

CONSIDERATIONS FOR MANUFACTURERS WHEN EVALUATING AUTOMATION

SKILL & LABOUR AVAILABILITY

A common misconception is that automation replaces humans when in fact the opposite is true. Through automation, humans are able to fulfil more meaningful tasks removing them from those that are repetitive and may be even hazardous.

Roles in manufacturing processes that are monotonous and repetitive can be difficult to fill and due to their very nature are often open to human error. Automating process and handling roles can improve production output and quality due to standardisation not possible with human intervention. Redeploying workers to higher value tasks improves job satisfaction due to learning added skills and acquiring further expertise enabling employers to be competitive.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Consider what value automation can bring in the long term and how long it will take to achieve a return on investment. It is important to look beyond the ROI, considering what cost savings can be made beyond the initial hardware, software and other set up costs such as increased productivity, improved processes, consistent product quality and increased competitiveness.

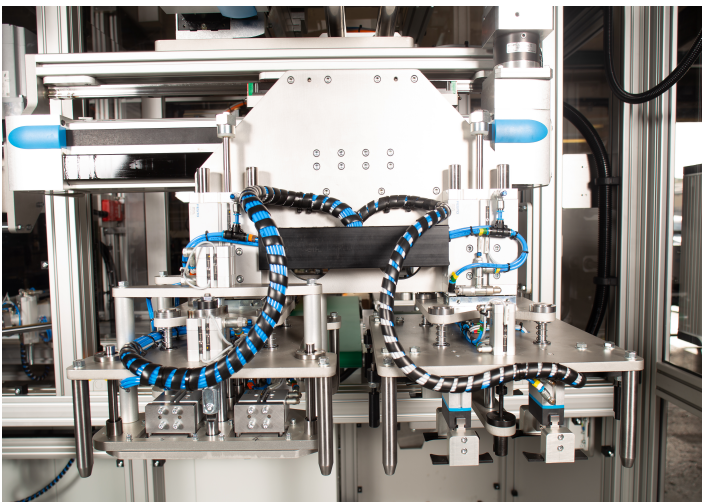


FLEXIBILITY

Automation should be flexible enough to meet both existing and new requirements. Production line changes and assembly to meet customer demands can be challenging due to multiple product offerings. It is important to consider ease of use, how quickly the automation can be up and running and the availability of pre-programmed tasks.

ADAPTABILITY

Automation can provide a rapid return on investment even for small and medium manufacturers, especially those challenged by skilled labour shortages, high consumer demand or shrinking employee availability. Adaptable manufacturers will benefit from automation enabling smarter and more connected processes, helping them to increase their competitiveness in the marketplace.



IDEAL FOR SMEs

No longer the domain of large automotive manufacturers, smaller manufacturers are rapidly increasing their use of automated solutions, which are easy to program, simple and intuitive with minimal training required. Any solution should easily integrate into existing production lines and offer the flexibility to be utilised in more than one application.