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Thriving Industrial Machinery & Equipment leaders know when technology outperforms expectations. It's driven by culture.

POINT OF VIEW

Executive Summary

Industrial Machinery and Equipment (IM&E) manufacturers have never invested more in digital technology, yet many are unable to translate that investment into measurable productivity. The challenge is not the availability of advanced systems, but how effectively people use them.

High-performing IM&E leaders treat technology not as a standalone initiative, but as a valued member of the organization, one that informs decisions, supports teams, and continuously improves performance. They align leadership, culture, and systems so that insight leads to action, accountability is clear and productivity becomes repeatable rather than one-off successes.

When leaders invest as much in adoption, trust, and empowerment as they do in platforms, technology becomes a human advantage. Productivity accelerates. Margins stabilize. Customer outcomes improve.

Closing the value void is not about deploying more tools. It is about leading differently and building a culture that knows how to turn technology into impact.

> “Technology sets the platform. Culture determines the performance.”

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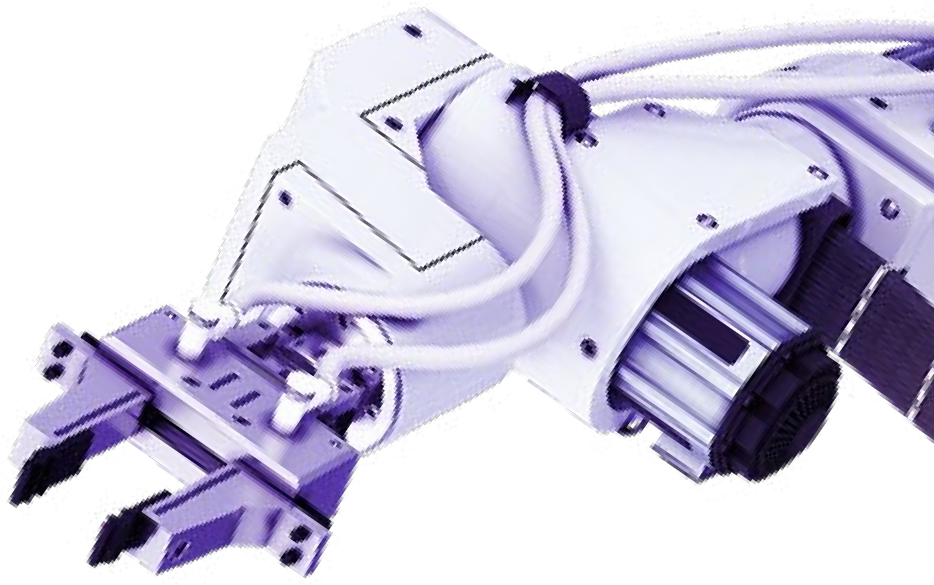


> The next wave of productivity will come from leaders who connect systems, strategy, and people.

Industrial Machinery and Equipment manufacturers face surmounting challenges.

Product lifecycles are shrinking. Customers expect personalized, engineered-to-order equipment. Service revenues are rising faster than product revenues. And smart, connected machines are flooding operations with data, but not always with insight.

The industry is shifting from making products to delivering outcomes across the entire equipment lifecycle. According to the *How Possible Happens Industrial Manufacturing Report*, while 82% of industrial manufacturers agree that their future success depends on new technologies too many IM&E firms still fail to turn those technologies into measurable performance. That gap between digital ambition and operational reality is what Infor™ identifies as *the value void*.

Common challenges for manufacturing:

