

Below you will find our comments. We are a solution provider in the distribution and manufacturing industry for almost 30 years. This is what we see as an outsider looking in at the needs of companies so we continue to compete and keep goods “made in America”. Hope they help.

1. What are the key problems facing small U.S. manufacturers?
 1. Lack of skilled workers understanding the manufacturing trade and basic business concepts
 2. Lack of the right technology solutions adaption by small manufacturers
2. What advanced manufacturing technologies are needed to help manufacturers grow and be competitive in the marketplace?
 1. Adequate Network infrastructure inside the business to support information sharing
 2. Sales and pipeline software management
 3. Manufacturing Software interfaced to back office accounting creating easy quote to cash transaction tracking – so many manufacturers are duplicating information inside multiple software as well as tools such as excel the cost is staggering if they would stop to calculate it
 4. The ability to forecast demands for inventory stock levels and the scheduling of delivery dates required from vendors and the shipment dates to customers
 5. The ability to generate good financial statements and supporting documents for lines of banking credit
 6. The knowledge of where the business stands financially so decisions can be based on this information
3. What technologies and business models are important to manufacturers as they choose and participate in supply chains?
 1. EDI technology
 2. Purchase order, RMA and Shipping technology to track and manage their supply chain
 3. Both of these need to be interfaced with the back office accounting as well.
4. What business services are needed by manufacturers and/or MEP centers to take full advantage of advanced manufacturing technologies?
 1. Software consultants that understand business, accounting and manufacturing to recommend and implement the correct solutions one business at a time and educate the users on how to manage information generated by these systems
5. Are there any other critical issues that NIST MEP should consider in its strategic planning?
 1. Training and workshops on the various solutions available and which business model the solution is best suited for
 2. Education to the business owners on best practices for manufacturing software