

# PARTNERS IN PROGRESS.

JANUARY 2021: NEWS AND RESOURCES



## MOVE AHEAD FASTER.

### \*Just Released\* No-cost Project Offering

A fully funded opportunity to advance Illinois Manufacturers to globally compete. Choose one of nine projects identified to provide assessments and technical assistance for key drivers of your organizational success. *Funding is limited to one project per company.*

#### Projects Areas Include:

- Developing your Leaders
- Focusing on Maintenance
- Getting Cyber Ready
- Maximizing Cash Flow
- Growing your Sales
- Keeping Workers Safe

[\[Click here to claim your project\]](#)

#### BECOME A PREMIER DOMESTIC MANUFACTURER

Apply for an opportunity to open new sales channels offering locally produced components to large OEMs, as substitutes for imported products.

MORE

#### INDUSTRY 4.0 SHOWCASE MANUFACTURER

Apply to be on the cutting-edge with this fully funded opportunity.

MORE

#### BECOME A TOP SHOPS BENCHMARKING SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Apply to receive a customized market research report to increase competitiveness.

MORE

INDUSTRY  
EXPERT  
INSIGHTS.



# 2020

# Client-Reported Impacts

Last year, over 1,100 manufacturers partnered with IMEC to navigate the challenges of 2020, grow their business, and build global competitiveness. Throughout the year, we survey our clients to not only understand how our work has helped their business become more effective and efficient, but to demonstrate that we all play an important role in strengthening Illinois manufacturing hub and our economy.

[\[View 2020 Impacts\]](#)

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## COVID-19 — Stronger Together

Yes, the pandemic disrupted supply chains and reduced the demand for manufactured goods, but it has also provided opportunities for manufacturers to pursue creative and adaptive strategies to meet critical needs while staying business. In response, IMEC and the other 50 MEP Centers also pivoted in order to provide pandemic-related assistance to their state's manufacturers in areas such as workforce training, layoff aversion/talent retention, domestic supply sourcing, and technology needs.

[\[Read more\]](#)

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## NEW! Success in Operations: PedalCell

PedalCell learned about the IMEC Illinois Manufacturing Innovation Voucher program and applied in January 2020 for a multifaceted project centered around intellectual property and product development.

The resources received helped them move the needle on their product launch. Much to the team's satisfaction, they were able to secure the

## Maximizing Workforce Productivity with Online Training Opportunities

Regardless if employees are on-site or working remotely, companies should continue providing basic skills training and opportunities for professional development.

[\[Read more\]](#)

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## Do More with Less – The March of Productivity

The role of automation and mechanization in driving productivity has been widely headlined. Yet, eliminating unnecessary work takes as much innovation. From everyone, not just the specialists.

[\[Read more\]](#)

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## What Is Manufacturing's Greatest Challenge?

Manufacturing's digitization is only going to increase. But a recent survey shows us that technology-related challenges aren't what keep business owners awake at night—it's who will do the work and how to train them.

[\[Read more\]](#)

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capital needed for three additional patents, personnel to test equipment and fixtures, and ultimately manufacture and launch the product.

[\[Read more\]](#)



When you establish your role in American-made products, you could increase sales, create new jobs, become more competitive, and stimulate the economy by becoming a vital part of the American Manufacturer's Supply Chain. Manufacturers like you can expect new opportunities and business growth from the recent announcement of the Executive Order to strengthen the Buy American Act. If you have questions about what this means for your or how IMEC can help you, please let us know.

[\[Get in touch\]](#)

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## Pandemic Employment Research Survey

Amid the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism, many companies found new and better ways to operate. How has your company changed over the past year? UpSkill America and Training Industry, Inc. want to know how the pandemic and heightened attention to racial inequities have influenced your company's plans for the months and years ahead. Take the Pandemic Employment Research Survey and lend your insights to this important body of knowledge. Findings will be shared at a virtual public event this year. Please respond by **today**.

[\[Take the survey\]](#)

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## Strive for Organizational Excellence

### Is it Really Still Business as Usual?

Whether or not you have a formal, written plan or maybe it resides within the chief executive's head, or maybe you really haven't thought about it, you do have a strategic plan. In a nutshell a strategic plan is how you use all your resources to accomplish your goals.

[\[Read more\]](#)

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### Strengthening your Quality System Post COVID-19

With our focus elsewhere, new procedures or training can get implemented without proper documentation. We can get behind on our internal auditing schedule. Or we lose sight of action items from prior meetings and audits.

[\[Read more\]](#)

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### Mitigating Risk in Virtual World

Regardless of whether you have a formal quality management system or must meet regimented regulations, leadership, as well as additional stakeholders, have a particularly vested interest in



### **2021 IMEC Awards for Excellence — Intent to Apply Deadline**

The IMEC Awards for Excellence provides a system for recognizing organizations at three levels that are representative of progress and growth toward performance excellence. Award levels reflect the increasing maturity of a performance management system as defined by the [Baldrige Excellence Framework](#). For organizations to participate in the 2021 IMEC Awards for Excellence cycle, the Intent to Apply Packet is due by **April 2, 2021**.

