

LIBBY LIVINGS- Partnership's story-- what kind of partner are you? Please enter in the name of your organization in the chat box window on the lower right screen. If you will go to the chat box, and indicate all participants, and enter in what kind of partner are you and your name. We'd love to see who you are.

I think we have Alamance Community College. Welcome, Karen Hughes and participants. Looking forward to seeing whom else we have out there.

Again, what kind of partner are you-- education, employer, workforce development, other? If it's education, we have some technical colleges, Department of Labor. Hello, Heidi, good to have you back.

Workforce Development Boards-- looks like we're [AUDIO OUT] great start today. I also see a state Department of Education. It's going to be a great conversation.

Today's agenda-- we're going to have a welcome and introduction. We're going to talk briefly about why are we here. We're going to introduce our pair of presenters and dive into our discussion.

And as always, plenty of opportunity for Q&A. And I can see, we're going to have a tremendous audience here, with representatives across all-- all areas of partnerships. The two are welcome and introductions.

As always, I am so honored to introduce Sharon Miller, Director of the Division of Academic and Technical Education. She is with the US Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. She's here to welcome each of you and share a little bit about the project. Sharon?

SHARON MILLER: Great, thank you for joining us for the second of four peer-to-peer conversations. This one is entitled "Telling Your Partnership's Story." Last week, we had an informative conversation with leaders in Peoria, who led our discussion on vertical integration. That is a process for reaching down and engaging younger students.

We are grateful to everyone who will engage in that useful discussion. Today, we will talk about how to represent what we are doing, that is telling our stories. Often, as practitioners, we are so busy making things work that we may fail to effectively share information about what

we are doing, especially to key stakeholders that we rely on to support and scale up our efforts.

In this second of four peer-to-peer conversations, we will share best practices for telling our stories from those who have mastered it. With that, let me turn things right over to our moderator, Libby Livings-Eassa. You're up, Libby.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Thank you, Sharon. We'd also like to say hello to another one of our friends from OCTAE. We have Greg Henschel, who is also here with us from the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. Welcome, Greg. And I am here--

GREG HENSCHEL:

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Oh, I'm sorry, Greg.

GREG HENSCHEL: Oh, no, thanks. All right, nothing more, thanks.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Well, we're delighted to have you with us. We always appreciate having our supporters from OCTAE with us on conversations such as today. So I am Libby Livings-Eassa. I am your moderator for today's conversations.

And about this conversational approach and your participation, as your moderator, I'm going to introduce and define each one of the topics. Our conversation today will be driven by subtopics and our co-presenters that I'll introduce [INAUDIBLE].

We want to reiterate-- this is a conversation. We hope you will capitalize on the opportunity to engage and to freely inquire. Like our peers for today, you are all colleagues that have done this work together and have traveled this road. So this is your official invitation to participate, engage, and network today.

Your participation will be facilitated via the chat function, as we've already demonstrated. So once again, where are you? Let's go to that chat window again, and you'll enter your location out so that we can see the vast representation that we have across the nation. I think already we've got some all the way from Polk State College, and I'm guessing that that is in the state of Florida, from Wisconsin to Memphis, DC, North Carolina.

We may have all 50 states covered today. And this is going to be a tremendous opportunity. I'm absolutely thrilled. Let's talk a little bit about why are we here.

We'll once again continue our conversations, as Sharon is our [AUDIO OUT] today. And this is the second of conversations in the "Strengthening Partnerships for the Manufacturing Workforce" series. Again, these topics today have surfaced after we had month-long conversations across the nation with experts, manufacturing partnership representatives, and their partners from industry, education, and state and local governments. After our conversation today, we're all going to meet up online in a group. And I'm going to share a little bit more with you about that group and how to join that in just a moment.

Again, we're going to use the chat box to collect your questions, and thoughts, and comments. So if you haven't already-- but it looks like many of you have-- you're going to go to chat window, lower right of the screen. And go to the dropbox to indicate all participants. So let us continue the conversation.

