

## National Manufacturing Study Reveals New Trends, Steps for Success

WASHINGTON— On October 19, 2011 the American Small Manufacturers Coalition (ASMC) released the results of its [2011 Next Generation Manufacturing Study](#), identifying key trends affecting the industry and steps U.S. manufacturers can take now to be successful in the next generation.

The study, conducted by the [Manufacturing Performance Institute](#), finds that this is a critical point in time for U.S. manufacturing, and manufacturers must assess whether they have the workforce, business systems, equipment and strategies in place to successfully compete in the future. While external factors, like the economic downturn present challenges, manufacturers can remain competitive by focusing on six strategies assessed by the NGM Study as a blueprint for success.

Specifically, the study found:

- Nearly six out of 10 U.S. manufacturers could have a new leader in the next five years — a five percent increase over 2009. This presents an opportunity for manufacturers to solidify leadership and direction for years to come if they develop their next generation of leaders now.
- Sustainability is increasingly important to manufacturers, with 59.2 percent of manufacturers reporting that sustainability is important or highly important to their future, up from 35.1 percent in 2009. Many of these manufacturers are responding to customer demands for greener products, while others recognize cost-control opportunities such as reduced energy consumption and the re-use of materials.
- Most manufacturers have systems and equipment in place to support the current requirements of the six NGM strategies, but few describe their equipment as —state-of-the-art. For example, only 18 percent have state-of-the-art equipment to support world-class innovation, and just 14 percent have state-of-the-art equipment to support world-class process improvements.
- Few manufacturers have both talent and workforce development programs to drive world-class performance. Due to an aging workforce and gap in skilled labor, more professional training and development is needed to prepare manufacturers for the next generation.
- Small companies need assistance in implementing NGM strategies. Smaller manufacturers are less likely than larger companies to be at or near world-class performance in the six NGM strategies and are less likely to have best practices in place.

“The manufacturing industry is widely recognized as a critical component of America’s economic recovery, but it is important that we provide small manufacturers with the tools to continue to be competitive in the global market,” said ASMC Executive Director Carrie Hines. “The NGM study results provide a road map for the continued growth and success of U.S. small manufacturers.”

A majority of manufacturers surveyed said they look for outside help in a range of areas, such as regulatory compliance and business development, to achieve success. In addition, a majority say that their organizations have been positively impacted by the American Small Manufacturers Coalition and the state-level Manufacturing Extension Partnership centers that constitute its membership. ASMC and MEP centers nationwide help manufacturers develop and implement strategies in these six areas through customized training and consultation services.

The study, first conducted in 2009, surveyed more than 800 U.S. manufacturers nationwide. More information can be found at [www.smallmanufacturers.org/2011NGMStudy](http://www.smallmanufacturers.org/2011NGMStudy)