How Do We Fix American Manufacturing?

In America, many have lost sight of the fact that the object of the act of manufacturing is not merely the generation of maximum profit, but instead the creation of value.

How do we fix?
The question isn’t “Why?” the question today is “How do we fix?”

1) **Create value, not just profits.** Value includes meaningful work for our neighbors and quality products that are useful to buyers and society. Profits are the result of creating value, not the cause.

2) **Economic patriotism.** As consumers, we need to acknowledge that loyalty to our friends and neighbors might be as important as saving a few bucks on products made overseas where the costs and worker protections are far, far, lower.

3) **We need to once again recognize the dignity of work, and value a job well done.** We need to acknowledge the fact that our economic support of our community is an essential means to creating a just and productive society.

4) **Invite critical thinking back into our lives.** We want to buy local food so we can see where it was grown, so we can have a relationship with the people who grow it. We need to abandon our blind trust that manufactured goods from “over there” are magically just as good as what our friends and neighbors could make here in our zip code. We need to hold foreign goods to same levels of regulatory and labor standards as we hold our local manufacturers.

5) **Refocus on production and creation, not profits.** What is the object of the act? Western culture seems insanely focused on profit and wealth accumulation. Nowhere do we read that the object of the act just might be the “existential joy of manufacturing” -- where our talents, capital, and creativity turn raw materials into items of utility, quality of life, and creation of joy. Instead of expecting instant career success through college (and debt), we can consider...
Patriotism can be moved to recognize dignity of work, value in (and pride of!) creation, and shared community values. Recognizing that profits are a result of manufacturing, and not the goal of manufacturing, is essential to restore dignity to American manufacturing and economic patriotism. In target shooting, aiming at the right target is crucial. The results can change when American business (and consumers) stop aiming at the cheapest price and maximum profits target. Profits are the result of manufacturing, not the cause. Aim for values, community and America.

Mastery of our craft, of our materials, creation of production capability, these can lead us to mastery of our world, mastery of our fate. Manufacturing engineering, not financial engineering, is the sustainable way back to lives worth living. How do we change our economic incentives to reflect this?

Miles Free III is the PMPA Director of Industry Affairs with over 40 years of experience in the areas of manufacturing, quality, and steelmaking. He helps answer “How?”, “With what?” and “Really?” Miles’ blog is at pmpaspeakingofprecision.com; email: mfree@pmpa.org; website: pmpa.org.

Rediscovering True North
Rediscovering true North is the understanding that the basis of our individual success is also the foundation of our community’s success. And that as our communities succeed, so do we. If decision-making is reframed from profit maximization at any cost, the lens of economic patriotism can be moved to recognize dignity of work, value in (and pride of!) creation, and shared community values.

LIKE FEEDS AND SPEEDS, PMPA AND YOU WORK BETTER TOGETHER

Precision Machined Products Association (PMPA) kept all members up-to-date on Covid-19 and SBA loan announcements. Members also helped members. This is just a small sample of how we work Better Together.

COVID-19 RESOURCE CENTER
WE ARE POSTING ALL OF THE INFORMATION THAT WE HAVE ALREADY VIA OUR LIST SERVE THIS WEEK ON THE PAGE SO THAT YOU WILL HAVE EVERYTHING IN PLACE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS.

INCLUDING ALL THINGS RELATED TO:

PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM

Networking, Resources & Problem-Solving
Legislative & Regulatory Updates
National & Local Events
Trends & Benchmarking
Health & Safety
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