



The State of Manufacturing: 2026

Building Toward the Connected Factory



Executive Summary

As manufacturers pursued digital transformation in previous years, their focus centered on factory efficiency, workflow automation, and supply chain management.

In 2026, digital maturity is further along, but it has exposed a deeper problem. Product customization, process intricacy, and variability are increasing. More digital tools are in place, but the systems, teams, and processes aren't working from the same foundation. Each increase in product complexity or tools multiplies the effort required to deliver on customer promises.

2025:

Manufacturers were rebuilding the foundation, investing in supply chain, production, and workflow.

2026:

The foundation is maturing. Growth, intelligence, and automation are now a larger part of the agenda.

The Problem:

Rising complexity is exposing the gaps between systems and teams that transformation didn't close.

The 2026 State of Manufacturing survey maps how manufacturers across the globe are managing the sale of highly configurable products, operational dexterity, and the need for business intelligence and automation.

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The 2026 Survey

1084

Respondents since 2022

8

Countries Represented

13

Sectors across industrial,
capital, specialty equipment

87%

Manager level or above

67%

Report very / extremely
complex products

44%

Well into digital transformation

Departments Represented



Information Technology
Systems & Infrastructure



Production & Supply Chain
Ops & Fulfillment



Product & Engineering
Design & Configuration



Executive Leadership
Strategy & Oversight

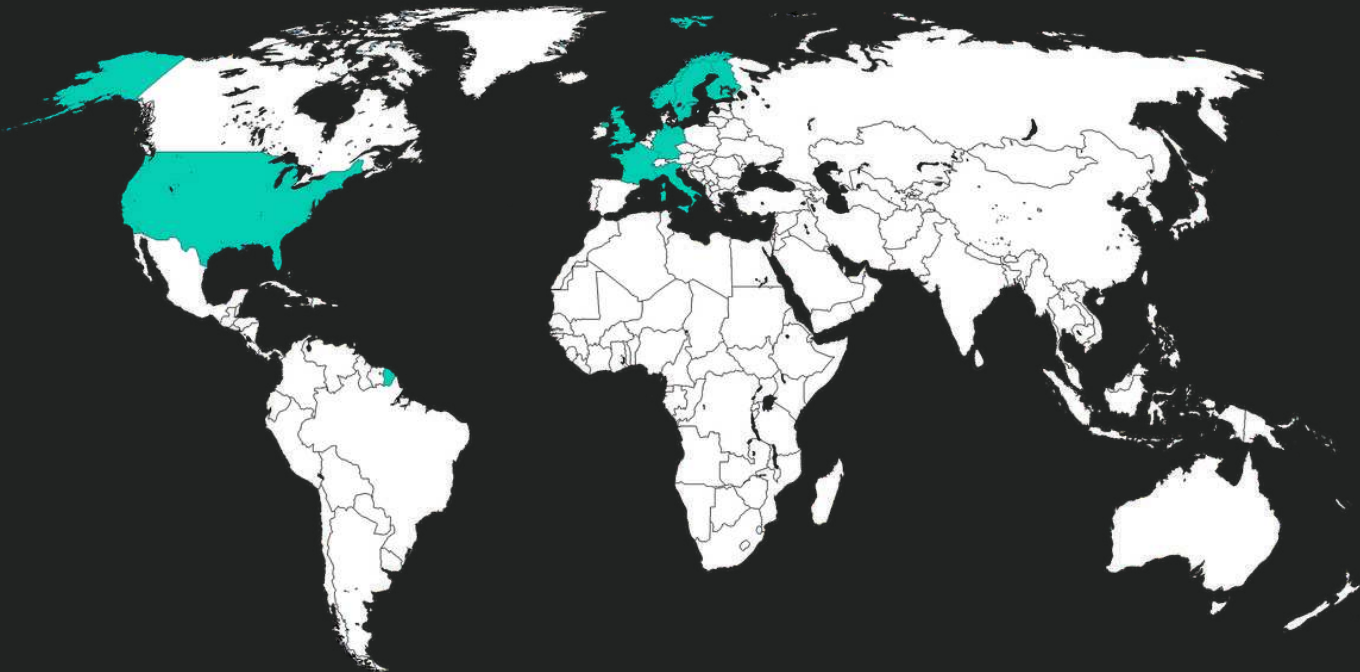


Procurement & Finance
Cost & Vendor Management



Sales & Marketing
Commercial & GTM

Where Respondents Are From



United States • United Kingdom • Germany • France •
Sweden • Finland • Norway • Italy

United States

62%

Europe

38%

Overview: Where Manufacturers Must Take Action

Complexity in manufacturing isn't new, but in 2026, the pressure is showing up at every stage of the lifecycle, creating hidden fissures between teams, systems, and data that compound with each product and project.

Across six areas, this research surfaces where those gaps are widest, how manufacturers are managing these challenges, and what successful teams are doing differently.



1

Confront: Complexity is now slowing down.

Product complexity has reached a tipping point. 67% of manufacturers report very or extremely complex products, up 20 points in a single year.

2

Quote: Quoting speed without accuracy is still a problem.

Third-party CPQ adoption is up 19 points since 2022, but customization remains the top quoting challenge despite faster RFQ responses.

3

Own: Margin erosion is a coordination failure.

Sixty-two percent cite margin erosion as at least a moderate issue. Each department offers different causes, which means no one is looking at the total cost of the handoffs between them.

4

Connect: The digital thread is where complexity is managed or multiplied.

Only seven percent of manufacturers define configuration rules once and reuse them. The rest are manually re-synching at every change, order, and handoff.

5

See: Data maturity determines what you can act on.

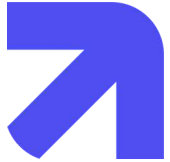
Manufacturers who capture configuration logic and data in a structured way are better equipped to understand what drives performance and continuously improve.

6

Optimize: AI is ready, but it amplifies what's already there.

Seventy-nine percent of manufacturers are investing in or exploring AI, up from 64% in 2025. But AI appears as a subsequent priority across every segment, not a starting point.

1. Confront



Complexity is rising and making everything downstream harder.

Products are growing more configurable faster, requiring more speed, efficiency, and coordination. Every added product option or new order is a new place for something to break between design and delivery.

Q: How complex are most of the products your company manufactures?

