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INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION & PROCESS CONTROL

IMMIGRATION AND THE MANUFACTURING ECONOMY

Dick Morley was a brilliant man, a prolific inventor, a philosopher of manufacturing. In case you have forgotten, or maybe never heard of

him, Dick was the inventor of the PLC (along with his skiing buddy Otto Struger), the zone-based HVAC system, the floppy disk, gender-linked chocolate formulas, and about 500 other patents. For many years he was the Chair of the President's Council on Manufacturing and he consulted to many governments around the world.

One day, Dick and I were talking about immigration. He told me he thought we needed immigrants, always had needed them, and always would need them. He pointed out that (at the time of our discussion) three of the five largest automation companies' Chief Technical Officers were immigrants from India. It wasn't an accident, he said.



We should welcome immigrants just as we did in the 1800s, and for the same reasons. We continue to need people. He pointed out that the unemployment rate is usually close to adjusted zero (3-4% unemployment is really close to no unemployment, with jobs going begging). He also noted that there were always classes of jobs that more settled people in the US, Canada, and Europe do not want to do, and immigrants will do those jobs.

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“Here’s what I’d do,” Dick said to me. “I’d put one of those gray steel army surplus desks at every border crossing, and staff it with somebody like me and a box of cigars. The Border Patrol would line up the potential immigrants in front of the desk, and I’d ask them some very simple questions:

“Do you have a criminal record in your home country? If they said yes, they were out.

“Do you have a clean health record? If they answered yes, the interview would go on.

“Do you have enough money to last 30 days or do you have a sponsor who will provide you a place to live? Same thing as before.

“Do you have a skill or trade? If they have a skill or trade, or were a doctor or other health professional in their home country, they’re in.”

“Companies would set up hiring halls to get the best of the immigrants right at the border. We can absorb many more immigrants than we are taking in now.”

Dick said he’d sit there and smoke a cigar while he admitted more immigrants than he rejected.

Skills and Trades

One of the things that has always made me angry is to meet an immigrant who was doing a manual labor task or working in a very low paying position, who had been an educated and trained professional in his home country. Engineers, doctors, dentists, nurses, and the like—and many of them never able to practice their professions in the US or Europe again. They give that up for freedom and safety.

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But here's the thing. If we provided the small level of testing and possible retraining that most of these professionals need to function in the Western Economy, we would gain millions of dollars in additional taxes, not to mention quality staffing where we are very short on professionals.

Why Blood Does Not Matter

One of the things we in the United States, and the citizens of the EU are not doing is asking why the immigrants are coming and in such huge numbers. Look at the people mobbing the southern border of the USA. Many are coming from Ecuador, other Central American countries, and countries like Venezuela. This is a ridiculously difficult and arduous journey, much of it on foot, with wives, children, husbands, and very little in the way of possessions.

So why do they come *here*? They could stop at any country along the way. But they want to come here. Just as the Syrian and Ethiopian and Eritrean and Sudanese refugees want to go to Europe.

The reason is the most significant difference between the Western Democracies and everywhere else. We trivialize it by calling it "The American Dream," but it is, in fact a major difference. In many countries, you need to be native born to be a full citizen. The United States was the first country to eliminate that requirement. Blood does not matter. What matters is that you pledge your allegiance to the flag and constitution—to the rule of law. If you do that, you are free to succeed (or fail) on your own, with whatever help you can get from government, private enterprise, and charities of all sorts. And for hundreds of years, people have come here, and to Canada and to the EU and Britain, so that they could make themselves better and give their families a better life.

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We need to support politicians and political parties who value people and are willing to work to take advantage of this incredible resource in people and dedicated citizens. If we don't, we are the ones who will lose.

Dick Morley knew the score. He also knew, as Chair of the President's Council on Manufacturing, just how much we need immigrants—people of all skill levels. So maybe we should consider our immigration policy in light of the fact that we need these people, and work on ways to let them in, not keep them out.

