

Your opinion MATTERS to us – take our survey and help us improve our website!

Take Survey Dismiss

Special Feature



**ASIA REACTS TO...**

Click Here to Explore

Follow Us:



SEARCH: [Advanced Search »](#)

ASIA ASEAN JAPAN SOUTH KOREA AUSTRALIA CHINA INDIA TAIWAN

- HIGHLIGHTS
- INTERACTIVE DATA
- ARTICLES
- STATES & DISTRICTS
- PUBLICATIONS
- SPECIAL PROJECTS
- ABOUT US

## In America, Japanese-brand Automakers Provide Crucial Workforce Development Initiatives

by MANNY MANRIQUEZ on Oct 18, 2016  
Featured in: Asia, Japan



JAMA member companies' workforce development efforts go beyond traditional training to impart philosophical approaches to manufacturing. Image: JAMA USA annual contributions report.

It is time for us to change the way we think about American manufacturing and recognize the new realities. Amidst the present uncertainty about the nature of these realities is the idea that "America doesn't manufacture things anymore." That could not be further from the truth. In fact, US manufacturing output has nearly doubled over the last 30 years, reaching a near record-high in 2015, according to [Federal Reserve data](#). And while labor productivity in manufacturing has [increased significantly](#) over this period, there is a growing shortage of high-skilled workers available to address vacancies in the manufacturing workforce.

This [skills gap](#) means that over the next decade, almost 3.5 million manufacturing jobs will likely be available, but about 2 million of these positions are expected to remain unfilled.

This is why one of the most critical needs in the US economy is workforce development, and Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association (JAMA) member companies in America offer a compelling model to address this need. Workforce development initiatives, like those championed by Japanese-brand automakers, demonstrate that in the face of technological change and increased global competitiveness, our member companies are doubling down on their support for the American manufacturing workforce. Through workforce training programs and targeted science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education initiatives, Japanese-brand automakers are increasingly devoting human and capital resources to developing skilled talent in high-tech manufacturing, as well as R&D. Every week our member companies share details of new or ongoing STEM education and workforce training programs taking place across the United States.

In Ohio, Honda proves its commitment to developing the next generation of technology and manufacturing professionals by directly supporting educational institutions focused on STEM education, such as Marysville Early College High School. Honda's focus on STEM schools makes students aware of manufacturing opportunities and prepares them for fulfilling careers in an innovative field. In Michigan and several other states, Mazda has reached over 25,000 students through its RACE (Racing Accelerates Creative Education) STEM initiative, which offers interactive presentations that harness the excitement of racing to educate students on the variety of career paths they can pursue by studying STEM disciplines.

While STEM schools provide the foundation for building expertise in high-tech manufacturing, JAMA members also invest in specialized training programs. Just this year, Isuzu opened a new training, distribution, and technical assistance facility in Northwest Pennsylvania that will provide

Share this:

### RECENT POSTS & UPDATES

#### [Semiconductors and Lobsters - The Burgeoning Maine-Asia Export Market](#)

The total export of Maine goods rose 5.8% in 2016 - far above a negative national average. Maine's growing role in the Asian market is demonstrated by steady Malaysian electronic...

[READ MORE »](#)

#### [Utah State University's Japan Club Partakes in Japanese New Year Tradition](#)

Utah State University's Japan Club honors the Japanese New Year tradition through the pounding of mochi, a sweet Japanese snack.

[READ MORE »](#)

#### [Architects in the US Can Now Find Work in Australia and New Zealand](#)

Licensing authorities in the US, Australia, and New Zealand made arrangements that allow architects to gain licenses in each country.

[READ MORE »](#)

### RELATED ARTICLES

#### [Architects in the US Can Now Find Work in Australia and New Zealand](#)

Licensing authorities in the US, Australia, and New Zealand made arrangements that allow architects to gain licenses in each country.

[READ MORE »](#)

direct, hands-on technical training for personnel at Isuzu dealerships, parts suppliers, and service centers, demonstrating their focus on educating their current and prospective employees. In Tennessee, Nissan is building a state-of-the-art training facility next to its Smyrna plant that will allow both prospective and current employees to learn valuable skills in advanced manufacturing. Likewise, Subaru's AIM (Advanced Leadership in Manufacturing) program in Indiana fast-tracks gifted college students to promising careers by providing specialized education in Computer Integrated Manufacturing coupled with real world experience and compensation.

JAMA member companies' workforce development efforts go beyond traditional training to impart philosophical approaches to manufacturing. At its Georgetown, Kentucky facility, Toyota trains employees in its Takumi training philosophy, which embraces becoming a master of one's craft and role. Similarly, the *kaizen* concept, an approach to manufacturing that prioritizes "continuous improvement" and enables employees to suggest innovative approaches to all tasks, large or small, is a driving force for innovation at many JAMA member manufacturing plants.

These types of initiatives and approaches to workforce development can be seen across our members' 26 US-based manufacturing facilities. They also help to prepare talented individuals for careers in R&D. Indeed, JAMA members are investing in R&D and design centers throughout the country, where Japanese-brand automakers track industry trends and develop products specific to US consumers' needs. For example, employees at Mitsubishi Motors' R&D facilities—located in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Washington, D.C., and Cypress, California—are highly trained and are responsible for evaluating auto parts and vehicles, technical support, and critical market research. There are 36 JAMA member company R&D/Design Centers in the United States.

All these examples offer striking evidence of Japanese-brand automakers' enduring commitment to the American workforce and to directly providing high quality employment across 17 US states and the District of Columbia. As manufacturing in the US thrives, we must turn to constructive solutions like those outlined here—but it will take a clear-eyed understanding of the realities of manufacturing in America to expand and accelerate the best results. Workforce training and STEM education can and should be at the heart of these solutions. The nearly 88,000 direct employees of Japanese-brand automakers in the US understand this, and while the country debates the health of manufacturing in America, JAMA members are quietly leading the way.

Our recently released 2016-2017 Contributions Report entitled [\*Driving America's Automotive Future\*](#) features more details on our members' commitment to the United States.

*Manny Manriquez is General Director of the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association's US Office (located in Washington, DC). For more information on his background and work with JAMA, see his [LinkedIn profile](#) and follow him on Twitter [@JAMAManny](#). Views expressed in this commentary are his own.*

**Tags:** [business](#) [investment](#) [trade](#)

**Top Korean Utility Company Builds Smart Campus in Maryland -- 한국 최고 공익기업, 메릴랜드주에 스마트 캠퍼스 구축**

Governor Hogan welcomes new Korean utility initiative. 호건 주지사, 새로운 한국 공익사업을 환영하다.

[READ MORE »](#)