienced *and* younger workers alike are valued and needed.

Messages should resonate with the different audiences and their needs and motivations. For example, older workers may need flextime to take care of grandchildren due to various circumstances; younger workers may want to know how they’ll be developed as leaders.

### CREATE MENTOR PROGRAMS

The successful sharing and transfer of knowledge across generations is intentional, and begins with a top-down approach, says Fahey.

It’s also a retention point, meaning, younger workers who are mentored stay on the job longer.

“Experienced workers find value in being mentors and helping younger workers become better employees and grow their skill set. Experienced workers pass on ‘soft skills,’ such as how to manage time or work productively with others,” he says.

“Younger workers enjoy sharing their technical computer knowledge and/or how to do things differently,” he adds. “Hunter Ingalls, the largest shipbuilder in the U.S., credits its success to this exact type of teamwork.” (See the write up on page 4.)

### LOOK AT AGING DIFFERENTLY

The bottom line, says Fahey,



## Schedule a Meeting with Dianna and Rachel at IMTS

### BREAKING NEWS!

Rachel found a very good flight deal from NZ to the U.S. and will be attending IMTS.

We’ll both be at the show Wednesday afternoon, all day Thursday, and Friday morning.

To schedule a time to meet with us to talk about your business, marketing, or website, please **contact Dianna.**

Thank you!


is that people find value in work, and this “finding value” doesn’t come to a stop at age 65.

Because of advances in healthcare, and the fact that many jobs today, including those in manufacturing, are less rigorous, people are living active lives far beyond their grandparents or even their parents.

As Lori Trawinski, of the AARP Public Policy Institute, stated, when age is removed as a filter, companies can then focus on people’s knowledge, skills and abilities.

With the age filter removed, employers can then hire the right person for the right job, whether it’s a younger person in a supervisory position, or an experienced worker transitioning from one industry to another. The narrative changes from “lack” to one that’s more positive and inclusive.

If you’d like to learn more about attracting experienced workers – or retaining the ones you have – Fahey suggests you begin by consulting the AARP website.

The website has a wealth of information for employers about age diversity research, programs for attracting experienced workers, and even virtual career fairs and a job board. 

*Todd C. Fahey, J.D., is the State Director, AARP New Hampshire. Visit the organization’s website at [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org).*

## Business Case Study: Huntington Ingalls



*A mixed age work team © Huntington Ingalls*

The largest shipbuilder in the U.S., Huntington Ingalls credits its success to its intergenerational workforce.

“Within any company, you have a formal culture and an informal culture,” says Bill Ermatiger, Chief HR Officer for the company.

“But who owns that culture and who drives it? How is it passed down? Well, that’s your workforce, and the employees who have been there the longest.”

The shipyard, which has 1,200 employees who have been with the company for forty or more years, is also going digital. This

transition process includes taking paper drawings and putting them on an iPad., for example.

“Within the company,” says Ermatiger, “you have an older generation that translates the art of shipbuilding, and a younger generation translating technology to the older generation. It turns out they have a common language, which has led to a seamless transition.”

To learn more about Huntington Ingalls, view the video, [Shipbuilding Made Possible by Bringing Generations Together - AARP.](#)



## Using Cobots to Transition Displaced Miners into Manufacturing Jobs

*By Jeff Green, Rethink Robotics*

Bluefield State College, in Bluefield, West Virginia, realized it had an opportunity to help solve a problem affecting both employers and the unemployed.

“We did some research,” says Jeff McFadden, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering & Engineering Management, “and learned we had quite a few manufacturers in our area. In fact, we have a dozen Fortune 500s within a three-hour drive!”

After talking with the management of these companies, McFadden and his team learned the manufacturers’ biggest challenge was finding skilled manufacturing workers. “Many said to us, ‘We could expand if only we had the skilled people.’ This was a huge shock to us –

mainly because we just didn’t know,” he says.

McFadden and his colleagues also realized that while coal mining is seeing some rejuvenation, and the positions are high-paying, the sector’s renewal won’t bring back as many jobs as it once employed.

Enter the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), which funds initiatives that help transition displaced coal miners.

“Coal miners have many of the skills needed in manufacturing jobs, such as welding, equipment maintenance and installation, CNC operation, etc., but need to be trained for emerging industries and technologies and their associated skills,” says McFadden.

McFadden put together a proposal for the establishment of a new Center for Excellence in Manufacturing Engineering (CEME) at Bluefield State College – and was awarded a \$1.5 million grant by ARC.

The purpose behind the CEME is threefold: to train students and displaced miners while also helping the local industrial base implement new technologies. The program also helps non-traditional students, including those in their mid-20s to 40s, and military veterans, gain the skilled training the area’s manufacturers need today.

In addition to setting up the new Center, the grant has allowed McFadden to purchase two Sawyer collaborative robots

– something he had wanted to do after seeing demonstrations of both Sawyer and Baxter working with humans a few years ago.

“Once the grant money came through, we purchased one Sawyer, but after it arrived, we had 10 students all trying to work on it at once, so we ordered a second one,” he says.

The addition of cobots to the program will not only give students exposure to robotics and its place in manufacturing, it also will give the CEME the technology needed to act as an R&D resource for local businesses looking to learn about robots as an automation solution for their factories.

Scheduled to go live August 2018, the CEME already has a pilot project running with a local Volvo truck assembly plant, plus two additional projects slated.

“This is a huge opportunity for our students and for us as a college,” says McFadden. “If we can supply the skilled workers local manufacturers need, then they can expand – which means more jobs and higher wages.”



*Jeff Green is the Senior Content and Social Media Strategist at Rethink Robotics. This article was reprinted with permission from the company's blog. Visit Rethink Robotics to learn more: [www.rethinkrobotics.com](http://www.rethinkrobotics.com)*

## DOL to Celebrate 4th Annual National Apprenticeship Week

To help manufacturers and other businesses fill workforce pipelines, states across the U.S. have begun working with the Department of Labor and with companies to create initiatives involving apprenticeships.

To celebrate the continued success of the program, and to recognize the over 150,000 employers involved with it, the DOL is holding the fourth annual National Apprenticeship Week November 12 – 18, 2018.

The weeklong celebration will feature media opportunities as well as the recognition of state initiative and business success stories.

Over 105,000 people attended events throughout the US in 2017, with seven states hosting over 40 events each.



To learn more about the Apprenticeship program, and to register for the 2018 Apprenticeship Week event, visit the DOL website: [www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/naw](http://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/naw)



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“ We recently closed on \$75K in new projects in one week. One of the projects should net us \$750K over the next year. Our customers indicated they went with UI due in part to our website messaging – which was provided by Dianna and Rachel. ”

KURT MOBERLY  
GM, URETHANE INNOVATORS