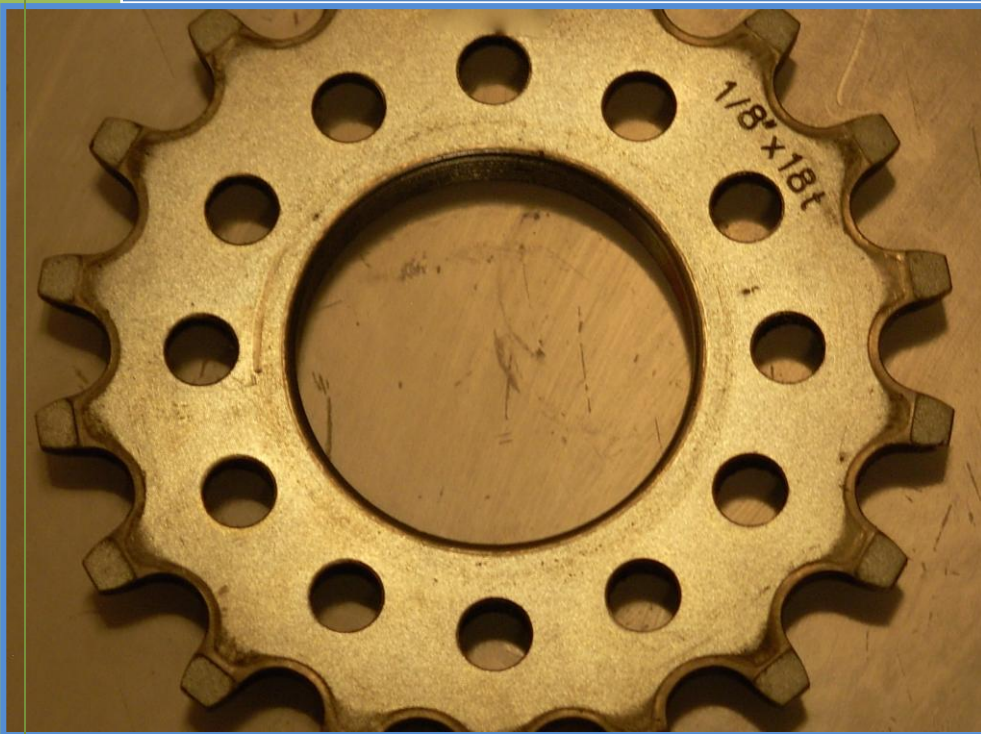


# 2009

# Southwest Oklahoma Manufacturing Solution Summit



# Solutions Report

**WORK WISE**  
PRODUCTIONS  
KristineSexter.com®



## Overview

*It was worthy of a loudly-bellowed, 'WOW!'*

On August 20, 2009, in the quintessential southwest Oklahoma town of Chickasha, seventy-five manufacturing professionals gathered to solve a few persistent problems. With tenacious determination, and (unsurprisingly), a hearty dose of camaraderie and candor, they set about joining forces as a means to address nine specific challenges. Those challenges were:

- Finding Skilled Workers
- Generational Differences at Work
- Supervisors That Can Lead and Manage
- Competing with China, Mexico, India, Casinos, etc
- The Economy
- Workers Compensation
- Service Providers: Tech Centers, State and Federally Supported Agencies
- The state, public education and parents, don't appear to support the well-paying careers that are in manufacturing
- Infrastructure- Roads, Highways and Transportation

Included in this report is an overview of the strategies utilized to collect the insights into the barriers to SW Oklahoma manufacturers. More importantly, the nearly *ONE THOUSAND* viable solutions generated are contained here too!!

It was such an honor to have been amongst the highly-committed manufacturing professionals that saw the need for this event. This committee committed to hundreds of hours of planning and then executed it with such phenomenal success that it even surprised us when it surpassed our proactive, lofty goals!

Have a manufacturing challenge? Need help with ANY facet of your SW Oklahoma manufacturing business? Well, here are the heroes, who on a daily basis, eagerly await your call:

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WorkWise Productions &  
KristineSexter.com LLC presents:

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**Manufacturing Extension Agents with the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance**

Bill Cunningham  
580-250-5688  
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Serves Counties: Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Jefferson, Stephens and Tillman Counties and the cities of Gotebo, Mt. View, and Snyder

Dan Asklund  
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In Wayne: 405-449-3394, ext. 303

Serves Counties: Coal, Garvin, McClain, Murray, and Pontotoc Counties and the cities of Noble and Little Axe in Cleveland County

Paul Walenciak  
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Serves Counties: Beckham, Custer, Dewey, Roger Mills, Washita, and Western Kiowa

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Serves Counties: Blaine, Canadian, Grady, and Kingfisher

**The Southwest Oklahoma Impact Coalition (SOIC)**

- Marilyn Feaver, Executive Director  
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The mission of SOIC is to reinforce and grow wealth in the Southwest Quadrant of Oklahoma by maximizing and coordinating workforce and economic development opportunities. SOIC can assist in analyzing needs, linking resources that match those needs and assist in expanding business operations by bringing together the various

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partners that can work to achieve increased production and services to the communities.

• **The Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development**

- GCWED brings together leaders from across a variety of private and public sector organizations to develop a strategy for accelerated economic growth and to provide direction to state administration. The Council's vision is for Oklahoma to have a competitive advantage through integrated workforce and economic development objectives. The Council seeks to achieve this vision through its mission to advance a demand-driven workforce and economic development system.

Gordon Andersen, Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development Pelco Products, 405-340-3434, [gordon.andersen@pelcoinc.com](mailto:gordon.andersen@pelcoinc.com)

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Steve Hendrickson, Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development, 918-852-4536, [steven.d.hendrickson@boeing.com](mailto:steven.d.hendrickson@boeing.com)

• **WorkWise Productions**

- An award-winning, Oklahoma-based consulting firm that works with manufacturers in developing customized strategies for finding, training and keeping their top talent. [www.KristineSexter.com](http://www.KristineSexter.com)  
Kristine Sexter, President, 918-361-3000 [kristine@kristinesexter.com](mailto:kristine@kristinesexter.com)

**The next step? Implement!** Go through all one thousand of these ideas for solving the 9 issues and circle/highlight the ones that make perfect sense to you. Then do something about getting it done. Still not sure what to do? Then just pick up the phone or send an email to your resident heroes listed above.

*With indefatigable respect for you- those that manufacture greatness for the USA and the world,*

*Kristine Sexter*

President, WorkWise Productions

[www.KristineSexter.com](http://www.KristineSexter.com)

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# Generating Viable Solutions to Our Workforce Challenges!

***"Those closest to the problem are closest to the solution."*** – Peter Drucker

**W**elcome to the **2009 SW Oklahoma Manufacturing Solutions Summit**. The primary focus of this session, *"Generating Viable Solutions to Our Workforce Solutions"* is to gather **your input as to viable solutions, ideas, answers, resolutions and positive strategies for solving the greatest challenges facing SW Oklahoma's manufacturing industries.**

As a manufacturing professional, you already possess the skills, experience and insights, which when captured in a collaborative and collective environment such as this session, can result in hundreds, (even thousands!) of truly viable solutions!

Over the course of the 2 weeks preceding this conference, the following short pre-program research survey was conducted. We asked these **5 simple questions to approximately 100 manufacturers in southwest Oklahoma:**



- 1. What is your single greatest workforce challenge?**
- 2. Which technical skills or soft skills will be in highest demand for your company in the coming years?**
- 3. What challenges do you foresee in the recruitment, training and retention of these employees?**
- 4. How can the Tech Centers, Colleges, and State agencies better serve your workforce development and employee training needs?**
- 5. What other issues(s) are challenges to your future success? (i.e. workers comp, cell coverage, broad band availability, roads/highways, taxes, government regulations, taxes, etc.)**



## How to Generate Viable Solutions

**A** viable solution is to industry-related challenge is one that is **feasible, likely to survive, has relevance and pertinence and of course, has been proven to be effective in solving the problem or challenge!** When taking a professional approach to problem-solving, it is imperative that you are prepared with the (1) **the right mind set:** be patient, thorough, objective and realistic and an (2) **objective approach.**

### Definition of Viable Solution: The SMART Approach

- **Specific:** You must be very **clear, precise and exact when describing the solution.** Provide examples/samples from credible resources when possible.
- **Measurable:** You must have a **quantifiable way of tracking the effectiveness** (or lack of thereof) as to whether the solution has met the goal of positively alleviating the challenge or problem. Measure everything ...from start to finish.
- **Achievable:** Your solution must be realistic and **achievable.** Research and seek out other states, businesses or organizations that have truly achieved successful implementation of a solution to an industry-related challenge. Benchmark on their processes.
- **Relevant:** Your solution should be addressing a challenge that has been deemed a priority (Fix the right things first!). Additionally, it must conform to industry, local, state and federal regulations, best practices and/or .
- **Timed:** Once your solution is implemented, it must be **tested/measured for success under the scrutiny of deadlines** and sub deadlines.
- Apply **WHY, WHAT, WHO, WHERE** and **WHEN** to each step (S,M,A,R,T)



## Directions:

All responses to the Pre Program Surveys have been reviewed and compiled by Kristine Sexter, Senior Consultant with WorkWise Productions.

The responses, concerns and challenges were put into **general categories**.

### **Individual Exercise:**

The concerns/challenge categories will be revealed to the group, one by one.

**As each category is revealed, you will be asked to individually (and silently) brainstorm, and write down, as many possible solutions to this concern as you can.** Even though you are being asked to brainstorm at a fast pace, please continue to consider the facets that comprise the definition of a "viable solution."

You will be given \_\_\_\_ minutes to generate as many solutions as you can to each category. Your facilitator will give the 'go' and 'stop' signals and will go on to reveal the next category.

Remember: Do NOT put your name on your response sheets.

### **Team Exercise:**

You will be randomly divided into teams.

As a team, decide which concern/category deserves to be addressed first.

As a team, generate the top 3 most viable solutions your team believes will most effectively resolve/correct this concern.

Decide upon a spokesperson. This individual will stand up and present why your team chose this category as needing the most immediate attention and the 3 solutions the team believes represent a positive step in resolving the concern.



## *Your Solutions:*

### **CATEGORY 1: Finding Skilled Workers**

#### **A FEW EXAMPLES of the CONCERNS:**

*"Our operation is located in a rural area of SW Oklahoma. Our recruiting source is primarily from agricultural communities and staffing is a real issue when the economy is strong."*

*"Finding people who have a positive work ethic (reliable, willing to put in a solid 40 hours per week, have a positive attitude)"*

*"Young people are not going into manufacturing or skilled industrial positions!"*

*"Finding anyone who is even willing to be trained!! We have the training available- even paid for- but no one is interested!"*

**SOLUTIONS:** Scholarship programs paid by business on completion of degrees as provided by Technical Institutions.

1. Define clear career paths for specific jobs/skills not just jobs.
2. Job contracts.
3. Develop, and highly reward, mentors/informal leaders.
4. Industry to work with local high schools to encourage them in summer internship jobs – High School Associates.
5. Build a deep rooted system as suggested in Work Keys Programs and publicize and educate GROWOKLAHOMA.COM
6. Free tuition to trade school – but no standing curriculum.
7. Recruit from outside area – but haven't been successful.
8. Apprentice from within – but that creates another vacancy.
9. Provide good descriptions of opportunities to kids in schools.

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10. Willingness and a positive work ethics is a problem that covers a lot of areas. I think the only answer is training in the area of ethics if this is possible outside the home and church. With the right attitudes and willingness, training becomes a lot easier. Skills are not going to be developed very far when you only stay at a job 1-3 months at a time.
11. An apprenticeship program could be one solution.
12. Start talking to high school level administrators, counselor teachers and students in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade about the manufacturing sector.
13. Getting parents more involved in their child's education and career counseling is probably more important than anything in my opinion.
14. Managers must get involved with the local school system if they are going to make change.
15. Working with tech's to open vocational education.
16. Promote manufacturing in youth education sooner.
17. Community input or action board.
18. Counselors in education helping youth to pick a career for them. Not just a job.
19. Parents should be compelled to attend the job fairs for youths.
20. Recruit from high schools by hosting plant tours and/or class room speaking.
21. Work with local real estate people to have a ready housing base.
22. Get involved with community activities to promote company.
23. Do like health facilities and create temporary housing for families to relocate to until they can find permanent homes. A lot of times they cannot afford to move without money from jobs or housing is not immediately available in some rural communities.
24. Join all available groups in other rural areas for networking.
25. Advertise what you offer as employer – everywhere! Current employees are best representatives when they are happy, they talk. When they are not happy they talk too.
26. Speak for free at vo-techs and high schools.
27. Open your doors – invite everyone in to see who you are and what you do.
28. Partner with all educational institutions to keep the company visible to possible employees.

