

Making in America From Innovation to Market

Suzanne Berger and the MIT Task Force on Production and Innovation

America is the world leader in innovation, but many of the ideas that are hatched in American startups, labs, and companies end up going abroad to reach commercial scale. Apple, the superstar of innovation, locates its production in China (yet still reaps most of its profits in the United States). When innovation does not find the capital, skills, and expertise it needs to come to market in the United States, what does it mean for economic growth and job creation? In *Making in America*, Suzanne Berger reports on an ambitious two-year MIT study on innovation and its links to production. Inspired by the MIT Made in America project of the 1980s, this study brings experts from across the Institute to focus on a critical problem for the country.



MIT scientists, engineers, social scientists, and management experts visited more than 260 companies in the U.S., Germany, and China. From companies across the country—from big defense contractors to small machine shops and new technology startups—the researchers tried to learn how we can rebuild the industrial landscape to sustain an innovative economy. They asked this basic question: “When you have a new idea, how do you get it into the market?” They found gaping holes and missing pieces in the industrial ecosystem. Critical strengths and capabilities that once helped bring new enterprises to life have disappeared: production capacity; small- and medium-size suppliers; spillovers of research, training, diffusion of new technology from big corporations. (Production in the Innovation Economy, also published by the MIT Press in 2013, describes this research.)

Even in an Internet-connected world, proximity to innovation and users matters for industry. *Making in America* describes ways to strengthen these connections including public-private collaborations, new government-initiated manufacturing innovation institutes and industry/community college projects. If we can learn from these experiments in linking innovation to production, American manufacturing could have a renaissance.

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