



## 2024 WISCONSIN MANUFACTURERS STUDY (v2) FINAL

Field Dates: July 28-August 23, 2024 (Estimated Dates)  
Sample Size: N=350-400 Manufacturing Executives

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ a national research company. We're talking with manufacturing business executives all around Wisconsin today, and would like to ask you a few questions on a confidential basis. This study is being sponsored by the Wisconsin Center for Manufacturing and Productivity, in collaboration with the UW Stout Manufacturing Outreach Center (MOC) and the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP).

We are calling today to discuss business issues that are important to you and your company.

Please know that your responses will be kept strictly confidential and no material that identifies your response will be distributed. This survey is NOT for marketing purposes. We are not attempting to sell anything, nor will your participation result in any e-mails in the future to sell you anything. **(DO NOT PAUSE)**

### *Question A*

First, am I speaking with **(FILL IN NAME FROM SAMPLE)**?

1 YES **(CONTINUE)**

**(IF QA: NO, THEN ASK:)**

### *Question B*

May I please speak with him/her please?

1 NO

2 YES **(REPEAT INTRO WITH LISTED RESPONDENT)**

**(NOTE: IF UNAVAILABLE, ARRANGE FOR CALLBACK, IF RESPONDENT NO LONGER IS EMPLOYED AT THIS COMPANY, ASK TO SPEAK TO A SENIOR EXECUTIVE)**



**PHONE QUESTION ONLY:  
(IF QB: NO, THEN ASK:)**

*Question B2*

Is there another senior executive I may speak with please?

- 1 NO (THANK AND TERMINATE)
- 2 YES (REPEAT INTRO WITH LISTED RESPONDENT. RECORD NAME: \_\_\_\_\_)

And, just to make sure we have a representative sample...

*Question C*

What is your job title? (RECORD ONE RESPONSE)

- 1 Owner/Partner
- 2 President/CEO/VP/CFO/COO/CTO
- 3 Management Team Member/Controller
- 4 Director/Manager/Operations
- 98 OTHER (SPECIFY: \_\_\_\_\_)
- 99 DON'T KNOW/REFUSED (THANK AND TERMINATE)

*Question R*

(ONLY ASK FOR RECORDS WITHOUT A COUNTY)

In what county is the Wisconsin headquarters of your company located?

(DROP-DOWN BOX OF ALL COUNTIES. RECORD ONE RESPONSE)

*Question 1*

Generally speaking, how would you describe the business climate here in Wisconsin? Would you say the business climate in the state is heading in the right direction, or is the business climate off on the wrong track?

- 1 RIGHT DIRECTION
- 2 WRONG TRACK
- 98 NO OPINION/NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW(DO NOT READ)
- 99 REFUSED (DO NOT READ)



*Question 2*

Compared to say five years ago, 2019, would you say the business climate in Wisconsin has gotten better, gotten worse or stayed about the same?

- 1 GOTTEN BETTER
- 2 GOTTEN WORSE
- 3 STAYED ABOUT THE SAME
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE (**DO NOT READ**)
- 99 REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

*Question 3*

Overall, right now, do you think Wisconsin's economy is growing, slowing down, mostly flat, or in a recession?

- 1 GROWING
- 2 SLOWING DOWN
- 3 MOSTLY FLAT
- 4 A RECESSION
  
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE (**DO NOT READ**)
- 99 REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

*Question 4*

Let's shift gears for a moment and focus more on your company. From a financial perspective, how do you feel right now about the future for your company... (**ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM, BOTTOM TO TOP**)

- 1 VERY CONFIDENT
- 2 SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT
- 3 NOT VERY CONFIDENT
- ...or...
- 4 NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT
- ...about the future of your company from a financial perspective?
  
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE (**DO NOT READ**)
- 99 REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)



Looking at this year again...

*Question 5*

As you look to the year-end, do you expect your company's gross revenues for 2024 to... **(ROTATE)** increase or decrease compared to 2023, or will they probably stay the same?

**(IF INCREASE/DECREASE:)** Do you expect your gross revenues to (increase/decrease) by more than 10% or less than 10%?

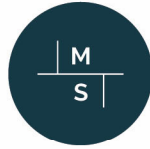
- 1 INCREASE BY MORE THAN 10%
- 2 INCREASE BY LESS THAN 10%
- 3 DECREASE BY LESS THAN 10%
- 4 DECREASE BY MORE THAN 10%
- 5 STAY THE SAME
- 98 TOO SOON TO SAY/DON'T KNOW **(DO NOT READ)**
- 99 REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**

*Question 6*

And, as you look to the year-end, do you expect your company's profitability for 2024 to **(ROTATE)** increase or decrease compared to 2023, or will it probably stay the same?

