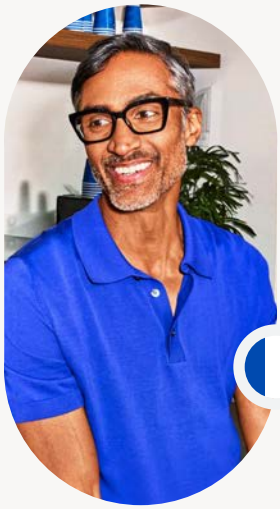
The Global Hiring Guide for Manufacturing



Why you need this guide

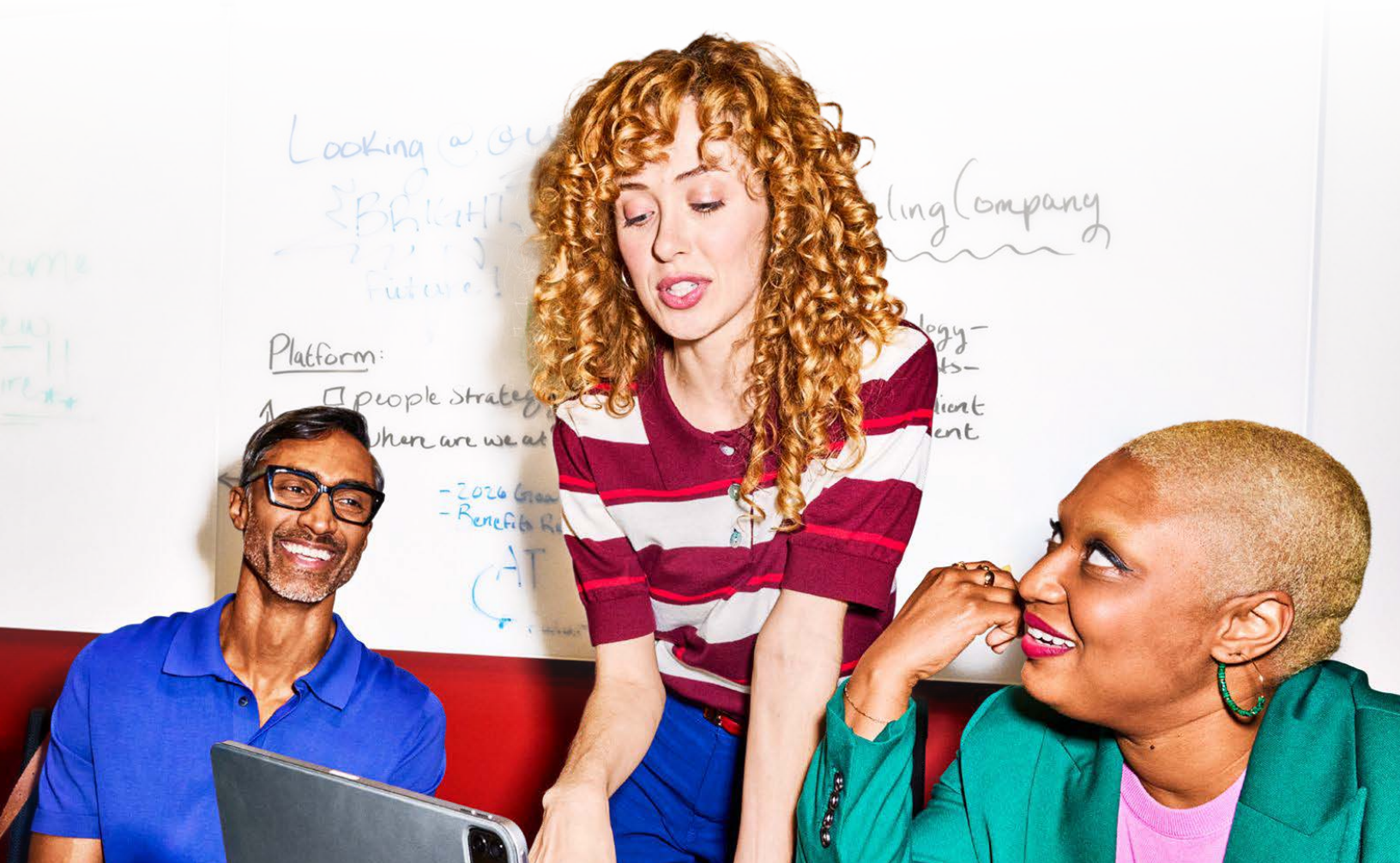
The manufacturing sector is facing a serious talent crunch. The numbers are stark. Currently, 20.6% of U.S. manufacturing plants report labor shortages. The sector could see 2.1 million unfilled jobs by 2030.

