



My favorite speaker by far was Mr. John S. Sofia from American Axle. His presentation centered on the importance of manufacturing to a country's overall economic health. His passion for his company and manufacturing flowed out of him with every single word. I also liked his answers in the Q&A forum where he stated that manufacturing jobs were being located closer to the customer base due to cost issues, and thereby implying that national sentiment does not play a role. I was able to speak to Mr. Sofia during the first break and his intensity and passion burned just as brightly in a one-on-one setting.

*By Mark Shelton, MBA 2014*

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**John Sofia, AAM**  
**Manufacturing Does Matter**  
*By Andy Schanno, MSIA 2013*

John Sofia from American Axle Manufacturing had an interesting perspective of an American vehicle parts manufacturer who has had to overcome the recent recession that devastated the U.S. car manufacturing industry. He came across to me as a survivor. I fully understood and appreciated his opinion that manufacturing is key to healthy growing national economies. I was equally impressed with his understanding that in order to survive, his company needed to be willing to improve efficiency with its U.S.

production and be prepared to manufacture internationally when appropriate. This was highlighted to me in how he pointed out that his production facilities utilize semi-portable machines that can be transported to other global regions if needed to meet customer demands or macroeconomic changes. He also spoke about how both types of production (local and offshoring) have advantages and disadvantages and that decisions had to be made that found the optimal combination of quality control and responsiveness to a given customer segment.

