



BRIDGING THE SKILLS GAP FOR OPERATIONAL ROLES IN MANUFACTURING

Find great new employees and retain experienced workers by focusing on the right things during your screening and selection processes and creating a positive workforce culture. This tip sheet talks about areas you can focus on to help you do just this.

Manufacturing organizations know all too well the challenges that come with the growing generational skills gaps, impacted by lots of factors. Experienced workers are retiring faster than new workers are entering the industry, which is the result of low interest from younger generations, outdated perceptions of

the industry, and the need for high-tech skills due to technological advancements.

The skills shortage can significantly impact organizational productivity, cost, and ability to meet consumer demands. The struggle to find candidates with the right experience and qualifications to fill operational roles means organizations need to look at new avenues for hiring to stand out in a competitive market and adapt their hiring strategy by attracting new avenues of candidates.

Here are a few ways that organizations can start bridging the skills gap:

1 FOCUS ON SOFT SKILLS OVER EXPERIENCE

Historically, organizations look to fill operational roles with candidates who possess the right experience and industry skills that match the role requirements, ensuring they hire candidates who are successfully able to complete jobs and maintain productivity. Organizations should refocus on candidates who have the potential to be successful in operational roles rather than focusing on industry experience. Soft skills such as teamwork, communication, and adaptability are crucial in the manufacturing environment and can be the right foundation to help even inexperienced workers grow and excel in their roles. Whilst not having (much) traditional manufacturing experience, [these candidates can show they have the right aptitude and raw tools to be reliable and productive employees.](#)

2 INVEST IN UPSKILLING

Continue to bridge the skills gap from within by providing ongoing training and development opportunities for your current workforce, and those entering your workforce. [Assess your current workforce, identify gaps, and develop strategies to create a workforce that enables your company to deliver the quality your market needs.](#) Almost working in tandem with the previous initiative, opportunities to upskill employees means you can take those candidates with the right soft skills and build their hard skill set from the ground up, ensuring it matches the desired requirements of your operational roles. This also allows you to keep your employees up to date with any new skills that may arise. Creating a supportive work environment in turn encourages employee retention and reduces the need for frequent new hires.

3

INCREASE RETENTION RATES

Increasing retention through development opportunities and a positive workplace culture can go a long way to helping organizations slow down the skills gap and retain crucial knowledge and experience. Whilst focusing on new hires to help plug the skills gap, manufacturing organizations should also put emphasis on retaining their existing workforce. This may involve offering opportunities for professional development, career advancement, and a supportive work environment to encourage experienced workers to stay with the company for longer. **By creating a positive and inclusive workplace culture with opportunities for continuous development, you can also attract candidates looking for workplace stability and job security.**

4

BOOST KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

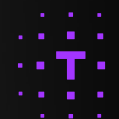
Reduce knowledge gaps by having effective processes in place for transferring knowledge from older, experienced workers to younger ones, and vice versa. Whilst there is constant technological advancement across the industry and new knowledge that needs to be absorbed, **it's important to maintain crucial knowledge from more experienced workers to ensure this is not lost when they retire or leave** the organization. This can include mentorship programs, training initiatives, and documentation of best practices. Similarly, younger generations might be more proficient in computer or technical skills related to new technologies, which must be shared collectively across the organization to ensure older generation employees are continuing to keep up to date with new required skills.

5

STAND OUT IN THE MARKET

Although we talk about the growing skills gap, there are candidates out there with the right experience and skills needed for operational roles. Attract the best candidates by setting your organization apart from competitors from the beginning, using engaging, interactive assessment methods to screen and select talent. This will reduce dropout rates and serve as an opportunity to give realistic previews of what it is like to work with your organization and within your operational roles, helping you select candidates that fit well into your operational team.

However, **organizations need to focus on more than just the role to secure talent.** There are lots of talent strategies they can implement to get ahead – showcasing company culture, embracing work-life balance, emphasizing safety, promoting modern tools and equipment, and committing to professional development opportunities.



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