	2022	2023	2025	2026
[Extremely + Very complex]	46%	42%	47%	67%

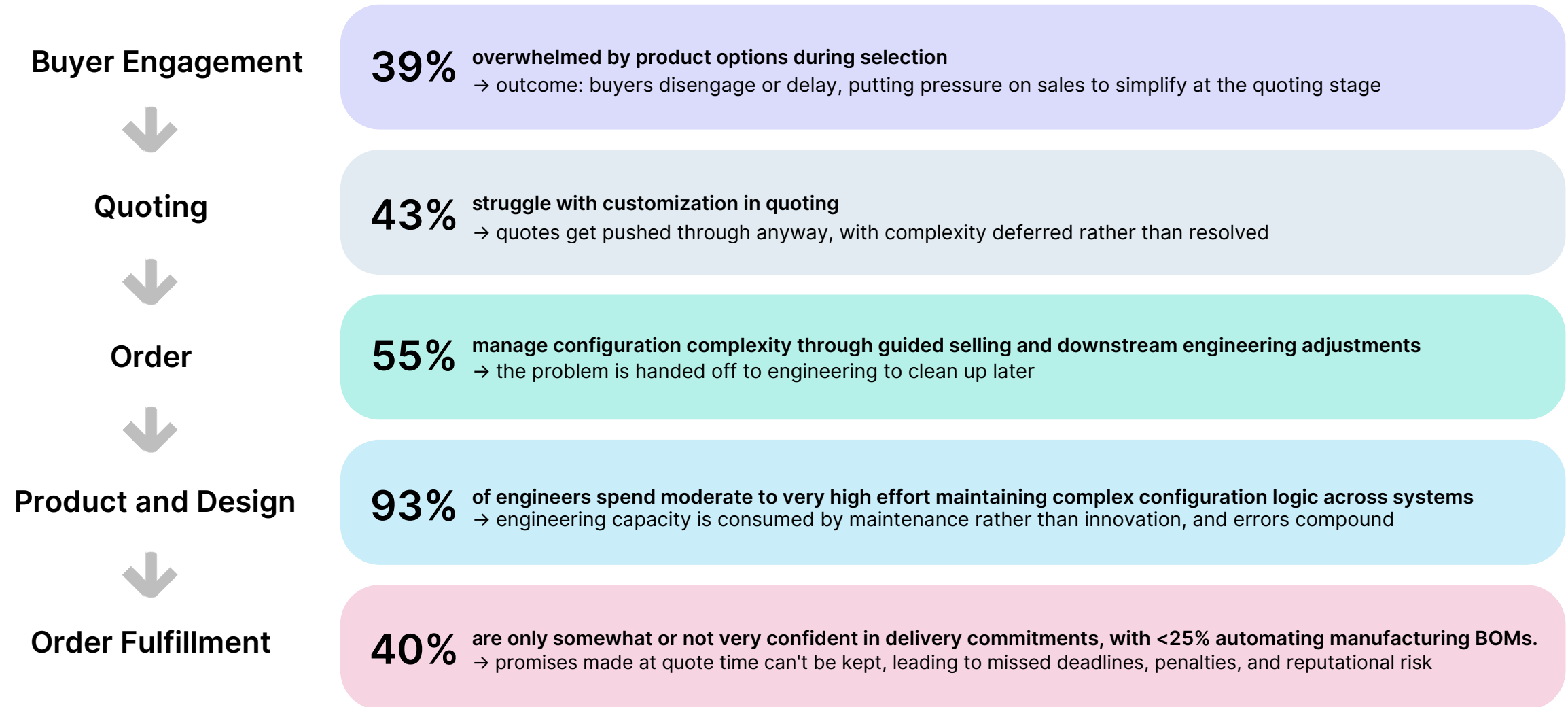
Manufacturers are tackling more product complexity than in past years.

Market competition is driving more differentiated products and higher demand for solutions tailored to specific business outcomes, rather than standard offerings. As a result, engineer-to-order and configure-to-order manufacturers must deliver customization with equal parts speed and accuracy.

While product complexity grows (i.e., more options, more rules, more variation), everyone in the value chain absorbs the pressure.

The Domino Effect:

How complexity impacts the whole value chain



ETO & CTO coverage requires greater system integration and data alignment

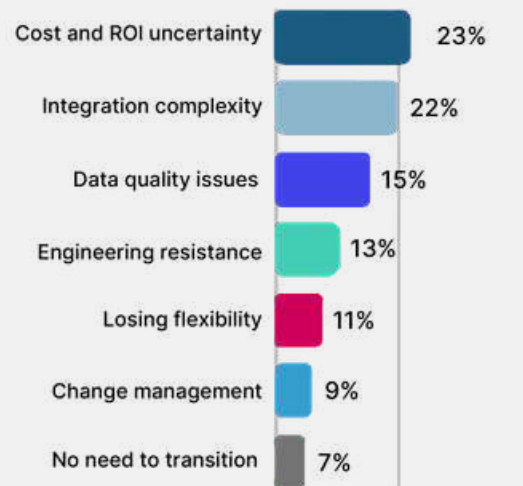
Manufacturers are increasingly turning to configure-to-order (CTO) models to streamline the sale of highly complex products at greater volume. CTO models, which use modular or standardized product components, often alongside engineer-to-order (ETO) components, enable flexibility and scalability. However, they rely on strong system integration and shared, quality data to be efficient and profitable.

Engineer-to-Order

ETO orders are handled case by case. High touch, hard to scale. As product demands increase, the manual effort-per-order compounds.

There is no configuration shortcut; engineering carries the weight.

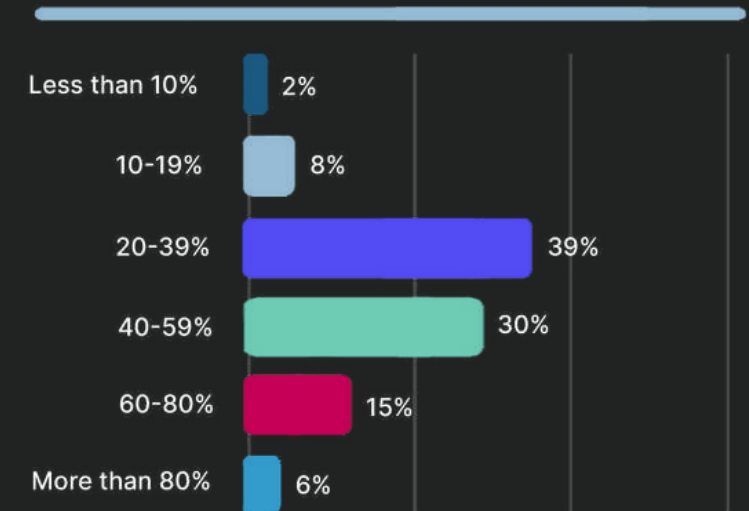
What is your biggest concern about moving from ETO to CTO?



Configure-to-Order

CTO promises scalability with standardized, modular customization, but only if configuration logic is consistent across sales, engineering, and production. Without a tight thread, each configured order still requires downstream adjustment. The scale benefit disappears.

What percentage of your manufacturing model is configure-to-order?



5 Key Takeaways from Successful Leaders:

Confronting Complexity

- 1 No sector is insulated from complexity.**

Sixty-seven percent of manufacturers report very or extremely complex products, up 20 points since 2025. Industrial machinery manufacturers lead at 75%, but even broader manufacturing sits at 63%.
- 2 Digital maturity makes complexity more visible and urgent.**

Those well into transformation are significantly more likely to report very or extremely complex products (70%) than the overall average. Digital maturity brings complexity into sharp focus. Less mature manufacturers don't have simpler products, but they may not yet have full visibility into the complexity they're managing.
- 3 Complexity is felt differently depending on where you sit.**

The teams closest to managing systems see it most acutely, with IT citing product complexity the highest (14% more than engineering).
- 4 All manufacturers are looking to AI, but they know the foundation comes first.**

U.S. manufacturers are more likely to be in the investing stage for AI compared to European manufacturers, who are still catching up in emerging technology that can help them manage complexity.
- 5 Most manufacturers are hybrid ETO-CTO, which multiplies the coordination burden.**

Nearly 70 percent configure-to-order 20 to 59% of their portfolio, putting them in the hybrid zone. Running both simultaneously means both sets of demands hit the same systems and people at once.

