We have a vision to lead the world in smart manufacturing. This requires radical changes in four areas: talent, innovation, technology, and leadership.

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Top 10 Tips to Lead the World in Smart Manufacturing

Leadership

1. Commit to the Future. Growth happens when companies lead well for both tomorrow and today. Sometimes a small step can far outstrip the influence of a larger strategic direction. That’s what happened in the aerospace industry in the 1990s when Boilermakers and these companies developed, but the company used 3D printing to print to their plants and local needs. The key to making this leap is to re-think what you can do in your current business and plan for growth. Use 3D printing and digital production to better lead the world. “That really helped us take that transition quite easily,” states Jason, the company’s first digital printing specialist, “and it’s really helped us push the needle further.”

2. Build an inclusive industry. “A top talent mentality is the only way the talent shortage is going to go away for us,” says Dr. Ethan Geraci, Chief Operating Officer at NSA. “In the future, we will have to work with each other. Innovation’s part of it, technology’s part of it, just being creative as a team is part of it.”

3. Activita inspire the next generation. Raise awareness of great manufacturing careers, sponsor talent for employees, or get involved in innovation training programs for high school students. Lincoln Electric is a founding partner of MAGNET’s Early College, Early Career Apprenticeship program. Chris Mapes, Chairman, President & CEO of Lincoln Electric, states: “When I think of the future, I think we have to be inclusive.”

4. Focus on technology, innovation, and talent. Investing in technology, constantly innovating, and finding new ways to train young workers are key signs that your company is on the right path to success. Without adopting new technologies, you risk losing out in the future. “I think there’s a deep mine of potential in midsize companies throughout Northeast Ohio,” says Dave Brown, Senior Vice President at Geraci, Chief Operating Officer at NSA.

5. Reimagine your future. With work and the world rapidly changing, it’s up to business leaders to innovate the way forward. Lincoln Electric is a lighting company that’s continuously reinventing its future. It started with traditional lighting products and went on to invent the world’s first backlit keyboard, and most recently it’s spun off a medical device company that uses light to treat and prevent devastating side effects of cancer treatment. “I think there’s a deep mine of potential in midsize companies throughout Northeast Ohio, many of which have ideas that they could incubate, develop, and potentially spin off,” says Dave Brown, Senior Vice President at Geraci, Chief Operating Officer at NSA.

6. Build your community as you build your company. For manufacturing to thrive, we need to work with each other. Collaboration is the only way to address massive issues like the talent gap. When it couldn’t be solved on its own, the Northeast Ohio manufacturing community came together to form MAGNET. “The manufacturing community has to open the door to everyone in order to be successful,” says Jack Schron Jr., chairman and CEO of Lincoln Electric.

7. Build a community that attracts talent. We have to keep reinventing ourselves,” says Peter Broer, CEO of Lumitex. “In the future, we will have to work with each other. Innovation’s part of it, technology’s part of it, just being creative as a team is part of it.”

8. Reinvent your future. “I think there’s a deep mine of potential in midsize companies throughout Northeast Ohio,” says Dave Brown, Senior Vice President at Geraci, Chief Operating Officer at NSA. “We need to be inclusive,” says Jack Schron Jr., chairman and CEO of Lincoln Electric. “In the future, we will have to work with each other. Innovation’s part of it, technology’s part of it, just being creative as a team is part of it.”

9. Invest in Industry 4.0 at scale. This is no longer an option, it’s a requirement. “Investing in innovation, investing in transformation, is required not only to grow your business, it’s required to sustain your business. If you’re not willing to make those investments, it’s required not only to grow your business, but you’re going to be left behind.”

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The FACTS: In 2024, U.S. manufacturing output will be double that of 2011. In 2021, China’s output was almost double the U.S. If we want to rebalance the scales it will take bold leadership at every level to lead the world. Here are some ideas.

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