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“I consult with manufacturing companies of all shapes and sizes on a wide range of projects. Over the past year, I’ve been privy to a convergence of activities that suggest to me that 2015 will be a landmark year for American manufacturing.”

– John Zegers, Director of the Georgia Center of Innovation for Manufacturing

“In 2015, customer centricity requires higher standards for customer service excellence, efficient innovation, and responsive manufacturing, which motivates 75% of manufacturers to invest in customer-facing technologies.”

– International Data Corporation FutureScape, Worldwide Manufacturing 2015 Predictions

Manufacturing in America has endured a rough recent past. Economic declines shifted much production overseas in pursuit of lower labor costs, resulting in generally low activity levels. But there is hope on the horizon. New technologies are transforming plant operations, lowered costs associated with reshoring are attracting more local manufacturing activity, and capital investments are growing. In the following [manufacturing predictions](#), John Zegers, Director of the Georgia Center of Innovation for Manufacturing, offers a peek at what’s to come in 2015.

U.S. INDUSTRY PREDICTIONS FOR 2015

1. Reshoring will continue, but at a slower pace

Manufacturers typically evaluate seven critical areas when it comes to operational decision making: transportation and energy costs; market demand for their products; rising labor costs in China and other developing nations; access to talent, tax, and regulatory policies; availability of capital; and currency trends. In 2015, we will see jobs return to the U.S as trends around these areas continue to impact bottom lines.

2. A manufacturing boom will hit the U.S.

2015 will launch a new wave of domestic manufacturing, as the industry sees broader growth. One reliably strong trend has been the national Purchasing Managers Index, which stood at 58.7 percent in November 2014. Rooted in a solid expansion of manufacturing activity, this index allows us to look forward and reasonably expect between 4 percent and 5 percent growth in domestic manufacturing.

3. Big data will drive big efficiency

Eighty-one percent of manufacturers feel big data has a positive effect on production and efficiency, and 65 percent believe big data will be a strategic business driver moving forward, according to the CSC Global CIO Survey: 2014-2015. That trend will continue, but the cornerstone in 2015 will be the widespread introduction of the Internet of Things (IoT).

4. Increased investments in predictive maintenance technologies

The spread of better and cheaper sensor technologies, combined with the trend of connected factories will allow for greater opportunity for U.S. manufacturers to implement predictive maintenance technologies that will cut downtime and increase investment.

5. Increased investment in capital equipment

2015 will be the year in which we will see a true renaissance in domestic manufacturing. Improved bottom lines will drive replacement of aging legacy equipment and investment in new capital equipment that performs better, more efficiently and more reliably. Software will also assist in making current equipment more efficient.

6. Manufacturing will grow at a higher rate than GDP

U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) historically has been a marker against which industries peg their overall performance. A report issued in December 2014 by the Institute of Supply Management stated that manufacturing revenues are expected to increase in 15 different manufacturing industries this year. It also asserted that capital expenditures, a major driver in the U.S. economy, are expected to increase by 3.7 percent in the manufacturing sector.

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