Discussion Guide for NGA Manufacturing Policy Academy Roundtable
Wichita State University – December 12, 2011

NAME (optional): ______________________  Firm/Agency (optional) ______________________

First Discussion Period: Please discuss Topic 1, Topic 2 and Topic 3 (20 minutes). The meeting will reconvene, and participants will share the main ideas from each topic with the full assembly.

1. Product Development
   A. How do you research and develop new products?

   ________________________________________________________________________________

   B. Do you patent your products? Do you manufacture products for others that hold patents?

   ________________________________________________________________________________

   C. How does R&D generally work in your industry?

   ________________________________________________________________________________

   D. Does your organization collaborate or interface in any way with colleges and universities? If not, can you envision any benefit to your company by exploring opportunities at Kansas research institutions?

   ________________________________________________________________________________

2. Marketing/Sales
   A. Where do your customers reside?

   ________________________________________________________________________________

   B. Are you looking to expand beyond this current footprint?

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   C. Would you be able to increase your profits or sell more if you opened additional manufacturing locations?

   ________________________________________________________________________________

   D. If you are not selling internationally, what barriers are stopping you?

   ________________________________________________________________________________
3. **Partnerships**
   
   A. How do you choose your suppliers?

   B. Where are your suppliers located? Could you benefit by having any of these suppliers closer to your manufacturing location(s)?

   C. What benefit would your organization receive if it could source more products locally?

   D. What current partnerships are critical to your success? (E.g. Do you have special distribution agreements? Do you partner with another group for research and development?)

   E. Have you identified additional partnerships that would improve your success? If so, what kind of partnerships are you exploring?

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*Second Discussion Period: Please discuss Topic 4, Topic 5 and Topic 6 (20 minutes). The meeting will reconvene, and participants will share the main ideas from each topic with the full assembly.*

4. **Talent**

   A. How do you identify and hire new talent?

   B. What kind of training programs do you provide to your employees? Who develops and delivers the training?

   C. What type of experience and certifications/education do your successful employees have? (Think about this for different job descriptions.)

   D. Do you have trouble finding and developing the talent you need to be competitive? Does your answer vary based on the location of your facility?
5. **Process Technology**

A. What are the most critical challenges faced by your firm related to manufacturing process technology (i.e. a new process technology) and technology innovation that should be addressed to improve your business's prospects for success?

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__________________________________________________________________________________________

B. Is your firm required to have certain certifications in place to sell your products? (e.g. IE AS9100, ISO, Lean) If not, would you be able to sell more with these certifications in place?

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C. What type of continuous improvement processes have you put into place? What kind of advantages are you seeing from these processes?

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D. How do you determine what type of changes are needed in your processes?

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6. **Other**

A. Are there specific shortcomings or needs for infrastructure (i.e. transportation, telecommunications, etc.) that are critical and that should be addressed to improve your business’s prospects for success?

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B. Are there specific state and local government programs and policies that are particularly burdensome for your business that should be addressed to improve your business’s prospects for success?

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C. How can the state of Kansas be a better partner in the success and growth of your business?

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Please take a moment to individually prioritize the areas that you believe address the biggest opportunities for improving manufacturing in Kansas.

1 – Most critical opportunity to improve the success of manufacturing in Kansas
6 – Not as critical to the success of manufacturing in Kansas

[ ] Product Development [ ] Talent
[ ] Marketing and Sales [ ] Process Technology
[ ] Partnership [ ] Infrastructure

Thank you for your participation.