Competitive Edge

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How manufacturers are fighting back against the global pressures that are taking much-needed American jobs

Manufacturing in America isn't as simple as just setting up shop and producing a product. Nowadays, a globally networking economy means competition has taken on more nuance: labor rates are eroded by low cost countries, which results in lower cost imported goods and an ever-sloping playing field. In addition, manufacturers must face newer, more aggressive problems like intellectual property theft — a dog that bites twice as it both steals the profits from the innovators themselves, and ultimately takes away their incentive to focus on new product development, resulting in organizational stagnation. And if that weren't enough, the manufacturing labor force is facing a skill gap that could place additional burdens on those making investments in new technology — meaning the right equipment is simply expensive furniture if there is no skilled staff to operate and maintain it.

It's critical that America's competitive edge be viewed as a Rubik's Cube of sorts. Luckily, ideas spearheaded by government, associations, businesses – and even concerned citizens at a grassroots level – are taking steps to target each and every area that needs addressing, before more time, money, and value seep into the tide and across the ocean.

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