We can continue it as a member of the LINCS community and as a member of the *Strengthening Manufacturing Partnerships* group. You can see the links here. If you are not already a member of LINCS, you want to go to lincs.ed.gov and join the group *Strengthening Manufacturing Partnerships*. You want to create a LINCS account so you can join this.

There going to be a specific thread for each of the conversations. Here, in these threads, we will also respond to any of your questions or comments posed during the course of conversation which we may not have the opportunity to address over the course of today. Let's go to name our peer presenters so that we can get started on discussion and conversation.

We first like to welcome Susan Koehn. She is the Director of Industry Partnerships at Milwaukee 7. Greetings, Susan.

SUSAN KOEHN: Hello, everyone.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Thank you for joining us today, Susan. And we are also delighted to have with us David Palmer, who is the Senior Director for Strategies and Partnerships for Workforce Intelligence Network, Southeast Michigan. Greetings, David.

DAVID PALMER: Happy Monday.

LIBBY LIVINGS-

EASSA:

Absolutely, isn't it? We've got a lot of people who are with us today on this Monday, so this is going to be tremendous we know. Your colleagues Susan and David today are going to share real life examples of challenges that they've identified to their manufacturing communities and that others across the nation have identified as related to workforce education.

These topics are centered around those identified challenges. There going to be three conversation topics today. And Susan and David are going to provide examples of strategies of interest. Again, as well as we invite now to provide comments, ask questions, and provide strategies relative to the conversation topics as our speakers share examples of their real life challenges. And they're going to get real today for us.

But those questions and shared strategies, again, we might not be able to target during this conversation. But we will capture and post again in the LINC'S group. So you're going to want to make sure that you enroll at lincs.ed.gov and enroll in the *Strengthening Manufacturing Partnerships* group.

A very important note-- today's conversation is scheduled to end at 12:45. However, we're going to stay online for additional 15 minutes for those of you that can spare the time and want to further the conversation and opportunities [INAUDIBLE] strategy and network. These are the overarching conversation topics for today.

I will further define each topic, take upon a national conversation and the prevalent challenges and issues that were identified over the course of the conversation. As prompted, Susan and David will provide briefs as they share real life challenges and strategies that they developed that relate to the topic at hand. Again, as they share, you may post questions and provide comments within the chat box. As time allows, we may ask you to briefly share your thoughts or comments you have entered into the chat box.

So let's get started. Our first topic is how to have more granular conversation. These are the prevalent challenges of manufacturing communities, and again, as related to workforce education. But those of you that may have joined us during our "Vertical Integration" conversation, you may notice some familiar bullet points here, when we had our integrating K-12 system discussion.

I think this is just a reiteration of the critical focus of having that common mission in vision, the common vernacular. We just have to get everyone on the same page and eliminate that

taxonomy disconnect, particularly if we're coming from business [AUDIO OUT] into education and vice versa. So let's go now to our co-presenters.

Susan, I'm going to go to you first. You shared a tremendous point in our conversation regarding value proposition. Could you please share? Because that would be tremendous.

SUSAN KOEHN: Sure, so as we explored successful partnership models, we've discovered that the most successful are those that are mutually beneficial. So we intentionally assess the value proposition for each partner and identify strategically activities or interventions that will meet shared goals. One key to getting there has been-- we've had to remove the stigma around the business return on investment in workforce through education. In our region, business engagement in education has historically been more on the philanthropic side or the community engagement side of the business. And we have been moving our business partners to take a holistic approach towards long-term talent pipeline management and showing them the value of investments on different parts of the pipeline.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Susan, thank you. That's tremendous information. And again, during the course of their responses, please feel free to enter any of your questions that you hear a point and you'd like to further inquire about. We would love to have that in the chat box. David, I remember you talking to us about critical trust, and how important that was to this process. Can you elaborate for our colleagues?