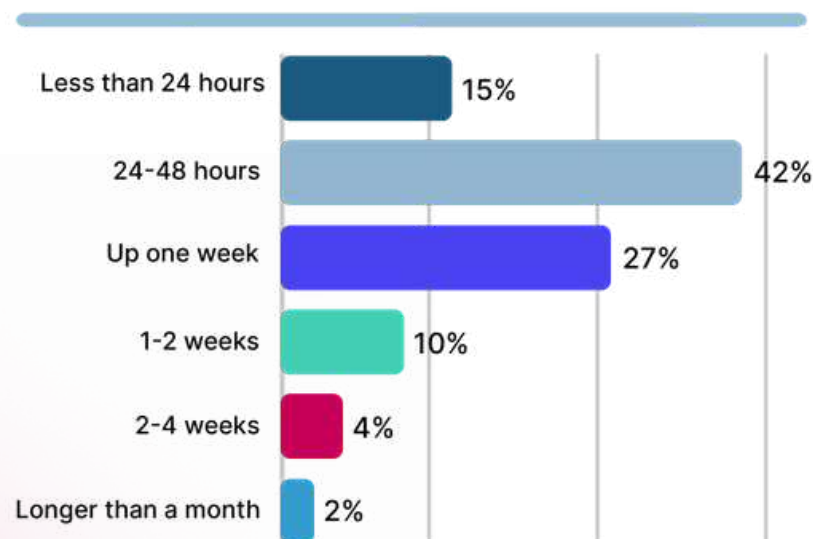
2. Quote



Quoting is more tooled but not supported for customization demands.

Sales teams are responding quickly to requests for proposals, with more tools at their disposal to automate quoting. However, downstream adjustments signal a need for increased accuracy and smarter configuration.

How long is your typical response time for an RFQ?



RFQ volume is high and sales is responding quickly

High monthly RFQ volume is competitive among global manufacturers, but quotes still break down on customization and accuracy, despite growing CPQ adoption.

57% of manufacturers handle between 200 and 999 RFQs per month

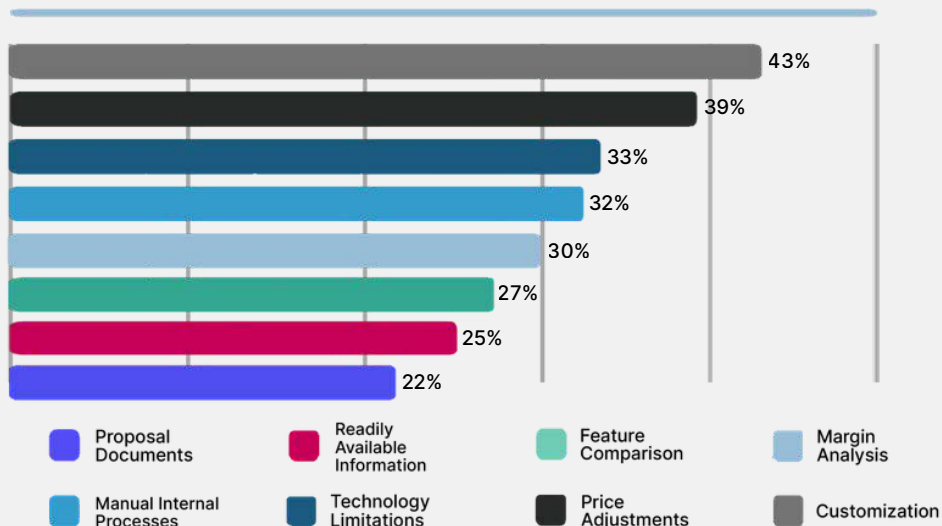
57% respond to customers within 48 hours

CPQ adoption is growing, but quoting speed is not enough

CPQ adoption has surged, with more manufacturers using CPQ in 2026 than years prior (specifically third-party CPQ over homegrown tools, which can be more difficult to build and maintain).

46% now use third-party CPQ software
— up 19 pts since 2022

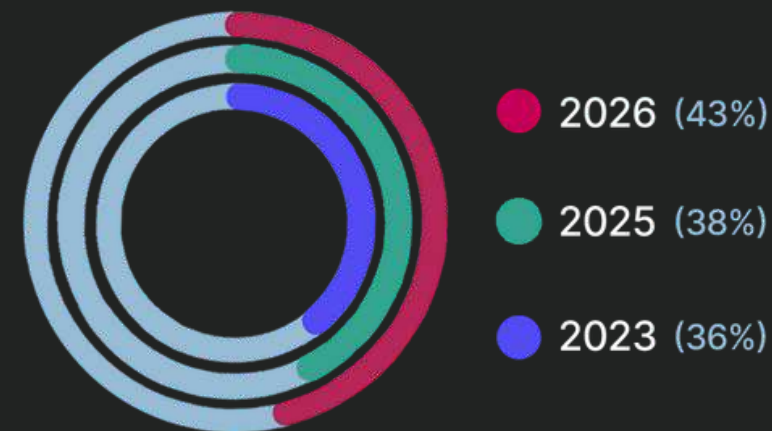
2026 Top Quoting Challenges



Despite more quoting tools, however, customization exceptions and availability checks still break the flow. Manufacturers still struggle to manage product complexity and customization, including product selection, where 39% of manufacturers state that the size of their portfolio is overwhelming.

In addition, pricing adjustments and manual downstream adjustments with engineering mean rework.

Challenge: Customization



If manufacturers treat quoting as a back-end process and adopt CPQ as a tool for quoting speed alone, they risk trading speed for poorer outcomes. Sales teams require up-to-date product information, strong product configuration logic, and intelligent ways to connect customer needs to the best possible solutions.

5 Key Takeaways from Successful Leaders:

Mastering Customized Selling at Scale

1 **Digitize quoting to scale.**

Manufacturers further along in transformation respond to RFQs within 48 hours at higher rates (64% vs. 47%) and handle greater volume. Manual processes create a ceiling, and every additional RFQ requires more effort.

2 **Use AI to match the right configuration to the customer.**

Digitally mature manufacturers prioritize intelligent quotes, not just speed. Sixty-seven percent (vs. 56%) want AI to automate complex configurations, and 52% (vs. 45%) want it to predict customer preferences for guided selling.

3 **Treat CPQ model maintenance as a strategic bottleneck.**

Eighty-one percent report moderate to extremely high effort for model maintenance. When models lag product reality, outdated configurations carry into every quote. Over 40% see AI modeling as a path forward.

4 **Invest in a dedicated product selector.**

Among those configuring and pricing fully online, 58% use one, and 28% report no selection challenges. The right product must be identified before it can be accurately quoted.

5 **Customization won't be solved by faster tools.**

It continues to rise, because it's a configuration problem, not a speed issue, and must be addressed at the source.

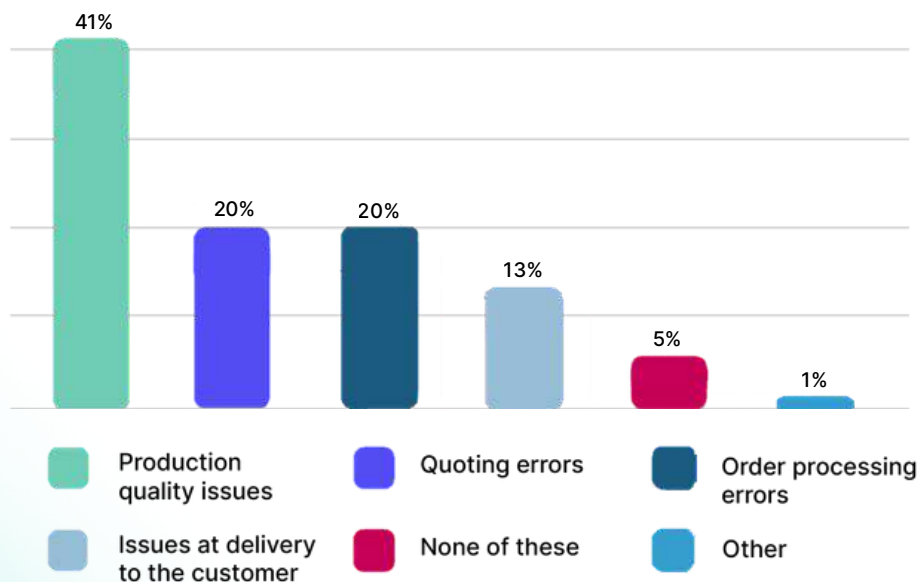
3. Own



Margin protection is a full-lifecycle problem. Do manufacturers see it that way?