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29. Be clear about what you need and define levels of advancement – advertise this.
30. Employee incentives for bringing in skilled workers – our best employees come from employee referrals.
31. Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance to network and develop more of today's type conferences in each small town. Utilize Kristine Sexter of WorkWise Productions again as facilitator.
32. Find a way for every school system in Oklahoma to be a member of a tech-school, without the citizens having to approve by vote.
33. More networking opportunities for small business.
34. More recruiting training for employers.
35. Inspire the upcoming generations to achieve their goals through education, counseling and on- site experience.
36. Have a product workable and worth producing that one would want to be a part of manufacturing.
37. Retaining/retraining what you have.
38. Go to public schools on career day.
39. Be visible in your community and accessible.
40. Internet, internet.
41. Networking.
42. Let your needs be known to everyone.
43. Grow and professionally develop your current work force.
44. Offering the right benefits to the right groups of employers.
45. Have a time book type page that list all employees skills per tests they have taken online, this could include their resume as well. Status could say 'in job', 'looking', etc.
46. There is a site currently on line, [www.elance.com](http://www.elance.com) where you can outsource all types of jobs, web design, and programming, anything that can be done electronically. On this site every person is rated that you can hire.
47. Offer more free “Work Keys” job assessments. We were given two free this year and with these economic times we cannot afford it. We have many jobs that could have benefitted.

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48. Introduce school children to a variety of jobs from the 7<sup>th</sup> grade on.
49. Networking.
50. Seminars – job fairs.
51. Assessments (skills or body of knowledge).
52. Incentives or compensation.
53. Recruit within area high schools, meet with high school counselors to generate a recruitment process for non-college bound students prior to graduation – introduce them too our industry.
54. Work with school officials – tech centers to identify our skills need so they can incorporate this into class curriculum.
55. Radio advertisement – reaches larger population.
56. Employee referral system with cash incentives.
57. Recruit trained craftspeople through tech centers.
58. Change the way the education system thinks about manufacturing – develop students to believe it's for smart, talented people who want to work their way up instead of going to college for four years, then ending up working retail.
59. Educate parents to understand the earning potential of manufacturing including benefits, i.e., insurance (401(k) that most offer.
60. Use flexible scheduling whenever possible.
61. Entertain part-time employment ideas for the working mom.
62. Finding unskilled works are not a problem, so seek within your company and see if any of your employees are interested in becoming skilled and train them yourself and really promote your project. Go to area schools and promote your company to students that will be graduating.
63. Educate!
64. Train children in school so that they must be more responsible in school and have to work for a living.
65. Build strong positive relationship with community, “Building” the company as a pension plan to work and be associated with.
66. Close relationship with schools, scholarships, interns, lectures, field trips, etc.

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67. Referrals – if the current work force is proud, then they will send family, friend and strangers to your doors generation after generation.
68. Must start with K-12 public education – starting with training teachers and emphasizing U.S. needs in these areas. Also, there must be marketing to parents of needs. It will take time, but must start at the lowest grade levels.
69. Market values of manufacturing jobs – incentives, pay, etc.
70. Local communities must figure out to make their communities attractive to young folks of today,
71. Through local vocational facilities; internet searches of job boards; local high schools pushing the development of technical skills; through internships – summer programs bringing in high school graduates; bring in at lower level positions and then open up opportunity for in-house training.
72. Need to promote manufacturing careers everywhere – schools, communities, etc. – educate the populace as to manufacturing careers.
73. Education and awareness services; at a younger age. Young really don't know about career paths. Get youth involved in skills and careers sooner. We gave up on finding skilled workers and started looking for trainable employees; using work keys, work ethic, motivation, needs to come from home.
74. Develop "dual" opportunity for shared work farms and manufacturing business.
75. Incorporate personal/individual responsibility for teaching/training into commercial system – e.g., Brian Tracy type motivated talks. "If it is to be, it's up to me!" *Psychology of Success*.
76. Offer competitive wages and benefits.
77. Provide training opportunities that employees can relate to.
78. Network with other manufacturers and HR groups.
79. Create employee owned organizations.
80. Use work keys as a source for skilled workers.
81. Utilize technology centers and their capabilities.
82. Communications between employers and employees.
83. Referrals from existing work force.
84. Sources at Vo-Techs, high schools, etc.
85. Networking with other HR officials.

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86. Participate in job fairs.
87. Communication lines with local workforce office/personnel.
88. CRC network – all high school graduates.
89. Teach kids that they have to start somewhere and not at the top – work your way up.
90. Network with local schools – community colleges/ CVTC/high schools.
91. Offer more incentives to bring in people to your company. Having a type of work place that is “known” in the area as the place to work. Encourage the community to keep those families new by offering better places to work. Advertise in local papers and with local employment agencies.
92. Have parents of young people tour manufacturing plants and see the possibilities for their children.
93. Create more commercials showing the satisfied employees and their stories.
94. Utilize the internet social networking sites to communicate with the younger generations.
95. Recruit more military veterans.
96. OESC, career readiness, colleges, networking, flex time.
97. Offer: High school tours (bring in students to show process and discuss expectations) – idea from group – summer programs and hires teachers).
98. Allow market forces to set wages and prices. Raise image of manufacturing in public. Educate public as to how manufacturing creates wealth and great opportunity. Changing attitude about price – morality of buying from sweat shops and companies that hate us. Dealing with systems rather than root cause which is lack of demand. Manufacturing creates wealth. Demand will attract quality employees if wages and benefits are properly designed which bring us back to attitudes about price. Focus effort on attracting business that create not consume wealth.
99. Make training requirement not optional. Flexible work hours so work force can use employees with second jobs. Liaison workplace rules (OCSA/AGE) and provide incentives to employers offering incentives
100. Volunteer to speak about careers at local high schools. Pass out business cards to everyone you meet which sparks an interest with you. Know all the high school counselors. Speak at civic clubs. Be a member, and local chamber of commerce. Network, network, network. Volunteer to help with leadership group; civic and schools.
101. Import workers from foreign countries i.e., Burma.

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102. Develop internship programs, common education, career tech community college, university with industrial companies actively involved and committed in curriculum development and placement.
103. Involve teachers, counselors and parents in understanding manufacturing job/career opportunities and benefits (pay, benefits, security, etc.).
104. Use temporary services. Work of mouth employee to anyone they would recommend. Signs outside of plant with hiring messages. Ads in papers; job fairs; internet; tech centers.
105. I am only 28, and my perception growing up was that manufacturing jobs were low level. If you wanted to be something, you had to have a four year degree. This is not what I believe, just what I have been told all of my life. I believe there needs to be a shift from college back to the tech schools. Vo-techs do not seem to be highly regarded in society for whatever reason.
106. Networking – engaging current work force in finding good workers.
107. Engaging current workforce in finding good workers.
108. Career tech programs that match workforce needs to happen. Collaboration between business and education.
109. Pain summer programs of job shadowing with high school kids.
110. Educating younger students and parents about good jobs in industry.
111. Use work based social members (i.e. Facebook/My Space) to find out what young people are thinking and interact with them. Point out positive information about industrial jobs and workforce needs.
112. Teach teachers what manufacturing really is. Provide that information to parents. Ask K-12 system for a career information style class. Talk to other operations about sharing employees – they may have employees who are a better fit for your company and vice versa. Rethink your definition of “positive work ethic” as far as possible, i.e. flex time. Offer a workplace that fosters a positive attitude. Utilize CRCs (they are free!) to see who can handle being further trained.
113. Remove the government restrictions that force our company to hire and retain individuals that are not suited to our manufacturing environment and culture.
114. Allow companies greater flexibility to promote the needs of our business without the political and labor union favorable pressures.
115. School systems should be more open to business coming into them and soliciting for workforce associates.

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116. Make work challenging. Have a recognition system. Reward associates for ideas. Listen to your people. Work of mouth; networking; recruiters; family; career day; job fairs; internships, coop programs; advertise on the internet and in newspapers; hire a talent manager.
117. Develop and relocation policy; keep up with industry trends and follow plant closing in your industry.
118. Basis skills training for manufacturing jobs. Manufacturing industry council to identify manufacturing needs; job responsibilities – show up.
119. Find ways to offer benefits (healthcare, retirement). Work with Vo-techs. Network with other companies. Advertise in newspaper, on TV, radio and internet. Offer better pay. Have air conditioning. Offer incentives and bonuses.
120. Synchronize local resources (i.e., manufacturing employee agents), tech schools, and government.
121. Network with other like industry/businesses.
122. Community involvement – advertise yourself in schools.
123. Community awareness – the need for inter-social events.
124. There are actually young people that desire small communities in which to raise their family.
125. College graduates without families tend to migrate toward metroplex environment.
126. Stable employment history – small community manufacturers sometimes are known for periodic layoffs – especially with energy industry.
127. People want a sense of stability – others plan to work for a short time and then move on to another company to advance their salary and position.
128. Change focus of education – not bases totally on testing but how to get things done.
129. Push parents back to the classroom. Tax credits – refunds, etc., for companies or parents that get involved in school activities such as parent teacher conferences – reading in the classroom. Show a kid that education is important.
130. Reform welfare – if you don't work you don't eat!
131. Crack down on drugs – selling and manufacturing of drugs does not equal a job!
132. Re-educate people about “work”. We now have “kids” as grandparents – 38 years old – they don't have the stability to even pass down their own family lines.

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133. People from industry as the instructors to teach skills from industry. Get input from industry of skills needed and test workers to determine where they are in relation to these skill sets. Get industry to help with incentives for people to learn these needed skills. Partner with business and industry to set up internships or apprenticeships to better train students for their specific needs.
134. Put together recruiting incentives for workers. Get parents involved in child's education and career opportunities. Educate people of the possibilities in manufacturing salaries, etc. Flexible work schedule. Fund day care. Address graduation requirement with legislation. Encourage career tech at an early age. Career opportunities within 50 mile radius.
135. Adjust hours to accommodate seasonal career professionals such as farmers.
136. Establish communication programs – keep people informed.
137. Work with community groups, schools, industry.
138. Sponsor information in plant for schools. Class tours.
139. Have summer programs for teaching (in-service).
140. Support/advertise with local vocational training centers.
141. Must address industry friendly comments that exist in OK today (Judicial).
142. Testimonials from present workers.
143. Comparison matrix (i.e., of competing opportunities/choices and prerequisites).
144. Be on school boards/advisory boards.
145. Look at your workplace through their eyes.
146. Be careful for value judgments.
147. Industry representative to recruit and “guide” young people at the junior high level to mentor them into a career. Networking. Referral from employees. Use local “free services”. Crqigslist is free – lots of good responses.
148. Provide a good company reputation so local employees will want to work for you. Use free job postings on internet if funds are short. Attend job fairs.
149. Fast(er) track skills training.
150. Housing availability – development funds.

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151. Means to find them – where to advertise.
152. Out of state job fairs located at plant closings.
153. Incentives and benefits.
154. Short-term employment contracts.
155. Extend recruitment area; use other sources of recruitment. Utilize profile assessment screening before hiring. Participate in DOC programs for hire; import workers; tap into areas with depressed economies. Visit high schools, middle schools, have tours, attend local job fairs/career days. Advertise the advantages of training. Do training with co-op approach (1/2 day work, 1/2 day training) as example.
156. Advertise, internet, stronger business website.
157. Communication with tech centers.
158. Get away from two income families.
159. Networking with other regional businesses.
160. Paradigm shift away from “dark, dirty” manufacturing companies.
161. Let people know where we are with finding skilled workers.

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## **CATEGORY 2: Generational Differences at Work**

### **A FEW EXAMPLES of the CONCERNS:**

*“There is certainly a clash of generational attitudes!”*

*“We have an aging workforce which cannot be preplaced with techno kids!”*

*“We are challenged to find a work environment that can accommodate all generations without alienating anyone!”*

*“Why can’t we begin teaching Generation Y what they need to do to obtain and retain jobs rather than trying to tell employers we need to accommodate GenY?!”*

### **SOLUTIONS:**

1. Flexible hours and shifts.
2. Short work week/hours.
3. Provide constant challenges on the job (renewal).
4. Cross training to reduce boredom.
5. Utilize Work cells or teams.
6. We like Techno kids – we do a lot of cross training and putting old and new generations together. (My expectation as manager) – Certify then, file training record – give them raises based on performance.
7. Use six sigma methods – learn.
8. Most of our employees are Gen Y. We meet their need for honest management. Adjust your expectations – but demand they be met!
9. The problem again goes back to work ethics not being taught anywhere, so we suggest training on work ethics.
10. Encourage creativity within a certain set of guidelines.
11. Do not stifle their thinking process by forcing your perceptions on them.
12. Provide a work atmosphere that rewards innovation and communication.

