

AMERICAN FACTORY

美国工厂

Discussion Guide



Welcome To The AMERICAN FACTORY 美国工厂 Community!

This guide is designed to help you use AMERICAN FACTORY 美国工厂 to spark discussions around the future of workers and how that future affects us all. While technology might first come to mind, the future of workers includes topics such as workplace conditions, income, and globalization.

Using this guide, you can begin framing the conversations you would like to have. To do this, think about the goals of your conversation. From there, we invite you to use your organization's materials and / or the resources on our site to engage and take action.

Thank you for joining the conversation!

AMERICAN FACTORY 美国工厂 Discussion Guide

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1. AMERICAN FACTORY 美国工厂 : About The Film

AMERICAN FACTORY 美国工厂, the new film from Academy Award®-nominated directors Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert, documents the revitalization of one long-shuttered factory in Dayton, Ohio while providing a startling glimpse into an economic overhaul playing out in towns and cities across the country – and the world.

The film does not promote an ideology or political agenda, but instead tells a powerful, personal story about how globalization and the loss of industrial jobs affects workers, communities, and the future of work.

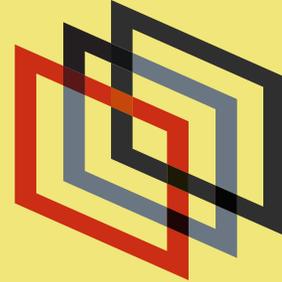


2. Getting Started: How To Host & Start The Conversation

[Click here](#) for more tips on how to set up a screening:

1

How to access the film



2

Who to invite



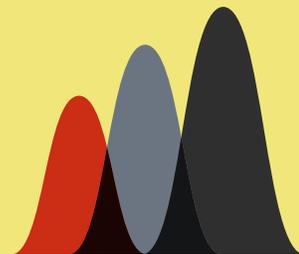
3

Setting a goal and location



4

Promoting your gathering



3. Talking Tips: Building A Productive Conversation

Here are some tips to help you take the lead to ensure you have a productive and engaging group discussion:

Preparation Tips

- As the organizer, read through all of the materials ahead of time to help lead the group through the conversation.
- Identify who will facilitate the gathering.
- Consider who is in the room. Feel free to tailor questions to fit the different backgrounds and perspectives of those coming to the conversation.
- Set your goals. What is your intention for screening this film? What steps can you take to accomplish this?
- As you moderate the conversation, stay aware of who is speaking and who is not. Work to make space for everyone's opinions. Ensure that no one dominates the conversation, and welcome (but don't demand) input from quieter participants.
- If the conversation escalates inappropriately, quiet the group and ask everyone to spend two minutes silently writing down what they're feeling and thinking. Use your judgment to either move on to a different topic or share what everyone wrote.

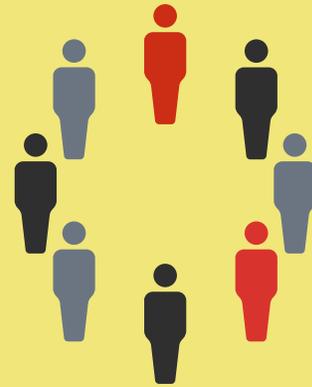
Group Tips

- Appreciate that everyone in the room has good intentions and is also coming to the conversation with their own biases and unique personal experiences.
- Speak for yourself ("I feel...", "I think..."), not on behalf of your identity ("We feel...", "We are...") or other identities ("They think...", "They act like...").
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. Try to not make assumptions. Listen fully to what people have to say.
- Avoid negative judgments, language, and name-calling.
- Be open to feeling uncomfortable. Remember that all growth comes with some discomfort.
- Stay engaged. If you feel frustrated or misunderstood, take a moment but try not to drop out of the conversation.
- Don't dominate the conversation. Everyone gets a chance to speak and be heard.
- Lastly, this is a discussion, not a debate or a lesson.

4. Sparking Discussion

1

Organizers: To set the stage for a good discussion, try to position your group so everyone can see each other (ideally in a circle.)



