

Press Release

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Local Manufacturers Focus on 'Industry 4.0'

Sussex manufacturers will need to focus on upskilling and digitisation to reap the benefits of 'Industry 4.0' – the so-called fourth industrial revolution.

The latest meeting of METALL (the Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology Alliance), a forum for south coast and Gatwick diamond businesses in the sector, heard that while robotics, 3D printing and artificial intelligence offered potential for productivity gains, there were structural barriers to overcome.

Speaking at the event, Philippa Oldham, Head of Manufacturing and Transport for the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE), said nine in 10 manufacturers were aware of developments in robotics, but that industry's skills gap remained a significant challenge.

"We need to get more people excited about engineering, from apprentices through to PhD graduates, so that we are equipped as a sector to optimise the value of the fourth industrial revolution," she said. She estimated that manufacturing needed to find 182,000 new technicians and engineers every year until 2022 to meet demand.

This skills gap was underlined in the latest MHA Carpenter Box manufacturing and engineering report, which showed that 84% of manufacturing businesses in the south east were struggling to recruit people. Despite these challenges, the survey found that the majority of local businesses remained optimistic about the future which perhaps reflects the fact that engineers, by definition, solve problems.

METALL is supported by MHA Carpenter Box chartered accountants, asb law and sector recruitment professionals, CBSbutler.

Photo shows: John Docherty, CBSbutler • Philippa Oldham, IMechE • Chris Coopey, MHA Carpenter Box • Russell Bell, asb law

www.metall.org.uk

Notes

MHA Carpenter Box is a leading award winning*, South Coast and Gatwick based firm of Chartered Accountants, Auditors, Tax and Wealth Advisers. Through accountancy association, MHA, Carpenter Box can also provide accounting solutions across the UK and globally through Baker Tilly International.

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The firm supports businesses across a number of sectors including professional practices, property & construction, manufacturing, not for profit, healthcare, motor trade, travel and retail.

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