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13. Implement mentoring program between generations.
14. Training all employees about generation differences.
15. Actively use younger generation to get ideas about improving business, recruiting, and retention.
16. Build management team that included spectrum of generations.
17. Let them work together.
18. Allow them to input ideas and give them time and PC use to do research even at production level. They think differently so have great new ways of doing things.
19. Training on what they say they need training for.
20. Job sharing works in office setting, so does flex hours. It does not work ( for us) in assembly line manufacturing; neither will work from home.
21. I'm an aging baby boomer – this generation frustrates me with their sense of entitlement. Best success I've had is to develop a plan for them to advance. Let them know what they need to know and do to advance to the next level. Get them involved in the improvement/decision making process and recognize their efforts. Constant feedback on performance is beneficial.
22. All communications with Gen Y are almost entirely electronic. The older workers must adapt to this type of communication, but Gen Y's must also adapt to talking face to face. This should be trainable.
23. Confidence builders so generations have creditability.
24. Interaction to discover strengths and weaknesses.
25. Yieldedness/flexibility/accommodations.
26. Honor/acknowledgement of excellence.
27. Motivate to new skill levels and uses.
28. Find things in common with Gen Y and capitalize.
29. Communicate in their language.
30. Be the Gen Y manufacturing company.
31. Promotion is higher on their list of priorities than wages. Offer many promotion opportunities even if it is within the same type of jobs.
32. Put them in the fast paced jobs that take a lot of multitasking, or create jogs that allow multitasking.

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33. Standard benefits of healthcare, 401K, do not matter to young generation as much as additional time off or flexible schedule.
34. Get rid of the hierarchy (create high performance work force).
35. Use knowledge and skill of all to enhance efficiency.
36. Innovate to capture and hold their interest (dollars).
37. Modified policy such as attendance that allows employees to have more control of their schedule.  
Example – shift interruption to allow parent to attend games/Dr. appointment with kids (time can be made up prior to or after event as long as it is made up within pay week. They receive no penalty.  
“Changed from hourly to non-exempt workforce – eliminated time clock.
38. Involve them in creation of policy/procedures or in obtaining solution to problem (closest to problem – they know what is happening first hand).
39. Family involvement in work celebration – know family members and what is happening with them to help stay engaged.
40. Mentor Program – have new hires work with seasoned employees showing them the ropes and the tricks of the trade.
41. Why is it that everyone thinks they need to work 40 – 50 years? When I was raised it was 30 and out. Many younger folks see there is no way to advance because so many “old timers” won’t get out of the way! Younger people don’t want to be “stuck doing the same thing” for 40+ years. They need variety and challenges.
42. One thing I’ve encountered is that older managers don’t like change. If I can come up with a method of doing a certain job faster and easier they don’t want to always listen because they say “we’ve been doing it this way for years.” Listen to their ideas without bias opinion, what will it hurt.
43. Constant communication in multiple mediums – 2-way – give them a voice.
44. Answer the “why” questions. Because I told you does not work.
45. Variety – cross training.
46. Modern training programs – use technology.
47. Tuition assistance programs.
48. Committees and focus groups; mixing generations.
49. Involve them as leaders.

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50. Small, rural communities (50,000 residents or less) must provide quality of life to attract these folks and to keep them! Also, must have hi-tech capabilities. These young folks want time for self and family and friends.
51. Flexibility in work hours. Keep challenging them. Communication is key – they want to know what is going on and feel a part of it. Show them respect. Training – they need to be able to see a path to take to move up the ladder.
52. Involve them in problem solving and improvement projects.
53. Flexible benefits/schedules where and when possible.
54. Team them with older workers.
55. Cross training/develop multiple skills move them around.
56. Leadership development program – formalized training.
57. Mentors (proven leaders).
58. Rewards based on leadership skills (demonstrated).
59. Put the Gen Y worker with someone they can get along with and they will learn.
60. Train the different generations about the others.
61. Integrating Gen Y – no different then integrating any two or more things. Communication and understanding of each other is a must. Listen – share – work on developing each others strengths to contribute to mutual satisfaction of building together the solutions to producing a good outcome of the collaborative efforts.
62. Be open to flexible shifts and flexible hours.
63. Allow “Gen Y” to form or join committees to share ideas with senior employee and to be open to new ideas.
64. Reward them for their input.
65. Mentoring programs to pair “Gen Y” with “Gen X.”
66. Consistently recruiting their feedback on the functions of the company and instituting their viable suggestions.
67. Partner Gen Y’s with baby boomers, etc. to integrate job/work ethics from each generation.
68. Demonstrate a willingness to change.

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69. Keep the older generation away from them – 50 – 60 year olds have no patience with them and hurt the overall relationship – they make them feel unwanted!
70. Try to teach them that perception is everything to others.
71. Work with older generation to help them understand flexibility.
72. Listen to their ideas; take a fresh approach at solving an old problem. They are now taught technology that wasn't available to us when we were young. Encourage activities where the two generations can interact, maybe, older learning a video game, younger taking up fishing as a hobby; learns the relaxing things that the older generation have always known. Toss problems at the younger generation.
73. I'm raising two right now, and they both are already considering what they want to do. They want to be satisfied with their job not just make money. They want to see the job through to completion, not just see a piece of the job. They want to be valued and shown that value. They know when you don't mean it.
74. Communicate on their level.
75. Revamp incentive plans to include suggestions from Gen Y.
76. Flex time.
77. Don't try to find one size fits all work environments, create what you want and recruit those that are compatible.
78. Teams, involvement, flexibility in schedules and work environment.
79. Offer education and training opportunities for performance.
80. Don't substitute rules for leadership.
81. Be prepared to explain why – transparency.
82. Accept young social needs that impact work available It is always focused on performance – objective not subjective, i.e., don't worry about small stuff.
83. Ask them: What they want to do; what they think they can do; how they can help me; mentor them with your aged workers. Do not tell them what to do.
84. The aging workforce is less interested in full-time employment. The Gen Y group may not want 40 – 50 hour workweek. Perhaps matching to set up a mentoring work assignment with some overlap of hours. Both groups would need coaching to understand one another better so acceptance might be more compatible.

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85. I think your comment nailed it on the mark because I am Gen “Y” and I have always worked for the “old school” bosses. There has to be a balance point. I think the older generations need to adapt.
86. Listen to Gen Y and learn what motivates them.
87. Respect their strengths/skills – learn to tap into those skills – they may compliment our skills.
88. Mentoring/job sharing.
89. Ask for their input – value their input. Conversely – show them the value of our skills.
90. Don’t talk down to them or try to be dictator.
91. Communicate via “their” media – Facebook/My Space.
92. Have different generations actually talk to each other about themselves, not about work. No preaching – just facts.
93. Listen.
94. Reverse mentoring programs as well as adult mentoring.
95. Learn about your own leadership style regardless of which generation it is.
96. Take advantage of generational training. Check your jobs to see if they actually require 40 hours (or whatever) per week and possibly match some that don’t.
97. Show them acceptance in our work culture and explain to them why we do things certain ways. Make them comfortable in our work environment and harvest their desire and needs to create productivity and output.
98. Create company activities and programs geared toward their needs. Involve your “old” systems.
99. Task forces with older employees and younger employees.
100. Utilization of the knowledge of not standing for it’s always been done that way.
101. Mentoring programs.
102. Job sharing.
103. Challenging the workforce to improve and make things flow better.
104. Educate and train. Modify attendance and sick pay policies. Consider the “whole” person. Alternative employees – stay at home parents, teachers, students.

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105. Let 'em go --- controlling will not work! Communicate expectations and deadlines and then leave them be. Give direction/feed back when product is delivered – honest and open. Next task assigned will be better as you learn how best to communicate expectations and they learn from you.
106. Establish communication on something in common – sports, etc.
107. Staying up with technology – older folks are scared of technology advancements – despite having benefited from them.
108. Set and understand common goals and how to achieve them.
109. Manage people – not the problem – if people are managed effectively, problems will be solved accordingly.
110. Existing companies need to do more supervisory training – teach supervisors how to interact with this generation.
111. Companies should rethink hours – work day – just because a person has worked for the same company for 20 years does not make them a leader or a supervisor – be non-conventional where possible.
112. Don't let Gen Y'ers off the hook of hard work – make sure they know what is expected of them up front.
113. Introduce items of interest to them into the training programs they are in such as "robotics" in electronic games. Use of mentors and of opportunities – job shadowing opportunities.
114. Offering a different style of delivery.
115. More actual technology in delivery and outcome.
116. Try to find a happy medium between Gen Y and the older workforce. How they can be more compatible.
117. Try to provide opportunities for a smooth transaction from the aging workforce to the Gen Y.
118. Establish goals and objectives that motivate them.
119. Establish work schedules (flex hours) that meet both employer and employee needs.
120. Develop incentives (time off with pay) that are of interest.
121. Develop positions that add more teamwork and less individually measured.
122. Create activities that are centered around themselves. (open houses, etc.)

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123. Have educational assistance programs and benefits that appeal to younger generation. Old generation – retirement. New generation -- time off/flex hours.
124. Must have cross training opportunities and if you have multiple plants/businesses – cross career opportunities.
125. Differentiate between workplace and non-workplace values.
126. Look at yourself and your workplace from their perspective.
127. Have clear, realistic, and consistent policies about getting along, including training.
128. Support continuing education.
129. Job profile the supervisory job (i.e., it's not just tech skills).
130. Use supervisory, leadership, time, and career tactics.
131. Use Work Keys (performance, fit, talent) assessments.
132. A successful business has to place at least as much importance on the young worker as the experienced senior worker. It needs to be a blend of experience and young capabilities. The senior worker can be “pulled” into a techno world and it will enable them to feel like a team. There are many facets to a good employee – willingness to be open to change is among the highest. Most young people with their “techno” skills will blossom under the praise of a “senior.”
133. Flex time.
134. Four 10-hour days.
135. Listening to them gains their trust.
136. Involving them in big picture gains their buy-in.
137. Soliciting their ideas and solutions to everyday issues and projects.
138. Family oriented activities.
139. Showing them the coolness of how our product is used by end-users.
140. Strive to remove attitude as a dominant factor in the workplace.
141. Work smarter, not harder. Explain benefits of both generations to each.
142. Stick to the basics – all generations are motivated by positive feedback, results, rewards for performance. Share basic information and expand to meet the inquiries of either generation.

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- 143. Educate them to understand the different areas (machine shop, assembly, drafting) perhaps with a mentor (older, established employee).
  
- 144. Cross training new employees for avoiding the “boredom” that sets in with day in/day out repetitious work.



## **CATEGORY 3: Supervisors that can lead and manage**

### **A FEW EXAMPLES of the CONCERNS:**

*“We need employees at all levels- however it is especially difficult to find and keep talented leaders. Really- I am talking about folks who are both technically proficient and have excellent communication and motivational skills.”*

*“It used to be we would promote high producers into lead, or supervisor roles. That was wrong. Just because that can produce on the line has NOTHING to do with managing others. How can we attract and keep great leaders when we struggle to attract and keep entry level employees?”*

*“How do we find individuals that want to grow and develop? Most workers don’t want more pressure, responsibility leadership. They want in and out of work.”*

*“We are a small shop. There is not a lot of advancement. How can we get and keep great supervisors when there is nowhere to go?”*

### **SOLUTIONS:**

1. Create a sense of family loyalty. Cross training to do additional responsibility, e.g. I have moved my production personnel to help with warranty.
2. Recognize superior performance.
3. Do not lay them off during slow times.
4. Take and expose employees to other opportunities.
5. - Train for soft skills – listening; determining readiness of employee for particular task.
6. Set expectations/define responsibilities/assign tasks that demonstrate development of management skills, i.e. performance reviews for reports. Schedule reports so that training opportunities are optimized.
7. Advertise for people with people management skills and screen the applicants well. Pay good for good performance. Must prove themselves.
8. Formal training in the areas of responsibility and management.
9. Reward creativity and good communication.
10. Create a work environment to enjoy.