DAVID PALMER: Sure, so building on what Susan noted, I think that before you can start having those strategic conversations, first you need to have trust among partners, which, at least in our region, is sometimes a long path to build. So that trust, fundamentally, I think starts around a convener, a neutral third party, who can begin to aggregate information, whether that's labor market data, or job postings data, or just bringing different actors into the room to get to know each other.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Thanks. You know, I also recall, David, when you [AUDIO OUT] about that. And we were talking about best practices, reviewing current labor market and performing skills, gap analysis, and all those pieces of [INAUDIBLE] and assessing data. You talked about [INAUDIBLE] partners, again, as acting as champions. And you referred at that point TPM, or that Talent Pipeline Management, which [AUDIO OUT] off-the-shelf [INAUDIBLE] resource. Can you share a little bit more for our listeners about that piece?

DAVID PALMER: Sure, the TPM tool, which Susan also mentioned, we had the pleasure of going through to the

US Chamber Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management Academy last year. And whether it's the TPM methodology or traditional cluster strategies organizing, there's essentially a very similar process, whereby you need to bring a small number of actors to the table from the business community. It's helpful to have that trust in convener because in a lot of cases, everybody in the support ecosystem must be at the table with employers, for good and bad reasons. So to have a convener that can aggregate information from the employers and then relay that information in aggregate back to the support organizations allows the businesses to build a degree of trust between themselves. And their shared interests are going to be addressed through the process of their investing time and dollars into.

So if you have, say, an IT cluster where there's a dozen or so IT companies, and you get 6 or 7 under the table to look at software developers for applications, then you can begin building metaprofiles for the humans that those organizations need and then use that sort of group purchase power, for lack of a better term, to take to the community college, or university, or other support networks to say that here's what we need, here's how many humans we need over the next, say, three to five years. And here's how we need you to adjust your programming to be highly responsive to what we need so that we can hire those individuals with a greater success rate coming out of your post-secondary or bootcamp organizations.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Well, that sounds like that was the absolutely tremendous opportunity for you. And is that something you would recommend others to try to get involved in through the US Chamber Foundation?

DAVID PALMER: Certainly. Talent Pipeline Management is easily searchable via your favorite search engine. And I haven't been able to kind of compare and contrast some of the different methodologies among cluster organizing, including the TPM tool, for anybody who's interested in following up afterward.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Yes, it is. And David, thank you so much for that. David, email the included for each of the all at the conclusion of this conversation. We already provided the link for you within the chat box to the US Chamber Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management, so you can review that program there. It is described in the curriculum.

It is certainly a tremendous initiative. And none of us have to reinvent the wheel. And as David has said to us, to boil the ocean. Right, David?

DAVID PALMER: Yeah, I mean, we all kind of want to put our own local spins on things, which, you know, [AUDIO OUT] sometimes. Because if there's this tool off-the-shelf, and [INAUDIBLE] adapt to your local system.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Yeah, well, I meant that, absolutely. And it's certainly a superb tool. Any questions or comments as we prepare to move to our next topic? Any one out there?

While I'm waiting to see if we might have one quick question or comment, I want to throw back out there to you, Susan and David, quickly. What has been your greatest challenge? Or should I say, maybe simply share with us your hardest conversation for either of you you'd had to have in the context of the conversation topic.

SUSAN KOEHN: I think one of the hardest conversations or situations that we came across was we had developed a very successful partnership with a cluster organization that was focused on the food and beverage industry and our local technical college to devise or to design customized credential in an associate's degree program in food manufacturing. Everyone on the industry side was quite pleased with the responsiveness of the technical college and was fully on board with the curriculum delivering the right skill sets to their organizations. What ended up happening however was that "if you build it, they will come" did not come true.

And actually, there were a total of three students that signed up for the classes over the course of 1 and 1/2 years of implementation. And each of the partners in that situation were somewhat surprised to learn that the other expected them to do their long-term recruiting to the program. And that's the point at which we realized that we were solving for the wrong part of the skills gap. And the problem had shifted to the need to proactively grow the pipeline towards the programs of study that feed industry.