Margin erodes at multiple points in the lifecycle, with no single root cause, which requires clearer margin visibility across the entire value chain.

What contributes most to margin erosion?



The Margin Flywheel

While **27%** of respondents claim margin erosion is only a minor issue from quote through order fulfillment, the majority of manufacturers at least consider it a moderate issue, with **15%** considering it severe. However, the cause for margin erosion is an interplay between people, process, and technology, where fragmented visibility and decisions made in isolation chip away at profitability.

62%

define margin erosion from moderate to severe between quote and delivery.

What is the source of those margin erosion issues/root cause?



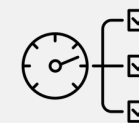
People

51%



Tools & Systems

38%



Multiple factors equally

38%



Process

37%

What people, process, and tool challenges look like in complex manufacturing

People



Decisions lack shared context of the full picture

- Partial views across teams
- No shared understanding
 - Pricing overrides, discounting behavior
 - Lack of embedded product knowledge
 - Manual estimates

Process



Handoffs break continuity

- Quote → Order → BOM → Production
- Re-entry at every step
 - Delays
 - Change cycles

Tools & Systems

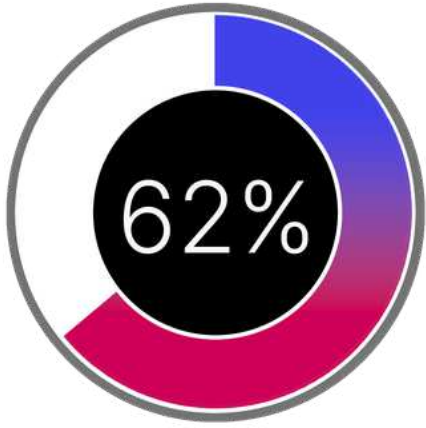


Systems aren't aligned

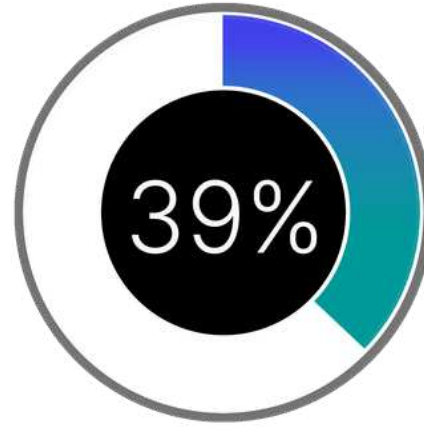
- Different product definitions
- No single source of truth
 - Duplicate rules
 - Stale BOMs

How margin erosion impacts teams at each stage of the lifecycle

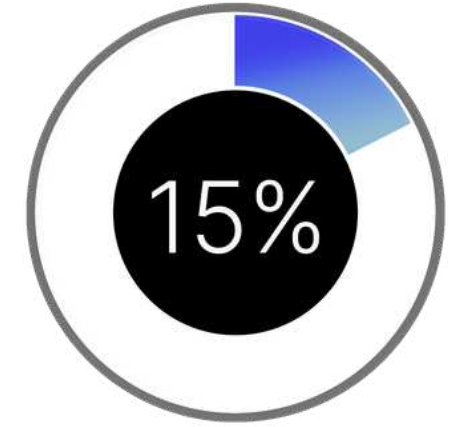
Across commercial, engineering, supply chain, and IT respondents, there is a clear disconnect between perceived margin erosion and confidence. Each function sees a problem at their stage, but without shared data across the chain, the full cost of misalignment is invisible to everyone.



cite margin erosion as at least a moderate issue between quote and delivery



experience very frequent or often change orders after a quote is submitted

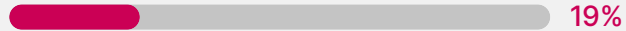


say margin erosion is significant or critical — rising to 23% for siloed data teams

Product & Engineering

Engineering Stage

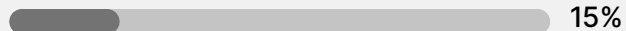
Significant or critical margin issue



Confident in delivery commitments



Very frequent rework

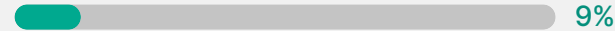


Sees the gap before it opens

Production & Supply Chain

Production Stage

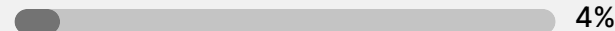
Significant or critical margin issue



Confident in delivery commitments



Very frequent rework

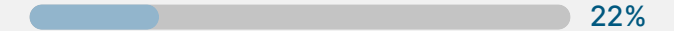


Absorbs it - doesn't feel the cost

IT

Systems View

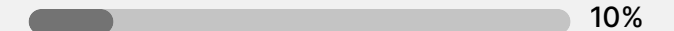
Significant or critical margin issue



Confident in delivery commitments



Very frequent rework



Most confident - most alarmed

5 Key Takeaways from Successful Leaders:

Protect Margins Across the Lifecycle

1

Create shared visibility, not siloed ownership.

No single person owns quote-to-delivery, but a shared digital thread ensures everyone sees how changes in one area impact another, and how this feeds the big picture.

2

Treat high quoting confidence as a warning.

Seventy-two percent are confident in quoting, yet 18% see frequent rework, with confidence concerns among engineers. That gap is where margin starts to erode.

3

Use shared data to improve margins.

A digital thread doesn't just reduce risk—it creates a feedback loop. Digitally mature manufacturers (78% vs. 47%) can pinpoint which configurations drive delays, revisions, or margin pressure.

4

Answer “Can we build this?” before quoting.

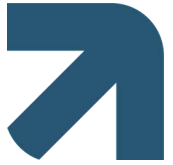
Fifty-six percent of mature manufacturers (those deep into digital transformation) can easily check parts availability at quote time vs. 17% of early-stage peers. Without that visibility, margin risk gets pushed downstream.

5

Capture knowledge before it leaves.

Forty-two percent expect 11–20% of their sales and engineering workforce to retire within 5–10 years. When knowledge lives in people instead of systems, margin risk becomes inevitable.