[\[Learn more and submit Intent to Apply\]](#)

### **Become an Examiner for the IMEC Excellence Recognition Program**

Embark on a unique and interactive professional development experience with IMEC. Examiners are quality-driven professionals who collaborate to assess the organizations that apply for the annual IMEC Awards for Excellence. As an examiner, you are trained in a proven tool for benchmarking against high-performing organizations — the Baldrige Excellence Framework. You are empowered to evaluate applications and provide value-added, actionable feedback that applicant organizations use to advance their processes, empower their workforce, and achieve the results they want. In addition, you equip your organization with in-house Baldrige expertise. Applications are due **April 15, 2021**.

[\[Apply to be an Examiner\]](#)

### **Go one step further.**

Learn how the IMEC Excellence Recognition Program can help you start on the road to organizational excellence. Develop an understanding of how to get started by focusing on the things most important to your organization and making sure your team is all on the same page. Reserve your seat for the [STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS: Your Guide to Achieving Organizational Excellence Webinar](#) on March 2.

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## **Registrations Now Open!**

identifying and planning for all potential risks to an organization.

[\[Read more\]](#)

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### **How COVID-19 has Exposed Opportunities to Optimize Information Systems**

By recognizing and documenting the shortcomings in the existing flow of information we use to operate in today's environment, we can capture and prioritize improvement opportunities to be implemented when we are back at full strength, whether it be next month, or next year.

[\[Read more\]](#)

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### **Leaders: It is Time to Walk the Line – Listening and Responding to Your Customers and Employees**

As leaders, we have likely taken our eye off the basics while dealing with the onslaught of uncertainty. So now it is time to revisit the basics and to reexamine how well you are taking care of your customers. It is time to look at how your key processes are performing. It is time to walk the line.

[\[Read more\]](#)

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## **GET TECH READY: 2021 Illinois Advanced Manufacturing Virtual Summit**

Reserve your company seats for the virtual Advanced Manufacturing Summit on **March 24**, where you will learn how technologies such as autonomous mobile robots, virtual reality, and data can increase productivity, quality, efficiency & connectivity for manufacturers of all sizes.

[\[Learn more\]](#)

## **FRAME THE FUTURE: IMEC Conference on Enterprise Excellence**

Whether you're new to process improvement or are on the path to leading your organization to impressive results, the 2021 IMEC Conference on Enterprise Excellence, hosted on a virtual platform, highlights best practices, strategies and inspiration for all individuals seeking improvement.

On **March 30 and 31**, the conference will feature leaders who advance leadership, strategy, customer, operations, workforce, and technology across industries.

[\[Learn more\]](#)

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## **Preventative Maintenance Now for Success Later**

Companies can stay productive and have confidence that when things get back to normal, they will be ready since they've used this time to complete equipment overhauls / preventative maintenance projects.

[\[Read more\]](#)

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## **The New Supply Chain Blog Series:**

Depending upon your products, customers, and your manufacturing footprint, the most recent crisis may have taxed your supply chain to its limits or maybe you have a business continuity plan that encompasses all the challenges.

[\[Read more\]](#)

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## **eCommerce Success Strategy**



[\[Learn more\]](#)



## Stay Connected with IMEC!

We have so much exciting news, we can't possibly include it all in our newsletter. Connect with us on LinkedIn for the latest in Illinois manufacturing updates and resource.

[\[Join our LinkedIn Community\]](#)

# HERE TO HELP.



## 2021 Virtual Events

### [EQUIP YOUR TEAMS: How a Training Matrix Can Identify and Address Skill Gaps Webinar](#)

*February 4 @ 11:30 am*

Learn tools and processes to invest in your workforce, developing individual skills and future leaders towards the success of your company.

### [SPARK NEW GROWTH: eCommerce Strategy for Manufacturers Series](#)

*February 9, 12, 16, 19, and 23 @ 10:00 am each day*

5-part series teaching small and mid-sized manufacturers the skills for online marketing, selling, & sourcing to accelerate eCommerce success.

### [Robotic End of Arm Tooling and Grippers Webinar](#)

*February 9 @ 10:00 pm*

Explore the role of end of arm tools as the interface between robots and materials they handle, learning they improve manufacturing processes.

### **Breaking into Government Contracting Webinar**

*February 10 @ 12:00 pm*

The U.S. Government is the world's largest buyer of products and services. Learn the basics of government contracting by joining this webinar.

