

Survey of US Public on Manufacturing Sector Shows Dichotomy

Vast Majority of Public Believes Manufacturing Key to Economic Health – but most don't want to Work there

SCDigest Editorial Staff

The National Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte consulting recently released the results of a large survey of more than 1000 US residents on their attitudes towards the manufacturing sector.

Perhaps no surprise, the respondents overwhelmingly believe manufacturing is key to the health of the economy, national security, and a number of other national priorities. On the other hand, a sizable percentage, especially among younger people, view careers in manufacturing quite negatively. (See [Public Viewpoints on Manufacturing](#)).

Clearly, the vast majority of Americans view "making things" as largely equivalent to economic health, perhaps even more so now than would have been the case even a year ago, before the economic meltdown that severely tainted the financial industry.

The chart on page 2 perhaps says it all here, as a "manufacturing facility" was the number one choice for survey respondents as to what type of business would be preferred to bring new jobs to a community, while a "financial institution" placed dead last.

Overwhelmingly, Americans view manufacturing as tightly linked to overall economic prosperity. 81 percent said manufacturing was important to American's standard of living, and 71 percent said developing manufacturing should be a top national priority.

However, age impacts those views to a degree. While an amazing 89 percent of respondents over 65 said manufacturing was important to economic prosperity, only 71 percent of 18-24 year olds felt that way, though this still represents a strong majority

Hence, the key to the dilemma: manufacturing is viewed as key to US affluence, but as affluence grows, fewer and fewer Americans want to work in manufacturing.

even in this age group.

Interestingly, as what gets in a real sense to the heart of the issue, respondents ranked manufacturing as the sector most important to maintaining a strong economy – even as the portion of the economy coming from manufacturing continues to shrink, now down to just about 11 percent.

Stemming from that, 74 percent want to see more "investment" in US manufacturing, though the question did not specifically define what was meant by that term.

It is interesting though, given those results, that only 35 percent of respondents thought manufacturing jobs paid more than other industries. 52 percent said they did not pay better.

Only 33 percent overall thought manufacturing jobs are "clean and safe," including just 20 percent of 18-24 year olds. Only 30 percent overall would encourage a child to pursue a career in manufacturing, and based on the other questions it is a reasonable assumption that this number would be

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Americans Most Want to See New Jobs from Manufacturing

If you could create 1,000 new jobs in your community by establishing a new facility, what type of facility would you support?

Facility	Rank
Manufacturing Facility	1
Technology Development Center	2
Energy Production Facility	3
Healthcare Facility	4
Retailing Center	5
Communications Hub	6
Financial Institution	7

Aggregate ranking of sectors by all respondents

Source: National Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte

even lower for younger aged respondents.

In fact, despite the great interest in express by respondents in maintaining a strong manufacturing base, it rated pretty low in terms of career attractiveness. (See graphic on page 3.)

"These are jobs Americans want for their friends and neighbors - but not for themselves or their family members," said **Craig Giffi**, Deloitte LLP

vice chairman and U.S. Consumer & Industrial Products industry leader. "America's belief that manufacturing jobs are not clean, safe, or interesting may have been accurate at one time, but it's no longer the case."

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Out of 7 Key Industries, Manufacturing Only Ranks Fifth as a Career Choice

If you were to start your career today, what industry would you choose to enter?

Industry	Rank
Technology Industry	1
Healthcare Industry	2
Energy Industry	3
Communications Industry	4
Manufacturing Industry	5
Financial Services Industry	6
Retail Industry	7

Aggregate ranking of sectors by all respondents

Source: National Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte
