



Anxiety and Financial Concerns: “We Hear You” “We are taking action”

For Immediate Release:

Windsor ON- The joint forces of CMM and Automate Canada are taking immediate action in response to their most recent two surveys

Employee anxiety was listed as the number one problem by survey respondents to a question on what is the biggest impact on their Canadian manufacturing business to date. Financial concerns and declining sales were a close second to anxiety & protection of employees.

“We asked. We listened and now we are jumping in to take immediate action,” says Mike Bilton, Board Chair of CMM. “Fear is about not knowing so we are ready to support our industry and the workers who are so vital to stepping up to help out our healthcare workers as well.”

Stats on Employee Anxiety increased so sharply that the Canadian Association of Mold Makers (CMM) and Automate Canada reached out to the local Canadian Mental Health Association branch and decided to collaborate on a webinar to deliver targeted information to Human Resources staff, managers and company owners.

“We knew this issue needed to be addressed immediately,” said Shelley Fellows, of Automate Canada, who has been assisting on analysing the data from surveys.

“The red flag was raised when we saw 70 of our 90 respondents this week listed “employee anxiety” as a concern.”

Bilton says their surveys are not just an exercise in asking questions. “We are in action mode for sure. We have been juggling many things to work quickly to assist our members as well as jump in to help with the overall manufacturing industry.”

An info sheet is attached with further info on action items also underway to address other issues that emerged from the survey data, like financial concerns and challenges in stepping up to assist with medical equipment manufacturing.

“We are ready to step up to help,” says Kim Willis, CMHA-WECB Direction, Communications and Mental Health Promotion. “We launched our On The Front Lines campaign earlier in March before this crisis hit – and we certainly are ready and willing to help immediately. We know all the other concerns raised in the survey contribute to anxiety. And kudos these organizations for prioritizing this need and reaching out to us.”



CMHA-WECB has waived the fees for this webinar to ensure this very urgent issue is addressed during this time of crisis.

“Our mandate is always to assist in a time of need. Our Sole Focus Project campaign has allowed us to have these building blocks in places thanks to our volunteers and our donors and sponsors. We are now ready to jump in to help these two amazing organizations.

Clearly their members are lucky to have people representing them and taking action on issues of mental health, which we know is so closely tied to physical health.”

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See Attached Info Sheet on other planned actions



Action Plan:

Two dominant themes emerged from the Week 2 Survey: Personnel and Finances

92% of our respondents have had some slowing of their operations, ranging from small reductions to full shutdowns.

AND, other workplaces have had no or minimal impact on their employees from the COVID-19 crisis, with full operations, no layoffs, new orders coming in and no personnel off work due to quarantine requirements.

Other actions:

Thursday, April 16: joining with Automotive Parts Manufacturers Association (APMA) to hold a webinar with detailed information on key government supports and programs of relevance to manufacturing (like the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy program)

Joint task force formed: comprised of CFO's and key leadership from our members, as well as public accounting and banking, to understand the nuances and details of the financial crisis facing our members.

Coordinate with regional, provincial and federal efforts: Assist the 3/4 of survey respondents who want to help with medical equipment manufacturing leading to product and production, Identify, facilitate and support medical equipment manufacturing.

26% of respondents had increased or expanded their products and services for medical equipment manufacturing and in several cases, have actually produced medical equipment or products.

Overall Information:

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

- Almost 65% of respondents were companies under 50 employees in size
- One quarter of workplaces still have no impact from COVID-19 on the workplace
- Layoffs are escalating, with almost 1,100 employees laid off in the past seven days
- 12% of our workplaces are actually hiring, likely tied to the 26% who have added or expanded their products and services for medical equipment manufacturing
- the mental & physical health of their workforces are having a significant impact on their businesses as is the rapid decline in sales as it becomes increasingly difficult to fulfill current orders and obtain new work
- Anticipated challenges in coming weeks are cash flow, health and safety and employee morale, with reduced demand and the overall decline in our economies emerging this week as concerns
- Of the 26% of companies who have expanded or added product or services for medical equipment manufacturing, they most commonly offered production tooling



- 8% of respondents have fully or almost fully shutdown their operations; the most common reasons were lack of personnel and slowing orders, followed by supply chain shut downs

What Next?

A survey from CAMM and Automate Canada will go out weekly based on the feedback we are receiving.

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.

“ Our goal is to inform and take action,” say CAMM Board chair Mike Bilton. “We are using these results to develop programs and help advocate for support for an industry deemed essential, as well as pivot to help with any pending crisis in medical equipment.”

Shelley Fellows, chair of Automate Canada says she is proud to work alongside a team of people who meet each morning at 7:30 a.m. and are willing to not just talk but take action.

“We have industry and non-industry people at the table. That is our greatest strength – the team work and collaboration. And we have some top notch organizations willing to share resources. We are definitely stronger together.”

Fellows says the surveys identify issues early. “We are developing programs to address the big concerns of financial stability and also know we must deal with employee stress & anxiety immediately..”

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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