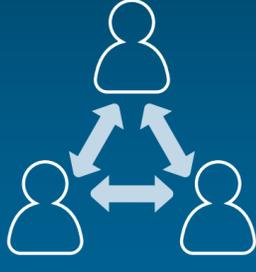




8 Key Drivers of The Job Quality Toolkit

The Job Quality Toolkit provides practical guidance on eight key drivers that turn a routine occupation into a high-quality job – one where your employee feels respected, valued, and important to your company’s success. The toolkit is rooted in the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Baldrige Excellence Framework.



Recruitment & Hiring

Actively recruit a diverse pool of applicants. Implement skills-based hiring that only requires the education, credentials, and experience needed to do the job. Be intentional about onboarding and retaining workers.

How the MEP National Network™ Applies This Driver

Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center (VMEC) client Carris Reels is a 100% employee-owned manufacturer of custom solutions for the wire and cable industry.

VMEC helped Carris **create an inclusive work environment, attract and train employees, and build trust and accountability** through the implementation of **TWI Job Relations Training**, which shows supervisors how to build positive relationships by emphasizing teamwork, fair treatment, constructive feedback, and positive recognition, as well as keeping workers continually informed.



Benefits

Seek workers’ input on needed and desired benefits, such as paid leave, health insurance, and a retirement plan. Provide them and encourage their use.

How the MEP National Network™ Applies This Driver

Kansas Manufacturing Solutions client Smith and Loveless, Inc. specializes in pre-engineered water and wastewater treatment and pumping systems.

Kansas Manufacturing Solutions provided Smith and Loveless with the **strategic guidance** the company needed for a range of **human resource challenges**, such as developing attractive **benefits packages**, that included **paid time off and vacation policies**; keeping up with legal policies; and creating an **employee handbook** that clearly defined this essential information.



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Accessibility (DEIA)

Make equal opportunity a core value and practiced norm. Foster systems where all workers feel respected and empowered in the workplace. Identify and remove systemic barriers to DEIA.

How the MEP National Network™ Applies This Driver

Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC) client Prater Industries engineers and manufactures custom grinding and milling equipment.

IMEC helped Prater find an innovative solution for fulfilling vital but repetitive tasks by aligning with Autism Workforce, which places autistic individuals in appropriate jobs, and working with them to create a **neurodiverse work environment** in which their valued new employees would feel comfortable.



Empowerment & Representation

Ensure that workers have a meaningful voice, without fear of retaliation. Enable workers to contribute to decisions about their work, how it is performed, and organizational direction.

How the MEP National Network™ Applies This Driver

Ohio Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Ohio MEP) client Atlas Roofing Corporation creates high quality roofing and construction materials.

Ohio MEP helped Atlas Roofing adopt a continuous improvement strategy by assisting its plant manager to **obtain employee buy-in, request their input**, detail how important their contributions were, and **open up communications** – starting an **ongoing dialogue** that welcomes suggestions and has **positive impact on employee morale** and the bottom line.



Job Security & Working Conditions

Ensure a safe, healthy, and accessible workplace and offer job security. Minimize temporary or contractor labor solutions, using such workers mainly to adjust for short-term needs. Assess and schedule hours that are adequate and predictable.

How the MEP National Network™ Applies This Driver

Nevada Industry Excellence (NVIE) client U.S. Ordnance builds military small arms and NATO-sanctioned weapon systems.

NVIE helped U.S. Ordnance address company-identified **potentially unsafe working conditions** caused by the need for employees to handle 70 lb. bars in tight spaces while off-balance, and **improve processes** by bringing in a Certified Energy Manager to perform an audit on the production facility. Helped the company submit applications for grants and incentives for implementing **energy efficient projects**, which resulted in funds awarded that allowed for **improved working conditions** that **increased morale** while producing savings in energy usage and maintenance costs.



Organizational Culture

Demonstrate through explicit behaviors and norms of leadership that all workers belong, are valued, and contribute meaningfully to the organization. Assess workers’ engagement and feelings of respect.

How the MEP National Network™ Applies This Driver

TechHelp Manufacturing Specialists client Western Trailers manufacturers flatbeds and other trailers.

TechHelp helped Western Trailers **hire and retain qualified production staff** to meet competitive production rates by providing tailored lean-based first line supervisor and lean leadership training to focus on lean standard work, leadership development, communication techniques, and interpersonal skills; this training helped employees learn to **coach** and **nurture “respect for people”** in a manufacturing culture as a means of getting results.



Pay

Provide an equitable living wage to all workers and ensure fair compensation practices.

How the MEP National Network™ Applies This Driver

Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC) client Hi-Country Snack Foods produces traditional-recipe high quality meat snacks.

MMEC helped Hi-Country increase **employee compensation, benefits, and job skills** in order to attract and retain its workforce by implementing a value stream mapping effort that highlighted **energy efficiency improvements**, training staff in lean principles of **waste reduction, standardizing work to improve packaging efficiency, and pursuing automation** – all of which resulted in the productivity and skill gains needed to support **wage increases**.



Skill & Career Advancement

Provide opportunities and tools for workers’ self-realization and advancement in their current jobs, within the organization, and outside it.

How the MEP National Network™ Applies This Driver

Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (OMEP) client KCR Manufacturing designs and manufactures wildland firefighting equipment for forestry professionals around the world.

OMEP helped KCR develop, create, and implement a **mentorship program** and update **training modules with remote access** to generate **structured on-the-job training** with **defined development pathways**, less repetitive work, and the ability to **integrate new workers and upgrade incumbents**.

Your local MEP Center can help your company become an employer of choice. If you want assistance in implementing the principles outlined here, visit www.nist.gov/mep/centers.



Sources: <https://www.nist.gov/mep/successstories/2022/70-year-old-vermont-complying-reels-employee-recruitment-and-retention>; <https://www.nist.gov/mep/successstories/2021/resource-human-resources>; <https://www.nist.gov/mep/successstories/2019/custom-grinding-and-milling-manufacturer-and-its-customers-reap-benefits>; <https://www.nist.gov/mep/successstories/2021/people-power-your-business-building-buy-factory-floor>; <https://www.nist.gov/mep/successstories/2018/us-ordnance-rural-energy-america-program-audit-earns-259418-energy-efficient>; <https://www.nist.gov/mep/successstories/2022/leadership-training-enhances-retains-workforce>; <https://www.nist.gov/mep/successstories/2022/taking-bigger-bite-out-snack-food-market-montana-manufacturer-and-mmec>; <https://www.nist.gov/mep/successstories/2018/firefighting-equipment-manufacturer-develops-structured-job-training-program>.