

5 REASONS WHY INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION WILL CHANGE THE FUTURE OF YOUR BUSINESS

As concepts like Industry 4.0, digital transformation and smart manufacturing attract the attention of those who own or run businesses, many of us speak to have more questions than answers. You may be one of them?

Automation vendors publish a lot of information, but much focuses on their technology and how it differs from others, rather than the business outcomes possible.

We believe a clearer explanation of the benefits industrial automation can bring is needed. Development of an automation strategy to deliver your business goals is then straightforward and doesn't require in-depth technical knowledge.

Your business's strategic objectives will determine whether the aim of investment is to increase production capacity, eliminate defects, reduce costs, something else, or a combination of these. Automation can provide a wide range of benefits so it pays to understand the possibilities before thinking about the best technology to deliver them.

“So let us review some of the ‘side’ benefits automation can bring, then give you more information on how you can implement it in your business.”

- Richard Banyard

Of course this isn't a comprehensive list, once the concept of automation is bought into a business it can drive improvements in almost every area. However we've chosen to highlight benefits a company without extensive industrial automation in place can expect to see, over and above long-term cost savings.

1. INCREASE PRODUCTION CAPACITY

Is your production capacity constrained by the number of experienced staff you have on shift?

It's an uncomfortable truth, but machines work faster than humans, and don't fatigue. They can run for long periods delivering consistent output and quality. They process and store huge amounts of data faster than ever. Increasing throughput can be as easy as asking more from your existing machines until practical limitations on how quickly product can be manipulated are reached.

Upgrades and enhancements then enable continuous improvement, which once deployed 'locks in' a higher level of performance, unlike relying on experienced staff to deliver performance increases.

2. USE HUMAN RESOURCE MORE EFFICIENTLY

How much time do your people waste on tasks which don't need them to think?

Instead of spending much of their day on manual tasks or operating machinery, people can be better deployed to pro-active maintenance and improvement activities. Using data gathered automatically, and made available using easy to interrogate interfaces, your staff can spot early warning signs and take remedial action before failures occur, maximising equipment availability and minimising disruptions to operation.

Data gathered during production or used in manufacturing can be accessed and shared on the IT network, automatically populating error-free production reports for better accuracy of management accounting, which in turn leads to greater confidence in corporate performance forecasting.

3. IMPROVE QUALITY, REDUCE DEFECTS

What's your cost of poor quality? How does this change when deadlines get tight or customers have special requirements?

People make mistakes, but machines only make mistakes when human operators or programmers prove themselves fallible. Automated processes are more reliable, quicker and produce more consistent results.

Products can be personalised in ways not previously possible, allowing customers' needs to be better served without the previous overhead required to re-tool or equip machinery.

With product quality consistently high and the rate of production more easily and accurately predicted, better quality is deliverable in a more predictable time frame. Delivery lead times may be given with confidence they will be fulfilled, maintaining or even enhancing your reputation.

4. SAFER WORKPLACE

Is your shop floor safe by design, or does it require staff to work in a state of constant vigilance?

Over recent decades factories have become cleaner, safer and quieter places where accidents are the exception rather than the rule. Safety procedures are more thorough, better applied and enforced by legislation.

Modern production machinery is better guarded, with more and better safety features and interlocks. The latest machines add automated safety monitoring and shutdown features to the pre-existing manual, and also place operators in a safe area from where they are able to read operational information and make control inputs from a remote console. Risk

assessment, management and control measures are fulfilled at the process design stage and would need only periodic review.

5. ENGAGED WORKFORCE

Is everyone in your organisation working towards a common goal?

Empower employees to drive your company's performance. Incentivise them to make continuous improvements by equipping them with key performance indicators in real-time. We're not just talking about staff on location here: imagine being able to alert sales people of a lull in planned production on Thursday afternoon, encouraging them to win orders to fill the gap.

Move away from relying on experienced staff to train and motivate others, then seeing performance dip when key people leave. Equip everyone with the tools and knowledge needed to perform at the highest level from day one.

MODERN PRODUCTION NEEDS MODERN PROCESSES TO COMPETE

Industrial automation is proving indispensable to others. Is it time you included it in your business plan?

There may be opportunity to streamline your business, cut costs and increase profits but more importantly it will improve your offer to customers, setting you on course to be seen as a flexible and reliable supplier, and a provider of desirable jobs with prospects for employees.

Experienced help is available, and our passion is to support innovation. We can work together to identify the needs of your business plan and review your production processes, covering your people, processes and technology. From that we would suggest actions to get them all working together at their best, to implement a long-term scalable strategy for your automation.

To start the conversation a good place to begin is with the Op-tec Intelligence Report. Its purpose is to help you look at automation in a different way. Not just as a means of reducing costs, but as a way of connecting your people, processes and technology to build the future of your business.

Be the business who is ready to look at automation in a different way.

Interested in having a conversation about the impact automation will have on your business? [Click here](#) to arrange a call or get in touch with us today on 0161 660 4293.

