

# Build Your Workforce to Combat the Global Workforce Gap

Brian Fortney, Global Capability Manager, Asset Optimization Services, Rockwell Automation

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## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The skills gap is challenging the global workforce.
- Achieving an agile and flexible workforce can be accomplished by marketing the industry, the quality of life, and the company.
- Establish workforce flexibility to support and augment the workforce.
- To remain productive, train and retain.
- Rockwell Automation provides an entire ecosystem of industrial training in one environment.

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## OVERVIEW

The manufacturing industry skills gap has created significant challenges for organizations. However, with a workforce strategy that provides support, augmentation, and training, manufacturers can mitigate many risks to production, strengthen their workforce, and fill critical manufacturing positions.

Rockwell Automation offers services that companies need to implement a holistic workforce strategy, for today and the future. In addition to multiple support options and field technician augmentation service, Rockwell Automation's e-learning and virtual training platform makes more training available anytime, anywhere, with more language and ease than ever before.

## CONTEXT

Brian Fortney summarized challenges faced by manufacturers due to the workforce skills gap and how investment in training can address those challenges. He shared how Rockwell Automation offers a variety of solutions to retain employees and build the workforce pipeline.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### The skills gap is challenging the global workforce.

In the United States, there is a two-million-job gap between what industrial companies need to maintain their productivity and what the staffing pool can provide. Not only are employers facing a lack of a pipeline of trained skilled workers from secondary schools, but there is also a high rate of retirement. Meanwhile, responses to job postings are not at the level needed to fill open posts, and responses are not received from enough candidates with a skill level to maintain productivity.

Also, training and retaining workers requires bandwidth from experienced team members. As a result of these challenges and gaps, there is no path to fast recovery.

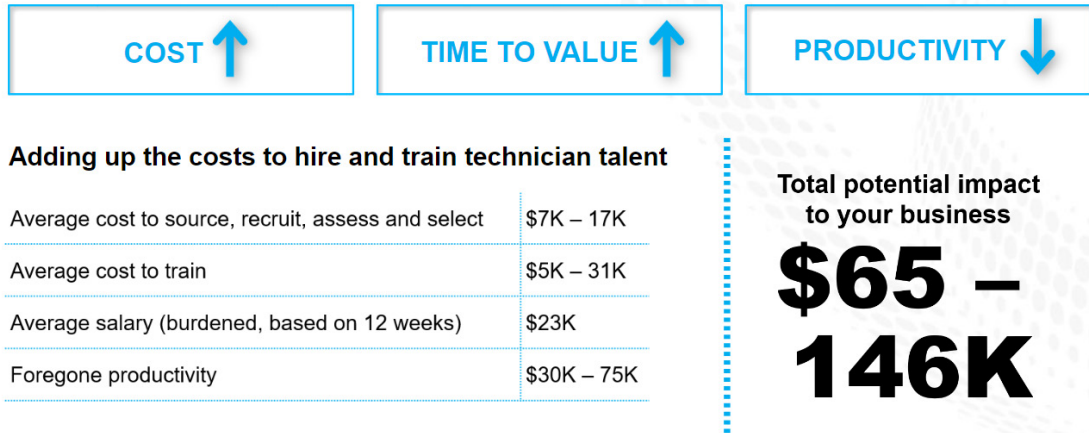
Although the cost impacts of the skills gap are hidden in HR budgets, maintenance budgets, and lost productivity, estimates place the skills gap cost between \$65,000 and \$146,000 per position per year. Losing talent to competitors only exacerbates this problem. Investment in maintaining existing workers is critical to optimizing an operation.

Figure 1: The workforce skills gap is real



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Figure 2: Cost of the skills gap



## Achieving an agile and flexible workforce can be accomplished by marketing the industry, the quality of life, and the company.

Building a robust workforce strategy is important and relevant at all times, even in an inflationary environment. Having workers who are skilled, trained, and ready to work is key to maintaining viability of both individual organizations and the wider manufacturing industry. This can be accomplished through three main strategies.

1. **Change the perception of manufacturing.** Manufacturing continues to be presented as a low-tech industry. However, manufacturing plants today are high-tech, software-centric operations. Manufacturing uses high-tech skills in real-world applications where employees can make a difference for themselves, their communities, and the world. Changing this view of manufacturing is a first step to attracting the workforce of the future.

2. **Tie manufacturing to a strong economic outcome.** Convey how manufacturing workers can do well financially. A good way to do that is to host tours and show them the nice cars and trucks in the parking lot that workers are driving.

**If you want to attract folks to manufacturing, help them envision what their life could look like.**

*Brian Fortney, Rockwell Automation*

3. **Market the company.** Join LinkedIn and post diversified content several times per week to show success stories, job postings, and articles that establish organizational credibility and build awareness of the organizational culture.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Figure 3: Attracting workers is more effective when employers think like a candidate

### Think Like a Candidate

Candidates are interviewing US as much as we are interviewing THEM.

- **Work / life balance** is important, especially now
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** Commitment
- **Opportunity for and support of career growth** and personal development. Explore and develop your strengths, influence what you want to learn and where you would like to go in the company.
- Let them **see the hiring manager or team members**
- Speak to **career path, options, culture**, why the job and company are worthwhile
- Speak to **what the candidate would do every day** in the role, instead of speaking at an esoteric or conceptual level only
- **Culture**: Fun? Challenging? Values?

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## Establish workforce flexibility to support and augment the workforce.

Spending less time reacting and more time planning allows organizations to be proactive at scale. This means putting systems in place to help people partner, leverage technology in the industrial automation space, and support investments in technology with a reinvestment in existing workers or recruiting additional workers.

