

PLENTY OF MANUFACTURING JOBS; NOT ENOUGH SKILLED WORKERS



Even though the country is struggling through a tough economic time, there are plenty of manufacturing jobs across the nation, there just are not enough skilled workers to fill those open jobs. If you are one of the 14 million Americans looking for a job, you surely will be surprised to find out that manufacturing companies are turning down applicants because they are not qualified for their openings. For example, Siemens Corp. has over 3,000 jobs open across the country with more than half of them requiring the applicants to have a background in technology, science, math, and engineering-related skills. There are other companies across the country that boast job openings from six to 200 with some of those open jobs remaining in that status for at least nine months. Right now, the manufacturing industry has been hurt by a lack of skilled manufacturing workers. "What we have been saying for quite a while is that even though there is a high unemployment rate, it's very difficult to find skilled people," said Jeff Owens, president of ATS. "We are pro-actively working to fill them. It can take 90 to a hundred days, probably, to fill them. We are creating jobs. We just don't necessarily have the right people to fill them." A survey released by ManpowerGroup has found that nearly 52 percent of United States companies have trouble finding employees skilled enough to fill their job vacancies. This number has risen from 14 percent back in 2010, a major increase that affects almost all 14 million unemployed Americans. One of the problems in the manufacturing industry is the age of the qualified workers, most of whom are baby boomers preparing to retire. There are so many baby boomers retiring but not enough qualified young workers to replace them. "Many of the younger kids that are coming out of college have been discouraged to go into manufacturing," said Dennis Bray, president and CEO of Contour Precision Group. "A lot of the college graduates have chosen a curriculum and degree that does not give them the necessary science and math skills to be of immediate benefit to companies such as ours." According to the Labor Department's Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, the unemployment rate in the manufacturing field is at 8.4 percent, which is well below the 9.1 percent national average. There are 240,000 open jobs in the manufacturing industry right now, which is up 38.7 percent from in August of 2010. "The old jobs are not coming back. We need to invest in education and training to get people prepared to fill these high-skilled, high-wage jobs of the future," said Eric Spiegel, president and CEO of Siemens Corp. "We have found that veterans have extensive technical training and experience that they gain through military service, and these skills are extremely valuable to us and match up well with many of our over 3,000 open positions."

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