

TOP 10 MANUFACTURING CHALLENGES YOU NEED TO BEAT

Digital commerce has turned the old days of enterprise resource planning (ERP) on its head, and with it, upended every rule of how to manage an increasingly complicated supply chain. At first, adjusting may seem as daunting as turning a pack of wild dogs into an Iditarod team, but it may be easier than you think. Set your sights on conquering these challenges one at a time, and you'll be ready to enjoy your success in the post-digital world of manufacturing.

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TURNING LACK OF VISIBILITY INTO COLLABORATION

Without the ability to see the entire supply chain from a 30,000-foot view, each person or department along the way can become isolated, with processes occurring in internal vacuums. End-to-end visibility can have a powerful effect on overall productivity, as most hiccups in the supply chain occur when products and responsibilities change hands.



Having the ability to quickly compile and visualize data down to extremely small granular levels can help you pinpoint exactly where your supply chain needs improvement, providing exacting data to guide the process without waste. The flexibility of the solutions offered by NBS allows you to adapt to those changes and can be tailored to fit your specific needs.

SMART SUPPLY CHAIN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

No matter the size of your business, resources are finite. The smaller your business, the more agile your supply chain data visualization needs should be so you can effectively plan for and respond to the constantly changing needs of your vendors, suppliers, and customers. Without smart ERP, waste and inventory mismanagement are inevitable -- and with them, lost profits.

Being able to visualize your supply chain in up-to-the-moment analytics allows you to react to a constantly-changing commerce environment. It's only slated to get more complex from here, and it's more crucial than ever to make sure your shipments get where they need to go, and only where they need to go.



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RED TAPE READINESS

Compliance and regulatory issues can hamstring any business of any size, but it can be devastating to a small or mid-size manufacturing business trying to break into a national or global market. As ecommerce turns the globe into a level customer playing field, manufacturers will have to maintain the ability to follow rules across multiple borders. Even in the U.S., labeling compliance across state lines can quickly become a headache.



Data warehousing also involves maintaining up-to-date regulatory requirements, so you can be prepared for changes instead of having to shut down in the event of a violation or audit.

KEEPING YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN LEAN

Storing and shipping inventory can quickly eat up a budget if you're not using accurate data to forecast your inventory needs all the way down to the pallet. Forecasting can help you manage your manufacturing personnel, anticipate weather-related slowdowns, and make sure you have enough people in the right places to keep up with demand.

It can also dramatically increase savings internally, with easy-to-use dashboards that allow anyone to synthesize a visual-heavy report to better leverage data into profitable results. Every saved dollar matters in the post-digital era, from time spent by analysts compiling reports, to the amount saved printing paper reports. The goal is to uncover all the big and small ways robust, data-based ERP can keep your entire operation lean.



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UNDERSTANDING THE OMNICHANNEL

Instead of running to keep ten or twenty separate plates spinning, becoming "omnichannel-read" is like learning how to spin all the plates in one big stack. After all, though one item may be shipping to a customer who purchased online and another to a retail location, they're all being manufactured and shipped out of your doors.



And ultimately, that's the perspective from which you should be managing your supply chain. You should be able to look at a single dashboard and know exactly where your buyers are coming from and where your inventory is going. If you can't yet, it's time to start the process of digitizing your operation with cloud-based ERP.

HEARING THE CUSTOMER'S VOICE

Customers live in a new world of information- and media-rich ecommerce experiences, and they expect to get every ounce of information they need on a single page. Whatever isn't on the page should be instantly available through a variety of customer service interactions, and customization is the key to the customer's heart.

That's a lot of expectations to manage, and might seem impossible to manage without the data collection possibilities available through a cloud-based platform. Luckily, customers want to tell you what they want. The challenge is keeping up with the options, from chat platforms to call centers, and turning the collected data into effective product upgrades and line expansions. Cloud-based platforms like those offered by NBS can help by automating much of this data collection, and putting it into useful visuals that speed customer service and streamline the design process.



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INVENTORY COST MANAGEMENT

Your inventory costs money. The longer it exists as "inventory" and not sold product on the way to a customer, it is costing money to sit in a warehouse. Similarly, if you're scrambling to fill orders in California but your closest warehouse capable of shipping this high-demand item is in the Midwest, those extra miles can seriously eat into your profits.



Both problems can be solved with up-to-the-minute analytics and forecasting, and products like those offered by NBS can help you keep product moving intelligently from your warehouses to the waiting hands of customers. The smaller your company, the more important it is to keep as little product in warehouse limbo as possible, keeping your inventory costs low.

GOING GLOBAL

You can try to keep it local, but you still must be able to compete in a global selling market, and that means your website needs to be translatable and you need to be able to accept payments from around the world. From currency specifications to local compliance issues and regulations, ecommerce needs have grown beyond the shopping cart and digital payment platform sign-ins. Customers from all over the world want it all, all in one place.

Since the ecommerce capabilities wrought by the internet exploded, the reality of a global market may seem daunting, but it doesn't have to be when you're using SAP's suite in a box ERP tools.



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CUSTOMER-FACING TRANSPARENCY

Customers love the instant gratification and sense of control shopping online gives them. Now, a high level of transparency has become an expectation for every online shopping experience. It's not enough to track every scan point during the shipping process, but customers also want to know where their order stands internally without having to check in with a salesperson or a customer service agent.



The same internal clarity and transparency offered by cloud-based ERP can also help your customers to feel secure in their buying experience -- a modern essential when attracting repeat customers.

INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC REGULATIONS

Every separate manufacturing industry must conform to a certain number of regulations, plus a host of regulations for the sales and shipping portion of the process. It can become even more complicated when you're manufacturing in a heavily and intricately regulated industry if you don't have a data warehousing platform in place that can handle binder-busting stack of regulatory requirements.

When the watchful eyes of inspectors are so keen, you should be able to stand behind the comprehensive data warehousing practices employed by your ERP platform. Stay on top of the regulations, not running to catch up before your money runs out.



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