

MADE IN ILLINOIS.

MADE TO BRAINSTORM



Made in Illinois: A Playbook for Illinois Manufacturers to Compete and Win

IMEC Book Club Reading Guide

For more information about how to apply Made in Illinois: A Modern Playbook for Manufacturers to Compete and Win, reach out to IMEC representatives today at info@imec.org.



Chapter 1:

- How can you strengthen the way your senior leaders communicate and engage your team members and your customers?
- How does your strategy and planning stimulate innovation? How do you decide which opportunities are intelligent risks to pursue?
- How does your leadership team ensure effective listening and trust building?
- What insights did you get from The Big Play: Strategy interview with Robert Barnett?

Chapter 2:

- What are your company's strengths when it comes to recruiting, hiring, and onboarding?
- What can your organization do to measure employee engagement in the next 30 days? If you already do measure employee engagement regularly, how can you take concepts from Made in Illinois to improve employee engagement?
- How do you promote diversity, or embrace personal differences to enrich the work environment? How representative is your company of your hiring and customer communities?



Chapter 3:

- List your top customers. Is your strategy aligned to meet the needs of your top customers? How can you adapt your strategy within the next 30 days, 6 months, and 1 year to better support your top customers?
- When was the last time you gathered insight from your top customers? If you could learn anything from your customers or ask them anything, what would it be?
- How do your top competitors sell themselves to potential customers (advertising, website, etc.)? Is your company as good at selling your products or services as your competitors are?

Chapter 4:

- What is the number one problem or pain point in your supply chain? What are some ways you can fix the problem for the short-term and for the long-term?
- If you needed to increase your output as quickly as possible, how could you do that? If you needed to add a new customer segment to your sales portfolio, how can you adapt your supply chain to meet their needs as well as the needs of your current customers?
- Is your supply chain faster, more reliable, more efficient, more accurate, or more customizable than your competitors? If you don't have one of these as your competitive advantage, select one and brainstorm how you can make it your competitive advantage.

Chapter 5:

- In what ways has your organization resisted change in the past? How can your organization better accept change?
- When was the last time your organization ignored a problem? What was the result? How could your organization improve its problem-solving process?
- Consider adding one of these five productivity-boosting tools: value stream mapping, 5S, Kanban, Kaizen, or Focus PDCA. What would your organization look like after implementation? How would you integrate this tool in your organization?
- Consider one of your most important production machines. What would happen if it broke down during production? Can this break-down be foreseen or prevented?

Chapter 6:

- Select one type of technology that isn't being used in your organization, but could help you either solve a problem, improve productivity, or improve employee engagement. How could HR technology assist you recruit, train, or otherwise assist your workforce?
- What is the most important data your organization collects? Is this available to the whole workforce, or only certain departments? Why? Is it easy to access and easy to understand? Is there other data that should be collected, but isn't? How can you start collecting and sharing that data?
- What data do you or your workforce wish you had at your fingers tips to make better decisions? How important is it to solve the lacking access to this information?

Chapter 7:

- List a crisis that recently affected your organization. How did this affect your organization? Can you protect your organization from this crisis in the future?
- Select one of these four ways to improve cash flow during a crisis: increase sales within your top relationships, accelerate collection of receivables, adjust your inventory investment strategy, or use the crisis to improve processes and profitability. How would your organization achieve that method?
- Evaluate your organization's risk management plan. Are there any gaps? How can those gaps be filled? Who needs to be involved to update those?

End of Book Conclusion

- Did you learn anything surprising in this book?
- Which chapter was the most helpful to you and why?