Worker shortages are a real threat to production and future growth. And traditional hiring methods aren't keeping pace. The good news is, there's a solution that can turn things around: global hiring. The talent you need may not be in your home country, but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

As a manufacturing leader, you're tasked with accelerating production and innovation. Global hiring can transform today's talent crisis into your competitive advantage.

This guide explores:

- Three challenges for growth-focused manufacturing companies
- Three benefits of global hiring
- Your three-step global hiring roadmap
- Real-world success story



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Chapter 1:

Three challenges for growth-focused manufacturing companies

Challenge #1: The demographic time bomb

The manufacturing workforce is aging at an alarming rate. In the U.S., the Census Bureau reports that 25% of manufacturing workers are 55 or older. Retirement acceleration continues to drain experienced talent from factory floors.

Let's say you're a mid-sized automotive parts manufacturer with 500 employees. If 25% of your workforce is nearing retirement, you're losing 125 highly experienced workers – machinists, quality control specialists, and production supervisors – within the next 5–10 years. Without a global hiring strategy to fill critical roles, you'd risk a 15–20% production reduction. This translates to millions in lost revenue.

Germany faces a similar cliff: Retirements are outpacing replacements. The German Engineering Federation (VDMA) warns this may leave half a million vacancies by 2030.

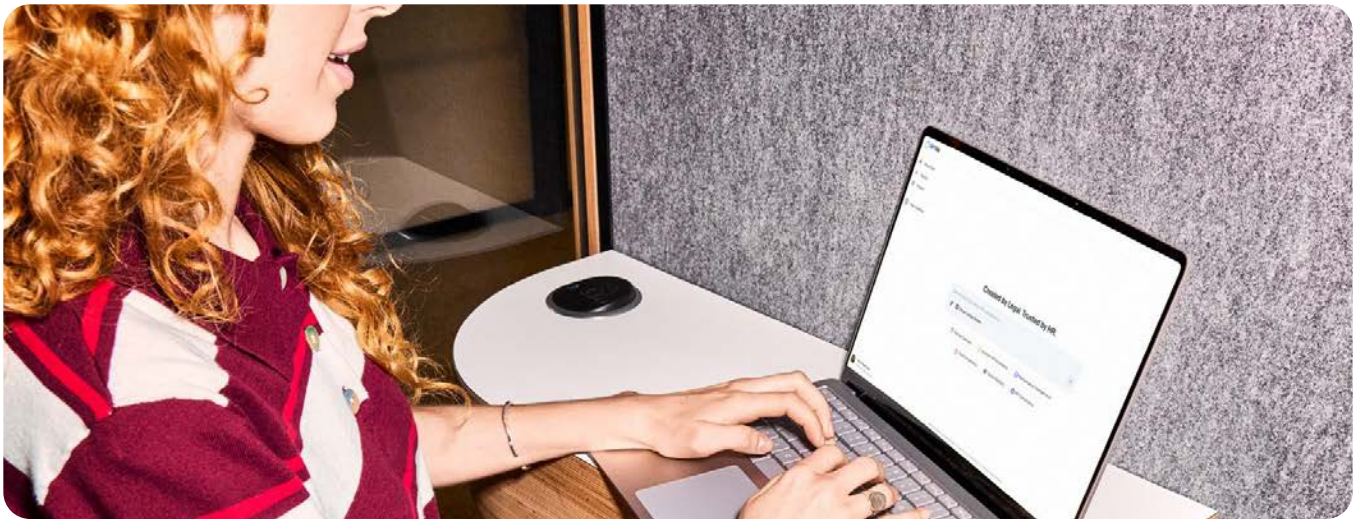
If companies don't have a plan for knowledge transfer and recruitment, the next few decades could drastically stall growth.

