

Finding and Keeping a Next-Gen Workforce

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Everyone in the manufacturing space has heard about the dramatic talent gap in the industry, where companies cannot find employees with the skills necessary to help run a high-tech operation. Knowledge in automation equipment, or with CNC machines, can be a rare commodity, with most young people moving toward other industries, and manufacturing-centric education faltering or disappearing elsewhere.

Joseph Lampinen, the director of Kelly Services Americas Product Group, and Gabrielle Caputo, the director of Kelly Services Commercial Product Group, have seen both extremes of this skills-deficiency story. Lampinen says that the labor situation can change from region to region, or even city to city — a certain market will be flush with CNC operators but lacking in people who understand machine vision, while another will suffer from the exact opposite shortage.

So while various reports claiming talent gaps in the hundreds of thousands may be correct, and may be relevant for many companies, who are unable to find the right talent in their areas, Lampinen and Caputo both argue that the future of hiring in this industry will rely not on passivity, or waiting for the right person to knock on the door. A proactive approach, crafted for any given individual market, will be a necessity in the years ahead.

That said, there's a lot that companies could be doing to find, and retain, not only the kinds of employees who already have the talents necessary to keep a plant running, but also those who *might* be capable of those skills, given the right education.

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