**(IF INCREASE/DECREASE:)** Do you expect your profitability to (increase/decrease) by more than 10% or less than 10%?

- 1 INCREASE BY MORE THAN 10%
- 2 INCREASE BY LESS THAN 10%
- 3 DECREASE BY LESS THAN 10%
- 4 DECREASE BY MORE THAN 10%
- 5 STAY THE SAME
- 98 TOO SOON TO SAY/DON'T KNOW **(DO NOT READ)**
- 99 REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**



*Question 7*

And, as you look to the year-end, do you expect your company's capital expenditures for 2024 to **(ROTATE)** increase or decrease compared to 2023, or will they probably stay the same?

**(IF INCREASE/DECREASE:)** Do you expect your capital expenditures to (increase/decrease) by more than 10% or less than 10%?

- 1 INCREASE BY MORE THAN 10%
- 2 INCREASE BY LESS THAN 10%
- 3 DECREASE BY LESS THAN 10%
- 4 DECREASE BY MORE THAN 10%
- 5 STAY THE SAME
- 98 TOO SOON TO SAY/DON'T KNOW **(DO NOT READ)**
- 99 REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**

*Question X1*

Next, thinking about your company, what would you say is the one or two most important issues affecting your business and its future success?

**RECORD OPEN ENDED RESPONSE**



### Questions 8-26

Next, we're going to look at a series of different issues that may or may not impact you and your company. For each one, please rate how important that issue is to you and your company's success.

We're going to use a scale from 1 to 10, where one means that it is NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT to you and your company's success and where ten means that it is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT to you and your company's success. You can choose any number between one and ten depending on how strongly you feel about it.

The (FIRST/NEXT) one is... **(RANDOMIZE)**

( \_\_\_\_ / 99 = DK/REF)

- (8) Federal government regulations
- (9) State government regulations
- (10) Federal and state taxes
- (11) The costs of health care coverage
- (12) Costs of employee salaries and benefits
- (13) Finding and attracting qualified employees
- (14) Keeping qualified employees
- (15) Economic and global uncertainty
- (16) Energy costs
- (17) Costs of materials for your products
- (18) Availability and supply of materials for your products
- (19) Hacking and cyber security
- (20) Finding new customers and markets
- (21) Developing company managers and leaders
- (22) Getting operations back to where they were before the pandemic
- (23) Overall inflation
- (24) ESG or environmental, social and governance issues
- (25) Artificial Intelligence applications
- (26) New customer acquisition
- (27) Access to credit



*Question 28 (2023 Q26)*

As you think about your company's future, what would you say are the two or three most important drivers of your company's future growth? Is it... **(RANDOMIZE AND ACCEPT UP TO THREE OPTIONS) (NOTE SELECTION ORDER)**

- 1 Finding new customers and markets
- 2 Creating new products
- 3 Developing company managers and leaders
- 4 Increasing productivity and eliminating waste
- 5 Better strategic planning and implementation
- 6 Finding/attracting qualified employees
- 7 Keeping qualified employees
  
- 97 OTHER (DO NOT READ) (SPECIFY: \_\_\_\_\_)
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE (DO NOT READ)
- 99 REFUSED (DO NOT READ)

*Question 28X*

Overall for the year 2024, do you expect to increase investment in any of the following areas? **(ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES)(RANDOMIZE)**

- 1 Systems, technology and automation
- 2 Expanding sales globally
- 3 Expanding sales within the United States
- 4 Maximizing productivity
- 5 Growing revenue and profitability
- 6 Obtain ISO (EYE-S-O) certification
- 7 Data and cyber security
- 8 Employee training
- 9 Employee development
- 10 Workplace and company culture
- 11 Research and development
- 12 Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) issues and sustainability
- 13 Sales and marketing
- 14 eCommerce
  
- 97 OTHER (SPECIFY:\_\_\_\_) (DO NOT READ)
- 98 None of the above (DO NOT READ)
- 99 Don't Know/Refused (DO NOT READ)



*Question 29*

Generally speaking, how important do you think automation will be to your company's future?

- 1 VERY IMPORTANT
- 2 SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
- 3 NOT VERY IMPORTANT
- 4 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
  
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE (**DO NOT READ**)
- 99 REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

*Question X2*

Are there any obstacles to implementing automation at your company?