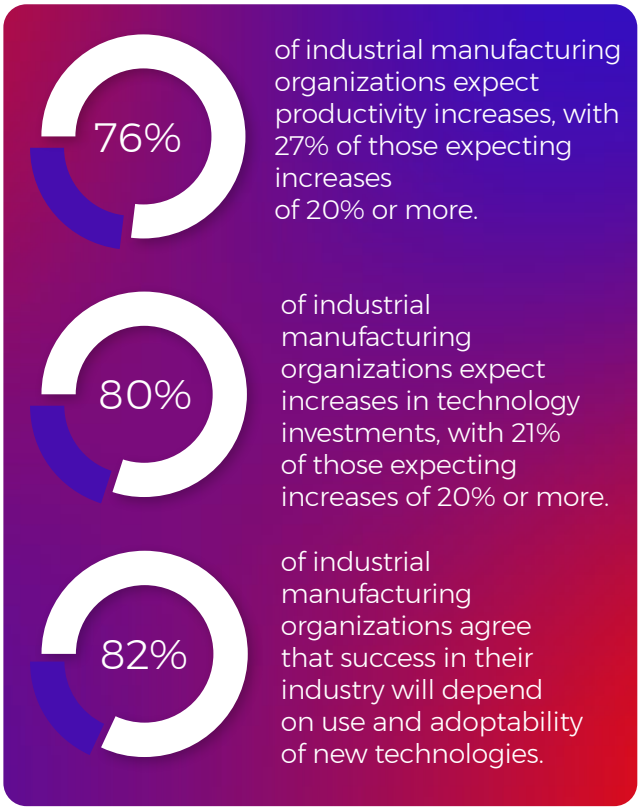
- **Engineering, production, and service teams run different versions of the truth.**
- **Feature-rich systems are deployed, but only partially adopted.**
- **Data exists, but decision-making remains instinct-driven.**
- **Customers demand customization, but processes remain rigid.**
- **Profitability is eroded by rework, delays, and disconnected workflows.**

High-performing IM&E manufacturers aren't differentiated by tools. They're differentiated by the cultures that know how to use them.

> A straightforward application in the past may have taken us 10-15 minutes to put together the initial component.
>
> It could then take the same amount of time to put additional components on the quotation to fulfill the entire quote.
>
> **Kenny Gilmour**
> Parts Manager, Combilift

Why technology alone won't solve IM&E's productivity challenge

Infor's How Possible Happens industry-specific?* research found that industrial manufacturers understand that technology is a way to unlock productivity, customer loyalty, and agility. Infor highlights a critical insight; 'Technology investment is high but value realization is low.'



In IM&E, this problem is amplified because the industry carries:

1. **Complex production models:** MTS (Make-to-Stock), MTO (Make-to-Order), ATO (Assemble-to-Order), ETO (Engineer-to-Order) - often all four at once. Manufacturers frequently switch modes, requiring systems that adapt without workarounds.
2. **Project-centric operating models:** Margins depend on the accuracy of WBS structures, cost-to-completion, subcontractor visibility, and milestone tracking.
3. **Rising demand for personalized, configured equipment:** Customers increasingly expect feature-rich, highly customized machinery without extended lead times.
4. **Growth of aftermarket and "as-a-service" models:** More businesses now depend on service contracts, rentals, parts, and field service for predictable revenue.
5. **Connected products producing real-time usage data:** Too few manufacturers turn this intelligence into predictive maintenance, redesign insight, or new revenue streams.

These pressures create a perfect storm where manufacturers lean heavily on technology but fail to unlock its full value.