DAVID PALMER: Yeah, and I would add to that that there always seems to be variances on plausible deniability arguments. It seems like somebody else is always the one responsible for a key component of this talent pipeline. So if you're working with a key group of employers, and they take time to be reflective on their talent supply chain-- where are they finding humans, how are they making them effective in their systems, and what do they need to augment that effectiveness through collaborations, external collaborations with education providers, public sector, or whoever. If you call out and highlight those needs, then businesses have an opportunity and time to process that indeed it is their responsibility to generate talent for their organization, and that these outside assets can complement that.

But if you don't have a demand-driven exercise in place, then you get what Susan just mentioned and what we have experienced here in the Detroit area, where you build it, and it doesn't for whatever reason fully click. And because of that plausible deniability argument, we think, well, the state's going to pay for it, or the trainee will pay for it, or who's going to be actually filling this talent pipeline. And that really needs to be led by the business community in demonstrating real demand over at least short to medium term time frame.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA:

OK, a perfect segue then that we can take to identifying "your" story, which is then our next conversation topic. And again, I encourage you all-- any comment, even if it's just a thumb up, or yeah, I agree, or not sure about that line-- please share it with us here. Well, that's the purpose of today is to have an actual conversation with all of you. Let's move then to identifying "your" story.

You know, it's just not about identifying "your" story. You've got to define it, define that story. And as Dave already indicated, finding even [INAUDIBLE] story. And what is the success criteria? And how do you leverage that data for the win?

You know, people just don't want to hear your anecdotal tales of your stories out there. They want-- what are the outcomes? What is the data?

And if it's a 2-minute tale or a 10-minute tale-- you've got tons of tales. Whether this is elevator or with a group you're speaking, you've got to focus-- what is the purpose of that story? What is the audience? And I think that's what we're going to go to now with David. Because, David, you've already shared with us before, and we'd love to hear again-- who are the storytellers?

DAVID PALMER:

Sure, so I find that within each of the employer cluster strategies that are deployed, there tend to be one or two champions within the group. And to the extent that you can think about the storytelling component as you're building out that collaboration or cluster strategy, if you will, thinking about who can tell that story is super important. So we try to build in some degree of flexibility with the funding streams that we have on the front end, saying that we're going to need to have professionally produced videos that are posted on a website.

So if you go to experienceitdetroit.com, you'll see there's a video story about a collaboration between eight large IT employers in downtown Detroit. Because ultimately, we had 90,000 job postings for IT-related occupations in 2016 for 5,500 people on all levels of post-secondary education coming out. So in a situation of full employment, you have a lot of challenges finding new humans, regardless of what region you are in the country. So telling that story is the

difference between having someone change careers or, indeed, reengage the labor market if they've not been engaged for some period of time.

LIBBY LIVINGS-

EASSA:

Yeah, and I think we totally get that. I also loved, you know you shared with us during your conversation in your personal stories that were the most compelling. It's enough to your program managers and your clients. I think staff can often give very good recommendations.

All those rock stars-- we have stories told well. And I thought that was great. And indeed, look for those rock stars stories.

But Susan, you spoke to us about your ancillary benefits. And to me, that was a critical point. Can you explain this in relation to your best story for us?

SUSAN KOEHN:

Sure, so in our particular situation, one of our best successes-- and we define success when our partners understand that this is a long game, that there are actually very few quick wins, and that investment is necessary all the way along the talent development pipeline continuum to see true long-term results. So when someone gets that, when an employer gets that, those are our success stories. And we've been gathering some of those testimonials and some of those examples where a business, or a group of businesses. or specter of group has been transformed in their approach to talent pipeline development via this new mindset.

