

A 'Monster' Look On Manufacturing Jobs

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

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

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

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

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

Top 10 manufacturing job markets:

1. Houston, TX
2. New York, NY
3. Los Angeles, CA
4. Tulsa, OK
5. Cleveland, OH
6. Milwaukee, WI
7. Chicago, IL
8. Dallas, TX
9. Phoenix, AZ

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10. Portland, OR

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

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

Ruge says, "When you think of manufacturing, you're thinking of that typical mechanical or aircraft, general production. It's great to see some hot industries that are adding jobs in these new sectors."

The results show that we're likely looking toward a near future where American manufacturing sheds some of the old stereotypes — focused primarily on automotive and aerospace assembly — in favor of some burgeoning industries. For those manufacturing workers in search of a new job, or who are dissatisfied in their particular sector, it might be worth looking into how to receive additional education or training on manufacturing processes most relevant to the growing electronics businesses.

Jeffrey Quinn, Vice President of Monster's Global Insights, says, "Manufacturing jobs on Monster are viewed close to 3 million times every month, indicating substantial interest from industry workers. Maybe finding the right job is just a matter of bringing their talents to another industry in need."

The Monster survey also targeted the top markets for manufacturing job opportunities, with some major surprises making the list. Ruge says, "Certainly those Top 10 have the most growth potential and the most job advertising opportunities right now for companies that are expanding in those markets." Houston and Dallas are not too surprising, considering that a number of semiconductor and other electronics manufacturers are based there. New York and Los Angeles would surprise many, as did Milwaukee, for this editor. Ruge added: "It's great to see Ohio on the list, and manufacturing coming back, because Ohio was one of the hardest-hit areas in the recession for manufacturing."

These results could be showing that aside from the advent of new sectors, manufacturing might be in the process of a shift in where much of the production happens. Whereas much of production in previous generations happened in the so-called "Rust Belt," many of the biggest areas for growth — Arizona, Oklahoma and Oregon, mostly — are quite far distant, and wouldn't likely be high on many

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people's list for particularly manufacturing-centric areas.

At the end of the day, Ruge acknowledges that the survey points to a very mixed outlook for manufacturing jobs into the future. In many ways, the industry is gaining steam, and employees who stick with it might find themselves in great positions. At the same time, the desire to eke out more productivity for the same pay is tiring. But the new information on burgeoning industries and markets points to one good truth for manufacturing workers: one doesn't have to rely on traditional verticals or regions in order to find success.

That's not to say employees should be doing all the hard work in improving their work days — Ruge says that employers need to step up as well. She says, "We need to bring back more manufacturing into the U.S. There's a lot of talk about it, and a lot of the larger companies saying they're going to bring production back to the U.S. if they can make it make sense from a cost basis. This is the sector where we want to see the innovation and the growth, and new companies starting up."

monster® SPOTLIGHT: MANUFACTURING

MONSTER SURVEY SUGGESTS MANUFACTURING WORKERS MAY BE UNHAPPY, SEEKING MORE FULFILLING JOBS

TOP 5 MANUFACTURING OCCUPATIONS

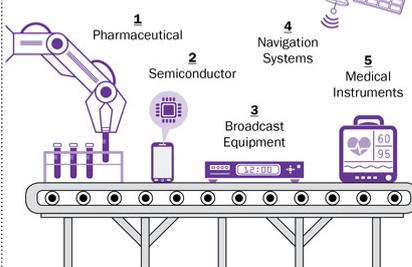
- 1 First-Line Supervisors
- 2 Production Workers
- 3 Welders & Fitters
- 4 Inspectors & Testers
- 5 Machine Operators

Manufacturing jobs on Monster are viewed close to **3 MILLION TIMES** every month, indicating substantial demand for them."

JEFFREY QUINN
VP OF GLOBAL INSIGHTS, MONSTER

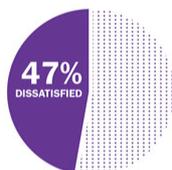


INDUSTRIES HIRING MANUFACTURING WORKERS*



MANUFACTURING SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

NEARLY ONE-HALF ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THEIR JOBS...



...RANKING IN THE BOTTOM HALF OF ALL OCCUPATIONS SURVEYED.

ONLY **34%**

ARE CONFIDENT OF FINDING A NEW JOB IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS.



FORTY-FIVE PERCENT BELIEVE EMPLOYERS ARE WILLING TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE TRAINING TO SUPPORT THEIR JOBS.

SEVEN OUT OF TEN FEEL IT IS MORE CHALLENGING TO FIND A JOB COMPARED TO A YEAR AGO.

Search



TWENTY SEVEN

PERCENT FEEL EMPLOYERS ARE WILLING TO OFFER HIGHER COMPENSATION THAN 12 MONTHS AGO.

*Many new hires within Manufacturing and production industries are being managed through temping, or placement industries. SOURCE: Monster's study "U.S. Workforce Talent" surveyed nearly 2,000 job seekers who are currently employed or desire employment in the next 12 months via an online survey. The study was designed to be inclusive of all Monster job seekers who have actively used their Monster account over the past 3 years. The survey ran from January 14, 2012 to February 28, 2012.

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