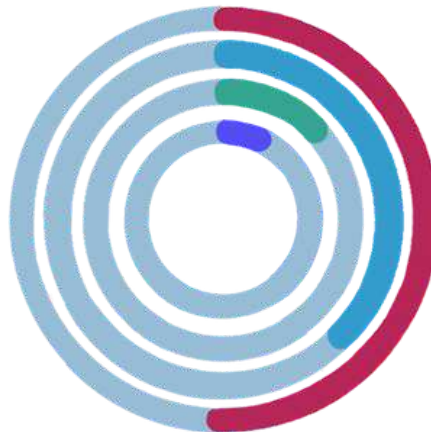
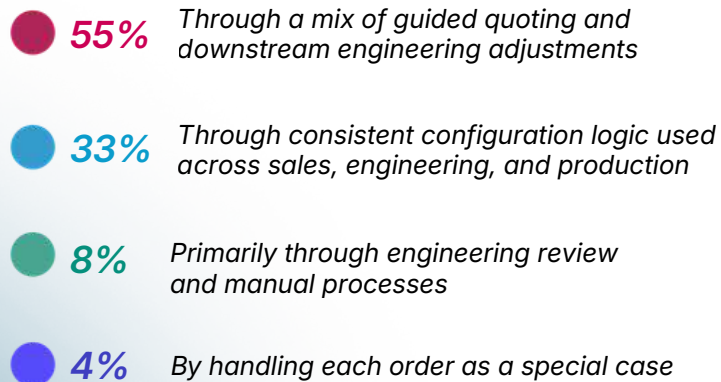
4. Connect



The cost of keeping up: managing change across a complex lifecycle

Managing information and product logic is not easy for manufacturers in 2026, and that's a problem for sales and fulfillment.

How is configuration complexity typically managed for highly configurable products across the full lifecycle?



Engineering and product teams are expending high effort to manage complex configuration logic

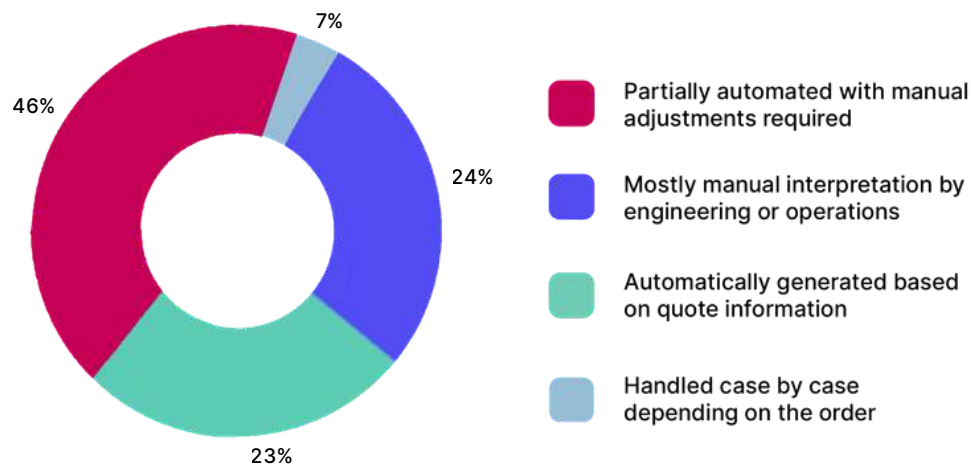
Only 33% of manufacturers currently use consistent configuration logic across sales, engineering, and logic production. Reinterpretation of that logic leads to invalid quotes that carry additional fixes and delivery risks.

Consistent configuration logic makes the following more clear:

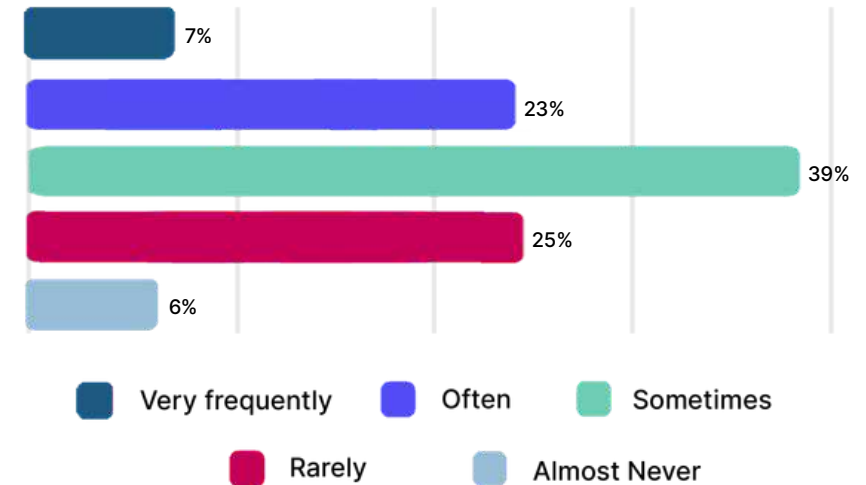
- Which options are compatible with each other?
- Which parts are required when a certain feature is selected?
- What are the valid combinations for a given product family?
- What does this configuration actually cost to make?
- Can we source the parts needed to fulfill this order?

In addition, **93%** of engineering teams spend moderate to very high effort maintaining configuration rules across systems. Only **seven percent** define configuration rules once and reuse them.

How are customer orders translated into manufacturing BOMs and routings today?



How often do you experience issues stemming from inconsistent information between commercial systems and ERP/MES?



In practice, configuration logic lives in CPQ as product rules, in engineering as design constraints, in ERP as bill of materials structures, and in production as routing and capacity rules. The problem is that each system holds its own version, and they don't automatically stay in sync.

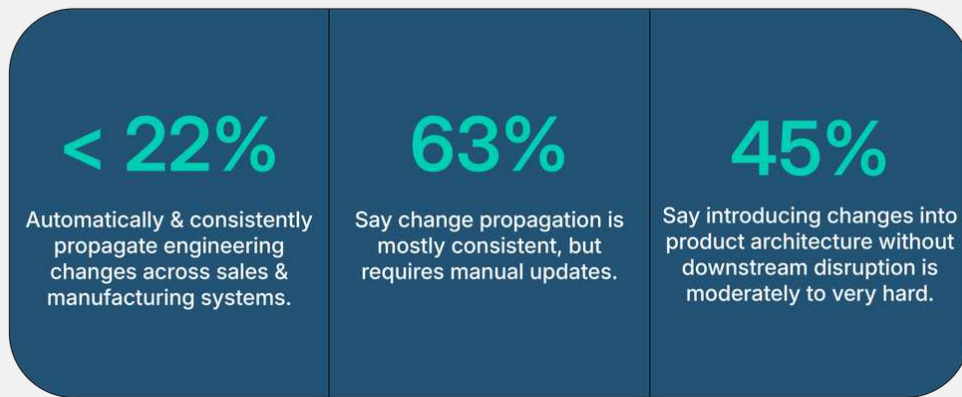
Inconsistent systems, lack of automated BOMs, and quotes that require downstream adjustments make it difficult for manufacturers to scale complex product sales, especially as changes and added data amplify these issues.

Forty percent of manufacturers are only somewhat or not very confident in delivery commitments at the time of quote. Additionally, manufacturers are facing disruptions to their operations as they update their portfolios.



At the end of the lifecycle, in supply chain and production fulfillment, only **30%** find it easy to support sales with parts availability for specific configurations, and **37%** find it moderate to hard, the highest of any department.

When this happens, there's no fast path to get availability data to sales at the point of quoting. So, commitments get made without it, and production absorbs the consequences downstream.



