

HIDDEN-GEM JOBS TO TAP INTO



Denise Starcher, Vice President of Human Resources, Menasha Corporation

Looking for a career that's in demand, requires critical-thinking, and doesn't require a four-year college degree? The manufacturing industry is loaded with job opportunities that offer growth, learning-by-doing, and a sense of ownership — key factors for job satisfaction.

When evaluating a future path, high school students in particular tend to overlook excellent job opportunities in manufacturing because they — and their parents — may not be aware of how far the manufacturing industry has come in terms of sophistication. Gone are the days of gritty and low-tech environments. With huge advances in equipment, technology and processes, today's jobs in manufacturing require comparable skillsets to what was at one time deemed necessary only for "office" positions. Computerized equipment and increased automation on the plant floor call for comprehension skills, the ability to solve spur-of-the-moment problems, and a grasp of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Manufacturing jobs not only pay well — an average of \$26.71 hourly¹ — but many come with good benefits such as health insurance, paid leave and retirement plans. In one survey, the manufacturing industry ranked as one of the top sectors with the highest-rated overall benefits.² While some manufacturing jobs require training and certifications, they typically require far less school than what is needed for a bachelor's degree. And, a job in manufacturing is a good option for some high school graduates who need time to evaluate their interests before jumping into a four-year college setting. Today, high schoolers can choose to work at manufacturing companies that offer apprenticeship programs which combine a job with paid classroom instruction, allowing employees to obtain a certification or degree. This on-the-job training makes learning affordable in an era of skyrocketing college costs.



Apprenticeship programs are one way an employee can earn while they learn.

Beyond pay and training, manufacturing jobs can provide daily, tangible proof of a job well done. Planning, producing and distributing a product or service require teamwork and collaboration. Employees immediately see the impact of their work and how their contribution plays a role in the bigger picture. This increases an employee's sense of ownership and responsibility, making a job much more meaningful.

Manufacturing is a productive, dynamic industry, and manufacturing companies are reaching out to the workforce of tomorrow. Today's job-seekers could land their dream job by taking a fresh look at manufacturing careers.

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics

² www.glassdoor.com/research/studies/best-industries-for-benefits/

