



Article 356

July 27, 2014

Online Tool Helps Manufacturers Measure Themselves Against World-Class Standards

By Claudia Serrano, Projects Coordinator, New Mexico MEP

Manufacturing businesses that want to know how their performance stacks up against industry standards have a new tool to make that measurement — and it's available at no cost.

The Manufacturing Performance Institute, in conjunction with the American Small Manufacturers Coalition and the New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership, created the Next Generation Manufacturing Assessment Tool after surveying thousands of U.S. manufacturers in 2009, 2011 and 2013.



The biennial survey asks manufacturers what strategic benchmarks they use to measure their efficiency and effectiveness in six critical areas: human resources, supply-chain management, sustainability, process improvement, innovation and global engagement. The tool based on this survey allows manufacturers of all kinds to see how they compare with world-class industry practices and standards by comparing their responses to those of thousands of other top manufacturers.

The overarching goal is to help businesses with strategic planning and to improve the innovation and productivity of companies that build things in America.

In the survey, the six areas identified by the makers of the Next Generation Manufacturing Assessment Tool are broken down further into core objectives and best practices. By seeing how well her company meets these standards, the business owner can identify opportunities she needs to act on and improvements she needs to make in:

- **Customer-focused innovation:** Company managers see how well — compared to competitors — they develop, make and market new products and services that meet customer needs.
- **Superior processes and improvement:** This measures how well the business records annual productivity and quality gains over the competition and how committed the organization is to continuous improvement.

- **Human-capital management:** Company managers can see what performance advantage they might enjoy over the competition by evaluating how they recruit, hire, develop and retain talent.
- **Supply-chain management and collaboration:** The business can see how well it develops and manages supply chains and partnerships that provide better flexibility, response time and delivery performance than rivals do.
- **Sustainability:** Managers can evaluate whether the company designs and implements waste and energy-use reductions at levels that save the company money and provide tangible customer value.
- **Global engagement:** The business can see whether it has the people, partnerships and systems in place to engage global markets and talents better than the competition can.

To get started, manufacturers are encouraged to visit: www.NextGenMfgTool.com whenever it's convenient: The tool is available at no cost 24 hours a day every day of the year, and the reports found at this site can be exported in pdf or Excel form.

The assessment tool is just one national resource made available to local manufacturers by New Mexico MEP. The organization also provides on-site technical and business assistance, and it helps manufacturers market themselves through its New Mexico Made and Manufacturing Day programs. Manufacturing Day 2014 will introduce the public to manufacturing facilities around the state by offering tours during the first week of October. Visit www.newmexicomep.org for information about all New Mexico MEP programs.

Finance New Mexico is a public service initiative to assist individuals and businesses with obtaining skills and funding resources for their business or idea. To learn more, go to www.FinanceNewMexico.org. Sponsored by:

