Written by Andy Gravitt, Senior Vice President, Industry Business, Schneider Electric
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Increasingly, the industrial sector faces a shortage of skilled workers that's a result of two simultaneous trends: a disproportionate number of aging workers nearing retirement, and a declining pool of college graduates equipped with the skills to maintain, progress and innovate the industry. This shortage will have a profound effect on businesses seeking candidates and on the national economy, which is why we must combine industry programs with public-private educational partnerships to correct the situation.

To overcome the aging worker dilemma—*the "Silver Tsunami"*—companies must implement concerted efforts to retain knowledge and mentor new employees through formal information-management systems. This ensures that employers retain skills within the organization and provides a framework to equip new employees with the expertise they need.

Advanced education is more important than ever in the industrial sector. Workforce shortages are most closely aligned with positions requiring highly technical skills. Industrial automation, control, software/computer literacy, process management and energy efficiency are all critical capabilities for new workers. The focus on lean manufacturing, energy-constrained operations and sustainability make many of the growing opportunities in manufacturing part of the "lean-and-green collar" workforce.

Industry can't do this alone. Public-private partnerships are essential to successfully train the next generation. The Obama Administration's Framework for Revitalizing Manufacturing recognizes this, and we must actively partner with and inform training programs at colleges to ensure new workers can compete in the evolving economy.

Additionally, in conjunction with the Automation Federation and the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), we actively support creation and evolution of the automation competency model. This

model helps define core roles and competencies required for success in the field and can guide and define 2- and 4-year technical curricula to ensure graduates succeed in the industrial automation profession.

At Schneider Electric, we believe our long-term viability relies on implementing knowledge-transfer processes in areas critical to our success. Historically, we would replace staff after other workers retired. Now though, we hire new staff months prior to expected retirements and incorporate job shadowing and mentoring to support retention and knowledge transfer. Similarly, managers follow a structured on-boarding process with new employees.

Our company creates highly skilled positions, so developing new sources of talent is crucial. Like many manufacturers, we focus on university relationships—*hiring interns, offering co-ops and defining career tracks to entice graduates into manufacturing.*
We sponsor test and lab environments on campuses and local competitions to demonstrate the opportunities Schneider Electric offers. This starts in high school: We support Dream It, Do It to show young students the types of opportunities available to them in the skilled trades.

For more advanced students, we've partnered with the Automation Federation and the USDOL's Employment and Training Administration to develop a comprehensive competency model for careers in automation, giving structure and clear growth paths to careers in industrial process fields. Moreover, we partner with individual universities to define our expectations for present and future workers—*and help those institutions optimize curricula for tomorrow's engineers.*

As a global energy-management specialist, we also want our customers to be energy literate. Our online "Energy University" gives manufacturers a deeper dive into plant-related efficiency topics, from industrial insulation to waste-heat recovery. The more our customers understand the benefits of energy management, the more opportunities we have to deploy efficient solutions across the industry. **MT**

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