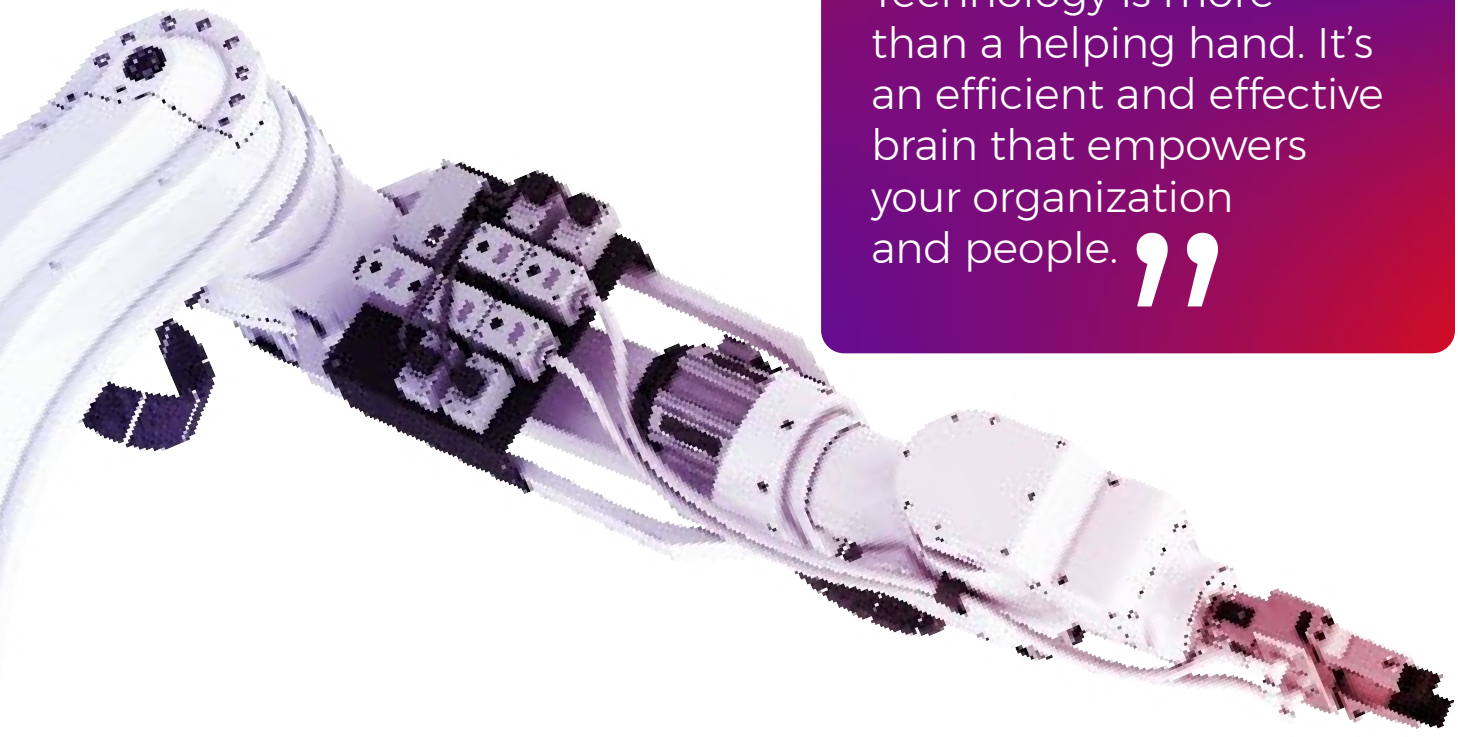
Why? Because technology adoption isn't an IT challenge. It's a cultural one. Productivity remains elusive not because technology is lacking, but because of misunderstanding and misalignment.

*Infor Industrial Manufacturing Report p. 8–11.

Why culture drives technology success

1. **Leadership mindset:** Leaders who foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement are the ones who see technology deliver outsized results.
2. **Empowered workforce:** A culture that empowers employees to experiment, learn, and adapt ensures that digital transformation is a company-wide capability.
3. **Collaboration & trust:** Technology thrives in organizations where cross-functional collaboration is encouraged.
4. **Resilience in change:** A culture that embraces agility and change helps leaders maximize the value of AI, IoT, and cloud-driven systems.

> “Technology is more than a helping hand. It’s an efficient and effective brain that empowers your organization and people.”



POINT OF VIEW

What high-performing industrial manufacturers do differently

The industrial manufacturing report revealed four consistent traits among the most productive industrial manufacturers, the *Vectors to Value*. Each vector represents the behaviors, capabilities, and cultural shifts that turn investment into impact.

1 They treat data as a strategic asset, not an exhaust output.

Industrial manufacturers face a 42.3% global performance gap in using data for productivity (HPH Report, p.20).

High performers overcome this by:

- **Giving teams real-time visibility across engineering, production, and service.**
- **Applying Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning (AI/ML) forecasting to plan capacity and predict downtime.**
- **Using real-world machine data to improve next-generation product design.**

Lesson: **Data only drives value when teams can interpret and trust it.**

Use-case example:

DeXter RESEARCH CENTER

"Every week we encounter or realize another aspect of the system (CloudSuite Industrial SyteLine) that can help us improve our efficiency."