5 Key Takeaways from Successful Leaders:

Connecting Your Lifecycle

- 1 Centralize configuration logic.**

Define it once and reuse it everywhere. Top performers avoid duplicate rule sets by using constraint-based logic instead of maintenance-heavy if/then rules—eliminating divergence at the source.
- 2 Automate change propagation early.**

Only 21 % propagate engineering changes automatically. As complexity grows, every manual update compounds. Systems should manage and push changes across CPQ and downstream environments.
- 3 Treat BOM automation as a margin lever.**

Only 23% auto-generate BOMs from quotes. Manual handoffs introduce errors and margin drift. Automating BOM creation ensures accuracy and simplifies change management.
- 4 Track change orders as a signal.**

High post-quote change rates point to broken handoffs or weak configuration logic. A connected thread reduces downstream changes by aligning quotes with what can actually be built.
- 5 Close the loop from fulfillment to quoting.**

Mature manufacturers feed fulfillment insights back into quoting, highlighting which configurations cause delays, require rework, or drive change requests to drive better sales and product decisions.

5. See



Getting granular: the data manufacturers aren't seeing

Most can track revenue and business outcomes, but few can see how decisions made at the configuration level impact performance.

What types of product, sales and order fulfillment data does your company currently track and use for decision-making?



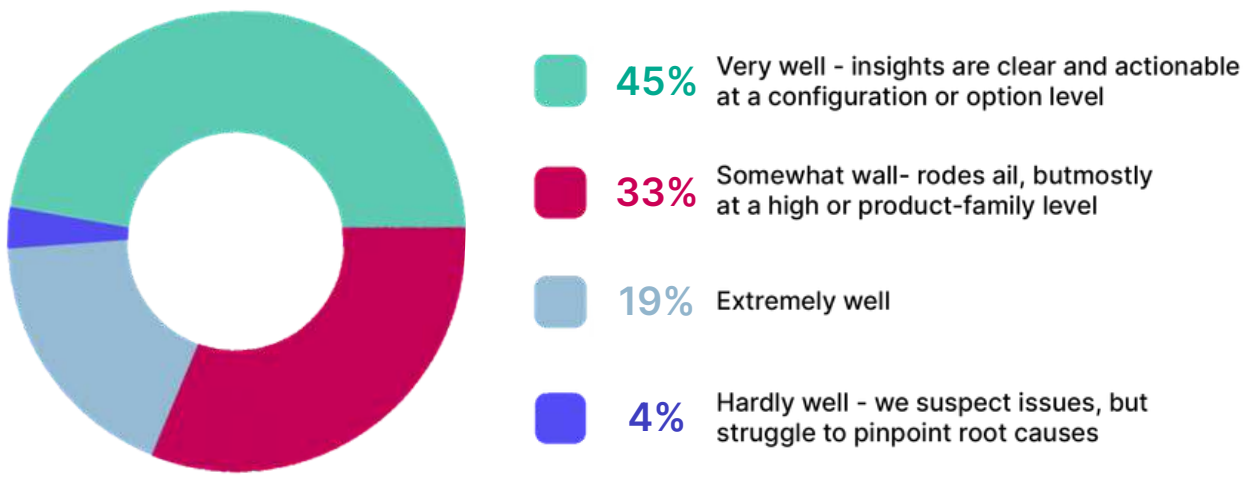
Analytics Maturity: How and What Manufacturers Are Measuring

Making better decisions across the complete manufacturing lifecycle requires strong data visibility. Manufacturers across industries and countries are getting deeper into their data, from revenue tracking to some even tracking performance at the configuration level. Yet less than half have visibility into decision-level insights at the time of configuration, which can make it easier to understand why one deal might win over another.

The AI heavy investors understand their product and configuration performance the most at 80% vs 56% for those still exploring AI. That's a 24-point gap, and it's almost certainly directional: better data enables AI investment, and AI investment generates better data.

However, European manufacturers have more ground left to cover in reporting compared to their North American counterparts. U.S. manufacturers have more visibility into sales performance and profitability by product variant. Meanwhile, Europe has greater visibility into their dealer network performance.

- Configuration/variant profitability: **U.S. 50% (↑) vs Europe 37% (↓)**
- Sales cycle length and pipeline performance: **U.S. 45% (↑) vs Europe 32% (↓)**
- Understanding configurations to act: **U.S. 69% (↑) vs Europe 56% (↓)**
- Demand forecasting: **U.S. 53% (↑) vs Europe 45% (↓)**
- Dealer/partner sales performance: **UK 31% (↑) vs U.S. 24%**
- Pricing trends: **UK 47% equal to U.S. 47%**



Still, most manufacturers are missing option-level insights

Feature and option-level tracking (27%) is the most actionable data—and the least collected. While 45% say they track “profitability by configuration or product attribute,” that can range from real-time CPQ-driven margin insights to occasional Excel filtering by product family.

Manufacturers with true configuration-level visibility can link specific parameters and decisions to outcomes across the lifecycle, from portfolio performance to sales cycle length. Many are confident in their insights, but most are still operating with limited depth.

To access this level of insight, configuration data must flow consistently from CPQ into downstream systems (order management, ERP, and fulfillment) while preserving the full context of each configuration. That means not just passing a final SKU or price, but the actual parameters, rules, and decisions behind every quote.

BI tools can visualize outcomes, but they can't explain what caused them without that context. They don't have access to the configuration logic behind each order. That context must be carried through from the start, not reconstructed later.

The 27% of manufacturers tracking feature- and option-level demand trends getting closer. But demand data still shows what is selected, not why specific configuration choices lead to change orders or margin loss.



Defining configuration parameters

This data tells you not just how “Product X performed in a quarter”. It tells you why “every time a customer selects option X with option Y in Product Z, we only win half the time”.

Examples:

- Motor size (15kW vs 22kW vs 37kW): does selecting a larger motor correlate with the customer's application or use case?
- Enclosure rating (IP54 vs IP65 vs IP67): which protection class drives the most engineering change requests?
- Voltage specification (230V vs 400V vs 460V): which variants have the highest quoting error rate?
- Sterilization compatibility: which combinations require manual engineering review every time?



5 Key Takeaways from Successful Leaders:

See Deeper Business Performance

1

Leaders don't stop at measuring performance.

They trace it back to the configuration decisions behind it. It's not just which deals close, but which configurations stall, accelerate, or align best with specific customer applications.

2

Retire complexity that doesn't convert.

Some variants add engineering effort without driving wins, but without configuration-level analytics, they remain hidden. Manufacturers moving fastest on simplification are actively removing them.

3

Data quality and alignment drive visibility.

Teams working in data silos are seven times more likely to struggle identifying which configurations need refinement. Connected, structured data makes product complexity easier to manage.

4

Leaders make configuration data accessible and maintainable.

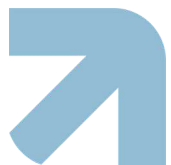
Digitally mature companies adopt third-party CPQ more often, creating centralized, structured data for analysis. Homegrown tools and spreadsheets make data harder to prepare, maintain, and scale.

5

Solve the foundation before scaling growth

Mature manufacturers prioritize revenue growth and delivery speed, while others remain focused on cost and error reduction. As systems connect, focus shifts from fixing operations to growing the business.