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11. Information from other manufacturing shops. Same or like work. Diversify product. Keep market sales in flow. New products.
12. I've found that you cannot "create" good managers, you must seek out those rare individuals that already have the right "attitude" to manage and supervise. All the training in the world is pointless without the attitude in place first (and you can't train "attitude").
13. Unique problem – my top machinists make more than a salaried supervisor so it is really difficult to promote from within. We have been somewhat successful with internal postings when it is clear what the job is and what the expectations are. We have a challenging interview process so they're really serious about the position to post for it. I've always been of the mindset that if you have great leadership/supervisory skills then you don't need to be the technical expert but the owner of our company disagrees.
14. You must find people with management skills for supervisory/lead roles. These people are already working for you. See who your people follow each day, the natural leaders will be there.
15. Loyalty is a goal. There is a level here where accuracy is trust, truth = honesty and all = successful management. Even short term excellent management is an opportunity for growth. Problem solving skills. The need to wait for the right person to fill this position has a priority. Ethics and pray, pray, pray! Access to resources/career tech partnering. Check out Delta Faucet, Maremont . . .
16. Are there any employees you currently have that are growable?
17. Do you have the right manager?
18. Make the supervisor/manager positions more desirable.
19. Support current supervisors and managers with the tools to make them successful.
20. Be a desirable place to work.
21. Set clear roles and responsibilities and expectations for both supervisors and their employees. Then set precise goals that are good for developing them and building the company for them, that they know if they meet them they will be personally rewarded. Along with those goals work with them to develop action items. Create a long term growth program with that employee that continually keeps them focused on the future and also gives them something to look forward to down the road, thus enhancing retention.
22. Make the tough decision to shift those employees out of supervisor roles that are not good supervisors and put in personnel that are good supervisors.
23. Provide a career or professional development plan. State the objectives for 6 months and review.
24. Ensure there is mandatory training accomplished that enhances their skill and prepares them for the next level.

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25. Pay for skills.
26. Front line leadership training.
27. Behavior based interviewing.
28. Succession planning – mentoring.
29. Have employees involved in leading committees to provide opportunities to evaluate leadership skills, delegation – handling situations that are not always pleasant. Provides management opportunity to train or develop individual area they struggle with.
30. 360 degree evaluation subordinate – supervisor and supervisor – subordinate, with comment for score received and improvement needed.
31. Sometimes need to hire outsider to break the chain of “we’ve always done it this way.”
32. Evaluate and pay for the skills they have. Even if they can’t promote up because there is nothing available, promote their pay.
33. Cross-train managers to offer variety and better knowledge of system as a whole.
34. Don’t just throw them to the wolves. Mentor, ease them into the transition of worker to leader. “Step them up” into that position while lead or manager is on vacation and see how they do. Then coach them through the rough stuff.
35. Invest in your supervisors – send to training and have regular meetings with them to address their concerns and help them develop the skills they need to become a great leader. Keep communications open and let them know what to expect from them.
36. Give managers incentives for doing a great job, not just punishing them when they fall back.
37. Create a desirable environment – combination of job/wage/benefits culture.
38. Opportunity for development.
39. Educate the workforce as to the economic environment and what it will take to win.
40. Ask for those who have an interest. Give them training and opportunity; but, give them assurance that they can return to previous work if they realize the new job does not work for them, i.e., it is not a good “fit.” They will know sooner than one might think and most will take the right course of action.
41. Take supervisor through extensive leadership training. Make sure they understand your expectations. Interview their employees to find out how they are really doing. Follow through with the information to help develop them. Provide them with a mentor – go to person who has the skills you desire.

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42. Lean manufacturing.
43. Training (continuous).
44. Some people like working with their hands, making things – it touches their creative element, their need for a feeling of fulfillment – find them and nurture them to be all they can be.
45. Not everyone wants to work in an office . . . or a casino!
46. Promote manufacturing careers.
47. Many of us have supervisors and leads that don't have good communication skills or motivational skills. I have lost workers because of this. How do you bring in someone to fill their position in a small business where we don't think we need another position, especially now. Catch 22? These skills are becoming much more important with the younger generation.
48. Management must be willing to establish a line of communication with its employees that permits the employee to express an interest in growing in supervisory and management skills. Management must then give those employees an opportunity to be trained (professionally) in that regard and measured in their ability to lead and development of management skills.
49. Provide across the board training to all employees so they are more knowledgeable when the time comes for advancement.
50. Create training programs and partnerships with technology centers to provide leadership training to lead and supervisory personnel.
51. Have a strong partnership between HR and supervisor. The HR Department should be there to help nurture and teach supervisor how to manage their employees.
52. Reward supervisor for the job they do, create loyalty between employer and employee.
53. Provide ongoing training.
54. Look for the soft skills needed and build from there.
55. Referrals from peers and co-workers.
56. Consistently include them in the state of the business and what their role is in success of the business.
57. It is easy to promote and leave alone because they are a good worker. You have to stop working in the business and start working on the business. That is when you start to develop your ideas and concepts that push leads or supervisors to training classes on a regular basis.
58. Lateral moves for a supervisor/lead can help improve the overall value and keep them interested. I get bored myself every 3 – 5 years in the same job.

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59. Work with them just as you have a supervisor/lead work with their employees. Too often we assume they know what to do.
60. Hire someone with management skills from another field that has been laid off due to the economy, or some other setback in their chosen profession to come into your company and lead with a positive attitude. Not that many people in our shop want, or even expect to be made a manager. Offer incentives to keep the leader you choose, so that he may not seek employment elsewhere.
61. I believe the current compensation structure is part of this problem. The supervisors usually make lots more money, and the production workers resent this. Therefore, the production workers want to move up, but don't have or want the skills necessary for the job. Offer more company paid tuition programs. Provide some training for all levels in the company.
62. Hire leaders, teach tech skills.
63. Leadership training, communication skills, problem solving training, versatility training to be able to work with conflicting social styles.
64. Apprenticeships.
65. Provide perks to motivate supervisors.
66. We must be prepared to pay for their soft-skills. Leaders must have authority to lead in more than name only. Leadership is a skill that must be trained. Salary is not code for no overtime.
67. Start training all employees on leadership and management skills. Put employees through shop to keep them from developing a fixed loyalty to a department/group and facilitate development and loyalties to organization. Assign small products to Gen Y's to lead and provide team members to manage. (also projects to build leadership by removing permanent status of manager/lead.
68. Search out good people; reliable, healthy, strong family, good work ethic. Must be able to communicate. Promote sales training to all supervisory candidates.
69. Assess – desire and competencies of workforce toward supervisor.
70. Train – to raise competencies.
71. Reward – supervisor – results driven measurable.
72. Recognize – parking, logo on logo shirts, perks, etc.
73. Teach them people skills to involve employees in work process. Be out there with their employees and be seen. Give them skills to succeed – coach them to be proactive. Teach them time management.
74. - Hire managers/supervisors for leadership skills. You learn how to recognize and evaluate leadership skills in potential employees.

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75. Give managers/supervisors the guidance and guidelines to be successful but let them do their job – don't micro manage – don't usurp their authority and respect lines of organization. Pay for positive performance.
76. Labor force – have the most efficient/motivated workforce possible. Keep striving for efficiency and implement lean manufacturing techniques.
77. Have open communication environment.
78. Utilize technology to improve quality and production efficiency.
79. Have a quality plan that takes input and is source of improvement from shop floor workers.
80. Profile (ACT/Work Keys) your leadership positions to see exactly what skills are most important and recruit from that profile. Reward supervisors for the performance of their team. Train the trainable for leadership roles. Don't just promote.
81. Make sure you move managers around and keep them engaged and on the edge pushing their skills.
82. Make sure you understand how the managers feel about their current roles, and what they want in their future. Some want to “move and shake”; others are content with their current roles. Don't push them out by not meeting their expectations!
83. Cross train them in other parts of the business.
84. Give them challenging assignments.
85. Recognition for a job well done.
86. Insure career mapping is done with manager and you both agree on it.
87. Pay them well.
88. Ownership of the business.
89. Ease people into more responsibility. Build a culture around communication and excellence. Train people in personal vision. It translates to leadership succession planning. Let people make mistakes. Examine pay structures, can they make more without promoting.
90. Individuals that have technical skills but also have soft skills in areas of communication, leadership, coaching skills. Involving employee to participate in soft and hard skills training.
91. Encourage gifted employees that are afraid of responsibility to take charge and learn to make important decisions. Find sharp, outgoing people and train them on the technical skills. Give employees the chance to prove themselves if they will be good leaders or not.

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92. Identify most important skills required – usually the soft “people skills”; communication (verbal) and able to motivate. We hire or promote based on those. If technical is integral team them with existing employees who have those skills.
93. Grow management from within your organization and make sure they are competent with “soft skills” before putting them in a management role.
94. The right people in the right seats on the bus. Workplace evaluations – to the point. Training on laws – policies and procedures – training on how to be a leader./supervisor. Push community involvement that will help develop other skills.
95. Where you have good people in place let them do their job – don’t micro manage them. That keeps them from being productive. Provide opportunities for professional development. Show your people you care about them. Praise and reward outstanding achievements.
96. Select employees that have the talent of being an effective lead person and then train them to a specific job category. Select a person that knows how to gain the respect of their co-workers.
97. Must have successful planning that includes ID of potential talent, reviews mean where skills need to be development, and establish a training program for those people. (Note) Must insist on strong communication skills.
98. Make informative programs available for people to become more informed of “what it takes to be a successful leader” – can be computer based and individually accessed.
99. Establish recognition/rewards that are team based and will allow success without necessarily promoting people.
100. Be aware these trends will level out (e.g. overseas labor will go up, transportation is going up, casinos will level out due to older generation fading away).
101. Write congress.
102. See what the European countries are doing.
103. My experience: I have always been a hard worker, motivated, want to please and be recognized as a good employee. When management recognizes that they abuse my willingness to take on and complete any task. I have actually had to change jobs because after my discussion with them they didn’t care. When I left one position they hired three people to cover. I feel managers are not “trained” properly and too much stress is put on “getting all they can from the worker and not managing the work loads properly and in turn they also are overwhelmed.
104. Soft skills training at tech centers.

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105. Educate them on how to manage the budget of their department by coaching them on how they manage their own household budgets. The revelation is that many of them have personal finances in a mess. Use this to provide training to their weaknesses for win – win results. This increases their competencies and loyalties.
106. Economic downturn is good time to work on our business while wer'e not consumed in our business during economic upturns.
107. Need to provide leader/supervisor roles with soft skill training, communication training. Recognize when an employee in leadership role is unsuited.
108. Involve them in decision making. Solicit input, ideas and react/respond to this.
109. Improvement teams with members from floor and front line. Create buy-in, this motivates people, develops confidence,
110. Emphasize needs to be placed on ability to lead, motivate, cultivate the employees; not who “works the hardest.” Measure success/provide feed back consistent with this.
111. These are/seem to be few and far between. Difficult to keep them primarily because the individual wants to continue advancing “up” the pay scale. They get hired away by someone that “needs” them more. Hiring from within my work in certain cases, but leaders are born with this talent. Must go and hire specifically for this.



## **CATEGORY 4: Competing with China, Mexico, India, casinos, etc.**

### **A FEW EXAMPLES of the CONCERNS:**

*"We just can't compete for the labor. Our product quality is tops! But I really believe that since we are in 'no-where's-ville Oklahoma', and can't seem to solve our labor shortage issues, especially for skilled workers, that our owners are already planning our demise. "*

*"The casinos are the big employers now in our small town. We can't seem to get the best workers because they are hiring them all. And casino work is a lot cleaner!"*

*"It's all leaving the good 'ole USA. How sad..."*

### **SOLUTIONS:**

1. Keep up with technology.
2. Multi-skilled – multi-talented
3. Reduce our greed occurring at Wall Street.
4. Show genuine interest in each and every employee.
5. Do not outsource – In source!
6. We train our own; however, there is no skill base that would encourage new industry to locate here – it is dying. I don't see an end.
7. Utilize VoTech – we have 25 in basic hydraulic power training now.
8. Will be doing mechanical training this fall (bearing, mounting and handling).
9. Just got four E:I techs through Ioran Votech 8-week long course.
10. So far we haven't had this problem. We do employ some Mexican labor.
11. Manufacturing must create a work environment that will attract workers and by getting involved locally with schools and civic organizations they can help this situation. It may not cure it totally, but it will definitely help.
12. Locate qualified leaders – train! This may be able to reduce workforce ([Lean 101](#)).

