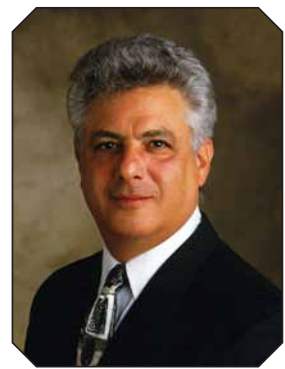


# AMERICA

## Needs a Different Kind of Candidate



**Publisher & Editor-in-Chief**  
Michael Goldstein

**The two candidates in the upcoming presidential election offer two distinctly different approaches to solving America's economic problems**—neither of which is likely to be successful. One, trying to stay in office, increasingly looks to borrow even more money from our future in yet another effort to kick-start the economy. The other tells us that increasing taxes for the top 1% is not necessary, because if we leave them alone, they'll invest their way to our prosperity (as if they have all their money sitting around in cash and are just waiting to figure out where and when to invest it).

While this ideological fight is going on, the manufacturing community—although it's enjoying a strong business climate—continues to suffer from a severe shortage of skilled labor. Our society encourages young people to go to college—and for many, this is the right choice. But for too long we've been turning out too many lawyers, financiers and unneeded liberal arts majors. Parents need to get more involved and question the educational direction their kids are taking. Manufacturing isn't often considered a viable vocation, despite the fact that today there are possibly 600,000 manufacturing jobs available to the right candidates (according to the Manufacturing Institute).

Time and time again I read about manufacturers struggling to hire good candidates to support their growth, let alone to replace their present aging workforce. A recent article focused on the hiring woes of manufacturers in Northeast Indiana, where 26% of the workforce is employed in manufacturing. One hiring manager expects to go through 500 applicants just to get the 10 that he needs, and there's no guarantee that those 10 hires will work out. Another hiring manager took 129 applications, which he screened down to 40. Of those 40, only four passed the basic skills test. All four were offered jobs, but only one accepted. Applicants are failing drug tests and others decide they want to wait until their unemployment benefits run out before taking a factory job. Manufacturers hesitate to hire candidates with four-year college degrees out of fear that those candidates will leave as soon as something else becomes available.

We don't need better *political* candidates. We need better *job* candidates.

Just think of the economic benefits of 100,000 unemployed no longer drawing from the public coffers but each contributing \$35,000-\$70,000 a year throughout their communities and into our economic system and you can quickly see that our economic problems can be solved from the ground up much more easily than from the government down.

The good news is that attention is finally being paid to the issue of the skilled manufacturing labor shortage. In addition to articles in the mainstream press, various organizations are getting involved. One example is AMT—The Association for Manufacturing Technology, the organizers of IMTS. At this year's IMTS, there will be a special focus on the manufacturing labor shortage. **Booth W-200** will be home to the IMTS Jobs Center, where you can meet with professionals in manufacturing placement. In addition, the show will have the NIMS Student Skills Center, where all week long, students, educators and counselors will have a hands-on opportunity to explore careers in manufacturing. Finally, the show's IMTSedu booth (**N-6677**) will host a town hall meeting about the workforce shortage on Tuesday, Sept. 11, at 11:00 a.m.

Solving our hiring problems might take the next decade, but you can solve some of your manufacturing problems within the next week or so by visiting IMTS in Chicago from September 10–15. It's here at this show that you'll find not only the latest machines and technologies but the most productive automation available to help you meet your potential demand for your products while you struggle with increasing or enhancing your workforce.

One of the best ways to reduce your dependence on hiring is to make the most of the labor you have. The key to that is highly effective manufacturing technology and automation, which is exactly what you'll find at the show. Automation not only lessens the impact of our need for more employees, but it also reduces the labor content of our products and reduces the cost advantages of low-wage competitors. Despite our issues with finding skilled labor, American manufacturers remain competitive in the world because of their ingenuity, technology and innovation.