Challenge #2: The skills mismatch crisis

Industry 4.0 has changed what manufacturers need from their workforce. Today's factories require skilled workers in AI, IoT, robotics, and data analytics. But traditional education systems struggle to keep up.

Manufacturing Dive reports a 75% surge in demand for simulation and software skills. These aren't skills you can easily find in local markets. The geographic distribution of talent creates a mismatch: Silicon Valley has the AI engineers, but manufacturing happens elsewhere.

Countries like Japan are feeling the pressure too. Nearly two-thirds of Japan-based companies say workforce shortages affect their operations. Even with a long-standing emphasis on automation, Japan's manufacturing sector is struggling to keep pace with its aging population and shrinking labor force.



Challenge #3: The unintended consequences of reshoring

In the U.S., the CHIPS and Science Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act created a record 364,000 manufacturing jobs in 2022, a 53% jump from the year before.

But there's a catch. The jobs are coming back faster than the workers. In fact, 65% of manufacturing leaders say finding and keeping skilled talent is their #1 challenge. And looking ahead, the industry will need to fill 3.8 million new jobs by 2033. Without a solid workforce plan, nearly half of those could stay unfilled.

The U.K. is seeing a similar dynamic. Post-Brexit reshoring and trade shifts have accelerated demand for domestic manufacturing talent, but 74% of U.K. manufacturers experience ongoing recruitment challenges.

Chapter 2:

Three benefits of global hiring

Benefit #1: Bridge the critical skills gap

Global hiring helps you fill mission-critical roles that are hard to staff locally.

India

India alone graduates 1.5 million engineers every year, yet only 10% land jobs in their field. This is a huge supply of talent that often goes untapped. India's vast pool of highly skilled professionals is ideal for roles in software development for industrial automation, data analytics for predictive maintenance, CAD and simulation engineering for product design, and even AI and IoT specialists crucial for Industry 4.0 initiatives.

Poland

Poland has a notably high employment rate: 72.4% of its working-age population (15–64) was employed in 2023. That translates to a deep bench of active workers from which manufacturers can recruit, particularly for advanced manufacturing, electronics assembly, machinery operation, and quality control roles.

Mexico

Mexico's STEM graduate pool has surged by 30% over the past five years, expanding capacity in automation and quality control expertise. With a strong emphasis on engineering, manufacturing, and construction, Mexico offers a robust talent pipeline for industries like automotive, aerospace, and electronics.