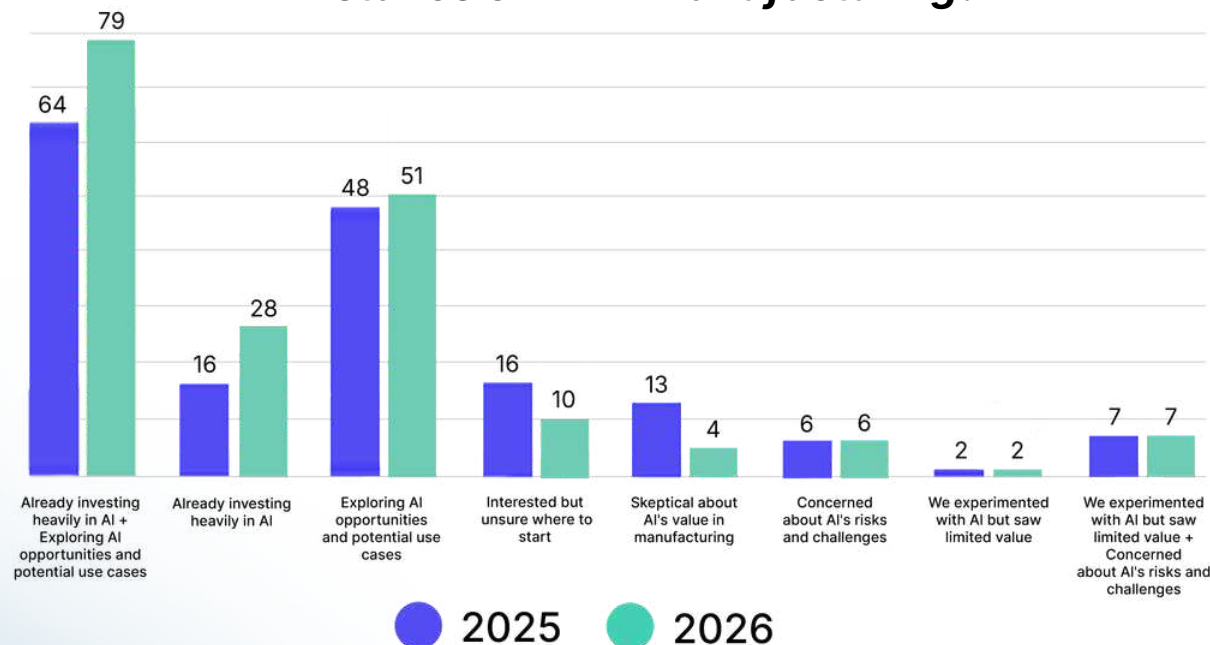
6. Optimize



AI momentum is real but uneven.

Confidence in AI's ability to automate and reduce tedium is rising fast, but not all manufacturers are positioned for its benefits.

How would you describe your company's stance on AI in manufacturing?



AI skepticism has collapsed.

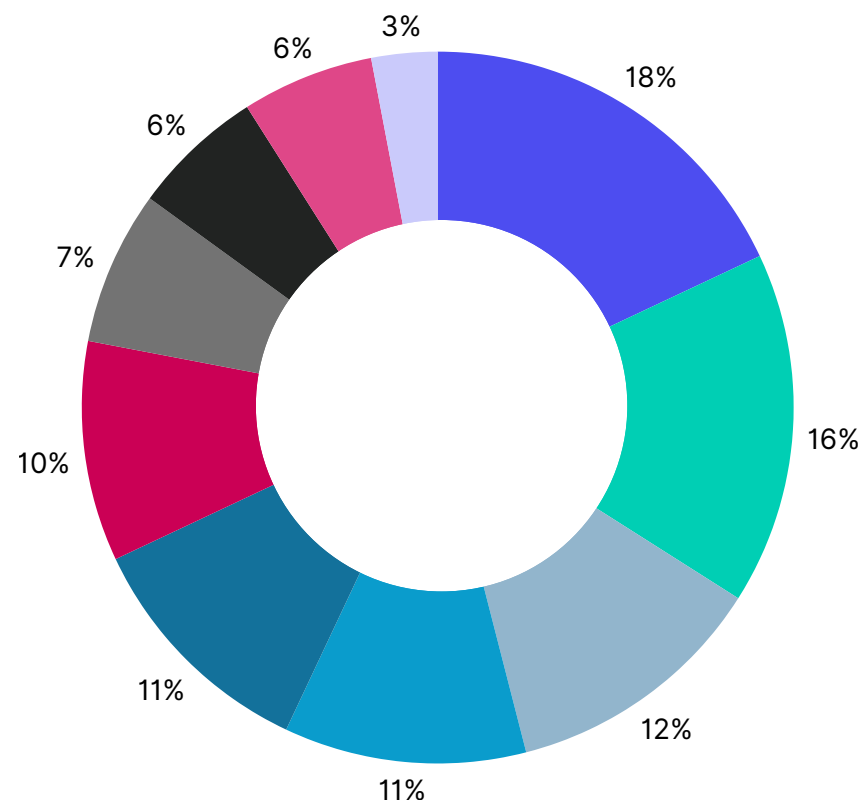
Compared to 2025, which was characterized by exploration, manufacturers in 2026 are getting their hands dirty with AI. Today, 28% of manufacturers are already heavily investing versus just 16% in 2025.

In addition, fewer manufacturers are skeptical about the need for AI as a competitive uplift. Much like reporting and analytics, however, Europe is still catching up to U.S. advancements in AI adoption and investment.

79% are actively investing in or exploring AI — up from 64% in 2025

What aspect of digital transformation is a priority for you?

Rank in Order:



- AI-driven automation & optimization
- Engineering and production line efficiency
- Data intelligence and analytics
- Workflow automation
- Supply chain management
- Smart manufacturing or IoT
- Cloud-based solutions
- Automating engineer-to-order
- Improving customer self-service
- System consolidation

Top AI priorities by region

📍 United States

Already investing	34%
Exploring	47%
Unsure where to start	8%

📍 United Kingdom

Already investing	20%
Exploring	58%
Unsure where to start	9%

📍 Europe

Already investing	18%
Exploring	57%
Unsure where to start	14%

Top 2 Priorities

Automate configurations	57%
Reduce quoting errors • pricing • quote speed	53%

Top 2 Priorities

Automate configurations	58%
Guided selling	53%

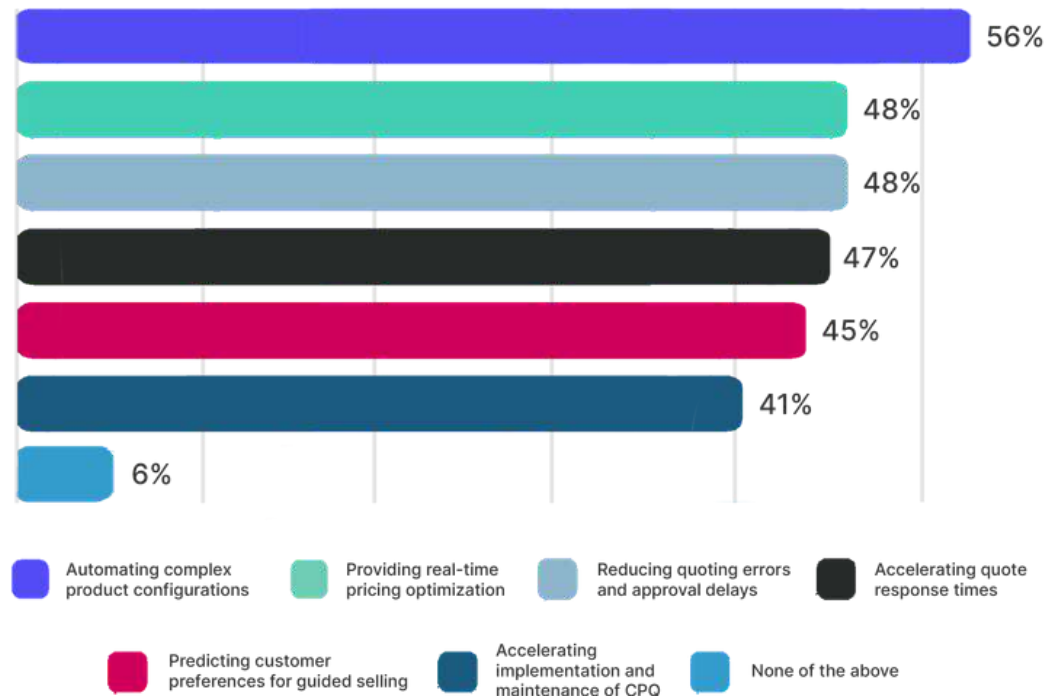
Top 2 Priorities

Automate configurations	55%
Guided selling	44%

AI appears as a top five digital transformation priority across nearly every segment alongside cost reduction, production efficiency, and supply chain management—18% rank it their first priority. The manufacturers who will get the most from AI are those who have already built the data, workflow, and foundations that give it something useful to work on.

