



Report

Winter/Spring 2017

Hello and welcome to our 2017 Attitudes to UK Industry (ATUKI) survey.

Over the last few years we've taken several snapshots of public opinion regarding industrial issues in the UK. Our latest report makes for fascinating reading and suggests some trends that many will find surprising. Who inside modern industry, for example, would say that industrial jobs are mainly 'dirty, repetitive and unskilled'? We suspected that figure would be very low across the board. Remarkably though, only one in 16 over-65s answered in the affirmative compared to almost 20% of 18-24 year olds. Despite numerous projects, schemes and good intentions, it seems that UK industry still has a lot of work to do with young people. New and creative ways of showing them what a diverse, interesting and fulfilling career modern industry can offer.

Significant differences in opinion between younger and older people emerge throughout the report. One of the most striking is divergent attitudes toward STEM. Nearly nine in ten of the oldest age category (65+) believe that STEM skills are critical to the future workforce – but they, industry, Government and schools will have their work cut out convincing younger people. Less than two-thirds of 18-24 year olds agree, consistent with the findings of the 2013 ATUKI survey. The recently released Industrial Strategy Green Paper contains measures to tackle this issue head-on, so perhaps if we ask the same question in 2020 opinion among the young will have shifted. For now, there is much hard work to be done.

On an altogether brighter note, there does appear to be strong support across the country and across the age-groups for the 'UK's World renowned education, research and university communities' and 'Government and Industry' to work more closely together. This is progress.

With the new Green Paper and the incredible opportunities heralded by the arrival of the Industrial Internet of Things, the UK industrial sector has a lot of positive stories to tell at the moment and lots to look forward to in the years to come. There's every reason to think that with a bit of creativity and hard work, attitudes to industry can be changed – and I firmly believe they will be.



Tom Spencer

Young people more hostile

One in every six (16%) 18-24 year old feels that industrial jobs are mainly dirty, repetitive and unskilled compared to just one in every 16 (6%) over 65's.

There was no significant difference between responses from different parts of the UK. One in five (20%) of 18-24s 'would not encourage their children or children they know to pursue a career in industry', compared to just one in 16 (6%) of over 65's.

The 2012 ATUKI report found that nearly one in five (18%) respondents agreed with the statement that that industrial jobs are mainly dirty, repetitive and unskilled, compared to just one in ten (11%) in 2016, suggesting that industry's public image is slowly improving.

Less than half of under-34s felt that the UK can be proud of its manufacturing base, compared to almost three-quarters (71%) of over-65s. There was a clear regional divide, with respondents from traditionally industrial areas around 10% more likely to agree with the statement than respondents from the South. Londoners were the most likely to answer 'don't know'.

Over two thirds (68%) of respondents agreed that high levels of automation (such as evidenced in the Nissan plant in Sunderland) prove that manufacturing in the UK can be highly competitive, but again, less than half of 18-24s were convinced compared to a remarkable nine in ten (86%) of over-65s. Londoners were by far the most sceptical with an overall agreement rate of just over half, at 58%.

16%

Attitudes and reality out of step

Only 7% (fewer than one in ten) of respondents felt that 'industrial careers are not suited to women' – yet women still constitute only around one in ten of the industrial workforce. Clearly, a piece of the puzzle is still missing.

- Could more be done to encourage women and girls into industrial careers?
- What is being done and by whom?

There was no significant difference between male and female respondents. Interestingly, only 3% of over-65s agreed that industrial careers are not suited to women, compared to nearly one in seven (13%) of 18-24s. This suggests that measures to promote gender equality in industry should be focused on younger people.

7%

Brexit uncertainty

Half of respondents agreed that "Brexit can be a good thing for industry", with the remaining half split equally between uncertainty and outright disagreement.

Older people are more optimistic about Brexit, with fewer than one in three (28%) of 18-24s agreeing that it could be a good thing for industry compared to over two thirds (68%) of over-65s.

Gender made little difference to people's responses overall. However there were two interesting exceptions. More than one in three men (35%) answered that they 'strongly agree' Brexit can be a good thing for industry, compared to one in four women (25%), while women were significantly more likely to answer 'don't know' than men, with around one in seven (14%) compared to less than one in ten (8%) respectively.

50%

S.T.E.M.

Most respondents agreed that Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths were critical for the future of the workforce. However, men were more likely to agree than women, with eight in ten (79%) men and seven in ten (71%) of women's agreement respectively. Older respondents valued STEM more highly than younger ones, with almost nine in ten (88%) of over-65s agreeing with the proposition compared to just less than two thirds (63%) of 18-24s.

These findings were consistent with the Summer 2013 ATUKI report, which found that older people and men were far more likely to think that Science, Engineering and Technology skills should be given higher priority than other school subjects.



79%

Joined-up thinking

There is strong support across the board for closer cooperation between the "UK's World renowned education, research and university communities" and "government and industry". Four in five (81%) respondents agreed, with half (51%) agreeing strongly.

A statistically negligent number disagreed, while older people were more likely to agree than younger people.



81%

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We are a 'hands on' consultancy with a heritage spanning twenty five years in the industrial sector. Our industry initiatives create opportunities, encourage media interest and provide insight on industry trends and issues. Such initiatives include the Industrial Entrepreneurship Network, Attitudes to UK Industry polls, and the regular First Friday Club Editors' Briefings. Additionally we provide direct support to executives for media interviews, facilitate media relations for key spokespersons, deliver and support events.

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