Managing, maintaining, and optimizing the technology of digital transformation requires people who have the critical skills to optimize data flow, contextualize data, and drive information and insights that can help make the businesses more productive. Partnerships to support, as well as to augment, an in-house workforce are helpful when an organization lacks the skills or bandwidth for a project.

## To remain productive, train and retain.

A key to employee retention is to provide employees with training. Continue their development, invest in them, and help them to see how they're being invested in. This fosters appreciation, which drives engagement and retention. Being more mindful about onboarding programs and knowledge transfer allows new talent to shorten their time to value.

Investment in employee training has a positive impact on retention in three ways:

- **Empowerment.** Giving individuals the power to make decisions to improve the work or move the work forward.
- **Engagement.** Fostering employee enthusiasm and passion about the work.
- **Transparency.** Being honest with employees about current conditions and the journey ahead, which builds trust and increase commitment.

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**The key to retention across all age levels of your workforce is engagement. The work has to matter and individuals have to feel appreciated.**

*Brian Fortney, Rockwell Automation*

Shift organizational focus to prioritize training, build training time and opportunity into the work, and block time for training. Prioritize requests for a training class and have plans to get coverage so employees can continue their development.

As part of the focus on training, understanding the purpose of training helps evaluate its effectiveness by developing metrics to measure the desired outcome. There are three primary purposes for training, and providing training in all three areas supports a safe and sustainable workforce:

1. Compliance, to fulfill legal and local regulation requirements.
2. Enablement, to raise output, reduce downtime, and lower overall risk.
3. Development, to give employees more of the right skills to develop and grow.

## **Rockwell Automation provides an entire ecosystem of industrial training in one environment.**

From on-demand online learning to customized solution implementations, Rockwell Automation provides support, augmentation, and training for customer organizations.

- **Support.** Rockwell Automation fields tens of thousands of calls each month to support customers in real time on challenges from all levels of the organization and offers a knowledge base for self-service.

- **Augmentation.** With Rockwell Automation's proactive alerts through application and highly qualified field service teams, customers can augment their workforce, drive change, and shift resources to focus on training and drive engagement.
- **Training.** Rockwell Automation offers the Learning+ training platform in addition to instructor-led, tailored trainings. Rockwell Automation's investment in its training platform goes beyond what traditional training providers offer. Learning+ provides access to nearly 30 in-demand training classes, a self-service e-learning format, and unlimited access to scheduled, virtual, instructor-led training globally. Training is accessible from everywhere, at any time, in the local language.

In addition to in-person and online trainings, Rockwell Automation offers virtual coaching in live, one-on-one, or small-group interactions, with either an instructor or a field technical resource. For a larger-scale initiative, the Rockwell Automation **Global Workforce Solutions** is a consultative assessment aimed at wholesale workforce transformation.

The Rockwell Automation **Academy of Advanced Manufacturing**, created in partnership with Manpower Group, enhances the skillset crossover between veterans coming off duty and manufacturing workforce requirements.

When troubleshooting in an intense, high-stakes, high-productivity environment, customers need technicians with resilience and grit. Rockwell Automation and Manpower sourced, screened, assessed, selected, and trained groups of 12 to 18 veteran technicians—experienced, but off-duty or off-service, technicians with proven skills—in a 12-week program. Technicians were trained in both technical and soft skills needed to be successful in a team environment. Some of Rockwell Automation's largest customers invested in supporting, hiring, and onboarding individuals directly out of the Academy of Advanced Manufacturing program.

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Figure 4: Rockwell Automation's ecosystem of industrial workforce support



## CASE STUDY: ROCKWELL AUTOMATION HELPS ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS PRODUCT LINES AND TRAINING NEEDS

### Bakery Bootcamp

In the Southwest United States, a global organization for a specific bakery was bringing on 12 to 15 new hires who needed to be quickly onboarded, not only to embrace the new technology of a line that was being installed, but also to learn fundamental craft and mechanical/electrical skills to apply on day one of production.

Rockwell Automation put together a training bootcamp—12 weeks of training at an off-site location where students could learn all day, with time to work and practice incorporated into the bootcamp. This approach gave participants a high level of confidence on day one and resulted in one of the most successful production output starts that the customer had ever seen.

### Driving Training at an Automaker

A global automotive organization needed to improve preparedness for new line releases. They worked with the Rockwell Automation Global Workforce Solutions business to establish a “Train the Trainer” program where 36 team members became trainers for two years to drive their knowledge to team members throughout the organization.

In that two-year span, those 36 individuals trained 1,700 employees on new model launches, allowing the company to launch new products on time, with a higher level of quality. The team members remain fully engaged and can apply the training they received across robotics manufacturing, pneumatics, hydraulics, and manufacturing. This highly scalable training approach fosters an engaged, committed workforce and eases the change management journey.



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## BIOGRAPHY

### **Brian Fortney**

Global Capability Manager, Asset Optimization Services, Rockwell Automation

Brian Fortney is the global capability manager for the Asset Optimization businesses within Rockwell Automation. In this role, he is responsible for the global strategy and portfolio of offerings that provide support for the production assets within industrial manufacturing facilities. This includes Repair, Inventory Services, Equipment Lifecycle, Integrated Service Agreements, and Customer Insights.

Mr. Fortney joined Rockwell Automation in 2012, serving in roles of increasing responsibility within the Lifecycle Services business (Training and Service Portfolio). Prior to Rockwell Automation, he served in leadership roles in the advertising and publishing industry in Northeast Ohio and Las Vegas.

Brian is a graduate of the University of Mount Union with a degree in business administration, as well as being a graduate of Baldwin Wallace University, where he earned an MBA.