2

Before you begin posing questions, welcome everyone and read the “Group Tips” section aloud. Once the discussion begins, be sure to monitor the conversation to ensure the “Group Tips” are being followed and the conversation remains civil, fair and productive.



3

Now we’re ready to start! Have each person introduce themselves by name and say why this conversation interests them. Once introductions are finished, you’ll pose the below questions to the group before you play the film.



4. Sparking Discussion (cont.)

a. SETTING THE TONE: PRE-SCREENING QUESTIONS

1. What qualities of your job are most important to you?
2. There is a lot of talk about the need for “good jobs.” What does a good job mean to you?
 - a. Were good jobs available to more people in the past?
 - b. What do job prospects look like for future generations?
3. Who should have a say over working conditions, wages, and benefits?
4. What has been the most significant change you’ve seen in your place of employment, industry, or the economy in the last few years?
5. What do you think are the most important skills to have in today’s job market?
 - a. Where and how should people get them?
6. What concerns do you have about the global economy and where it’s headed?
7. Was there ever a time where you were frustrated about a workplace issue and wanted to do something about it?
 - a. What could you do?
 - b. Did you and your co-workers try to find a unified way to address the issue? Why or why not?
 - c. Are there any resources your workplace did not have that could have helped you address the issue?
8. How do you see your life and experiences within your particular workplace impacting and connecting with your broader community?
9. What comes to mind when you picture factory work?

Once the pre-screening discussion is finished, hit play on the film. You’ll be picking the conversation back up once the film is finished.

DID YOU KNOW THAT?



Source: Arntz, M., T. Gregory and U. Zierahn (2016), “The Risk of Automation for Jobs in OECD Countries: A Comparative Analysis”, OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 189, OECD Publishing, Paris. [View link](#)

2/3

of the jobs that are at highest risk of becoming automated are in fields where most workers don’t have an advanced degree

— OECD SOCIAL, EMPLOYMENT AND MIGRATION WORKING PAPERS

4. Sparking Discussion (cont.)

b. CONNECTING THE DOTS: POST-SCREENING QUESTIONS

Reflect – How are you feeling?

1. Was there an individual in the film that you found inspirational or that you related to the most? What feelings did that person inspire in you?
2. What do you think were the overarching messages of the film?
3. Is there any advice you wanted to give the individuals featured in the film as you watched them navigate the situations?
4. How did the conversation between management and the workers unfold? What about between co-workers? How could the conversations between management and the workers have been improved? What about between co-workers?
5. If you were a worker at Fuyao, what would you do? If you were a manager at Fuyao, what would you do?
6. How can commonality build bridges between co-workers of different backgrounds and experiences?

Think bigger – Exploring the themes and issues that affect you and your gathering

1. When thinking about working for Fuyao, why would workers want to vote to form a union? Why might they vote against a union?
2. Was the campaign for and against the union fair or unfair? Why?
3. Did the film make you think differently about your own workplace and/or working conditions?
4. How did you see health and safety come up in the film?
5. How can we make sure there is democracy in the workplace?
6. How are union representation elections like and unlike elections for Governors, Congress and President?
8. Economic inequality is a growing problem in the industrial world. How did that issue play out in the film and what did it mean for the workers and managers at Fuyao?
9. Did the film highlight any aspects about the direction of the economy that are important to you?
10. How could you influence such issues? How should other groups or people influence those issues?
11. How can this film and discussion be used to deepen your organization's or group's objectives?

5. What Now? Building Next Steps

1

Take a photo or short video of your event and share one thing you'd like to see changed about the future of workers. Post it on social media with the hashtag #AmericanFactory and tag @Participant



2

Join the conversation. How did your discussion go? What does this mean for you? We want to hear from you to understand the larger impact. We may feature your stories on social media and in our newsletter. Click here to get started.



3

What is one thing you can do now to create lasting change in your community? Let us know. Here are some examples:

- a. *Learn more about labor issues via the resources below.*
- b. *Find and support a local nonprofit who works with the community.*
- c. *Share this film with your friends, a local business, local union, or your local government office.*



6. Conversation Language & Jargon

Gig Economy/Platform Economy: Independent workers getting paid for a certain task or project that they complete instead of workers that receive a monthly salary or hourly wage. For example, Lyft, Uber, or Postmates.

