

Take the simple path to smart manufacturing

Leading producers, who have embraced “smart manufacturing” by extending their IT network to the production floor, realize significant benefits such as lower costs, increased productivity, faster time to market, improved uptime and more accurate forecasting. Obtaining these competitive advantages, however, may require investments in network connectivity, infrastructure, cybersecurity and other solutions.



Manufacturers say a lack of a clear path forward is a top barrier to digital transformation at their companies.¹

Here’s a roadmap to help your business simplify the journey to smart manufacturing.

1 Follow a guide who knows the way

Like hiring a knowledgeable tour guide to take you farther, faster and with less risk upon your adventure, working with an experienced and trusted technology partner is the best way to simplify your digital transformation journey. The right partner works alongside you to define your exact business needs and tailors networking solutions to meet them.



>60% of manufacturers are working with specialized technology companies to further their smart manufacturing initiatives.²



2 Identify what you want to accomplish on your journey

When mountain climbing, knowing what you want to achieve will help you reach the summit. Likewise, clearly defined goals for integrating your digital network with your physical operations can foster the right technology adoption from the beginning.



48% of manufacturers said that reduced costs are digital transformation’s greatest benefit.³



3 Plot your path

To reach the summit, you’ll need to plot the best path to your destination. Plan your approach to smart manufacturing and how you want that journey to unfold. Prioritize initiatives that will provide the highest impact with the lowest risk. Identify the key business drivers — and challenges — that will inform the capabilities of your network over the long term.

4 Gather an experienced group

It’s risky to venture into the unknown alone. Surround yourself with experts who can inform and share the work of making the right technology investments. Your project should include an executive sponsor as well as people skilled in IT, operational technology and production, each with clearly assigned roles. An experienced technology services provider can help fill any gaps and offer guidance along the way.

5 Make sure you have the right gear

Take stock of what you have and what you will need to successfully reach your goals. On the path to smart manufacturing, this includes things like the ability to integrate your digital infrastructure with the industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) and the capability to easily adopt emerging technologies.



78% of manufacturing leaders say digital solutions enhance visibility throughout the supply network.⁴



6 Train for your adventure

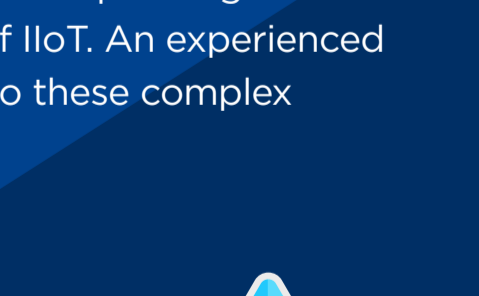
Beginners don’t start out by climbing Mt. Everest. They train on smaller peaks to build their skills. The equivalent for smart manufacturing can be a limited, temporary pilot project. Be sure this aligns with one of the use cases and business goals you’ve identified for your broader initiative. Then analyze data from the pilot to identify its impact on that goal.

7 Expect the unexpected

When you’re out in nature, you need to be aware of threats in your surroundings. Manufacturers also face threats related to expanding cloud adoption, a mobile workforce and the rapid growth of IIoT. An experienced service provider can bring a multi-layered approach to these complex security challenges.



70% of ransomware attacks tracked in one study impacted the manufacturing sector in Q2, 2023.⁵



The path to smart manufacturing can be as rewarding as it is challenging for your business. Reach your destination with the right planning and an expert technology partner to guide you along your way.

[Learn more](#)

1. Evelyn DuJack, “Digital Transformation in Manufacturing: Trends and Challenges,” L2L, October 23, 2023.
 2. John Edwards, “How Smart Factories Will Revolutionize Manufacturing,” Information Week, November 28, 2023.
 3. Evelyn DuJack, “Digital Transformation in Manufacturing: Trends and Challenges,” L2L, October 23, 2023.
 4. Paul Wellener, Kate Hardin, Stephen Gold, Stephen Laaper and Aaron Parrott, “Meeting the Challenge of Supply Chain Disruption,” Deloitte Insights, September 21, 2022.
 5. Abdulrahman H. Alamri, “Dragos Industrial Ransomware Attack Analysis: Q2 2023,” Dragos, July 31, 2023.

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