Cory Ziegler
CFO, Dexter

2 They build operational agility into their culture.

Volatility isn't a surprise anymore; it's the operating environment. High performers accept this and build flexibility in to how people work.

That means:

- **Engineering teams using Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) change histories to adapt quickly.**
- **Production teams using Advanced Planning and Scheduling (APS) and scenario planning to shift workloads.**
- **Leadership empowering teams to adapt without waiting for approval.**

Lesson: **Agility isn't a feature. It's a mindset.**

Use-case example:

W.

"APS has proven powerful in keeping our shop floor working on the right product at the right time while helping us be aggressive with our commitments to our customers."

Kyle Meyers
ERP Administrator, Worden Group

3 They turn automation into an advantage, not just efficiency.

Automation in IM&E isn't about replacing people; it's about elevating them.

Leaders automate the high-friction areas:

- **Invoice processing, automated matching, and dispute resolution.**
- **Return Material Authorization (RMA) handling and warranty workflows.**
- **Order entry automation and change management approvals.**

Lesson: **Automation frees teams to innovate, not repeat.**

Use-case example:

ARNOLD machine

"We needed one system that could give us accurate data and grow with us."

Zach Arnold
President, Arnold Machine

4 They define productivity by customer impact.

The most advanced IM&E manufacturers measure productivity by the value customers experience.

They:

- **Improve customer uptime, not just internal output.**
- **Protect service margins through accurate, visible data.**
- **Deliver lifecycle value, not just shipping equipment.**

Lesson: **Productivity is only real when the customer feels it.**

Use-case example:

DMC DANIELS MANUFACTURING CORPORATION

"It (SyteLine) allows us better visibility over our manufacturing processes and control over costs and meeting manufacturing delivery times."

Scott Frankenfield
IT Manager, Daniels Mfg Corp

Beyond the report: How you can act now

1 Start small, scale fast

Are you prioritizing pilot projects with the highest potential for measurable impact?

Big ambitions start with focused proof points. High performers begin with pilot projects such as predictive maintenance, smart scheduling, and ESG visibility to deliver tangible ROI quickly. These wins build confidence and momentum for scaling.

Where to start for IM&E manufacturers:

- **Automate ETO/MTO configuration through CPQ.**
- **Launch a predictive maintenance pilot using connected machine data.**
- **Test APS for a single product line to prove capacity gains.**

2 Maximize current technological investments

Are you fully realizing the potential of your existing technology before moving to the next wave of investment?

Most manufacturers already have the right systems in place, but they're not using them to their full capabilities. Leaders who prioritize training, adoption, and integration extract more value from existing platforms before investing in new ones.

Use existing technology fully before adding more:

- **Audit underused PLM, CPQ, APS, or service modules.**
- **Ensure engineering and manufacturing share the same product definitions.**
- **Enforce adoption of project costing through WBS standards.**
- **Eliminate Excel-based "shadow systems".**

> When organizations undertake a large-scale transformation, research shows that their efforts fail about 70%.
>
> **McKinsey and Company, 2022**

> Godlan came and learned all about how we operate on a day-to-day basis. They executed it so we could see how this will work for us and how the company as a whole can grow.
>
> **Maggie Schade**
> ERP Systems Coordinator
> Arnold Machine

3 Measure what matters

Do you measure productivity outcomes or just technology adoption milestones?

The report outlines that manufacturers frequently measure technology activity (deployments, go-lives) instead of technology outcomes (productivity, output, resilience).

> Managers and team members have personalized KPI homepages set up that they can make informed business decisions without having to go on to the production shop floor, or comb through information on the ERP system.
>
> **Fintan Sherry**
> Production Manager, Combilift

This tells us that productivity is not proven at launch, it's proven in progress. By tying technology projects to business KPIs like throughput, downtime, or customer delivery accuracy, leaders ensure every initiative drives the results that matter.

