Survey: Manufacturers Struggle to Bridge Skills Gap

CLAREMONT, Calif. (PRNewswire) — Lisa Anderson, president of LMA Consulting Group [1] and a supply chain management expert who helps manufacturers and distributors elevate business performance with increased margins, cash flow and customer service performance, in conjunction with the APICS – Inland Empire chapter, conducted a skills gap survey honing in on how manufacturers and distributors are hiring, training and retaining employees to prepare for success in 2014. From the data, 77% of hiring managers and human resources professionals surveyed struggle to find and develop the needed skills to respond to challenging business demands.

"Employees and new recruits not only lack the technical skills, but are also falling short on the needed communication and professional skills to do project management, run meetings and take notes," says Anderson. She and her team identified that many of the needed skills are still being developed in house but that there is a growing trend to move outside of the organization to seek professional training and development options that also include certification.

"This is a real transition time for manufacturers and distributors," explains Anderson. "We used to focus solely on the development of technical skills including demand planning, capacity planning, and supply chain and operations management. Most employees already had a baseline of those technical skills, and we were trying to elevate performance by enhancing skills and conducting training programs. Now, we must meet the growing need for improving communication skills such as writing persuasive emails, leading meetings and giving presentations. Without these types of skills, not only will internal promotions to management or leadership positions in the company will be difficult, but career and company success will be limited as these skills are considered essential to delivering bottom line business results."

While on-the-job and in-house training comprise the majority of training methodologies used, survey respondents also use mentor programs and leadership development training programs for dual purposes of training and retaining employees.

"It is a smart investment to not only improve the communication and leadership skills of current employees, but to also let the employees know you value them and are investing in their future with the company," says Anderson. "With the costs to recruit and train new employees, implementing a mentor or leadership training program is a very effective way to groom future leaders and maintain continuity within the organization."

The complete Manufacturing and Distribution Skills Gap report will be available in

mid-January. To automatically receive the free report when it is available, register here [2].

For information about Lisa Anderson, go to http://www.lma-consultinggroup.com/ *[1] or call 909.630.3943.*

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