

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Back-to-Back National Honor: Humtown's Student-Led Career Programs Inspires 1,000+ Students; Alongside Industry Giants

Columbiana, OH — June 19, 2025 — Humtown is once again redefining what a factory can be, not just a place of production, but a place of learning, inspiration, and opportunity for America's next generation of industrial athletes. In an era when U.S. manufacturers face historic workforce shortages and an urgent need to inspire young talent, Humtown is transforming its factory floor into a hands-on learning lab, where students see, touch, and experience the possibilities of modern manufacturing.

Building on its 2024 recognition for Transformational Business Cultures, Humtown has now earned back-to-back national honors from the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), this time winning the 2025 Manufacturing Leadership Award in the Collaborative Ecosystems category.

This year's first-place winners in the category were:

- Humtown: Where Education and Manufacturing Unite to Empower Next-Gen Industrial Athletes
- Whirlpool Corporation: Manufacturing The Washing Machine Project



The Manufacturing Leadership Awards, hosted by NAM—the largest manufacturing association in the United States—recognize excellence and innovation across the industry. Finalists and winners are selected by a distinguished panel of judges with significant industry expertise and experience. The 2025 Manufacturing Leadership Awards Gala was held Wednesday, June 18 at the JW Marriott in Marco Island, Florida.

Alongside Humtown and Whirlpool, finalists in this category included Bayer Crop Science, EnerSys, Hitachi Astemo, Iowa State University CIRAS, Johnson & Johnson, Lexmark International, PACCAR, Pella Corporation, and Winnebago Industries. While honored alongside some of the world's largest corporations — billion-dollar global brands like Johnson & Johnson and Whirlpool — Humtown's award reflects something deeper: the power of a small, family-owned manufacturer connecting students, educators, and industry to shape careers and strengthen local communities.

Humtown's initiative has created a dynamic ecosystem of collaboration across education, industry, and community partners. By connecting students to real-world experiences and providing opportunities to develop industrial athlete mindsets and skills, Humtown is helping reshape workforce pipelines and strengthen American manufacturing.

Over the past three years, Humtown has connected more than 1,000 students across Northeast Ohio and Western Pennsylvania with hands-on manufacturing experiences — both through on-site student-led tours and in-school career exploration programs.

"The winners of the Manufacturing Leadership Awards represent the kind of bold and innovative thinking that will propel our industry into the future," said NAM President and CEO Jay Timmons.

"I get excited seeing the students experience hands-on learning — not just something from a textbook," said Sheri Lamoncha, Director of Community Engagement at Humtown, who also brings advanced manufacturing career exploration directly into local schools. "When they visit, ask questions, and even suggest ideas, you can see their curiosity and confidence growing. It's such a joy to watch them discover the pathway to their own unique career."

"It's an honor to accept this award on behalf of all our Humtown team members, teachers, and school administrators who have supported our student-led tours in the factory," said Mark Lamoncha, President of Humtown, a member of the Ohio State Board of Education and a board member of the Ohio Manufacturers' Association. "When we see young adults as emerging industrial athletes, blending classroom learning and real-world experience, they begin to discover what truly sparks their interest, and just as importantly, what doesn't. Interest becomes the gateway to purpose, which fuels passion and engagement. This is how a young person moves from choosing a job they 'have to do' to finding meaningful work they 'want to do' — work they love and can engage with for a lifetime."

"Humtown is the definition of a staple in our community," said Ryan O'Donnell, Family Liaison / Career Site Coordinator Columbiana County Educational Service Center.

"They are present at every school event that involves families — always going above and beyond to meet community needs. They are truly committed to career exploration for youth. The tours we've taken at Humtown have been a life-changing experience for our students."





"It was such a fantastic experience being a tour guide for Humtown," said Taylor, a local student. "I loved getting to show my classmates the place where I hope to work someday. I'm especially excited about the new machine we'll be using — and the new building is amazing! Thank you, Humtown, for believing in me!"

Click to watch a student-led tour of Humtown's additive manufacturing facility:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ua-e8LYsSow>

The "Next-Gen Industrial Athlete" concept builds on their book, *The Industrial Athlete Operating System*, available at [Amazon](#), [Books-A-Million](#), [Barnes & Noble](#), and [Audible](#).

"To see Humtown win a major national award like this reflects how the Mahoning Valley and the Lake to River Region and Ohio as a whole are stepping up to become national leaders in education-to-career pathways and in building an agile, future-ready workforce — one student at a time," said Tim Figley, Co-Author of The Industrial Athlete Operating System, who also helps shape the student tours and curriculum design at Humtown.

With back-to-back NAM awards, Humtown continues to expand its student-led learning model — inspiring new partnerships, shaping conversations at the local, state, and national levels, working with several new school districts to broaden the program, and preparing to share its model with statewide manufacturing and education leaders — and showing that small businesses can drive national innovation in workforce development.

About [Humtown](#)

Founded over 60 years ago, Humtown Products is a family-owned, ISO 9001 certified business based in Columbiana, Ohio. The company specializes in both conventional analog tooling-based sand cores and molds, and 3D digitally printed sand cores and molds for the foundry industry. Humtown is committed to advancing American manufacturing while nurturing strong, reciprocal relationships with its team and the wider community.

About [National Association of Manufacturers](#)

The National Association of Manufacturers is the largest manufacturing association in the United States, representing small and large manufacturers in every industrial sector and in all 50 states. The NAM is a powerful voice in advancing pro-manufacturing policies and driving innovation across the country.

About the [Manufacturing Leadership Awards](#)

The Manufacturing Leadership Awards, presented by the National Association of Manufacturers, celebrate companies and individuals driving transformational projects across the manufacturing industry through innovation, collaboration, and leadership.





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Additional Resources

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