Source: Harris, Jonathan & Dr. Istrate, Emilia, "The Future of Work The Rise of the Gig Economy," NACo Counties Futures Lab, November 2017. [View link](#)

Inclusive Economy: An inclusive economy is one that creates opportunity for all people of all backgrounds and experiences to live with dignity, to support themselves and their families, and to help their communities thrive.

Source: "B Inclusive Economy Challenge 2017 Impact Report," B Corps Inclusive Economy Challenge", 2017. [View link](#)

National Labor Relations Act (NLRA): Congress enacted the National Labor Relations Act ("NLRA") in 1935 to protect the rights of employees and employers, to encourage collective bargaining, and to curtail certain private sector labor and management practices, which can harm the general welfare of workers, businesses and the U.S. economy.

Source: "NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS ACT", National Labor Relations Board. [View link](#)

National Labor Relations Board (NLRB): The National Labor Relations Board is an independent federal agency vested with the power to safeguard employees' rights to organize and to determine whether to have unions as their bargaining representative. The agency also acts to prevent and remedy unfair labor practices committed by private sector employers and unions.

Source: "What We Do", National Labor Relations Board. [View link](#)
Source: "Employee Rights", National Labor Relations Board. [View link](#)

Opportunity Employment: Opportunity Employment is a set of principles and associated talent practices that prioritize opportunity and mobility for entry-level and frontline workers while generating business value for the company.

Source: "What Is Opportunity Employment?", Opportunity Navigator, 2019. [View link](#)

Protected Concerted Activity: Giving and allowing employees the chance to practice their rights to attempt to improve pay and working conditions whether involved in a union or not. These employees are protected by the National Labor Relations Board if punished for taking part.

Source: "Protected Concerted Activity", National Labor Relations Board. [View link](#)

Retaliation: Workplace Retaliation is when the employer or management penalizes an employee for taking part in an action that is legally protected under the NLRA. Retaliation includes firing or reducing the salary of an employee.

Source: "Questions and Answers: Enforcement Guidance on Retaliation and Related Issues", U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [View link](#)

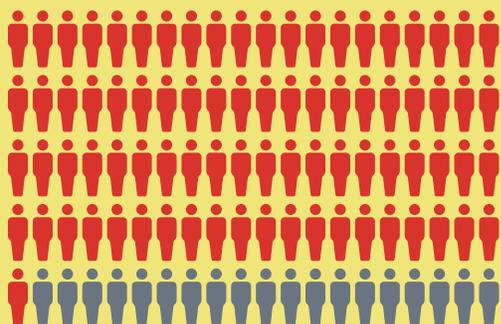
The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC): The EEOC takes responsibility for enforcing federal laws if a worker is discriminated against in the process of employment.

Source: "Overview", U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. [View link](#)

Workplace Democracy: Applying the concept of democratic practices within a workplace including debates, voting, as well as decision making.

Source: "What Is Workplace Democracy?", Williams Center for Learning In Action [View link](#)

DID YOU KNOW THAT?



Citation: Anne Field, Millennials Want Companies Mixing Mission And Money, - Forbes, December 2017

81%

of U.S. Millennials said a successful business needs to have a genuine purpose

— FORBES

7. Who's Who?

Cao Dewang is the CEO, founder and Chairman of Fuyao Glass, the largest automotive glass manufacturer in the world. (Cao Dewang's name is also translated as Cho Tak Wong.)

John Gauthier was president of Fuyao Glass America (FGA) during its early days and was let go.

Dave Burrows was a vice president of Fuyao Glass America during its early days and was fired.

Shimeng He was First Secretary for the Fuyao Communist Party Committee in Fuqing, the head of the Fuyao worker's union, and Chairman Cao's brother-in-law.

Jeff Daochuan Liu takes over as president of Fuyao Glass America after John Gauthier's departure.

