

MOBILIZING THE FACTORY SHOP FLOOR

A quiet evolution has been taking place on the factory or shop floor writ large, and it's changing the face of manufacturing.

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In its heyday, manufacturing output was a measure of a nation's power and might. The industrialized complex was as much an economic barometer as it was a national security deterrent and source of pride and patriotism. Today, the digital revolution is modernizing how goods are produced and new technologies and processes are bringing exciting visions of the future to life.

Envisioning innovation

The shop floor of tomorrow will not be like anything we see today, as the tools and machines of yesterday are being upgraded to be able to connect with mobile technologies and the cloud. From the internet of things, to wearable computing, social, robotics and 3-D printers that print industrial materials like carbon fiber, the tools on the mobilized shop floor create a flexible production platform.

The massive buildings that housed lengthy production lines are a far cry from the leading-edge small and mid-sized manufacturers that are leveraging this age of digital transformation to shift manufacturing models to better enable diversification and optimization of production.

Seeing more, responding sooner

Mobile devices have become strategically important in giving manufacturing companies a competitive advantage. For example, integrating mobile CRM systems with the ordering process can improve customer responsiveness by providing information to sales teams on inventory levels and available-to-promise dates.

This real-time responsiveness can really make the difference between making a sale or not. In addition,

for make-to-order manufacturers, mobile integration of configuration and pricing options accelerates the quoting process and eliminates costly mistakes.

Better cost-efficiency

Manufacturers' production costs relate to both the materials required to create an item as well as the labor needed to create it. Mobile devices are also being utilized to monitor production performance to keep costs down. By leveraging dashboards accessible from mobile devices, managers can get real-time updates on shop floor capacity and issues, as they happen. Managers can also report customer production changes or quality issues to the shop floor electronically, improving product quality and saving companies thousands of dollars in the production process.

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The transformation of the shop floor will only continue at exponentially accelerated paces. A mobile infrastructure as the backbone of the transformation removes significant barriers, as manufacturers have absolute visibility and control over more

aspects of the production process. The results are tremendous benefits that will help manufacturers improve the customers experience and generate a greater return on investment through a more diverse and optimized production

capability. As mobile technology becomes faster and more robust, product designers will be pressured to keep pace with creating great products that are timely and poised to capture the market opportunity when it presents itself.

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