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13. With all of the regulatory issues we face we cannot compete on a pure unskilled labor base. We can only compete by increasing automation, productivity, quality and skill level. This then leads to all of the training, recruiting and retention problems.
14. Updated equipment – hiring fewer people – able to pay more to higher greater skilled employees. Also quality and speed. So we can be closer to home, provide product to market faster and with better quality.
15. Our labor requirements are so specialized that there are a handful of companies like us and we steal from each other. A person will jump shop for 50 cents an hour so you better create the environment that makes them want to stay.
16. One of our biggest issues is finding places for people to live if we hire someone from outside of town for a skilled position. I feel there needs to be more grants for people to build apartments, etc. that are not “low income.”
17. Have a product worth producing. Have a better product able to be manufactured best here. Don't compete, cooperate, integrate multifaceted. Work a cooperative effort that utilizes both. See your product to your workforce.
18. Be the in place to work.
19. Networking.
20. Rethink your hiring practices.
21. Exit interviews to see why folks are leaving.
22. Train and retain.
23. Company makeover.
24. Huge issue with us currently. We are the last manufacturer of our type of product in the U.S. All of our competitors in the U.S. and Europe are shifting manufacturing to other countries. Our single biggest expense in manufacturing is our build labor. We can't automate our process because of our 500 + customers we have 500+ different applications. Profit sharing.
25. Value the workforce so they provide best value to the customer. Let them be a part of the organization instead of just working for the organization.
26. Hire people who don't like what the casinos stand for! [Kidding] Offer better work environment, just because we are a manufacturing facility does not mean our facilities have to be dirty – invest in proper cleanup and make it an essential function of everyone's job. Train on fact that bigger cities may pay more but might have more expense so take home pay is less. Learn to engage high school students with community so they don't want to leave.

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27. We compete regionally with our product. International competition is non-existent.
28. We try to show we are geared towards families and try to attract those that appreciate that instead of money only.
29. Like you said, offer training. I wish my company offered more training. Don't know what to say.
30. Create a desirable environment – combination of job/wages/benefits culture.
31. Opportunity for development.
32. Educate the workforce as to the economic environment and what it will take to win.
33. Must pay competitively! Must provide desirable workplace.
34. Lean manufacturing. Get your costs down. Make sure your employees understand how important it is to be efficient. Listen to your workforce. They're doing the work and will have great ideas on how to improve.
35. Lean manufacturing.
36. Training (continuous).
37. Some people like working with their hands, making things – it touches their creative element, their need for a feeling of fulfillment – find them and nurture them to be all they can be – invest in them.
38. Not everyone wants to work in an office --- or a casino!
39. Promote manufacturing careers.
40. Do what's right. Foreign companies are catching up with us on problems, labor costs and technology. We have to have a desirable work environment. We have had to become a lot more flexible with employees' needs and wants. More time off for personal needs.
41. Develop multi-skilled employees who become more valuable because they can do/perform in multiple jobs. They can be paid more because they can be moved around to where the work requirements are. For example, a manufacturing technician who can weld, program and run CNC machines, run manual machines and execute maintenance functions.
42. Provide quality service and quality good. The employees want to work for an organization that takes pride in its business.
43. Value employee input and challenging employees to come up with ways to improve production while cutting costs.

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44. Employees will work where they are treated well. Provide good benefits, decent wages and continuing education.
45. Continue to provide adequate skills training.
46. Demonstrate from top down a sense of pride in the workplace.
47. Instill a sense of value within the workforce.
48. Provide “open door” environment.
49. Provide cross-training.
50. We try to evaluate key workers and try to compensate them to discourage them from leaving. Also keep looking for opportunities for them to grow or move up.
51. We are employee owned so we have to sell this to them to help them understand what that means.
52. Market products to different types than they are normally sold, so that you may be able to offer better opportunities and benefits.
53. Focus on higher level jobs that other less skilled countries can't perform. Look for processes that lead us to manufacture products that can be built with existing workforce that we aren't building today. Focus on tomorrow's products and needs. Focus on local Oklahoma based companies that understand the value of Oklahoma's people.
54. Find out what the competition has that is enticing these workers in order to develop an action plan.
55. You cannot save your way to prosperity!
56. No labor shortage now
57. Casino's drain wealth, not create. Much of the money going to casinos is coming from low wage or mid-income food and clothing budgets. Look for other forms of gambling.
58. Morality of low price! Do we really benefit by exporting intellectual talent and capital investment off shore or south?
59. Distribution centers do not need scientists, engineers, or all disciplines, designer, artists, welders, machinists and many other educational disciplines or skills.
60. We compete by changing consumer attitude about supporting countries that mistreat workers or hate the U.S. Higher prices mean more money to circulate through the system via higher wages.
61. Reduce Government regulations and mandates.

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62. Manufacture lean.
63. Improve relationships with customers.
64. Fix: Workers compensation; health care costs; utility costs, etc. We must offer more than a job and should offer healthcare, day care and flexibility.
65. Use more technology to offset lack of skilled employees. Implement 5S programs. Improve jobs.
66. Make your business a better (more fun, more rewarding) place to work than the competition.
67. Promote opportunity for skills training and technological skills advancement.
68. Benefits are a big issue. Pay-rotating shifts – not many employees like to rotate.
69. Look at the profitability of the company and choose to invest in your workforce – pay them. Market your company as a great place to work at every opportunity.
70. Provide the workers with what they need. They will come.
71. Don't give up! You can compete with foreign companies, the higher oil and gas the more competitive we get. Transportation costs have hurt foreign companies in our sector.
72. Work has to be rewarding. Teach your associates to own the business. Educate all levels of the organization. Cross-train. Cross functional associates.
73. Get involved with community promotion. Examine your strengths and weaknesses. Annually review wages and benefits. Don't give up! Inventory your resources and use them. Think globally.
74. Provide quality customized training to your existing industry base.
75. Have industry representatives discuss job opportunities to students.
76. Share industry requirements with students. What to look for in a job and what the company expects.
77. Provide a cleaner, cooler work environment with better wages, benefits and training.
78. Everyone wants to make more money. Publicly held companies must find a way to improve their bottom line and moving operations to a more favorable (lower cost) labor market (internationally) is the easiest – not necessarily the best – way to do so.
79. There is not enough effort given to drive costs down in current methods in order to be competitive with foreign markets.
80. Private companies must find a way to economize their operations to stay competitive and at the same time achieve the “make more money” objective.

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81. Where possible modernize – get LEAN
82. Product improvement.
83. Training.
84. Positive employee relations.
85. Provide a better product.
86. Cut overhead by controlling waste and loss of time on productivity.
87. Skill training and safety training to cut down employee claims and down time.
88. We have to restructure our workforce with less involvement with labor unions and the strangle hold they have on the manufacturing industry. Implement some type of tax on impacted goods and focus on the quality of products made in the U.S.A.
89. Must establish and focus on “job satisfaction.”
90. Make sure you communicate all the time with all employees.
91. Have programs that identify you as a company with a positive factor in the community – “people like being associated with a place that neighbors think highly of.”
92. Be fair with everyone – be consistent.
93. Do not take advantage of people. Having people that work with commitment is important in establishes a desire.
94. Write Congress.
95. Obtaining good employees starts with management of the company. Working diligently to “not settle” for sub-quality employees. Owners should be in contact with training schools, other employers to do referrals and be a positive force in the community.
96. Focus on new products, new technologies, and new markets . . . do not try to compete toe-to-toe on commodity items. Innovate and diversify! This will help U.S. manufacturing to remain #1. Stay on the leading edge. Get out of the old rut that worked for the past 25 years. Change or die! Engage the entire workforce on generating new product ideas. (The alliance has a program for this). Business growth strategies must be part of our continuous improvement process.
97. Encourage workers to enter skilled trades. Work with local schools/training resources to develop industry specific training of the needed skills and allow workers to attend. (Invest in current workforce.) Promote from within if possible.

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98. Develop as many engineering/mechanical solutions to productivity issues as possible.
99. Make lean manufacturing a part of company culture.
100. Consider stock program to engage employees in profitability of the company.
101. Providing an atmosphere of “needing” Gen Y and providing concise direct instruction and purpose to the daily grind.
102. Particularly, cross-training for multiple job rolls is important. Break down the shop/engineering “walls.”



## **CATEGORY 5: The economy**

### **A FEW EXAMPLES of the CONCERNS:**

*"We have been hit hard by the economy. We hope to hold out as we manufacture for the oil and gas industry. With all the ups and downs, plus a bloat of inventory, the compilation of these challenges seems overwhelming at times."*

*"We can't afford to pay someone with the skills we need in this economy."*

*"Struggling to provide enough business in house to provide employees with 40 hour work weeks."*

### **SOLUTIONS:**

1. Cross-training programs.
2. Reduce hours to 24 or 32 and keep them around.
3. Work compressed.
4. Give a 3 or 4 day weekend!
5. Become efficient.
6. Look at every cost component in your process.
7. Involve your people – get their ideas.
8. Don't be afraid to experiment – challenge the status quo.
9. Don't accept (we've always done it this way)!
10. Accept failure and learn from it.
11. Be sure all vacations are taken during this slow down or anyone wanting extra time off. Suggest a cut in pay to keep afloat. Pray for better times and they will come at the proper time.
12. Create new products or service to increase revenue.
13. Participate in business growth initiatives through the MEP Network – such as Eureka Ranch!
14. Market your products to gain more market share or service.

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15. Diversification of manufacturing – working on extra work other than what you do.
16. Flex hours for employees.
17. Part time shift or night shift.
18. Contacting other shops for work.
19. Best way to address the economy: train voters in basic economics.
20. Our employees (a group) came to us and suggested they were willing to take pay cuts and/or work fewer hours in the event we need to do layoffs.
21. Train the skills needed while it is slow. Change to 32 hour work weeks across the board, (President, CEO to Productions) to keep the employees we had left who were able to train new employees when the economy turns around.
22. We need to move from a debt laden economy to one that manages money with efficiency and accountability. This applies not only to the business itself, but to each employee and owner. All have a goal to balance finances; to aim at wise use of income and resources. A biblical economy.
23. Get out side of the box. Rethink, get your people and processes up to date with technology and training.
24. Look to clean your processes up, get employees involved to make things faster, easier, cheaper (in cost do not sacrifice quality) safer and more accessible.
25. Currently we take 5 Fridays a quarter to help reduce labor expense.
26. We offer something called a DOW POP (day off without pay or penalty). Employees can ask for these in advance, or they can come to work in the morning and request them. If the schedule is light, supervisors hand them out. No penalty against their attendance or their profits sharing.
27. Employees who have remained are well trained and we want to keep them.
28. Try and capture or tap into other lines of business.
29. Provide history of stable/safe workforce. People with families are sometimes scared to change to an industry that is known to come and go and is unsafe. We are on OSHA Star site – safety is our culture, employees don't want to work in an unsafe environment.
30. Retain employees instead of laying them off and hold them through reductions naturally until you get trimmed down to size.
31. Look at ways to make the process leaner. Re-evaluate every step. Is it necessary? Does it demand a full-time person? Can jobs be combined?

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32. Can departments “share” employees and help fill in the gaps without over-scheduling employees.
33. Cut back on all unnecessary expenses such as promotional items, look at current expenses such as all phone bills – make sure you have the plan that fits your company.
34. Educate the work force as to the situation and share ideas from the work force. You could be surprised as to the size of team they will bring.
35. Build job security. Security will offset some level of pay difference.
36. Explain to the work force what you are doing to protect their jobs. Show commitment.
37. Communicate – communicate – communicate and when you are done communicate some more.
38. Might have to cut hours and corresponding pay for a period of time until things turn around. Many employees would prefer this to termination; but there are always some risks. Also central with this – for example, may lose best employee that is very marketable and can go move elsewhere quickly.
39. Furlough in lieu of RIF to keep experienced workers. Training during slow times to keep workers engaged. Get creative. Keep communications open during these hard times. Employees appreciate being kept in the loop.
40. Lean.
41. Get out of our normal comfort zone. Look outside the box. Look at a different process or industry. Collaborate with other like industries and different industries. Cut back where we can to survive. Hard on everyone from the top down. Find out who wants to stick around for the long term.
42. Cut back or tighten the belt on other spending to allow for retention of workers.
43. Come up with creative solutions to economic issues. Actively seek cheaper training, shop around for the best fit with your organization.
44. Let employees know they are a valued part of the organization. They will come up with cost savings to help keep their jobs.
45. Let employees have a more relaxed attendance policy when you need to cut back. They will take off with or without pay to keep job.
46. Stricter budget control in all areas of the business.
47. Eliminate waste in as many areas as possible.
48. Use slow down time as an opportunity to prepare for the upswing that is coming. (Training, 5-S, etc.)

