

# #WhyMFG

Skilled labor is crucial to maintaining the strength of U.S. manufacturing. As a new generation enters the workforce, #WhyMFG helps educate young professionals about career opportunities in this growing sector through personal perspectives from industry workers, educators, students, and recent graduates. #WhyMFG stories highlight the multitude of successes throughout this sector.

Manufacturers are turning to apprenticeships to cultivate workers who can do more than push buttons ... they need people to think critically, program machines, and design, produce, and inspect parts for wide-ranging products.

smartforce  
MANUFACTURING BRIGHTER FUTURES

Careers in manufacturing are not just high technology. They are leading-edge technology.

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September 12-17, 2016



**Laura Gilmore**  
**Machinist**  
Steelhead Metal Corp.  
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## How does the Morris Group find and train young people?

The employee mix at Morris Group is heavily weighted toward individuals with a technical background – 60% of our 700+ employees are either service or applications engineers, many of whom joined our company right when they graduated. In order to maintain this vital talent pipeline, we have spent years building strong ties within the leading universities, community colleges, and technical high schools in the markets we serve.

## How important is educational outreach in attracting young, qualified people to manufacturing careers?

We support educational partnerships such as SkillsUSA and the Haas Technical Education Network by hosting regional events and competitions in our facilities. Some of our employees have taken it upon themselves to volunteer as judges at SkillsUSA competitions, which we strongly support. Recently, we have hosted joint open houses within many of the Tech Schools that use our equipment. These joint events become a machine tool show and job fair in one; allowing our customers to network with students and educators, while witnessing new technology in action. The response has been overwhelmingly positive.

## What misconceptions do you hear from young people considering manufacturing careers?

The appeal of a career in manufacturing has increased greatly throughout the past decade. Thankfully, many people are beginning to understand that today's manufacturing is far more technologically advanced and, in fact, tends to provide highly stimulating and inviting workplace environments. We can thank the efforts of organizations such as Edge Factor, SkillsUSA, Smartforce Development, and the IMTS Student Summit for helping to get high school students excited about a career in manufacturing.

## Mathew Kachur Vice President of Human Resources Morris Group Inc.

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## Manufacturing education

Gilmore studied at Idaho State University in Pocatello and earned her Associate of Applied Science for Machine Tool Technology at the College of Western Idaho in Nampa. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

## When did you become interested in a career in manufacturing?

My grandfather was a machinist, and he was a machining instructor at Idaho State University from 1976 to 1982. Although I never had the opportunity to meet my grandfather, I am getting to know him through his tools; my father passed down to me my grandfather's machinist toolbox.

It is also very important to me to be financially independent. Within two years of beginning my machining career journey, I was gainfully employed in the industry... A recent study from Deloitte and The Manufacturing Institute predicts the skilled labor gap could grow to 2 million jobs by 2025.

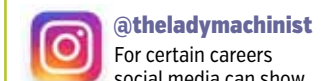
## How did you get involved with SkillsUSA, and what have some of your most memorable experiences from the program been?

I heard about SkillsUSA at Idaho State University, where the machining program had a SkillsUSA team that I wanted to join.

Last year I competed at the first ever CNC Technician event at the SkillsUSA National Championships. I had so much fun competing that I was eager to go again. This year I competed

as a CNC Turning Specialist from the College of Western Idaho. It has been an honor to represent Idaho two years in a row.

I won the bronze medal for CNC Turning Specialist (in June in Louisville, Kentucky). I was the only woman on the podium for any of the CNC competitions, and I was also the only West Coast competitor to medal in my event. The CNC Turning Specialist competition was held on my birthday this year. I do not think I will soon forget the experience. I had a blast competing.



For certain careers social media can show you what the process looks like. It gives you the opportunity to see the fun and exciting parts of my career. Because my Instagram is available to a diverse audience, some of whom may not be acquainted with machining, I am able to encourage more young people, especially young women, to consider manufacturing careers.



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