So we were working with a group of manufacturers who wanted to do something to change the perception of manufacturing careers in the region. You know, they felt that the perception of manufacturing was outdated, and it was not an attractive place for students or parents to encourage their students to pursue long-term. The group, luckily, we were able to push them away from immediately rushing into like a tactical approach, to rush to market with a flashy marketing campaign or a website. Because that probably is kind of their first reaction is, let's do something to change the perception.

And we were able to get across that changing of perception is actually the long game. That's the end. And we have to move away from this transactional tactical approach to an overall brand strategy.

And we have an example of an industry partner who has submitted a really glowing testimonial about the transformation of his particular company through this transition and gave us a lot of credit to end. And in appreciation for us helping them, mapped the ecosystem of workforce and talent development providers in the region. And helping us determine which of those

partners would be the most beneficial for them, depending on what their core competencies were or what types of populations or geographical proximity to populations they could deliver for them. As a result, he feels that in the past five years of working with us, that his organization is uniquely positioned to actually have already changed the perception of manufacturing careers in the region and drives more young people to his front door and the front doors of his peers.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Well, that's always been one of those issues, that perception-- perception, perception. And I think all of these links and these resources that you're showing are incredible opportunities for us to overcome that perception. Thanks to Joe who popped up that link for us that David was telling us about. And it is there in the chat box for all of you-- experienceitdetroit.com. It is tremendous. I encourage you all to check it out.

We have a question here from Christa. And I think this one is posed to you, David. It is a question about strategies about practices of disseminating these videos. Where do they go? Are they housed, YouTube? You could give us maybe a couple of statements on that. I think it'd be tremendously helpful. Great question, Christa.

DAVID PALMER: Sure, so there it goes again back to your coalition of organizations. Usually, company is at the table. So we have a clear message. We have a large coalition. And we have a call to action.

So Quicken Loans, being one of the largest mortgage originators, if not the largest mortgage originator in the nation, happens to also be an IT organization. So they have, between the companies that you see listed there, there's about 1,000 open positions in the Detroit area for IT professionals. So within their own networks, we have buy in from Blue Cross Blue Shield Michigan and the other partners to say that information that the group is working on is integrated with their own both government relations from an advocacy and education point of view, from the organization and their communication streams.

So thousands of employees receive updates on ExperienceIT. And indeed, the companies together leverage about half a million dollars a year in in-kind staff time contribution to make this system work. It's not managed by an executive director and whatnot.

So we have a lot of broadcast opportunities. For example, on WIN's website, we have regular updates. We maintain relationships on most social media channels and have email list that has 10,000 receiving just from the WIN perspective on a regular basis.

So to the extent, you can start with your first 50, 100, or 5,000 individuals. Then the recruitment from ExperienceIT is now almost 100% organic from folks to the website. So we receive applications on a rolling basis throughout the year from individuals who are interested in careers in IT.

**LIBBY LIVINGS-
EASSA:**

That's a relief. And that takes us [AUDIO OUT] thank you for that segue. And that final topic is getting the stories out there, which is, do you know how do we do that? And it is not just taking those opportunities.

There's so much more involved here. There's co-branding, logos, trademarks. What delivery vehicle do we use? Is it direct? Is it digital? Which we're already talking about.

And not only that work. We're talking about those formats and the strategic timeline. So this is really market is exactly what we're doing. We market. And the timeline is always the best time to deliver the message in always best time and place.

So let's move to that. David spoke to us already a little bit about when. And David, I know that you found out [INAUDIBLE] before that these broad-based coalitions that have coordinated social and traditional media outreach play such a significant part in getting those dividends promote that type of awareness and participation. Maybe tell us just a little bit more about stories out there, and just very briefly about your brand management and that acceleration 101.

DAVID PALMER:

Sure, so here, we had a coalition of IT employers in the study that we're using as an example. Also many coalitions for the domestic automakers, Tier 1 suppliers. Nissan just recently joined that group.

So in each case, that convener is key. Because the companies are willing to make modest contributions for the good of their coalition. And having a neutral third party fiscal judiciary agent has been really key for, I think, us moving forward.