Benefit #2: Build resilient operations

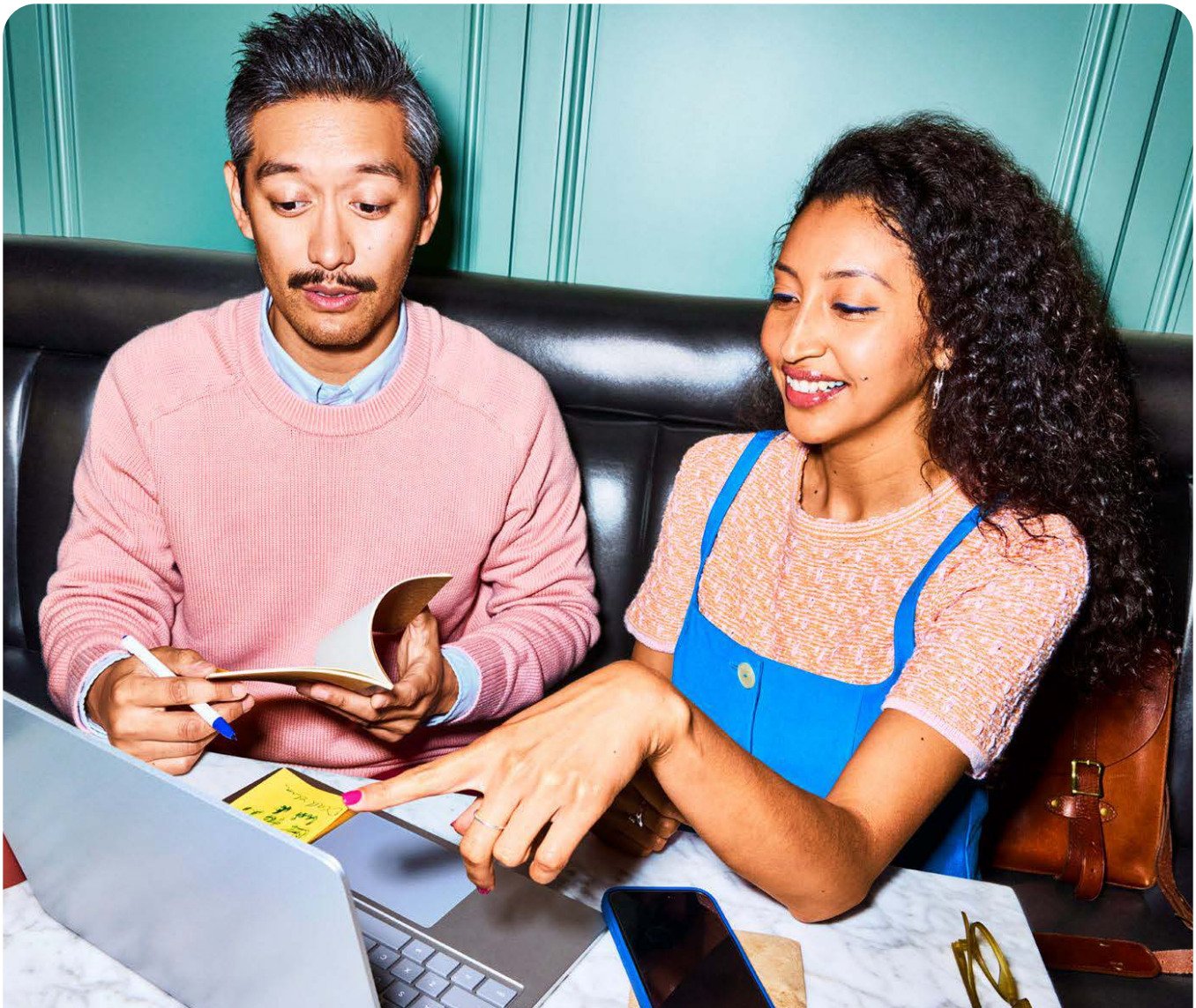
Operating across time zones has performance and productivity gains. “Follow-the-sun” teams can keep production lines running 24/7. That means a production issue flagged late in Detroit can be quickly addressed by teams in Osaka, keeping output flowing and innovation moving without delays.

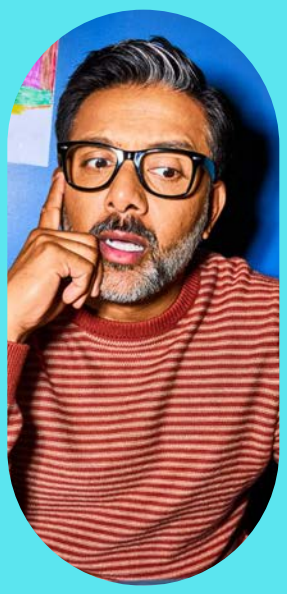
Benefit #3: Accelerate economic efficiency

The financial case for global hiring is clear: Save on salaries and reduce turnover costs.

Hiring a senior automation engineer in the U.S. costs about USD 120,000. Hiring the same role in Warsaw is USD 50,000–70,000.

Also, replacing one skilled frontline worker costs USD 10,000–40,000. Global hiring reduces turnover by providing better talent matches and skills alignment. These direct savings can fund additional tech investment and fuel growth.





Chapter 3:

Your three-step global hiring roadmap

Global hiring doesn't have to be overwhelming. The most successful manufacturers take a phased approach, starting small, learning fast, and building from there.

Step 1: Start small with strategic roles

Begin with noncritical, high-impact roles that can be managed remotely and offer quick wins. Focus on support functions that don't directly affect production but allow you to test global workflows and compliance processes.

Ideal starter roles include:

- Compliance and regulatory specialists
- Technical writing and documentation
- Training development and delivery
- Data analysis and reporting

These roles require minimal physical presence, are process-oriented, and enable your team to get comfortable with cross-border collaboration.

Step 2: Expand to core engineering and R&D functions

Once the foundation is solid, expand global hiring to technical functions that benefit from follow-the-sun productivity and specialized skills. This is where you'll see clear business value: faster product cycles, better problem-solving, and stronger innovation.

