Turning the corner? Survey Results point to some glimmers of hope

Manufacturing in Canada continues to be hit hard by the COVID-19 crisis, however stats from our recent survey indicate a corner may have been turned.

-Number of employees on layoff dropped dramatically this week

- Employees off on quarantine or isolation also dropped;

“This is first solid piece of evidence that the worst may be behind us in terms of impact on the essential workplaces of manufacturing,” says Shelley Fellows… “ While the number of workplaces that have reduced their operations to near zero is still high, we have plateaued. The proportion of companies that are almost fully operational has remained consistent each week – another positive sign.”

The results are from the fourth week of surveys from the Canadian Association of Moldmakers (CAMM) & Automate Canada.

“We know the survey info is paying dividends as it is helping us better understand how to help our members, says CAMM Board Chair Mike Bilton. “We are also getting a read on the pulse of this industry in pretty much real time. “

Fellows says the data is key to helping both boards advocate for what is needed both now and in the long term.

When asked about the future, manufacturers continue to be most concerned by the negative impact on cash flow this crisis is having along with the mental & physical well-being of their employees. Those are consistently among the top five concerns cited in the surveys to date, which represent primarily the mold, tool & die industry as well as industrial automation sector. CAMM and Automate Canada have been assisted in the distribution of each week’ survey by the Canadian Tooling & Machining Association (CTMA).

In order to address the mental health implications of this survey, a well attended webinar was held on April 15 with the Windsor branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association. Tools & resources to positively impact workplace mental health were explained, with an eye to the unique needs of the manufacturing sector.

CAMM and Automate Canada have also launched a bi-weekly “deep dive” study into the cash flow concerns expressed in the surveys. Results for the first report will be released next week.

FACT SHEET

Responses this week were primarily from the Southwestern Ontario region, which has a significant manufacturing, moldmaking and industrial automation cluster.

Key Points:

* 64% of respondents represent Mold Tool or Die companies
* 51 manufacturing workplaces reported having no employees on quarantine, up from 32 in week 3.
* 43 Workplaces, or 46% of our respondents, laid off no workers this week. In another positive trend, this increased from last week, where 33% of our respondents had not laid anyone off.
* Just under 1/5th have decided to offer some kind of premium to keep employees working.
* this week we’re seeing more project cancellations and a slowing of delays and new programs compared to prior weeks.
* For the past 4 weeks, we’ve seen that while cash flow worries are still top of mind, employee mental & physical health still keep our manufacturers up at night, along with cancellation of projects and reduced demand.
* The increases we’ve seen in workplace shutdowns have slowed - a positive development this week. 30% of our respondents are at over 90% of full operations. The number of workplaces that are completely (or almost completely) shut down remained fairly consistent this week at 17%.
* Shutdowns were due primarily to employee absences, loss of work and health & safety concerns.

**What Next?**

A COVID-19 Impact survey from CAMM and Automate Canada will go out weekly based on the feedback we are receiving. The questionnaire for the Financial Study was released on April 16th.

Our surveys will be released each week for the next several weeks in order to gather data on the impact COVID-19 is having on the Canadian manufacturing sector.

***CAMM is a not-for-profit industry driven association focusing on the Canadian mold making sector of Canada. Automate Canada is a not-for-profit industry driven association focusing on the industrial automation and advanced manufacturing technology sectors of Canada. Both are based in Windsor, Ontario and are affiliated with the Auto Parts Manufacturers Association (APMA) in Canada and Automation Alley in Michigan, USA.***

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