High performers track IM&E specific KPIs:

- **Engineering change cycle time.**
- **On-time delivery for ETO/MTO products.**
- **Service-first-time fix rates.**
- **Cost-to-completion accuracy.**
- **Project gross margin variance.**
- **Machine performance and uptime.**

Tie each initiative to one measurable

4 Empower people to drive value

Are your people empowered to act on real-time insights, or are you just collecting more data?

Even the best systems fail without engaged teams. The most successful leaders build digital confidence, cross-functional collaboration, and a culture where people are trusted to act on insight.

Actions for IM&E manufacturers:

- **Provide role-based dashboards across engineering production service.**
- **Reward teams for improving delivery time, margins, and uptime.**
- **Establish a shared understanding of product and project data.**
- **Break down silos between IT, production, engineering and service.**

Oberg was struggling with slow delivery and poor visibility due to a fragmented on-premise ERP. By moving to Infor CloudSuite™ Industrial with Infor, they unified operations on a single cloud platform, achieving a **90% on-time delivery rate while continuing to produce highly customized equipment.**

Bridging ambition and understanding

IM&E manufacturers don't lack ambition, they lack alignment.

The value void often comes down to a missing link between technology and the people using it. Closing that gap means making digital understanding universal, from the boardroom to the factory floor. When everyone can see how technology supports their role, productivity stops being a management objective and becomes an everyday practice.

> "Technology sets the stage. Leadership and people make the performance."

Closing the gap: Are your people tech-ready?

The 'value void' is real – but it's not permanent.

Every IM&E manufacturer faces the gap between technology's promise and productivity.

The good news? The most productive manufacturers prove it can be closed.

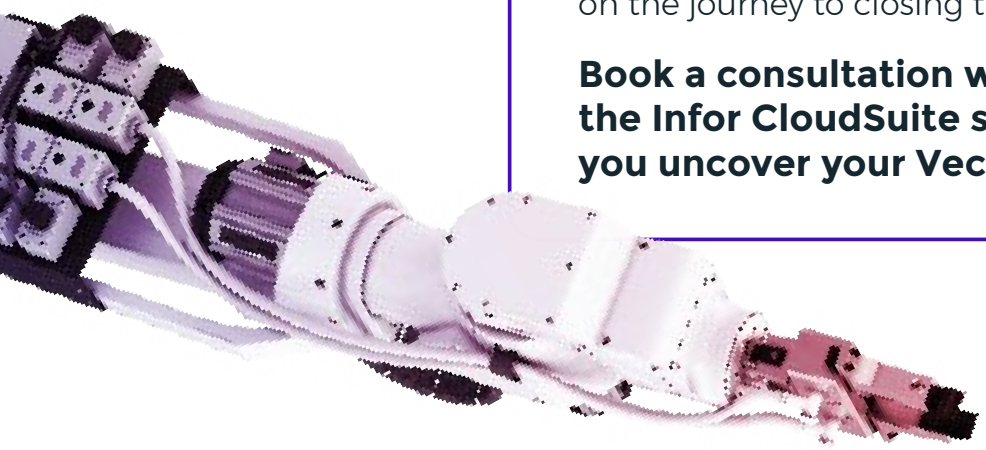
Strong foundational systems like Infor CloudSuite solutions give IM&E leaders the platform, the data and the agility needed to build a high-performing, future ready organization.

Those that succeed – will be the ones that act now: aligning leadership, enabling teams, and using data to guide every decision.

Infor's global research confirms that the most productive IM&E manufacturers share one thing in common, they've turned technology into a human advantage.

Let's take the next steps together.

1. **Audit your value void:**
   Start with a CloudSuite Readiness Workshop.
2. **Identify two Vectors to activate first:**
   Start by identifying a problem. Identify a process or use case that most appeals to your organization and align it with the relevant vector.
3. **Align culture before scaling technology:**
   High performers scale with clarity.
4. **Scale ESG:**
   Test. Prove. Expand. Measure. Repeat.



Want to know where your organization sits on the journey to closing the value void?

Book a consultation with us to see how the Infor CloudSuite solutions can help you uncover your Vectors to Value.

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