Three strategies for boosting operational innovation

How industrial manufacturing operations leaders are using technology to overcome complexity

Industrial manufacturing COOs need reliable, adaptable operations that thrive on complexity—rather than breaking under it. With the right approach and technology investment, you can build operations that do just that, no matter what disruptions come your way.

The barriers to innovation

While many have made strides in building efficient operations, achieving predictability and adaptability in today's complex and fast-changing environment requires overcoming key challenges:

1/3

of surveyed manufacturers cite transportation and logistics costs as a primary business challenge, making supply chain uncertainty a consistent challenge.[1]

85%

of industrial manufacturers report difficulties in finding skilled workers, meaning operations leaders must find different ways to compensate for lost manpower.[2]

50%

productivity gap for low complexity jobs between average- and high-performing industrial manufacturers, highlighting an opportunity to boost efficiency.[3]

Building processes that enable innovation

Here are three focus areas for running operations that are ready for whatever comes next:

1 Regionalize your supply chain

With looming environmental concerns, now is the time to move production closer to demand. 85% of manufacturers are already aiming to regionalize their supply chains by 2026 to avoid rising CBAM tariffs and reduce flight emissions.[4] Some are going one step further, reshoring their entire production line to **better connect systems for greater visibility** shorter, more resilient processes, and up-to-the-minute status of all supply.[5]

2 Enhance agility through AI

To address challenges such as increasing labor shortages, 41% of organizations are turning to AI to **automate complex, manual processes**, reducing costs and sharpening up resource.[6] Others are using exoskeletons, copilots, and AR/VR training to boost productivity, safety, and even demand forecasting. This helps operations leaders develop agile, adaptable strategies that flex with disruption.

3 Optimize operations with digital twins

By embracing digital twins, operations leaders can cut planning cycles by 30% and support real-time simulation while also optimizing layouts, energy usage, and operations.[4] To ensure complete accuracy in doing this, **operations leaders need access to the right data at the right time**—leading to more effective decision-making and greater opportunity to drive continuous improvement.

How Infor Process Mining helped Oberg eliminate inefficiencies

Global contract manufacturer Oberg Industries had to speak to dozens of team members to understand where operational inefficiencies sat. By implementing Infor Process Mining, leaders get instant GenAI-powered summaries of exactly where to eliminate manual, time-consuming tasks. This led to an 80–90% on time delivery to customers, which the organization expects to increase, as well as smarter, faster decision-making for boosting innovation.

Ready to make possible happen in your industrial manufacturing organization?

Discover how AI and advanced technologies can help your organization build smarter, more resilient operations in the face of complexity

Learn more

1. Deloitte, '2025 Manufacturing Industry Outlook' (2025). Available at: www.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/manufacturing-industrial-products/manufacturing-industry-outlook.html
2. Local and Global Eco, 'Labor Shortages: A Growing Challenge in the Global Manufacturing Sector' (2024). Available at: www.localandglobaleco.com/2024/10/19/labor-shortages-a-growing-challenge-in-the-global-manufacturing-sector/
3. McKinsey, 'Investing in the manufacturing workforce to accelerate productivity' (2025). Available at: www.mckinsey.com/industries/aerospace-and-defense/our-insights/investing-in-the-manufacturing-workforce-to-accelerate-productivity
4. StartUs Insights, 'Future of Manufacturing: 13 Trends Driving 2026-2035 Growth' (2025). Available at: www.startus-insights.com/innovators-guide/future-of-manufacturing/
5. BBC News, 'Why firms are bringing their manufacturing back home' (2024). Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-68500499
6. ZDNET, 'Manufacturing firms are using AI to fill labor shortages - but this human skill still matters' (2025). Available at: www.zdnet.com/article/manufacturing-firms-are-using-ai-to-fill-labor-shortages-but-this-human-skill-still-matters/

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