

How **Millennials & Mobile Apps** Can Help Overcome Labor Shortages in the *Manufacturing Industry*

by Tess Boros

The American logistics sector is facing an unprecedented labor shortage. According to the Economic Policy Institute, US manufacturing employment was stable between 1970 and 1998. But between March 1998 and 2013, we lost 5.7 million manufacturing jobs. Thankfully, the news isn't all gloom and doom. According to Deloitte and the Manufacturing Institute (as reported by the National Association of Manufacturers), nearly 3.5 million jobs will be needed in the next decade and 2 million are expected to go unfilled due to the skills gap.

The manufacturing industry, which comprises 8% of the GDP (gross domestic product), is still important to our economy. Modern customers demand more out of their purchasing experiences from the companies that provide their goods and services. For businesses in the logistics sector, the industry's upswing, paired with a continued decrease in unemployment rates, could actually turn out to be a curse.

How can you save your business from the looming crisis of a worker shortage? Consider tapping into an unlikely workforce while upping your technology game.

The Curse of Warehouse Workers Shortage

In essence, though the warehouse and logistics industry continues to need employees, Baby Boomers (persons born in the US between 1946 and 1964) are retiring at alarming rates, and no one is stepping in to take over. Decreased unemployment rates are already making seasonal hiring difficult, and studies show that 79% of 3PLs are worried about the negative impact the coming worker shortage will have on their supply chain.

Fact: If your company doesn't focus on hiring now, that labor shortage may take a large chunk out of your company's profits and put you out of business.

Tapping Into an Unlikely Labor Pool

It may sound melodramatic to call a labor shortage a "curse," but warehousing operations that can't hire enough employees will certainly feel as though a malignant force is plotting against them. As the breakneck-paced industry

runs ever faster, they'll experience continually slower fulfillment speeds, which will push their customers towards their well-staffed competitors.

The great news is that you can avoid all this curse nonsense entirely. How? By getting the #1 fastest-growing workforce sector to work for you. Yup, I'm talking about Millennials. Despite how they have been characterized by the media, they can be a huge asset to your organization. If you think Millennials wouldn't be interested in the manufacturing industry, think again. One of the best ways to attract the newest generation to hit the workforce is to give them access to the technology and work processes they already love to use.

3 Ways a Warehouse Management App Can Stem the Looming Crisis

In case you haven't noticed, warehouse manufacturing software has more than kept pace with trendy technology. Critical warehousing data is no longer chained to the desktop computer in the manager's office; there's now an app for that. You can attract Millennials with warehouse management software that:

1 Works with a smartphone. It is no secret that Millennials get unhappy fast when they can't use their smartphones. No matter what they are doing, Millennials prefer to do that task on a smartphone. Over the next decade, it will become increasingly important to offer warehouse management and inventory technology that runs on a smartphone, such as mobile-based inventory software and smartphone-based barcoding solutions.

2 Provides a handy warehouse management app. If smartphones are the most important thing to a Millennial, apps are the second-most important thing. After all, well-made apps are easy to use, easy to navigate, and let Millennials get right to the task at hand without wasting time. Warehouse management apps, like other apps, provide relevant information at a glance, anywhere and any time.

3 Helps you automate your warehouse. Of course, the best ways to combat the upcoming labor shortage is to reduce your reliance on labor. Though warehouses and fulfillment centers are traditionally very labor-heavy operations, especially around the holidays, new automation tools can streamline your warehouse's pick, pack, and ship process, as well as other complex inventory management tasks so you can get more done with less people.

Build a Stronger Workforce with Warehouse Management Apps

Though Millennials suffer a bad reputation in the workforce, the truth is that once you've get them on your team, they tend to be extremely loyal, hardworking employees who are skilled with technology and interpersonal communication, and who constantly seek better, faster ways to do their jobs.

It's time to overcome the looming labor-shortage curse by giving those talented, young, motivated Millennials a chance. And when you offer them technology they love to use, such as warehouse management software on smartphones, they'll be happy to give you a chance too.

ONE Software Solution can help you implement ERP, mobile warehouse and advanced manufacturing automation solutions that can run on a smartphone. For a single solution with one sales process, one contact and one personalized system, learn more at www.blytheco.com/onesoftware.

About the Author

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