

In October 2016, NCMEP conducted a survey on challenges facing manufacturers in NC in the next few years, and here are some of the findings that might be relevant to the 4 areas mentioned:

- Innovation and new product development was important. Fifty percent of respondents agreed that the lack of a new product development/innovation process was a serious challenge; leadership transition, managing supply chain relationships and cybersecurity threats were also seen as serious challenges by about 30 percent of respondents.
- Understanding changing market demographics was listed as a major challenge by 45 percent of the respondents, and 44 percent responded that technology changes were a challenge.
- More than 65 percent of respondents answered that they agreed or strongly agreed that the inability to find skilled hourly workers and technical workers was a serious problem. Thirty-six percent noted that impending retirements was a major issue.
- New technology adoption appeared to be less pervasive for manufacturers. When asked about cybersecurity threats, data analysis, industrial automation, 3D CAD modeling, process improvement software, additive manufacturing/3D printing and high performance materials, 45 percent of respondents indicated they had not considered these options.
- Seventy-seven percent of respondents had either implemented or were in the process of implementing search-engine optimization, social media, and email marketing. Implementing CRM systems seemed to lag a bit; 51 percent were in the process of implementing a CRM system, but 17 percent said they had not considered a CRM system.

Please let me know if you have questions or need further clarification!

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