Sherrod Brown is the senior U.S. Senator from Ohio.

Daquin "Leon" Liang is lead supervisor in the Furnace area of the OEM Tempering department at the Dayton Fuyao Glass America and a fan of fishing & Hip Hop. OEM stands for "Original Equipment Manufacturing."

Wong He is lead Furnace Engineer in OEM Tempering at Fuyao Glass America, and a 20-plus-year employee of Fuyao who admires his American co-workers' work ethic. His wife and two sons are back in China.

Jill Lamantia is a forklift operator who lost her home when she was laid off by GM. When she first gets a job at Fuyao, Jill is living in her sister's basement. Over time, Jill becomes an outspoken union advocate.

Timi Jernigan is a furnace technician at Fuyao Glass America and

grateful to be one of the company's early hires.

John Crane, safety manager for Fuyao Glass America, grapples with safety, injury and heat issues on the factory floor. John later resigns from the company.

Shawnea Rosser is a pre-treatment inspector for Fuyao Glass America whose hourly wage at GM was \$29 and who starts working at Fuyao for \$12 an hour. Shawnea is pronounced "Sha-NAV."

Cynthia Harper is a lamination specialist at Fuyao who expresses her preference for unionization because of her safety concerns and history of not being listened to by employers.

Robert "Bobby" Allen is a team leader at Fuyao who worked at General Motors for 15 years, and who struggled with low-pay seasonal jobs for years before he was hired by Fuyao, which he calls "the best game in town." Bobby is in the movie *The Last Truck, Closing of a GM Plant*.

Rob Haerr is a furnace supervisor and Harley enthusiast who builds strong ties with the Chinese workers, inviting several for Thanksgiving dinner at his house.

Rebecca Ruan O'Shaughnessy was born in Fuqing, China, but moved to the US as a teenager. Rebecca becomes Fuyao Glass America's first chief counsel, and a right hand person for the Chairman in the U.S.

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

Citation: Sharp, Kristin, Senior Fellow, New America & Co-Founder Shift, Aug 2019.

Most companies report that they would like to provide training opportunities to develop new pipelines of potential workers, but don't know how.

— Kristin Sharp, NEW AMERICA

8. Additional Resources

Learn more about labor issues and how to take action:

[National Employment Law Project \(NELP\)](#)

[Economic Policy Institute \(EPI\)](#)

[AFL-CIO](#)

[Working America](#)

[Guide to talking about workplace issues with coworkers](#)

[Co-worker.org Worker-led Campaigns](#)

[Guide to the PRO Act: Protecting the Right to Organize](#)

Find ways to continue this conversation with your elected representatives [townhallproject.com](#)

Learn about the future of work:

[SHIFT Commission Report of Findings](#)

[Growing Cities that Work For All Report, by Brookings](#)

[Future of Jobs, by World Economic Forum](#)

Learn more about ways companies participate in an inclusive economy and can take action:

[Becoming an Opportunity Employer](#)

[Talent Rewire](#)

Thank you for taking the first step in
safeguarding the future of workers.

Thank you to our group of advisors who helped develop the content for our discussion guide, digital hub, and overall vision – without whom this would not be possible!

Christian Sweeney, [AFL-CIO](#)

Karen Nussbaum, [Working America](#)

Kristin Sharp, [New America](#)

Nicole Trimble, [Talent Rewire](#)

9. About The Filmmakers



STEVEN BOGNAR & JULIA REICHERT (*Directors, Producers*) are Oscar®-nominated documentary filmmakers whose work has screened at Sundance, Telluride, SXSW and other major festivals, as well as on HBO and PBS.

Their film *A Lion in the House*, a co-production with ITVS, premiered at Sundance, screened on the PBS series “Independent Lens” and won a Primetime Emmy®. Their film *The Last Truck: Closing of a GM Plant* premiered at the 2009 Telluride Film Festival, screened on HBO, and was nominated for an Academy Award® for Best Documentary Short in 2010.

Their films have, for the most part, told stories of rank-and-file citizens grappling with questions of agency and how to have a decent life. Reichert’s work, in particular, spanning 50 years of filmmaking, has a through-line of concern for working-class and women’s stories.