So in exchange for a very modest 5% admin fee, we have a safe place to park escrow funds for the coalition, which they then get a chance to decide on via memorandum of understanding between the organizations, rather than a formal nonprofit organization and creating yet another nonprofit in your system. So these consortia are viewed as interesting by both the state government, in that they have a recognized group of folks that are working together, and ultimately, that clear messaging, branding around the coalition and shared intellectual

properties where the group helps mitigate some of the other challenges that can pop up when you start involving corporate legal and defending that value proposition on an annual basis. If they're reflective, they can pull out what the exact financial benefit is for getting 100 new IT people to the system this way versus other recruiting streams.

**LIBBY LIVINGS-
EASSA:**

Thank you so much. We are at the 12:45 mark. Then we are to the point where we're going to continue that conversation for 15 more minutes. We've had a lot of great comments. We have the lincs.ed.gov where we all need to go and join. Because as Joe has already pointed out, we could do a whole discussion on just that one point.

So at this point, we are going to go on another 15 minutes. I encourage those of you who do have to go to go to lincs.ed.gov and join. And go to the *Strengthening Manufacturing Partnerships* and join today's thread so that you won't miss any of the next 15 minutes of conversation, comments, and questions that may be posed. So I thank you all again.

So let's continue on then at this point with those of you that wish to remain with us. And Susan, I'd like to go to you because this is the hot conversation topic right here. And you were so good.

This is where we go to truth confession. So I hope you all are going to stay on because this is the good part of conversation. So truth confession, Susan. You admitted that this is an area where y'all just weren't so strong. [INAUDIBLE] for the family?

SUSAN KOEHN:

Absolutely. We have struggled. It's a challenge. As I said earlier, this is complex work. And it's a long game that we're playing.

And we do struggle with the challenge of communicating that in a way that makes sense to the different target audiences. It's especially hard to communicate progress and success in typical economic development language. Whether talk is on wins, or on capital investment dollars, or a number of jobs won in the region, my organization is economic development. So when we have our investor meetings, it's challenging to put up like similar slides that communicate a similar story.

We also tend to get buried in reporting on grant outcomes, which we all know are dry and don't always translate well to engaging stories for broader audiences. One particularly exciting avenue lately has been a partner in the region who has started a very well received podcast series with a heavy focus on next generation manufacturing and the challenges in innovation,

nurturing startups, talent attraction and development. So we have been able to reach a broader audience with message topics that way and kind of infuse our ongoing messages there.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: And that is a tremendous podcast. I have to stop right here, Susan, and tell you, I got lost in this site. And it's-- I've already put the link up for everyone-- wtmj.com, GrowthMinded Milwaukee. It is phenomenal.

If you want to take a series or a vehicle for delivery, I'd say go to look at this. The first one was particularly riveting. It was by a former SEAL, which I'm always loving those former SEALs and what they've been through. But he's Chris Fussell, as I recall. Is that how you pronounce his name, Chris Fussell?

SUSAN KOEHN: Mhm.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: And he was solving complex problems by building a team of teams. And this was just one of the videos. And it was so compelling. So I also think that's just a tremendous resource for everyone to go and to visit.

And David has given us some great-- we've got-- Again, this is your opportunity, friends and family out there, to network and get resources. Why I encourage you? All the information and resources we have here are going to be posted, again, on that link, lincs.ed.gov, *Strengthening Manufacturing Partnerships* under today's thread.

Tremendous resources. So if you don't have time today, you'll want to go and visit those, and get the information, and get these examples that you can take too. I think David has given us some fabulous ideas, he is rocket firing these wonderful resources.

We're going to come in a home stretch here. We got about 11 minutes. And what I would love to do for all of you out there, we're getting some great resources. Is there anything else any of you can share with us that we can post? Any comments or questions?

