

Veterans Can Help Lead The Manufacturing Revolution

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As we honor our veterans this Veterans Day with the presidential election just now in the rear view mirror, it's clear we saw two undeniable points of agreement throughout the hard fought campaign.

Both sides of the aisle believe that we need to support our military veterans and to ensure the United States is once again a world leader in manufacturing.

At the National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS), the developer of many of the manufacturing industry's skills standards and credentials, and LIFT – Lightweight Innovations For Tomorrow, a Manufacturing USA Institute, we believe we have a shared responsibility to address both of these issues.

We believe our veterans and the manufacturing industry will be well-served by providing separating military men and women with a new model of career transition assistance. This new model arms them with the right training, knowledge and skills to excel in civilian manufacturing jobs before they separate and ensures that, when they separate, they have already earned manufacturing skills credentials with real value in today's job market.

Currently, the assistance provided before leaving the service is not enough, contributing to a 5.8 percent veteran unemployment rate – nearly a point higher than the national average. Meanwhile, it is projected that there will be 3.5 million available manufacturing jobs in the country over the next 10 years, and nearly 2 million of them are expected to go unfilled because employers cannot find workers with the skills and credentials required in today's advanced manufacturing.

Our vision is that a veteran will depart active duty with one or more credentials that have immediate value in the advanced manufacturing labor market.

Instead of a “business-as-usual” approach, NIMS and LIFT are focusing on creating innovative solutions and developing a new model that helps prepare service members for good jobs in advanced manufacturing during their last six months of active duty. In this model, during those hours each day after military duties are complete, service men and women can pursue both virtual and hands-on technical training and earn nationally-portable, industry-recognized credentials that set them on a path to success. Before their official separation, they can gain critical, in-demand skills for today's most sought-after advanced manufacturing jobs.

Organizations like the [Gene Haas Foundation](#) are leading the charge by recently providing funding to educate separating military about the industry and connect them to training and job opportunities across the country. For Peter Zierhut, Vice President, HTEC and Government Relations, Haas Automation, “Gene Haas Foundation's support of veterans is more than just social responsibility—it is also a critical business driver. Veterans have the skills, work ethic and attitudes our companies need to be productive and competitive.”

This new model will fill the manufacturing workforce pipeline with individuals who bring the same level of commitment, leadership and dedication to their civilian careers as they demonstrated in service to our country.

For more on LIFT, please visit www.lift.technology and for more on NIMS, please visit www.nimsready.org