And we need to enlist the manufacturing community and companies in this endeavor. They need people of all skill levels from toters of bales to degreed and knowledgeable engineers and even health professionals. Training costs are negligible compared to not being able to fill orders because employees are lacking.

As climate changes and as politics mutates around the world, the number of refugees and immigrants will continue to grow. The countries that master the use of this resource instead of spending dozens of billions of dollars to keep them out will succeed brilliantly.

Why DEI Makes Companies Stronger

For a couple of decades now, companies and other organizations like universities and other centers of higher education, and public

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organizations like governments have been attempting to implement a set of guidelines lumped together under the acronym DEI. DEI stands for “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.” These guidelines are intended to make sure that the

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organization is itself strengthened by the inclusion of as many different points of view, capabilities, and experiences as can be had.

In an insight published in August of 2022, McKinsey said, “Diversity—through the lenses of race, ethnicity, ability, gender, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, and beyond—can help to strengthen organizations, as [studies have shown](#) time and again.”

McKinsey’s report went on to say, “[Companies that are diverse, equitable, and inclusive](#) are better able to respond to challenges, win top talent, and meet the needs of different customer bases. With DEI in mind, companies are considering how to better support employees. Over the past few years, many organizations have taken strides to [build diversity, equity, and inclusion](#) into their policies and hiring practices.”

“[Companies that are diverse, equitable, and inclusive](#) are better able to respond to challenges, win top talent, and meet the needs of different customer bases.”

It seems to many people that DEI initiatives are no-brainers, but recently the concept has become politicized, and people confuse it with somehow being forced to hire unqualified or incompetent

employees because of some fanciful concepts of Diversity, Equity, or Inclusion that has little if any bearing on real world hiring and management practices.

As we pointed out in the first article in this issue, the chance to gain the services of unusual talents and different points of view and experience far outweighs the difficulties that managing a diverse work force creates.

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As McKinsey points out, the studies show clearly that DEI initiatives make companies stronger, not weaker. We should concentrate on social engineering to help all these disparate parts work together for the benefit of

the employees, the company, and its stakeholders. If you agree with me, and with McKinsey and others, that's fine. If you don't agree, please feel free to argue, but bring data with you that bolsters your arguments. Emotional ranting is not what is needed here. I think you will find, if you look, that like McKinsey says, the data is clear, and clearly in favor of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives in manufacturing and the workplace.

If you don't agree, please feel free to argue, but bring data with you that bolsters your arguments. Emotional ranting is not what is needed here.

Defending Democracy and the Rule of Law Is Good for Business

Democratic government based on the rule of law provides a stable platform for people to create, begin, continue, and have their enterprises flourish. This is because the platform on which we can build our businesses doesn't change on the whim of a sovereign or dictator. You don't have to worry about some sycophant getting the rules changed in their favor. You don't have to plan for coercion and bribery to get things done.

You can be sure that if you have a good idea, the rule of law will see to it that your idea will flourish, and that you will reap the benefits you deserve.

Having that stable platform for business and for society means that everyone is on a level playing field. Nobody is favored by the autocrat or the plutocrats. This means that it is viable to devote resources to developing new products and services without worrying that the government will step in and take them away or

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make them so difficult to create and sell that it is not worth it to continue. You can be sure that if you have a good idea, the rule of law will see to it that your idea will flourish, and that you will reap the benefits you deserve. Many countries are having elections in 2024. If you care that democracy and the rule of law make doing business anywhere in the world easier and better, make sure you vote for those ideas, and not for candidates who will restrict or corrupt the rule of law. Your children will thank you.

Finally, I want to apologize for the extreme lateness of this issue. Those who have been following me on Facebook or LinkedIn know that my wife and partner, Joy Ward, has been quite ill and in the hospital for most of the months of November and December. She appears to be getting well, and so I have been able to go back to getting my work done on time. We haven't had to resort to a GoFundMe yet although the expenses have been high.



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