**(ASK IF YES):** What do you see as potential obstacles? Are they obstacles related to budgets and financing, training, systems and technology, or something else? **(ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES :2-5)**

- 1 No obstacles to automation
  
- 2 Yes, budget/financing obstacles
- 3 Yes, training obstacles
- 4 Yes, technology/systems obstacles
- 5 Yes, other obstacles (**SPECIFY: \_\_\_\_**)
  
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE (**DO NOT READ**)
- 99 REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)



Thinking about A.I. (artificial intelligence) and your business...

*Question 29A*

Have you previously used, are you currently using, or are you considering using artificial intelligence, or A.I., in your business operations? **(READ RESPONSES. ACCEPT ONE RESPONSE)**

- 1 Yes, currently using A.I.
  - 2 Yes, considering using A.I. in my business within the next year
  - 3 Yes, considering using A.I. in my business within the next 2-5 years
  - 4 No, have never used and no plans to use A.I. in my business in the immediate future
- 
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE **(DO NOT READ)**
  - 99 REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**

*Question 29B*

Thinking about the next few years, which ONE of the following viewpoints on the impacts of artificial intelligence, or A.I., on businesses like yours do you agree with more?  
**(ACCEPT ONE RESPONSE)**

- 1 A.I. is going to fundamentally change businesses like mine
  - 2 A.I. is going to be another piece of technology among many
  - 3 A.I. is not going to have much of a real impact on businesses like mine
- 
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE **(DO NOT READ)**
  - 99 REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**



Now, turning our attention to workforce-related issues for a moment...

*Question 30*

Does your company currently have positions that are open for hiring?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE (**DO NOT READ**)
- 99 REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

*Question 31*

**(IF YES Q30:1, THEN ASK)** And, based on your best estimate, how many positions would you say your company has open that you are currently hiring for?

**(SPACE FOR RECORDING NUMBER OF POSITIONS) 9999 = DK/Ref**

*Question 32*

Generally speaking, how easy or difficult is it for your company currently to find qualified workers for new or open positions? Would you say it's... **(ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM/BOTTOM TO TOP)**

- 1 VERY DIFFICULT
- 2 SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT
- 3 SOMEWHAT EASY
- 4 VERY EASY
  
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE (**DO NOT READ**)
- 99 REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)



*Question 33*

Next, is your company considering any of the following changes to address potential long-term workforce challenges? **(RANDOMIZE AND ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES)**

- 1 Changing operating hours
- 2 Changing shifts
- 3 Automating or implementing new technologies
- 4 Offering employee training
- 5 Increasing wages and salaries
- 6 Allowing for remote work and flexible schedules
- 7 Offering more competitive employee benefits
- 8 Scaling back production
- 9 Raising prices
- 10 Utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- 11 Offering apprenticeship or internship programs
- 12 Increasing recruitment efforts
- 13 Improving onboarding
  
- 97 Something else (Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_)
- 98 None of these/Not considering any of these **(DO NOT READ)**
- 99 Refused **(DO NOT READ)**

*Question 34*

When thinking about attracting and hiring new employees, what does your company believe is its strongest selling point to prospective employees? Please choose one or two. **(ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM/BOTTOM TO TOP) (RECORD FIRST AND SECOND CHOICE)**

- 1 Salary and wages
- 2 The products you make
- 3 The potential for career growth
- 4 A work-life balance
- 5 The employee benefits
- 6 The work environment
- 7 Flexible shifts and work schedules
- 8 High tech jobs
- 9 The local area
- 10 Company mission or purpose
  
- 97 Other **(Please Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)**
- 98 DON'T KNOW **(DO NOT READ)**
- 99 REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**



*Question X4*

How much does your company invest in sales and marketing? **(ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM/BOTTOM TO TOP)**

- 1 A significant amount
- 2 A modest amount
- 3 A minor or little amount
- 4 Nothing at all
  
- 98 DON'T KNOW **(DO NOT READ)**
- 99 REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**

*Question X5*

What is your primary source of new customer acquisition?

- 1 Referral
- 2 Website/online
- 3 Industry events/trade shows
- 4 Traditional advertising
- 97 Something else **(Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)**
- 98 DON'T KNOW **(DO NOT READ)**
- 99 REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**



Changing topics now...

*Question 35*

Overall, do you expect wages for your employees will increase, decrease, or stay about the same in 2024?

- 1 INCREASE
- 2 DECREASE
- 3 STAY ABOUT THE SAME
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE (**DO NOT READ**)
- 99 REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

*Question 36*

Overall, do you expect the benefits you offer your employees will increase, decrease, or stay about the same in 2024?

