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20 Ideas to Spur U.S. Manufacturing

BY Drew Greenblatt

From taxes to teachers to torts, straightforward ideas to kickstart one of the economy's most lucrative sectors.



The most recent jobs report was just the latest sign that the economy continues to plod ahead in fits and starts--but hasn't been able to achieve "escape velocity." So what to do about it? Here are 20 ideas that would help create manufacturing jobs, both short term and in the long run.

Why manufacturing? With a multiplier effect of \$1.48 added to the economy for every \$1 spent, the highest multiplier of any sector, manufacturing needs the attention of lawmakers and policymakers now.

1. Create pro-manufacturing tax policies that encourage reshoring and research and development.
2. Reduce the corporate tax rate to the average of our biggest trade competitors, so we have more money to re-invest in our businesses.
3. Take advantage of opportunities to develop energy resources such as unconventional oil and natural gas.
4. Make our tax code treat foreign profits like our big overseas competitors do. This will level the playing field and encourage domestic manufacturing growth. That will bring home money now being parked overseas.
5. Make the tax credit for R&D a five-year credit with a rolling renewal every sixth year out. The current year-to-year status of the credit creates uncertainty for research that requires years to develop.
6. Close the 20 percent gap between the expense of doing business in the U.S. and our nine largest trading partners -- a gap that does not include the cost of labor.
7. Reform a tort system whose costs total almost 2 percent of GDP -- among the highest levels in the world.

8. Be more aggressive in protecting intellectual property rights when stolen abroad.
9. Increase national awareness that IP is the fuel of our innovation and our competitive advantage.
10. Better coordinate the government agencies that protect our IP.
11. Hire more patent examiners. It takes a year to get a patent on average -- that's glacial.
12. Root out unnecessary cost, complexity and uncertainty in regulation. (A 2010 Small Business Administration study found that manufacturers spend an average of \$14,000 per employee to comply with regulations -- 75 percent more than all American business.)
13. Demand a level playing field when nations who subsidize their currencies and raw materials want to do business with us.
14. Take the lead on the Trans-Pacific Partnership so that American companies have more prospects in Asia.
15. Help small to mid-sized American manufacturers overcome fear and complexity in exporting.
16. Change young people's perception of manufacturing from the "4Ds" -- dirty, dangerous, dumb and disappearing -- to a field that's safer, cleaner, and yes, more creative.
17. Enact comprehensive immigration reform.
18. Staple a green card to the diplomas of foreign scientists and engineers trained here.
19. Improve math, science and technology training in our public schools.
20. Pay the best public school teachers salaries of \$100,000 and cull out underperformers. We have to attract top college graduates to teaching and treat them like professionals with higher salaries.

IMAGE: VisionsofAmerica/Joe Sohm/Getty

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[DREW GREENBLATT](#) is the president of [Marlin Steel](#), a U.S.-based builder of steel wire baskets and sheet metal material handling containers. Marlin has grown for seven consecutive years, has gone more than 1,800 straight days without a safety accident, and believes passionately in the American manufacturing renaissance.

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