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49. Work harder with less people, less resources, reduce waste, improve quality, keep good employees and grow our own.
50. We used more seasonal help this year to help offset changes in the economy.
51. Reviewing our product line to reduce number of SKU's to help streamline the plant.
52. Open book management helps employee to see what is really going on with the company. They become part of the solution.
53. We have to find new outlets for our product; uses that haven't normally been used before. We normally just produce a product in its newest form, but are not taking on the approach of an "end-user" ourselves. We have expanded our marketing area due to an advantage we have been able to utilize in transporting our product.
54. Look for new products that we have the ability to manufacture with our current employees and equipment.
55. Offer employees flexible work schedules rather than laying them off. Many would rather take a pay cut than a lay off. With Gen Y's they would take the time to spend doing family projects.
56. Skilled up! Use the available time and money to improve employees' skills.
57. Reduced work schedules for all, if possible. Multi-functional areas/employees to help with the inability to hire external skill.
58. Again we must decide whether we want super low prices or good paying jobs. We can not have both forever. That is why we are in the economic mess we are in. We have to provide value at a fair price and then sell! Wealth is created when value is added to raw material. So is capital investment, job opportunity and security both from a personal and national perspective.
59. Grow your own. Lean manufacturing. Science, not gut. Stop looking to the past, look to the future. Flexibility.
60. Must keep employees as much as possible. Cut other areas (equipment, office training, tooling) before cutting employees.
61. The debtor is slave to the lender. Never borrow in excess of capacity to repay under most circumstances.
62. Look at new markets and products.
63. Explore new products/services. New products development center (OSU). Export tech – help develop an export plan and target market(s). (See your MEA)

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64. Eureka Winning Ways. (<http://www.mep.nist.gov/manufacturers/eureka-winning-ways/index.htm>) Innovation methodology for new products and services (See your MEA).
65. CASQ – Center for Aerospace Quality prepares companies for Government contracting (See your MEA).
66. Shorten work days. Request voluntary layoffs.
67. Job sharing with your company and vendors of yours or with another company in your sector.
68. Make smart decisions – don't overreact. We were faced with a 60% cut in production last quarter of 2008. Many other plants would have “whacked” the 400 or so associates but we knew the value of our skilled workers, took the multimillion dollar hit and now the company needs every drop of product we can produce. That decision to look at more than the bottom line short term but understand the incredible investment (our associates) has paid huge dividends in building trust and our ability to provide the products our customers are demanding now.
69. Shuffle the market demand; cut spending; train associates; become lean and educate the work force.
70. Set and monitor inventory standards. Be fiscally responsible. Consider alternative products for existing equipment.
71. Automate.
72. Educate yourself on the global economy and key indicators.
73. Go lean.
74. 32-hour work week versus lay off. Look at bid assistance.
75. Make improvements to your equipment and facility. Improve processes.
76. Broaden the company's customer base – two years ago we had four major customers. Today we have approximately 30 customers that we serve to stay at the same level of activity experienced when we had only four.
77. Look for expansion opportunities.
78. Consolidation of resources with once competitors.
79. Make wise choices with your expenditure – “no corporate jets.”
80. Make time to look at your business as a whole and weed out excesses – get LEAN.
81. Find other ways to provide a product with alternate forms of energy usage. Find other areas or products that are needed at a lower level quality but higher demand.

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82. Spend more time planning and looking at data to try not to over commit – be conservative as possible.
83. Make sure you utilize volunteers where you can for reduced hours, time off without pay, etc. This allows people to work that really need the hours.
84. Where you can, clean up, train, upgrade your facility, etc. (not always possible but should be looked at).
85. Write Congress.
86. It is during times like these that some of our strongest companies were founded. Oklahoma is tough, and loyal. Everyone has to work together to help each other. I spend quite a bit of time “buying Oklahoma – if not Oklahoma – I make sure it is made in the U.S.A.
87. As a company it is our responsibility to manage our resources – including personnel – as tightly as possible.
88. One company smartly anticipated the energy downturn and launched an innovation to expand existing markets; expand to other markets that could use some of their basic products for general or industrial applications; launch an aggressive export plan; and boldly consider diversifying to new products for emerging markets that utilized their core competencies on precision machinery and fabrication. Results have been to retain stable work force – wise while increasing gross sales. No risk no gain.
89. Recognize that employees are the #1 Resource.
90. Keep employees focused and engaged on the components of the business they control/have the impact on.
91. Involve the employees in cost savings challenges/ideas.
92. Think outside of the box – diversify product line, stagger hours, downtimes, wage impacts.
93. Maintain the basics/programs of the valued resources when/where possible.
94. Flex budgets to control costs.
95. Voluntary hours reductions (some employees like hours reduced).
96. Use profit sharing as flexible compensation.
97. As a company must diversify during these times. The sales force is key during this time. To think “outside the box” in offering our products to new industries within our scope of expertise.
98. Use this time to cross-train employees and enhance leadership skills of current leads and manager.

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## **CATEGORY 6: Workers compensation**

### **A FEW EXAMPLES of the CONCERNS:**

*“We have plants in several other states. Our location in Oklahoma routinely has the highest instances of workers comp claims and workers comp costs.”*

*“Workers comp has a long way to go in Oklahoma. Costs continue to run up as judges have too much control, doctors fear the system, and attorney s are advertising to take on frivolous cases.”*

*“ We need serious reform in the area of workers compensation if Oklahoma really has a desire to grow the industrial base in this state. It is extremely difficult to fight fraudulent comp claims when the courts are so biased against employers.”*

### **SOLUTIONS:**

1. Develop prevention system which rewards and recognizes OSHA and safety regulations. We have a proven record at Tornado Alley Turbo in Ada – 11 months with zero accidents.
2. Get health baseline when you like – physical assessment. Require return to work – through physician. Drug test randomly – consistently – pre-accident so that you don’t have hurt drug users.
3. A very intelligent letter need to be written for the average people to send to their political people. Thousands of letters need to be sent at one time. We need all the supporting agencies to support this.
4. Call your legislator! Hang the attorney.
5. - Stop electing lawyers as our representatives, it’s a “conflict of interest” with business.
6. Otherwise, all we can do is to continue to provide the safest possible work place possible and train employees in safe work practices.
7. Tax to screen applicants to avoid hiring “potential problems.”
8. Train all supervisors to document everything.
9. We have a small company, forming loyal, personal connections with your employees makes them less likely to claim, especially false claims.
  - a. We have a rotating safety committee. We train on safety and everyone in the company has to do their turn. We relate how unsafe practices cause accidents and accidents take money which keeps employee pay.

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10. We have seen a big decline in our safety issues by being SHARP certified since 2003. Create the culture built on safety. Our questionable claims have been few and far between. If you create the environment that makes people want to work for you then you will see less of this. It also helps in the caliber of people you hire.
11. Document, document, document, all injuries no matter how small must be reported, make sure this information is signed off on in training. Initiate random drug testing policy.
12. This again is an ethical problem. Claim should be provable within the first 24 hours. Legislative prevention incentives. Documentation file on each workman.
13. Work keys right person for the right job.
14. Safety teams/committees.
15. Measure and publicize your successes and failures.
16. Employee involvement.
17. Root cause investigation into accidents, put measures in place to eliminate opportunities.
18. The #1 way to prevent a workers compensation case is not to have the accident. All accidents are preventable.
19. Ergonomics training (on whatever is better suited). We had the tech center do employee training at our facility. Showed how carpal tunnel surgery was performed, made me want to prevent it.
20. We do stretches 3 times a day.
21. Do a great job of documenting issues.
22. Since job hiring slow down we primarily deal with wrist and neck injuries.
23. Reform work areas (ergonomics).
24. Provide fitness.
25. Enforce safety.
26. Change law – if an employee has a pre-existing injury and we aggravate it is ours.
27. Forbid attorneys to advertise, have attorneys get paid a fee for service instead of percentage of settlement. People who are not hurt might not go to an attorney knowing they have to pay. They know if they don't win they don't have to pay “why not go for it.”

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28. I believe some of the laws are the way they are and the only solution is through changes in the laws through our legislators for long-term results.
29. We have given most of our employees “light duty” so they don’t get to stay home and draw a check.
30. Voice your concern to your State Legislators and Representatives currently working in State Chambers on one case. Don’t be afraid to contest an injury and keep updated with workers compensation case worker. Keep the file updated, show that you involved and hold them accountable if they are doing something they shouldn’t be.
31. Train managers and HR in record retention. Invite State Legislators to view the workers compensation process. Don’t give up or give in.
32. As an employer you cannot change the system. The system is broke. So what you have to do is stop people enter the system.
33. Educate the work force.
34. Action prevention.
35. Invest in ergonomics.
36. Build relationships with your employees to establish trust.
37. Open honest communications.
38. Initiate petition for change – employers must fund to get the laws changed. Especially important is the appointment of judges. Meet some sort of change. It appears to be controlled by trial lawyers.
39. Work on your safety program – make safety first. Peers looking out for each other.
40. Behavior based training.
41. Risk assessment.
42. Engage your workers in the process. Make them responsible for their safety and the safety of others.
43. Effective safety program – develop a culture of safety.
44. Fight every claim.
45. Vote them out!
46. Training.
47. Take care of shop.

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48. Treat people right.
49. Show concern for issues or request, especially if you get a complaint.
50. Don't make employee do something you wouldn't do.
51. Keep legislators aware of concerns and cases even if it is another company.
52. Establish a rigorous safety training program that emphasizes injury prevention and encourages employees being somehow rewarded for reduced lost time accidents. Prevention (of accidents) does reduce your workers compensation costs. Do a careful job of pre-employment health screening and drug testing. Educating your work force on how the cost of injury claims reduces your ability to pay them more!
53. Documentation – train supervisor to look for instances of possible off work injuries and record those in the employees' file.
54. Properly document and track everything tied to a worker's compensation claim. The more information you can provide, the better your defense.
55. Pay attention to employees and their work stations. Be proactive and preventative.
56. Use lawyers from another state – that may lessen the chance of judges and lawyers scratching each other's back.
57. Give employees a work place. Invest in employees' safety training. They must want to come to work. Lower your recordable accidents.
58. Convince legislators that the courts need to take a tough stand on fraudulent claims, make examples of the “bad cases”. Require the employee to have to put something up to hire a lawyer, not just get them on a contingency basis. Consultation with safety experts on a more than “once a year inspection.” Have more on the employees that file claims followed by a private investigator, because most of the time those that aren't really injured will be doing something they shouldn't when they believe no one is watching.
59. We had success with a local company by providing “safety culture” training. We had a 50% reduction in recordable injuries within the next quarter following the training.
60. Improve safety.
61. Change the workforce's mentality by education.
62. Take care of your employees.
63. Go to court proceedings.

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64. Be involved – call injured worker, visit with clinics and doctors about your type of work, return to work programs. Invite doctors to facility.
65. Not a problem with aggressive safety and employee education programs.
66. System does need reform but that has been being worked on for nearly 100 years.
67. Best solution is prevention and aggressive resolution.
68. Safety programs.
69. Understand workers compensation.
70. Good to set limits on how many times can file to reopen. Cases never die.
71. We need reform in our State.
72. Formal safety program to include training your insurance carrier and career tech.
73. Set up safety contest and rewards.
74. Use your local manufacturing councils to leverage your lobbying with legislators.
75. Pay first part of minor injury expense with insurance carrier payment, with umbrella coverage beyond what you deem an acceptable dollar threshold.
76. Help tech centers get the word out to manufacturers and businesses on what the tech centers can do and the grants available to help pay for training.
77. Communicate with tech centers about what we as manufacturers learn/see from clients about training and workforce skill needs.
78. Political activity especially if there are similar facilities in other states with documented differences.
79. Need a solution similar to “right to work” that can get the power of information out to the people and shame the system enough that people know what judges are hurting our companies and the State. Must educate the public, they will come to our aid.
80. Hire private investigators. Document all cases with witnesses. Review every accident claimed by an associate with the injured associate and a team.
81. Write your Governor and Congressmen. Push for compensation reform.
82. Manage compensation care.
83. Resolve claims quickly.

