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outlook about the economy for 2018 than in 2017. The growing U.S. and global economies, rising energy and commodity prices, and improved business and consumer confidence ...

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Optimism is high as manufacturers' responses indicated they have a more positive outlook about the economy for 2018 than in 2017. The growing U.S. and global economies, rising energy and commodity prices, and improved business and consumer confidence support this positive outlook.

That's according to results from the 2018 National Manufacturing Outlook Survey, sponsored by the Carmel, Indiana based accounting firm Blue & Co., LLC and St. Charles, Illinois based Leading Edge Alliance (LEA Global).

Survey results for 2018 include:

- 81% of manufacturers believe their revenue will increase in 2018, with 72% eyeing organic growth in the U.S. as their primary opportunity to increase sales.
- Manufacturers are more optimistic about the regional and national economy than the global economy, yet notably the optimism rating for all three has increased by more than 10 points since the 2017 outlook.
- 62% of manufacturers expect their sectors to grow, more than doubling the 2017 outlook; food and beverage and construction materials cite the highest optimism for sector growth.
- Manufacturers' top three priorities are growing sales, cutting costs, and addressing the talent gap.
- As in past years, labor remains a significant challenge. More than half of survey participants cited the labor shortage as the greatest risk or barrier to growth, and more than half of manufacturers expect to increase hiring.

- Respondents plan to utilize technology to reduce risks and build a competitive

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the opinions of respondents who produce industrial/machining, transportation/automotive, construction, food and beverage, and other products.

Small Business • Technology

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