

PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT: *FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

Georgia Association of Manufacturers Partners with Unmudl to Launch Innovative Digital Platform: *Manufacturing Georgia*

Atlanta – February 27, 2025 – Today, the Georgia Association of Manufacturers (GAM) announced the development of "*Manufacturing Georgia*"—the first-ever digital platform designed to help Georgia manufacturers engage directly with the public. GAM also announced that it is developing *Manufacturing Georgia* through a multi-year strategic partnership with Unmudl, a leading Skills-to-Jobs® Marketplace.

The innovative *Manufacturing Georgia* platform will feature dynamic, social media-like capabilities to connect manufacturers with future workers, especially younger audiences. The goals driving the platform's development are twofold: improving public awareness and understanding of modern manufacturing and increasing the availability of skilled manufacturing workers within the next five years.

Manufacturing Georgia will be available to all manufacturers in the state.

A New Approach to Workforce Engagement

Lloyd Avram, GAM's President and CEO, explained the driving force behind this initiative: "Our manufacturing members expressed the need to connect more directly with Georgia's student body and showcase the exciting, progressive careers available in manufacturing. For too long, we've painted manufacturing as dark and gloomy, when today, the industry is vibrant, clean, and brimming with innovation. After conducting extensive research and planning, we determined that one of the best ways to change perception is through a platform with social media-like functionality that communicates simply and clearly to all generations."

Recognizing the challenges of reaching younger audiences, GAM sought to create a solution that would go beyond conventional methods, which often rely on work-based learning coordinators and school counselors. Given the high student-to-counselor ratios, these connections are often limited and insufficient.

In late 2023, GAM formed a focus group to brainstorm ways to engage the public, especially the younger generation. The consensus was clear: a platform with social media-like capabilities and cutting-edge gaming technology could foster direct, on-demand connections between manufacturers and future workers.

The Role of Unmudl

After a competitive review process, Unmudl was selected as the ideal partner to bring this vision to life. "When we reviewed proposals from various vendors, it became clear that Unmudl shared our commitment to solving the manufacturing workforce challenge," said Stephanie Scarce, GAM's Vice President of Workforce Innovation. "Their focus on connecting learners with employers, particularly in fields requiring mid-level technician skills, perfectly aligns with our mission at GAM. Unmudl understands manufacturing and is uniquely positioned to help us execute our long-term vision."

"We're thrilled to partner with GAM to tackle the manufacturing workforce gap," said Jim Lechleitner, Head of Strategy at Unmudl. "With our national experience connecting new and experienced talent to employers—both through technology and hands-on workforce initiatives—we know firsthand what it

takes to build successful career paths. This partnership allows us to apply that expertise on a larger scale, ensuring the manufacturing industry has the skilled workforce it needs for today and the future.”

Building the Future of Manufacturing in Georgia

The *Manufacturing Georgia* platform will highlight the diverse ecosystem of manufacturing careers and enable manufacturers to communicate directly with students and the public. Features will include real-time job postings, including youth apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities, training programs, and insights into the modern age of manufacturing.

Several Georgia-based manufacturers have already voiced their support for the initiative. “We are committed to this project because it’s a unique and timely way to engage the younger generation and their parents,” said Patrick Lenz, President and COO of Toyo Tires NA Manufacturing. “We must think outside the box to engage local high schools and grow and sustain our future workforce. This is an opportunity to do just that.”

In West Point, Stuart Countess, President and CEO of Kia Georgia, shared: “Kia Georgia is thankful for GAM’s commitment to combatting the false stigma of the 4 Ds, that manufacturing is dull, dirty, dangerous and dead end. With the workforce of tomorrow sitting in today’s classrooms, it is critical that industries seize this opportunity to inspire a passion and interest for manufacturing pathways—whether as production team members, skilled technicians, or future graduates pursuing four-year degrees.”

Meanwhile, in Dalton, Brian Cooksey, Director of Workforce Development at Shaw Industries, added: “Our hope is that Manufacturing Georgia will be a platform to engage young people with the right information about the diverse career opportunities that exist in advanced manufacturing. Having a technology platform that is easy to access, shares accurate information, and showcases great career opportunities will ensure that students and their families can make informed decisions about their future — a future that includes manufacturing as a viable option for the talented students who live in Georgia.”

And while *Manufacturing Georgia* will be a great asset to some of Georgia’s largest manufacturers, it will also be a tremendous resource for smaller manufacturers, which make up approximately 67 percent of Georgia’s manufacturing sector. John Fluker, President and CEO at Grenzebach, commented: “Grenzebach believes that our greatest asset as a company is our team members, and the next generation is key to manufacturers of all sizes in the state of Georgia. The ability to be able to connect with the next generation to promote the opportunities that manufacturing provides and to show them how Grenzebach can provide great career opportunities is exciting!”

Next Steps

The platform will launch in phases, with a pre-screening event set for March with stakeholders, followed by a soft rollout to select manufacturers and education institutions in April. *Manufacturing Georgia* will publicly launch in July.

“Thanks to the support of our Manufacturers Education Foundation and generous contributions from Toyo Tires, Kia Georgia, Shaw Industries, and Grenzebach, we are making *Manufacturing Georgia* a reality,” said Scarce. “Manufacturers across the state will have free access to the platform in 2025, with an affordable subscription fee starting in 2026. Users will enroll for free.”

About the Georgia Association of Manufacturers (GAM)

GAM is the voice of manufacturing. We advocate on the issues that matter most to manufacturers. For 125 years, GAM has been a champion for manufacturing growth and excellence in Georgia. Today, we represent an industry comprised of approximately 10,000 manufacturing entities and almost 427,000 workers.

About Unmudl

Unmudl Skills-to-Jobs® Marketplace is a public benefit company that connects talent and employers through a nationwide network of community and technical colleges. Focusing on mid-level 'hands-on' technician skills, Unmudl provides access to high-quality, affordable training that leads directly to in-demand jobs in key industries, including manufacturing.

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