And while I wait for that, I'm going to ask a question, hopefully to prompt some of that information. We would love to see what kind of delivery vehicle do you have out there. Whether it's direct delivery, digital media, [INAUDIBLE] links that the rest of us can explore, that would be tremendous. Put it in a box for us now.

Because we want to utilize these to get your story out there. So if you will, please enter that.

And Heidi, gives us Manufacturing Day.

You're right, that is coming up. I've forgotten exact date. But absolutely, that is a day to celebrate. Maybe Hallmark will come up with some cards for that we can all send out.

But that would be a great one, October, 2018. So thank you, Heidi. Now we all have plenty of time to prep for that and to get ready for it.

David tells us to get what you measure, collaborate with your local Workforce Investment Board. Absolutely, David. To see what outcomes are, have it tracked and report that story right there.

I'm also looking for any of you to share with us what are your formats for your delivery for your story. What about strategic timelines? Anybody [AUDIO OUT] tips for us here. And while we're waiting for those tips or comments to come in, Susan, I'm going to ask you, what is your biggest success in the storytelling arena?

SUSAN KOEHN: Well, actually, I was about to share a website. You know, that food and beverage cluster that I mentioned earlier, realizing that they had to redirect efforts to drive young people to careers and programs of study in the region, instead of just hoping that if they built a great program, people would sign up. So they have, as I said, gone back to the table and designed an absolutely fantastic high school outreach day, which will hit at least 300 high school students this year, if not more.

And it's entire day immersion in hands-on experiments and product development activities with food and beverage companies, speaking engagements, and the ability to work in an innovation center and learn about the different colleges and universities that offer programs in this industry and that meet one-on-one with young professionals or interesting characters in the region who have turned what was passion, or an interest, or an entrepreneurial story into a bona fide food and beverage company. So I just wanted to share that. And I'm about to send the link as well to show how that's morphed.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Tremendous. And while we're waiting for that, Wanda has a question that says, what region or who might host this day, talking about Manufacturing Day? Does anyone have a resource?

DAVID PALMER: This is David. One of the things that we've done for Manufacturing Day in our region is collaborating with our Manufacturing Education Partnership extension. So each state has an MEP, where their businesses essentially keep track of small and medium-sized business

needs and teach lean manufacturing concepts or whatever. So the MEP has been a key proponent of helping to build those assets. And if you're tracking real-time labor market information through job postings, you can also begin extrapolating from federal and proprietary databases who are the organizations in your region that perhaps you haven't yet developed relationships with. If you know five companies, but there's three in the top 10 that are having postings you don't have relationships with, then you can begin doing the introductions through cold calls or asking who in your ecosystem has worked and collaborated with those organizations.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Tremendous. And David, thank you so much. And I want to point out that my powerhouse behind the scenes, Vinayak, has links for us for Manufacturing Day. And it is simple-- mfgday.com. Thank you, V, we appreciate that so much.

Again, all of these resources, this chat will be captured for lincs.ed.gov, in the *Strengthening Manufacturing Partnerships*. And look for today's thread, so that you can locate each of these. While we're looking for more comments and questions to come from y'all or anything that you have to share, please don't be shy. Just enter that right into chat box. In these last final moments that we have, I'm going to go back to Susan and David.

But wait just a minute. Joe has come up with another great question. This is, any concerns as to how we owe or might classify certain careers industry that are in demand, even though employers don't need to hire other lower paying careers? David or Susan, either one of you would like to respond?

DAVID PALMER: So this is David. We're all trying to drive wages towards a living wage for your region. I think WIOA has a degree of agnosticism, as far as what those specific careers are. But the Workforce Investment Boards in combination with your governor and state Department of Commerce, or how we have that system organized, are going to have to set forth a certain number of priorities from the governor's perspective.