### **KEEP IT LEGAL: Need-to-Know COVID-19 Employment Issues for the New Year Webinar**

*February 11 @ 10:00 am*

An informative session addressing key employment issues on the horizon for 2021, from the perspective of an employment and labor attorney.

### **EXPAND YOUR NETWORK: Capture the Exciting Opportunities Waiting on LinkedIn**

*February 18 @ 11:30 am*

Join IMEC and B2Btail for a session outlining how to maximize your engagements through LinkedIn, increasing sales and company exposure.

### **PROTECT YOUR TEAM: Maintaining Workplace Safety through COVID-19 Virtual Workshop**

*February 24 @ 8:30 am*

Workshop focused on your pandemic response plan and policies, OSHA regulations, plus best practices for training, cleaning, PPE, and more!

### **EMBRACE NEW TECH: Getting Started with Autonomous Mobile Robots Webinar**

*February 25 @ 11:30 am*

This session focuses on integrating autonomous mobile robots into your manufacturing processes and how worker inclusion will maximize ROI.

### **FIND NEW TALENT: Virtual Engineering Job & Internship Fair - Northern Illinois University**

*February 25 @ 10:30 am*

Perfect for finding co-ops, internships, and part-time and full-time professionals, this virtual job fair showcase only engineering and engineering technology students.

### **RESOLVE IT NOW: Problem Solving Training Series**

*March 1, 8, 15, and 22 @ 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm*

Four-part virtual training to help you problem solve - and finally resolve the root cause - utilizing various methods to increase efficiency and improve processes.

### **STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS: Your Guide to Achieving Organizational Excellence Webinar**

*March 2 @ 11:30 am*

Join IMEC for a strategy for focusing on the things most important to your organization, to accomplish your mission and improve results.

**SALES DEEP DIVE: Improving Virtual Sales Skills Training Series for Illinois Manufacturers**

*March 4, 18 and April 1 @ 8:00am each day*

Three-part series to help manufacturers understand and develop vital sales skills such as pre-call planning, asking the right questions and building a virtual value proposition.

**QUALITY OF PRODUCT: Bridging ISO 9001 and ISO 17025 to Meet FDA Regulations Webinar**

*March 4 @ 11:30 am*

Learn how ISO 17025 requirements help manufacturers of food, beverages, pharmaceuticals, and supplements ensure safe, quality products.

**INCREASE ONLINE SALES: Role for Manufacturers in the eCommerce Marketplace 6-Part Series**

*March 9, 12, 16, 19, 23 and 26 @ 10:00 am each day*

Learn from eCommerce and digital marketing experts how small and mid-sized manufacturers – just like you – can develop a digital presence and increase sales through eCommerce.

**KEEP YOUR TALENT: Retain your Workforce with Stay Interviews Webinar**

*March 10 @ 11:30 am*

Highlighting how stay interviews reveal what matters to employees, while building trust through meaningful conversations to retain key staff.

**VISION GUIDED ROBOTICS: Set Up Machine Vision for Robot Position Offsets Webinar**

*March 11 @ 11:30 am*

IMEC and FPE Automation highlight how vision guided robotics can add a level of dynamic response to your automation processes.

**INCREASE CASH FLOW: Research and Development Tax Credits Webinar**

*March 17 @ 11:30 am*

R&D tax credit allows businesses of all sizes to reduce their taxes and increase cash flow. Do you qualify for tax credits for the things you are already doing?

**EXPAND YOUR REACH: Insider Ways To Use Facebook & LinkedIn to Increase Your Manufacturing Sales Webinar**

*March 18 @ 11:30 am*

Learn to maximize social media posts & profiles, to reach customers for free and increase your sales - plus tips for immediate improvement.

**GET TECH READY: 2021 Illinois Advanced Manufacturing Virtual Summit**

*March 24 @ 8:00 am*

Learn how advanced manufacturing technologies can increase productivity, quality, efficiency & connectivity for manufacturers of all sizes.

**KEEP IT RUNNING: Roadmap to Maintenance 4.0 Webinar**

*March 25 @ 11:30 am*

Join IMEC for a session outlining how a defined commitment to equipment maintenance can increase operational effectiveness and productivity.

### **FRAME THE FUTURE: 2021 Virtual IMEC Conference on Enterprise Excellence**

*March 30 and 31, 2021 @ 8:30 am each day*

The 2021 Virtual IMEC Conference on Enterprise Excellence features leaders who advance leadership, strategy, customer, operations, workforce, and technology across industries.

## **ICYMI: Download Past Webinars**

Recordings of all past webinars and resources are available on demand. Visit the [\*\*IMEC Coronavirus: News & Updates Page\*\*](#) to download and listen. Webinars are available in the topic areas of:

- Operations
- Workforce
- Safety
- Financial Management
- Customer Engagement
- Strategic Planning
- Technology

Share with a colleague to help them create their competitive future!

