

A 'Monster' Look At Manufacturing Jobs

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Not too long ago, Monster.com, the well-known online job marketplace, conducted a comprehensive survey (see infographic below) on the state of U.S. manufacturing jobs, and came to some compelling, if not worrying, results. In general, workers in U.S. manufacturing are largely unhappy with their current positions, for a variety of reasons, and are more likely to be actively searching for different work, be it at another plant, or another industry.

The survey found that close to one-half — 47 percent — of manufacturing workers expressed dissatisfaction with their current job. It's telling a story that many aren't talking about, the fact that despite a recovery in manufacturing productivity and corporate balance sheets, on the ground floor, things aren't necessarily looking rosy.

Joanie Ruge, employment industry expert and senior vice president at Monster Worldwide, says much of this dissatisfaction is intimately tied to the industry's overall poor performance as of late: "The manufacturing sector was one of the hardest-hit sectors during the recession. The number of jobs that were lost in this particular sector were, obviously, extremely high. Since the recovery, we really haven't seen enough of a jobs 'comeback' in manufacturing, which has been a concern."

On top of that, many U.S. manufacturing employees find themselves in a difficult position: having to do more work, or be more productive, with less. At many companies, benefits were cut back or slashed, which accumulated in more dissatisfaction. Ruge says, "During the recession, many employees were begin asked to do more work for less money, because through the cut-backs, many didn't get the annual merit or performance raise, or incentives or bonuses."

Unfortunately, only 34 percent of manufacturing workers expressed confidence that they would actually be able to secure a position elsewhere.

The report wasn't all bad news, however — it came with a number of surprising and hopeful trends that might not only outline a manufacturing recovery, but also sectors that workers might want to focus on if they're interested in a better future in manufacturing. Monster.com also surveyed, through a mix of internal and external data, the sectors within manufacturing that were hiring new employees at the greatest rate (see sidebar to the right).

Those results come with some surprises. Yes, the rise of pharmaceutical manufacturing is not unexpected, but the rise of American semiconductor creation could be a major boon to U.S. manufacturing as a whole. As electronics companies try to shorten their supply chains, companies like Texas Instruments could become an increasingly major player. Perhaps even more surprising is the advent of other

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electronics-based sectors, such as radio and TV broadcasting equipment, and the manufacturing of search, detection and navigational systems.

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