So having coalitions of Workforce Investment Boards is one of the things WIN has done to be successful, in that we have six of those Workforce Investment Boards across 16 counties and over half of Michigan's population in the region. So that they're actively talking with each other and the post-secondary institutions, the 10 community colleges in our region, to develop common priorities and strategies. So that if you're going to have limited investment in a particular group of occupations, that that's the biggest bang for the buck based on what the

employer demand looks like through job postings and those interviews. And then how they overlay those investments into the humans that are looking to upskill into the labor market.

**LIBBY LIVINGS-
EASSA:**

Yes, and we all know, David, that we're all looking for the biggest bang for our buck. So that's a great point. I want to give a shout-out here at this point to Jim Mackey. Hello, Jim Mackey. Great to see you on chat. That's a link for Wisconsin Technical College for their student facing website.

And I will have to say that Wisconsin has done some phenomenal work over the years. In 2010, they were one of the rigorous programs, the steady state, and have continued great work there in Severson and Westridge. I can name a number of my colleagues there who've done tremendous-- some retired-- but done tremendous work in career path, devising and developing those career path way systems.

And a great exploration link right there for you to get some ideas as far as vehicle for delivery. And thank you, Jim, so much for sharing that. And greetings to everyone back there in Wisconsin.

We do have a livingwage.mit.edu. And then we're going to go into you, if you will. Indeed, share that link for us because David referenced the living wage.

We are hearing more and more about that versus the poverty wages. You want to look at your highway of demand as reference to that living wage chart. I encourage you to look at that. We are all a little bit more dependent on that now because it does show what it takes to support families of varying numbers, which is critical.

We all know, in today's environment, we have these multi-member households. So you are going to want to explore that livingwage.mit.edu. And it is broken out, I believe. I know by states, and I'm not sure how much more breaks down. But there's another great resource for all of you.

Looking [AUDIO OUT] resources and comments coming from those of you across the country out there. I'm going to pose a couple of more questions to Susan and David here. Go back to identifying strategic timeline for delivery of those stories. Is there any insights that either of you might share with us on strategic timelines?

DAVID PALMER: Susan, go ahead.

SUSAN KOEHN: Strategic timelines-- well, I think one of our issues is we know in partnership building, different partners have different, let's say, budget cycles, or accountability structures, or, you know, times of the year in which they are reporting out things. So that's part of the art and science of partnership building is dovetailing all of that so that the data is coming in at the right time, and it's being reported out at the right time, and it is impactful and useful for that continuous improvement process that is necessary to keep the partnership humming along and being effective. So that's been one of the challenges for us too.

You know, when the school data comes in, it's not necessarily when businesses are attending to their bottom line and vice versa. And that's part of the-- you know, even defining what the annual report is. Well, is the year the school year? Or is the year the fiscal year? Or is the year the calendar year?

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: I know, I know. And these things are critical. Timing is everything, folks. I mean, we think of this as a marketing proposition. Believe me, when we're looking at those Super Bowl ads, they are very strategic in money, and time, and getting the bang for your buck.

So again, as we close up here, I just want to encourage all of you-- let's continue these consultations. Let's join the online discussion on LINCS. Again, if you go to lincs.ed.gov, and go to group *Strengthening Manufacturing Partnerships*, we're going to continue to answer your questions here and to provide opportunity for you to collaborate, share resources.

As always, we think of questions after the fact. And so we want you to be able to pose any questions here. We will capture those. Again, we will capture resources given to us in the chat box and share them here under the thread. And here again is that link for new accounts. Just truthfully, we want to have offered.

We want to thank all of the agencies, we want to thank OCTAE for the support in this [AUDIO OUT], and thank our co-presenters today. And we thank each of you for joining us. And we're going to hope that you're going to join us in our next conversation next Monday, at 12:15 again. We encourage you to log on early.

And very generously, our co-presenters today have included their emails. If you wish to contact them directly for more information or for their responses today, you want to learn a little bit more, they generously relented, if you will, to do that. So thank you all again. And we look forward and hope that each of you will join us again next week, March 12, at 12:15. Have a wonderful week.