- 1 INCREASE
- 2 DECREASE
- 3 STAY ABOUT THE SAME
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE (**DO NOT READ**)
- 99 REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

*Question 37*

And, does your company currently provide health insurance to your employees?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE (**DO NOT READ**)
- 99 REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

*Question 38*

**(IF YES Q37:1 THEN ASK)** And, overall, do you expect the cost your company pays for health care will increase, decrease, or stay about the same in 2024?

- 1 INCREASE
- 2 DECREASE
- 3 STAY ABOUT THE SAME
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE (**DO NOT READ**)
- 99 REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)



*Question 39*

And, how much of an investment is your company currently making in leadership training programs? **(ROTATE FIRST TWO)** Is it a major investment, a modest investment or just a little investment currently?

- 1 MAJOR INVESTMENT
- 2 MODEST INVESTMENT
- 3 JUST A LITTLE INVESTMENT
- 98 DON'T KNOW **(DO NOT READ)**
- 99 REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**

*Question 40*

On a different topic, does your company have a formal strategic plan for profitable growth?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE **(DO NOT READ)**
- 99 REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**

*Question 41*

How important is having a formal strategic plan to your company's future growth?

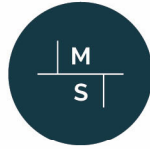
- 1 VERY IMPORTANT
- 2 SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
- 3 NOT VERY IMPORTANT
- 4 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
  
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE **(DO NOT READ)**
- 99 REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**



*Question 42*

And, in what part of the world do you see the greatest increase in prospective business? **(READ IN ORDER) (ACCEPT UP TO 3)**

- 1 CANADA
- 2 MEXICO
- 3 SOUTH AMERICA
- 4 EUROPE
- 5 CHINA
- 6 REST OF ASIA
- 8 AUSTRALIA
- 9 MIDDLE EAST
- 7 HERE IN THE UNITED STATES
- ...or...
- 96 Some other place? **(PLEASE SPECIFY: \_\_\_\_\_)**
  
- 97 NONE OF THE ABOVE **(DO NOT READ)**
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE **(DO NOT READ)**
- 99 REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**



*Question 43*

On a different topic, has your company been hacked or experienced a data breach of some kind?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE (**DO NOT READ**)
- 99 REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

*Question 44*

How confident are you that your company is secure from hacking, data breaches, and other technological threats? Are you... (**ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM/BOTTOM TO TOP**)

- 1 VERY CONFIDENT
- 2 SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT
- 3 NOT THAT CONFIDENT
- ...or...
- 4 NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT
  
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE (**DO NOT READ**)
- 99 REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)



Now, I have just a few more questions for statistical purposes only...

*Question 45*

How many people does your company employ in all its facilities in Wisconsin? **(READ LIST IN ORDER)**

- 1 UNDER 10
- 2 11-25
- 3 26-50
- 4 51-100
- 5 101-150
- 6 151 TO 250
- 7 MORE THAN 250
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE **(DO NOT READ)**
- 99 REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**

*Question 46*

What are your annual business revenues? Just stop me when I get to the category that includes your company's total annual revenues. **(READ LIST IN ORDER)**

- 1 UNDER \$1 MILLION
- 2 MORE THAN \$1 MILLION TO \$5 MILLION
- 3 MORE THAN \$5 MILLION TO \$10 MILLION
- 4 MORE THAN \$10 MILLION TO \$20 MILLION
- 5 MORE THAN \$20 MILLION
- 98 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE **(DO NOT READ)**
- 99 REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**



*Question 47*

Which one of the following best describes your company's primary business? Is it... **(READ LIST)**  
**(RANDOMIZE :1-7)**

- 1 FOOD OR BEVERAGE
- 2 PAPER OR WOOD PRODUCTS
- 3 PRINTING
- 4 PLASTICS
- 5 METAL FABRICATION
- 6 MACHINERY MANUFACTURING
- 7 ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT
- ... or...
- 97 SOMETHING ELSE (**SPECIFY: \_\_\_\_\_**)
- 98 DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)
- 99 REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

*Question 48*

How many years has your company been in operation?

- 1 LESS THAN 1 YEAR
- 2 1 - 3 YEARS
- 3 4 - 6 YEARS
- 4 7 - 10 YEARS
- 5 11 - 15 YEARS
- 6 16 YEARS OR MORE
- 98 DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)
- 99 REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

*Question 49*

And, in what year were you born?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ (**RECORD YEAR OF BIRTH**) (**9999 = DK/REF**)

*Question 50*

**GENDER (BY OBSERVATION)**

- 1 MALE
- 2 FEMALE