



How to manufacture jobs

A Baltimore factory owner, fresh back from Asia, offers six steps to revive America's industrial economy

By Drew Greenblatt

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More than 20 percent of [my Baltimore factory's sales are exports](#), and we want more. We ship to 35 countries; however, that is not good enough. Developing new markets to sell our [sheet metal fabrications](#), [wire baskets](#), and [wire forms](#) to new markets will grow jobs in Baltimore and strengthen my company's base.

That's why I accepted an invitation from Gov. Martin O'Malley to accompany him and other [Maryland officials and business leaders to Asia in June](#). This trip was a startling eye opener for me. I came home shocked with how advanced our economic rivals are.

My major observation is that we have some very tough, smart, aggressive competition. What does that mean to you and me? Our country needs to change its attitudes and policies, or we are going to be passed by. We have to compete with smart, clever, forward-thinking countries that are growth hunters. Our policies need to hit a reset button, so they encourage aggressive growth, so we can remain competitive, and so we can continue to provide a good living for our citizens.

Despite formidable Asian competition, we have to remember what is good in the USA. Our manufacturers pay \$73,000/year on average, plus rich benefits — we need even more of these jobs. Intellectual property is our secret sauce; we can out-innovate anyone, anywhere. And we still have the best political system: we settle disputes peacefully and rationally. China and Vietnam are still Communist dictatorships.

Here is what I propose that our politicians in Washington do to leverage those advantages and help our manufacturers and other businesses grow:

- Accelerate the patent process for our inventors by streamlining patent application-granting to complete the work in 30 days (not one year or more).

- Welcome more inventors. Foreign engineering/scientific students come to our outstanding universities like Johns Hopkins, obtain the world-class education available here, and then go home. Why? Because we do not grant enough visas for them to remain here, where they want to settle. We should reverse this policy, encourage them to stay, and give them a visa with their new diploma so they create their new ideas here in the USA.

- Lower our corporate tax rates. Canada levies half our corporate income tax rate, and the health insurance costs are paid by the government. Japan is the only large country with a higher corporate income tax rate than ours, and they are going to change that within months. If we don't lower American corporate income tax rates, companies will be encouraged to leave for lower-tax countries overseas.

- Eliminate business' portion of the payroll tax, the matching part of the Social Security Tax. Why do we tax what is good — hiring Americans? Without this tax, every American worker would cost the employer 8 percent less, immediately, so more will be hired.

Halt new regulations. Our problem is that we don't have enough jobs so let's stop the regulations that stifle hiring. Our tax code has 8 million words. That gives jobs to accountants and lawyers, not welders and robot-drivers. We need to simplify.

- Ratify the three free trade agreements (South Korea, Panama, Colombia) that have been languishing in the Senate for years. These treaties will lower the tariffs on American-made goods so American manufacturers can sell more overseas.

It is critical that we enact policies like these, policies that enhance our economic wellbeing. We have high unemployment and sluggish growth in the economy. Adopting these six points can lead to more people working and more factories humming. What are our politicians waiting for? Do they accept the idea of us going off into the sunset? I don't. I want action now. Do you?

[Drew Greenblatt is president of Marlin Steel, a Baltimore-based manufacturer. He is on the executive board of the National Association of Manufacturers and is chairman of the Regional Manufacturing Institute.](#)

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