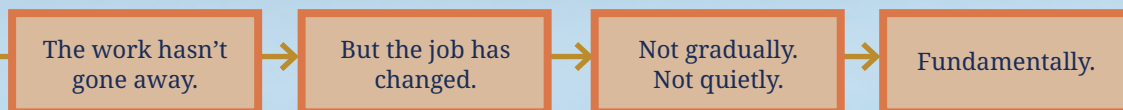


The Job Has Changed. Our Messaging Hasn't.

Modern manufacturing careers evolved.
Industry messaging still lags behind.

Spend any time around a modern production floor—whether it's beverage manufacturing, packaging, or print—and one thing becomes clear quickly:



And yet, the way we talk about these roles hasn't kept up.

WE'RE STILL SELLING YESTERDAY'S JOB

For years, we've described roles in our industry using language that no longer reflects reality.

Operator. Pressman. Machine runner.

Those words suggest repetition. Task-based work. Limited scope.

But that's not what the job is anymore.

Today's roles are increasingly defined by:

- Systematic thinking
- Troubleshooting and diagnostics
- Digital tools and automation
- Data awareness and decision-making

In one recent manufacturing discussion with high school students, a speaker put it simply: what used to require three people—mechanical, electrical, and controls—now requires one multi-skilled technician.

That shift is already happening across industries. Including ours.

THE REAL GAP ISN'T LABOR—IT'S ALIGNMENT

We talk often about the “labor shortage.”

And yes, there are open roles. A lot of them.

But the deeper issue is this:

The expectations of the role have evolved faster than our pipeline—and our messaging.

Students are still being introduced to an outdated version of the work.

Schools are often limited in how much modern equipment and workflow they can expose.

Employers, in many cases, are still describing roles the way they did 10 or 15 years ago.

That disconnect matters.

Because when the message doesn't match the moment, people opt out before they ever step in.

AUTOMATION ISN'T REPLACING PEOPLE—IT'S RAISING THE BAR

There's still a persistent narrative that automation and AI are eliminating jobs.

That's not what's happening on the floor.

What's actually happening is this:

- Repetitive, manual tasks are being reduced
- Throughput is increasing
- Systems are becoming more complex

Which means the value of the role shifts.

Less time doing.

More time understanding.

Less pushing product down a line.

More maintaining, optimizing, and diagnosing the system that runs it.

Or, as one technician framed it:

If the robot is moving the product, someone still has to know how—and why—it works.

That someone is the future workforce.

THIS IS A THINKING CAREER

One of the most important shifts—one we don't talk about enough—is this:

These roles now require critical thinking.

Not just following a process, but understanding it.

Not just identifying that something is broken, but explaining why—and what needs to happen next.

That's a very different value proposition than "hands-on work."

It's also a much stronger one.

Because it positions these careers not as a fallback, but as a path for people who want to engage, solve problems, and continuously improve.

THE PIPELINE EXISTS. IT NEEDS A CLEARER BRIDGE.

Programs like apprenticeship models are starting to close this gap in a meaningful way.

They offer:

- Real-world experience
- Structured learning
- Immediate income ("earn while you learn")
- A direct connection between education and industry

But their impact depends on how clearly we position them.

If we describe them as training programs, we undersell them.

If we frame them as a direct pathway into a modern, evolving career, we start to align expectations with reality.

WE DON'T NEED TO REINVENT THE INDUSTRY. WE NEED TO REFRAME IT.

The opportunity in front of us isn't small.

We have:

- A generation of experienced professionals nearing retirement
- Increasing technical complexity across operations
- A growing need for adaptable, multi-skilled talent

And at the same time:

- A generation of students looking for stability, relevance, and opportunity

The gap between those two groups is not capability.

It's clarity.

SIGNATURE

EVOLVING YOUR MESSAGING AROUND WORKFORCE

THE ROLE HAS EVOLVED. HAS YOUR MESSAGING?

A Practical Guide to Modernizing Workforce Messaging

Production environments have changed dramatically over the last decade. Automation, workflow software, robotics, digital controls, data analytics, and AI-assisted tools are increasingly common across manufacturing, print, and packaging operations. Yet many recruiting materials, job postings, and career conversations still describe these roles as if nothing has changed.

Traditional Language	Modernized Language
Press Operator Runs printing equipment Performs quality checks Machine Operator Works on production line Entry-Level Position	Production Technology Specialist Operates and optimizes automated production systems Uses data and quality systems to ensure consistent output Manufacturing Technician Monitors workflows, equipment performance, and production efficiency Career Pathway Opportunity with Training and Advancement

Use the questions below to evaluate and strengthen how your organization communicates career opportunities.

1. Audit Your Workforce Messaging

Most organizations begin by looking at job titles. That's a good start, but titles are only one piece of the story.

Review your:

- Job postings
- Careers page
- Recruiting brochures
- School outreach materials
- Social media recruiting posts
- Internal career pathway documents

Ask yourself:

- Does our language accurately describe the work being performed today?
- Would a student, career changer, or prospective employee understand what makes this role interesting?
- Are we communicating technical skill, problem-solving, and growth?

2. Move Beyond Task-Based Descriptions

Many job descriptions focus almost entirely on tasks. Modern candidates often want to understand:

- What problems will I solve?
- What technology will I use?
- What skills will I develop?
- How will I grow?

Instead of:

"Operates production equipment and maintains quality standards."

Consider:

"Monitors automated production systems, troubleshoots workflow issues, and works with advanced equipment to"

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PUT THIS THINKING INTO PRACTICE

Modernizing Job Messaging

Ready to rethink how your company presents production careers? This practical guide helps employers update job titles and descriptions to better reflect the technology, problem-solving and career potential behind today's print roles.

Use the guide to:

- Identify language that may be limiting your candidate pool
- Describe roles in ways candidates outside print can understand
- Build stronger, more current job descriptions

Access the Guide >