Reichert was also Oscar®-nominated for her documentary feature films *Union Maids* (1977) and

Seeing Red: Stories of American Communists (1983). Her first film, *Growing Up Female*, was selected for the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress. She is the 2018 recipient of the IDA Career Achievement Award.

Bognar’s films *Personal Belongings*, *Picture Day* and *Gravel* all premiered at the Sundance Film Festival.

9. About The Filmmakers (cont.)

JEFF REICHERT (*Producer, Cinematographer*) is a filmmaker and critic who lives in Brooklyn. His award-winning feature films include *Gerrymandering* (Tribeca Film Festival 2010), *Remote Area Medical* (Full Frame 2013), *This Time Next Year* (Tribeca Film Festival 2014), and *Feast of the Epiphany* (BAMcinemaFest 2018); and shorts *Kombit* (Sundance 2014), *Nobody Loves Me* (Camden 2017), and *American Carnage* (Field of Vision 2017). Since 2003 he has been the co-founder and editor of the online film journal Reverse Shot, now a publication of Museum of the Moving Image, and has written for numerous other publications including Film Comment, Filmmaker, Huffington Post and IndieWire.

JULIE PARKER BENELLO (*Producer*) is the founder of Secret Sauce Media, which produces and invests in surprising and timeless film projects. She co-founded Chicken & Egg Pictures in 2005 based on the shared belief that diverse women nonfiction storytellers have the power to catalyze change at home and around the globe. She is currently a producer on longtime collaborator Judith Helfand's *Love & Stuff*, and was executive producer on *United Skates* (Tribeca 2018) and *The Tale* (Sundance 2018). Earlier in her career she co-produced Helfand's documentary *Blue Vinyl*, served as a production executive for the company Non Fiction Films, and was an archival researcher for the Discovery Channel series "Cronkite Remembers." Benello serves on the board of SFFILM and is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' documentary branch.

JEFF SKOLL (*Executive Producer*) is an entrepreneur devoted to creating a sustainable world of peace and prosperity. Inspired by the belief that a story well told can change the world, Skoll founded Participant Media in 2004. Participant Media is the world's leading entertainment company focused on advocacy and social impact. Participant has produced more than 80 full-length narrative and documentary films that include *Spotlight*, *Contagion*, *A Fantastic Woman*, *Lincoln*, *The Help* and *Good Night and Good Luck*. Documentary films include *The Look of Silence*, *The Cove*, *Food, Inc.*, *He Named Me Malala*, *CITIZENFOUR*, *Waiting for "Superman"* and *An Inconvenient Truth*. These films collectively have garnered 56 Academy Award® nominations and 12 wins, including Best Picture for *Spotlight* and Best Foreign Language Film for *A Fantastic Woman*. In addition to Participant Media, Skoll's innovative portfolio of philanthropic and commercial enterprises includes the Skoll Foundation and Capricorn Investment Group – all coordinated under the Jeff Skoll Group umbrella.

DIANE WEYERMANN (*Executive Producer*) is President of Documentary Film and Television for Participant Media, a company dedicated to entertainment that inspires and empowers audiences to achieve social change. Participant's recent documentary projects include *The Price of Free*, *RBG*, *America to Me*, *Far From the Tree*, *Human Flow*, *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth To Power*, *The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble* and *Zero Days*. Previous releases include the Oscar®-winning films *CITIZENFOUR* and *An Inconvenient Truth*, the Emmy®-winning *Food, Inc.*, and Emmy®-nominated *The Great Invisible*.

Prior to joining Participant in 2005, Weyermann was the director of the Sundance Institute's Documentary Film Program. During her tenure at Sundance, she was responsible for the Sundance Documentary Fund, a program supporting documentary films dealing with contemporary human rights, social justice, civil liberties and freedom of expression from around the world.

Before her time at Sundance, Weyermann was the director of the Open Society Institute New York's Arts and Culture Program, where she launched the Soros Documentary Fund (which later became the Sundance Documentary Fund).

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