Ideal starter roles include:

- CAD and design engineering
- Technical project management
- R&D and product development
- Process optimization

Step 3: Integrate with operations for long-term scale

After your teams are comfortable and systems are proven, scale into production-linked roles and integrate global collaboration into core operations. This is where global hiring becomes a true competitive differentiator.

Ideal starter roles include:

- Manufacturing engineering support
- Quality control using IoT and digital twins
- Global supply chain coordination
- Regional market entry and customer support

Remember to formalize your approach to risk

As you scale, formalizing how you manage global workforce risks is essential.

Start by putting strong IP and data protection measures in place. This includes using secure tools and limiting access to sensitive technical documentation.

Work with global HR and legal partners to ensure compliance with local labor laws. Avoid missteps in contracts, benefits, and worker classification.

And be intentional about cultural integration. Align global teams through shared KPIs, asynchronous communication practices, and localized onboarding to reinforce your factory-floor values. These foundational efforts will help your global workforce operate with cohesion and share a sense of purpose.

Chapter 4:

Real-world success story

Boston Dynamics: From one hire to global leadership

Boston Dynamics faced a challenge that many manufacturers know intimately. The growing demand for their Spot and Stretch robots required specialized field engineers, sales teams, and support staff across multiple countries. They quickly realized that setting up legal entities in each location would take months and cost millions in legal and administrative fees.

Instead, Boston Dynamics used G-P EOR to hire 24+ professionals across Canada, Denmark, U.K., Netherlands, and Germany in a fraction of the time and cost. These teams now provide customer support worldwide while offering specialized skill sets that weren't available in domestic markets.

“If we didn’t have G-P, we’d simply not be as competitive as we are today," Eduardo Ramos, Senior Total Rewards Analyst at Boston Dynamics.

Boston Dynamics maintains their position as a global leader in mobile robotics. And their global hiring strategy serves as a cornerstone of this success.

Read the full Boston Dynamics success story.

Boston Dynamics

Future outlook

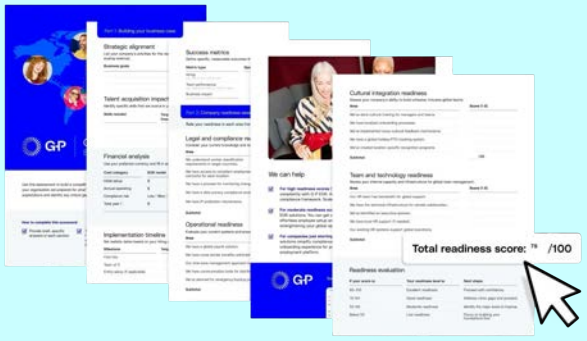
Manufacturing output continues to rise steadily. Deloitte reports that 98% of manufacturers worldwide have launched digital transformation initiatives and dedicate 30% of operating budgets to smart technologies like AI, cloud, and 5G.

Meanwhile, global investment in factory-scale clean-energy technologies topped USD 200B in 2023, growing by over 70% from the year before.

But this growth comes with a major constraint: talent. The global semiconductor sector alone will need over a million skilled workers by 2030, with similar shortages emerging across engineering, automation, and production roles.

The takeaway is clear: Companies that don't act now will struggle to keep up. Luckily, the tools, technologies, and talent are already out there. You just have to know how to access them.

Next steps: Download the global hiring readiness scorecard to assess where your company stands and how to move forward.



Transform your manufacturing company

A successful global hiring strategy is built on the combined efforts of HR, finance, and legal teams working together. From recruitment frameworks to financial planning and compliance guidance, these resources will help you build a complete and effective hiring strategy.

If you're an HR leader: Download the **HR Leader's Global Hiring Toolkit** for business case templates, hiring model comparisons, and step-by-step implementation guidance. Get frameworks for international recruitment and compliance.

If you're a finance executive: Download the **Finance Leader's Global Hiring Guide** for cost analysis and implementation timelines. Build accurate budgets and manage financial risk.

If you're a legal/compliance professional: Download the **Legal Leader's Global Hiring Guide** for risk assessment frameworks and regulatory guidance. Navigate compliance and minimize legal risk.