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84. Keep people working, away from the ads.
85. Call the doctors.
86. Develop a post-hire physical questionnaire (baseline health issues).
87. Work hardening programs.
88. Wellness programs.
89. Implement safety programs to include incentive for no lost-time injuries.
90. Track employees' history of workers compensation claims and make it public knowledge. Keep a history of employees,
91. Retro claims often cause biggest problems, i.e., twisted my back a couple of weeks ago and don't remember what I was doing but it was here at work. We end up picking up the tab with no way to contend and no way to assess event to minimize chance for reoccurrence.
92. I have not been involved with workers compensation issues and am thankful for that. Effective safety culture should reduce or minimize the need to combat workers compensation issues.
93. Have a good safety plan. Make sure employees know policies and procedures re: safety.
94. Safety training.
95. Quick discipline for safety violations.
96. Have a good relationship with employees enough to know when they are hurt and how they got hurt.
97. Contact legislators with your concerns – promote safety training plan.
98. Document things you know about injuries to employees outside the work place.
99. Documentation of all activities at work and away from the work place.
100. Let your feelings be known to your elected officials.
101. Work place training and documentation on a regular basis that is related to the job being performed.
102. Must have compensation reform in the State of Oklahoma.
103. Establish group incentives and bonuses that let the people help establish acceptable behavior.

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104. Work with your political representatives at the local level to make sure they are informed of your issues.
105. Write Congress.
106. Continuously improve safety process and documentation systems and practices.
107. Good training program – documents good safety program – documented supervisors trained in workers compensation issues and documentation references on employees.
108. Is there a place to check to see if someone has filed a workers compensation claim in the part with details?
109. I see this as two categories: (a) unwarranted, frivolous, (b) warranted, accident.
110. Benchmark on other states' successes.
111. Advocate (loudly) for the reform to our legislators.
112. Sincerely maintain communication with the injured employee to help prevent development of an adversarial relationship . . . which is inevitable but helps.
113. Documentation
114. Physical capacity profile assessment.
115. Implement procedure on reporting accidents (required).
116. Physician clearance after each and every time off for injury of any kind.
117. Open up background checks to include workers compensation history.



## **CATEGORY 7: Service Providers: Tech Centers, State and Federally supported agencies**

### **A FEW EXAMPLES of the CONCERNS:**

*"Not sure who does what!? So if I need training on a certain type of equipment, should my first call be to the schools, the Alliance, our district reps?"*

*"I am so busy and often unable to spend the time to process all the emails and other information coming into our business. So I am often unresponsive. Sorry."*

*"We appreciate all the help but we would really like more information on EXACTLY what, and who, are our most efficient and effective contacts to reach out to when a specific issue arises."*

*"Need the Tech schools to train faster! And help us fund not just the technical skills but to train the soft skills as well."*

### **SOLUTIONS:**

1. Partnership with career tech and with local industries.
2. Cannot say anything bad about Kevin Henson and folks at Great Plains – provide all we ask for but there is no standing curriculum to train people for new industry or growth.
3. Publish a single paper listing all the different free agencies and what each one does.
4. Call Manufacturing Alliance – they will point you in the right direction.
5. Contact your MEA (Southwest Alliance).
6. All of the State and Federal agencies seem to be sincere in helping business but you have to seek them out and find the specific agency whose "objective" matches your need. Unfortunately, most agencies have very narrow goals and motives.
7. Be involved with these agencies on the boards, committees, etc. Speak your thoughts and participate to make them happen. If you call one leader they will direct you or get or bring you to the person you need to help with individual issues. No company should have these issues with the agencies.
8. We love the tech centers! I'm the poster child for tech centers! They have provided so much support to our company in ways of training and training dollars. The Alliance has also been a tremendous support and I know exactly who I need to call when I need help.
9. Our tech center and the Alliance have both worked well for us.

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10. Oklahoma Career Tech are the best in the nation! We could recommend one more on our land in Newcastle/Tri City area!
11. Organize the structure the same way the company files are. At the high end break it down into 3 – 4 basic groups as you go through the channels more details appear. Post it on the website to guide you by country and by locatgion.
12. Have a clearing house/sole operator for all the groups. (MA, tech center, SOIC).
13. Include these groups in your long term planning actions so they can be prepared for your future needs.
14. -You have to make time, if you don't network you lose contact and will become inefficient.
15. You control which program you develop with tech schools.
16. Call the tech schools – Economic Development Center – Great resource for training. Know how to get dollars from state for specific needs in our facility.
17. Appoint one person for the tech centers to be a contact for certain regions. They need to come to the plant regularly.
18. Be specific on what is free and what isn't. Provide a list.
19. On equipment – find out who is the maker of the product. Sometimes they have a representative that will come out and train/educate people on their machines. Check with your vendors as well. They sometimes have contacts and usually is free service. Need to look at our school system and start training our children early in regards to soft skills and good work ethics.
20. Make sure your tech centers, State – Federal agencies actively come by your business,
21. Not an issue. Tech Center is meeting all needs. They are very responsive and design training with the whole of our team.
22. Each provider needs a single contact person – that individual needs to be marketed – advertised – continually.
23. Just call and you will find a wealth of knowledge is available. Tech Centers will develop programs customized to your needs.
24. Start by calling the Alliance representatives or any Career Tech BIS Group.
25. My MEA is my #1 resource. I depend on him greatly. We probably visit weekly. All MEA's are great resources for their area. Whenever I need to know something in another area I call that MEA.
26. Have someone in your business be the key contact for you and have them establish the key contact at your local training center. If it's where an alliance MEA is located, they should be the one. Funnel

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other requests through the Vo-Tech BIS Centers, but ask for a person with whom you can establish a relationship.

27. Build an in-house training and education committee to research and develop training for the company. Their responsibility is to find the training programs that best suit our organization.
28. Utilize the technology centers first, then branch out if you cannot find what you are looking for.
29. Develop a one-on-one relationship with the business development coordinator at your local tech center. They will help you find what you are looking for.
30. Find out who your local contacts are and meet with them to develop a strategy specific to your company.
31. Call the tech center and ask for industry training.
32. We have a great relationship with CVTC EI Reno. If you ask you shall receive.
33. We do not need to use it more, we all get too busy working on the business in training.
34. Contact the closest tech center and see if they have someone who can answer your questions.
35. Build a better relationship with their local Industrial Coordinator from the Career Center. Every Tech Center has at least one Industrial Coordinator.
36. Develop training budget with tech center and apply for existing industry money. I have a great relationship with my local WTC/Industrial Coordinator. If I need something I pick up the phone.
37. They do a great job for me and keep me aware of new programs.
38. Call your tech center BIS. Faster, better and cheaper. You can have any two of the three.
39. State funding to career tech must never go away. For manufacturers, The Alliance should always be the first call for any need or question.
40. Tech schools all have a large variety of training and skills available locally and additionally can call on sister schools competencies and are capable of developing custom training unique to specific needs.
41. The Alliance has available training opportunities made available through the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).
42. There is a national program to help states promote an understanding of manufacturing jobs/careers (I cannot think of the name).
43. Use social media (Facebook, etc) to communicate the story.

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44. Make videos for visual tours of hi-tech/clean manufacturing plants.
45. Have career days in schools with manufacturers talking to and showing students what they do. If safety doesn't allow plant tours, do video virtual tour.
46. An advanced manufacturing publicity campaign, which links with Manufacturing Alliance.
47. A way to insure manufacturing companies so that they can have high school age students tour their facilities or work there in the summer.
48. We have a great relationship with our tech centers and economic development folks.
49. Not an issue, we have a good relationship with our Vo Tech that meets our needs.
50. Call somebody! Eliminate tech center districts and make it one system.
51. Get in touch with Vo Tech and learn what they offer. Get involved with all agencies in your area.
52. Become friends with your MEA.
53. Contact OESC.
54. Get involved with your area workforce investment board – be an active board member!
55. Network in and out of your areas of specialty.
56. Contact your area Manufacturing Alliance person!
57. Service providers need to stay in their areas of expertise. Higher education handle their business. Career Teach handler their business and MEA handle their business.
58. When we get out of control we confuse the public.
59. Call Career Tech Center and ask about training for industry program funds (TIPS) and training for existing industry funds training program – these are free to business and industry in Oklahoma.
60. The Career Tech Schools are a phone call away and are ready and willing to provide the services and training you might need. The Career Tech System is a state wide service in that we have more resources than anyone else in the state.
61. Training center in Altus, Oklahoma is first class: Training is timely, very responsive. Come to our business – we try, as a business, to support that Center. Note: Disconnect for me is how can a state have such a “spot-on” answer to many of the training needs on business but then be so “out-in-the weeds” when it comes to the workers compensation system in this state.

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62. Work Keys is a site-buster. It improves academic skills, connects K-12 and career development; most college students work during the college years and afterwards.
63. Get on school boards/advisory councils.
64. Tech center staffs must come out of their schools to meet us versus expecting us to come to them. Change this paradigm!
65. Tech centers sometimes provide tailored training to some companies but not to others. Why? It's not like we haven't tried – our tech center doesn't provide what we need, so we can pay for outside consultant trainers who understand our industry. We don't fit the mold of our local tech center.
66. Tech centers tend to talk and not listen. They resist our challenges by foot dragging.
67. Constantly survey and be aware of your needs both current and future
68. Make all levels of management of your company aware of available resources within the tech system.
69. Have similar problems. Ask a tech center for information/training on a topic and no help (not sure what to do). Flip side is to have an excellent relationship with them for our safety training requirements.
70. I receive soft skill training information regularly, due to funding issues, these go into the round, circular file.



## **CATEGORY 8: The state, public education and parents, don't appear to support the well-paying careers that are in manufacturing**

### **A FEW EXAMPLES of the CONCERNS:**

*"Our public schools drive all students toward college. Nothing wrong with that but not everyone is suited to college or will not succeed there. We need those people to be informed and excited about highly-skilled, well-paying careers in manufacturing."*

*"K-12 education produces underperforming students without the necessary reading proficiency, life skills and work ethics."*

*"State needs to fund an awareness campaign to promote manufacturing careers."*

### **SOLUTIONS:**

1. The local high school to visit local manufacturing businesses.
2. Expand K-12 to K-20 – emphasize manufacturing technologies.
3. Summer student programs with various departments and pay summer students.
4. Parent/Children source programs.
5. Kids don't know about: how to balance a check book, how much insurance costs, how much food costs, how much kids cost. No real life "how to get along" education. I knew what I wanted to do when I was 8 years old – my 20 year old daughter doesn't have a clue.
6. Possibly the tech center could publish a list of possible careers other than college education careers. More education still need to be stressed if possible.
7. Get involved!
8. Market the history of company, the diversification. We need 'company believers.'
9. Must be active in the local school system and work with both teachers and administrators.
10. Develop recruiting program with schools.
11. Open your business to educators and students for tours and other functions.
12. Stop relying on the state, you have to make things happen – wanting someone to do it for you – so Gen Y.

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13. A lot is due to ignorance. Schools are unaware of advances in manufacturing. Let them know! What do we expect from schools when manufacturers are yelling for more higher skilled workers and advertising to get good jobs in our companies you will soon have to have college ed?
14. If they don't know then it's partly our fault. Our doors are open and we invite schools, teachers, counselors and students into our facility to show them who we are and what we do.
15. Our machinists even take a display to their kid's school for career day in both elementary and junior high school. It's never too early to get the interest started.
16. After high school I utilized the Vo-Tech System to learn a skill which I used for 13 years until I began a career in sales.
17. Since I am a part of a professionally-oriented family, I see manufacturing jobs to be short-term, a part of the growing process unless God provides purpose, stewardship, or ownership in the manufacturing field.
18. Definitely, these can be investment opportunities.
19. Manufacturing has to be involved in career day.
20. Be visible, be the place to work, attract Gen Y.
21. We started a miniature bull riding series. Almost everyone that attends either rides or feed hay. The series is funded by the cities we go to. We expose the kids and adults to who we are. Free advertisement for McHay.com. It has put us in the inner circles of small town Oklahoma.
22. Often times we don't have time to speak to students or parents. Move tech centers or MA compile job marketing material to distribute to students, including location, pay, benefits, job.
23. Have summer programs that introduce students to skilled labor and give them credit for attending.
24. Partner with school (Vo-Tech, Tech classes) and let them know about opportunities available within your company prior to graduation.
25. Have managers visit classes. We had an engineer who was from China visit my daughter's history class when they were studying "China". He told students how to speak and write their name in Chinese and described the culture. We have been asked to continue. Our company has made an impression on young children in our community. Don't let this partnership die (donate items to school, support activities, provide limited field trip to view work site).
26. Provide tours to area high schools so they can see and hear what your facility is all about.
27. Do positive things in the community that get attention.
28. Get your employees involved in community services.

