

# 2018 National Manufacturing Outlook and Insights



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Results from [Leading Edge Alliance's](#) annual manufacturing outlook survey are in, and they indicate that manufacturers have increased optimism, are planning for potential, and seizing opportunity in 2018.

More than 450 manufacturing executives participated in the survey, which includes the opinions of respondents who produce industrial/machining, transportation/automotive, construction, food and beverage, and other products.

Survey results for 2018 include:

- 81% of manufacturers believe their revenue will increase in 2018, with 72% eyeing organic growth in the U.S. as their primary opportunity to increase sales.
- Manufacturers are more optimistic about the regional and national economy than the global economy, yet notably the optimism rating for all three has increased by more than 10 points since the 2017 outlook.
- 62% of manufacturers expect their sectors to grow, more than doubling the 2017 outlook; food and beverage and construction materials cite the highest optimism for sector growth.
- Manufacturers' top three priorities are growing sales, cutting costs, and addressing the talent gap.
- As in past years, labor remains a significant challenge. More than half of survey participants cited the labor shortage as the greatest risk or barrier to growth, and more than half of manufacturers expect to increase hiring.
- Respondents plan to utilize technology to reduce risks and build a competitive advantage; 75% said that they will investigate/prioritize cybersecurity in 2018, and 50% will investigate/prioritize Big Data/ERP/IoT.