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29. Go to your local school and see if you can speak to high school students about your company and really focus in on the students that are questionable about going to college. Even have a job sharing day for interested students.
30. Need to outreach these kids when (after first semester) these kids find out for themselves (or parents) realize that college is not for them. Killed laborers will enter the job market with the potential of higher wages. Lots of kids don't know what to do next.
31. Perhaps manufacturers could have one or so times a year where they have an “open house” for students and their parents to come check out the facilities and see what really happens inside.
32. Relationship with local government and community leaders.
33. Reputation with current work force will drive most productive recruiting.
34. Re-educate – more information.
35. Reach out to the school systems. They always welcome businesses coming in and talking to their students about careers. School systems are aware that not all students are suited for college. You just need to open those doors. Offer tours of your facilities to students so they see what's available.
36. We need to demand from state agencies such as ODOC and the legislature that more attention should be paid to manufacturing.
37. Manufacturers need to get involved with public education to start up pro-manufacturing program. Example: Southeast High School Academy of Manufacturing “SAM” program.
38. Use manufacturing councils to promote manufacturing careers in communities. Get involved with legislators, schools, etc.
39. We need to be able to have job shadowing and internship opportunities for 7 – 12 grades. Our manufacturing association group has donated \$1,500 to the local university for marketing for their technology department. We are working on getting these videos into the local schools to make students aware of manufacturing and the technology degrees. (You Tube)
40. Get more students involved in career classes.
41. Manufacturers must take a personal interest, and make the investment to have one (or more) of staff get involved with local educators, school superintendents and principals; locate (state) legislators; civic clubs (service organizations) where talks can be given, etc. Group of manufacturers can get together regularly and establish a “speakers bureau” to provide the people to carry the message of marketing manufacturing to your local communities. Get material from various sources, e.g. grow Oklahoma and give to your employees to take home and share with family and friends.
42. Allow teachers to tour your company. The local tech centers have developed summer workshops for teachers to learn what area businesses need for their employees.

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43. Utilize the work keys programs. Ask you local workforce centers what you can do to get your organization enrolled.
44. We need a state manufacturers advocate... aka- 'Manufacturing Maniac!' He or she could travel throughout Oklahoma promoting manufacturing careers as a whole. Their salary can be paid with state funds, private donations ('want your individual company showcased? Sponsor the Manufacturing Maniac when he comes to your area!')
45. Even if they get that 4-year degree they cannot find jobs. In Kansas they get a degree in plumbing, electronics, maintenance, manufacturing technology, safety and health.
46. I wish kids in school could choose more in their own direction: college, tech centers, community colleges, or plan direct to business ready. But we need to market to the high schools if we do this.
47. Have schools promote a more intense approach at counseling students, and weed out the ones that aren't as well suited for college, and more apt for Vo-Tech and a career in manufacturing. Advertise the assets of working in the manufacturing field, the pay scale, etc. when compared to other jobs in the area.
48. Parents are the key! They need to understand the value of manufacturing jobs. Teachers in schools need to be invited into our companies. Many of our school teachers have never done anything but teach school.
49. Speak at schools, invite teachers to workplace.
50. Manufacturers should fund such promotions. My company uses skilled laborers; however, our process is unique and rare. If schools will deliver graduates with the following skills we can teach them our business with some help from tech centers: read, write, basic math, verbal communication/listening, manage personal finances, take a shower occasionally (hygiene), show up regularly. Just do it!
51. Robot programs in schools. Use workers as performance metric for public schools / break focus on college readiness as only career. Measurement of public school success.
52. Get involved with your local schools. Make your company more visible in the community. Don't keep it a secret.
53. OSU Okmulgee had a successful program in the Mid American Industrial Park in Pryor, OK. Parents, teachers, counselors administrators and students need first hand exposure to jobs / careers, benefits and the diversity of what manufacturing jobs are.
54. Tours, internships, speeches and marketing!!!
55. Junior achievement type projects – robotics competition as an example.
56. There is a national program to help states promote an understanding of manufacturing jobs / careers (can't think of the name).

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57. Use social media (Facebook, etc.) to communicate the story.
58. Make video for virtual tours of hi-tech / clean manufacturing plants.
59. Have career days in schools with manufacturing talking to and showing students what they do. If safety doesn't allow plant tours – do video virtual tour.
60. Career coaches in K-12 (not to replace guidance counselors but to start work on career exploration in 7<sup>th</sup> grade). Public awareness campaign needs to dovetail with project boomerang.
61. Let us into the public school system!! If you have a trained monkey that can do back flips you are welcome to come entertain the kids. But if you are a manufacturer in need of skilled labor we cannot “solicit” the children. Why???
62. Take care of your people and they will raise the awareness.
63. Start local promotion of your company. Host community events on-site in the parking lot. Use of Work Keys standards for jobs. Attend job and career fairs or days.
64. Identify those individuals that drop from college to train in technology centers for business and industry. How can we get a list of college drop outs so that we can promote manufacturing careers to them? We can collaborate with the Career Tech system to provide the training. The result- a productive, happy young adult who is capable of leaving home and excelling in a true career! Not winding back up in their childhood bedroom, working in fast food or joining the welfare line! Parents-happy! Young adult-happy! Manufacturers-happy! Win, win, win. So why no list from the colleges???????
65. Promote manufacturing by advertising at: career fairs, television, radio, etc.
66. Promote manufacturing through economic development.
67. This is a parenting issue. If parents don't get involved in the education process we cannot expect the teachers to be successful. It takes a village is not too far off base.
68. The state and federal departments need to realize the importance that not all people are going to college and then move on to how to help them get the proper education for them – not force more drop outs.
69. Public schools need to support the career tech centers because it is another option for students to have a highly rewarding career. The income from many skilled jobs is more than college education can provide.
70. It's not the public that drives the students to be college bound. It is the legislature. We need to get the ear of our legislators. There are some issues that K-12 have to deal with that are some of the causes in underperforming students. Remember “No Child Left Behind?”

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71. Complex issues here. Education lobbyist have remantled public education to what it is today's college bound track.
72. I like the idea of providing summer internships for teachers who will become our missionaries to students.
73. Approach local middle schools.
74. Attend career days to advertise the manufacturing business.
75. Promote school participation in one fact of the business. As an example, we utilize recycled fiber (paper). A few years ago we began a program of collecting discarded papers from the local schools, providing a year end “reward.” This has increased our presence in the schools and encouraged questions about what we do, what we pay, etc.
76. Participate in the community, extend tours for schools, offer demonstrations for science classes, etc.
77. Be involved with the career classes that most high schools over.
78. Make efforts to communicate with school counselors.
79. As a parent that is home schooling my children, I am simply unaware of most of these opportunities/businesses. I must seek this information, but little or no advertising by career tech or businesses leads to “its who you know” not “what you know”!



## **CATEGORY 9: Infrastructure- Roads, highways and transportation**

### **A FEW EXAMPLES of the CONCERNS:**

*“Many of Oklahoma manufacturers are located in small towns. We need the roads and highways to be upgraded so that people are willing to commute without moving.”*

*“We need the highways to reach all the small towns. Then Walmart will come. And then the families will come. When the families come, the employees come too. In that order- we all know that’s true!”*

### **SOLUTIONS:**

1. Oklahoma transportation sucks. The state highway in front of our plant is worst paved road in Lawton. Industry ships materials and goods – government doesn’t understand that.
2. I drive 51 miles to work daily and wonderful highways are already in place (Highway 99)!
3. The infrastructure that I get the most complaints about is the lack of good, and cheap, phone/television/web service. I do not have any solutions to suggest for these problems (unless the government would allow sharing of these services that have been installed in the public schools).
4. Partner with city councils and get them interested in joining the efforts in helping the community grow. It has to start somewhere, if you want it, start making it happen instead of waiting for someone to do it.
5. It is sad – our roads and highways are in disrepair and I’m reminded of it every time I cross the Oklahoma/Texas border. Why do other states do a better job of road maintenance?
6. If some of the stimulus money were spent to improve housing availability, not so many people would need to drive back and forth to work.
7. There are tax money issues. A real incentive to pay taxes honestly and for government to spend honestly and responsively using best technology and resources.
8. Someone has to have the vision, verbalize it accurately, then problem-solve to do it.
9. Rail- cheapest form of transportation there is. Shipping costs put a lot of Oklahoma manufacturers at a disadvantage, with rail you move more for less.
10. Infrastructure needs to include mobile communication and internet service.
11. We have no issues here and I am not too sure how to solve those who have this issue.
12. Solicit: EOA’s; ODOT; Department of Commerce.

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13. The roads are not the major concern. Transportation costs are high because there is little to no “import/export” in the state.
14. Rural roads are terrible, they destroy vehicles and money needs to be made to fix this problem. I live in a very rural area. My vehicle is shot by the time it is 4 years old – even small towns roads are hard on vehicles.
15. Need more access on and off the turnpike. I have to drive past work on turnpike and then back track 7 miles to get to work resulting in more dollars out of my pocket and wasted time.
16. Contact Congressmen, they hold the purse strings on funding. Do the research and provide them with the status from your area industry.
17. Walk to your county commissioners and local city manager. They will benefit as well if people move in. Ask about grant for these repairs and improvements.
18. Push hard the needs to government leaders and representatives. We need to figure out a way to emphasize the value of rural areas.
19. Seek out your representatives and let them know what your needs are.
20. Use the TARP money to fix the roads!
21. We are lucky with our roads and are just too far from the city.
22. There is strength in numbers – manufacturing needs to take there “story” to local – city – county – state – federal legislators that the economic engine of manufacturing cannot be effective without a good transportation means.
23. Be open to expansion. Most smaller communities want to keep the small town feeling but expect to draw in big business. We have to allow for growth or we will dry up and lose these opportunities.
24. Get a Gene Stipe.
25. In El Reno we just passed a CIP (Capital Improvement Projects) program that will help make our community more desirable to live in. Sometimes government will help.
26. Encourage state representatives that the road is absolutely necessary for the prosperity of your company and town.
27. Work with the local city managers. They can influence where the roads are improved and built. Work with local representatives they drive the state money. Vote! And ask your employees to vote!

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28. Spend gas taxes on roads. I travel the state quite a bit and most rural area roads seem in better condition than those in or near heavily populated areas.
29. The big problem, one of the main reasons many manufacturers are gone (along with virtually all other major retailers due to Walmart.
30. Providing better access to cable providers for required commercial internet access.
31. More four-lane highways linking rural Oklahoma to I-35 and I-40. More cell towers in rural areas. Wireless internet for all of Oklahoma.
32. Not too big an issue. Good access to our global supply chain.
33. Get your community wired. Employees will commute to maintain their quality of life.
34. Improved transportation system is beneficial to all communities small and large.
35. Shout your needs to your respective elected governmental representative – write letters and email. Keep you needs in front of them.
36. There are two sides of the state – we can't grow in Western Oklahoma without having good access to major highways.
37. Contact your legislators – Roads, highways, railroads and airports are all important to drawing industry to rural Oklahoma – and keeping them there.
38. We need to look at the types of projects when we have windfall in the state revenues instead of tax cuts. The tax cuts in the last 3 to 4 years is not in the billions of dollars in lost state revenue that can never be recovered.
39. This is the old argument: "Do you book the convention first or build the hotel:. The issue here is "what can be done to make Oklahoma a better choice for business."
40. The issue here is what can be done to make Oklahoma a better choice for business. The answer has to be government programs, laws and climate that are pro-business.
41. I do not see roads, highways and transportation being a problem today. They could be better – but they are not stopping my business progress today.
42. Get high speed railroads and consider public transportation.
43. Good roads for transportation of goods is vital for manufacturing. A large corporation looking to relocate where expenses and labor is less expensive should be an incentive.

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44. Advocate to our U.S. Congress representatives and senators to reinstate funding for rural transportation systems (vans and buses to carry groups of employees). However, regular bus-van schedules conflict with our production surges requiring forced overtime.
45. The roads are not the major concern. Transportation costs are high because there is little or no “import/export in the state.
46. Same low cost public transportation locally would help with single vehicle families.