Prioritizing AI: quick wins for lagging manufacturers

AI's emerging use cases continue to flood the market, and manufacturers are looking for capabilities in both speed and efficiency, as well as intelligence. This is especially true for AI capabilities to help sell complex products.



Though strong data and integration across the manufacturing lifecycle are prerequisites for confident AI adoption, manufacturers should still feel the pressure to strengthen intelligence as their experts retire.

Whether that means multiplying human intelligence with prescriptive product recommendations or simply freeing up time for teams to work on higher value tasks, it's key to begin testing and piloting AI sooner than later.

5 Key Takeaways from Successful Leaders:

Quick Wins in AI for Lagging Manufacturers

1

Use AI to reduce model maintenance effort.

Eighty-one percent of respondents report high CPQ model maintenance effort, yet it's one of the most overlooked use cases for automating with AI. AI can generate ~70% ready models and update existing ones using structured and unstructured data.

2

Guide product selection early.

Thirty-nine percent say too many options overwhelm selection. AI can steer customers toward optimal, valid configurations upfront, preventing downstream errors and overrides.

3

Catch errors at the quote.

Forty-three percent cite customization as the top quoting challenge. AI-enabled CPQ flags invalid configurations and constraint violations for highly configurable, customized products before they reach delivery.

4

Automate repeatable patterns.

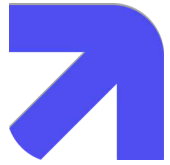
Many customer use cases consistently drive the same configuration choices. AI automates these predictable paths, improving speed and accuracy. In addition, leaders use AI to scale and automate product models from standardized base models.

5

Close the RFQ response gap.

Only 15% of manufacturers respond to RFQs in under 24 hours, while most handle hundreds per month. AI sales assistants can translate RFPs to engineering-valid configurations and reduce response time.

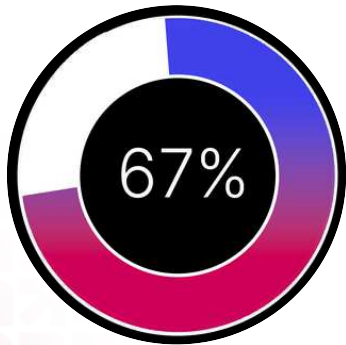
At a Glance



Building toward the connected lifecycle

Manufacturers must handle deep product variation and deliver more efficiently on customization by connecting the digital thread across the entire value chain.

COMPLEXITY



report very/extremely complex products — up 20 pts in one year

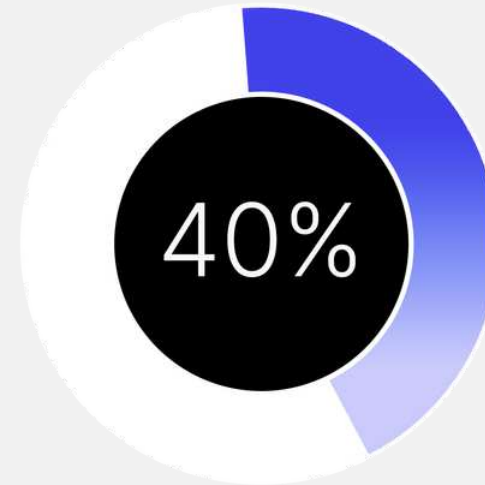
7%

define configuration rules once and reuse them

QUOTING

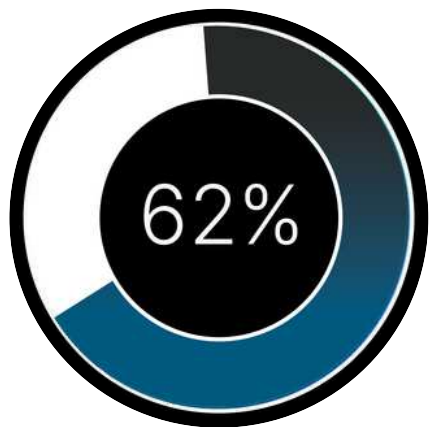
43%

cite customization as their top quoting challenge



not fully confident in delivery commitments at time of quote

MARGIN & DATA



experience moderate to severe margin erosion

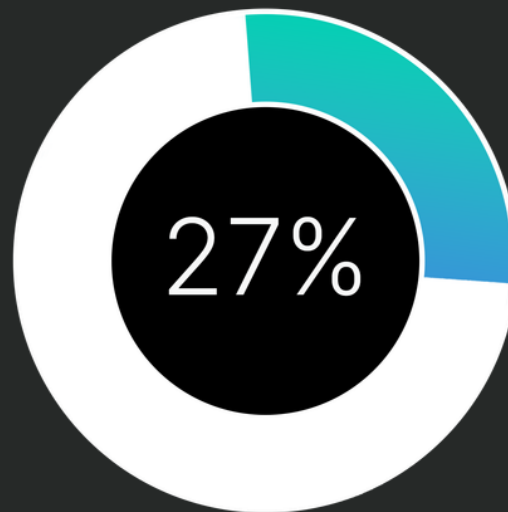
2x

the critical margin risk

AI & MATURITY

79%

investing in or exploring AI
— up from 64% in 2025



track feature and option-level demand trends

Manufacturers are riding the wave of Industry 4.0, with momentum building in digital transformation programs that increase productivity and agility. As more companies adopt AI and emerging tech, intelligence and decision-making will become critical layers to the work that's already being accomplished to level up foundational operations.



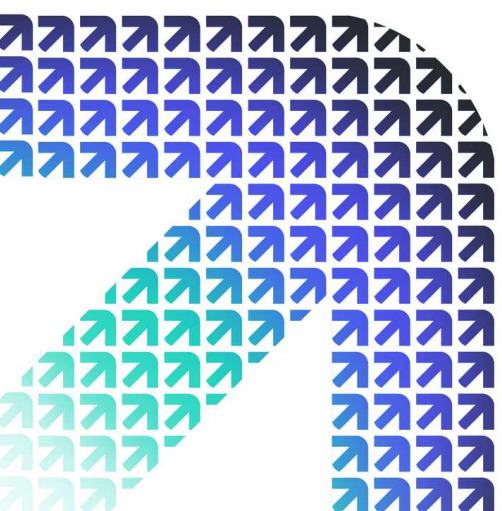
Organizations are confident in their digital initiatives, but disconnects across the value chain continue to create efficiency and profitability gaps. These gaps will only widen as operations, product portfolios, and sales channels grow more complex. To scale mass customization in a smart factory environment, every stage of the manufacturing lifecycle must operate from a shared source of truth for two key reasons:

1. Inconsistent configuration logic (e.g., misaligned BOMs, discrepancies between engineering rules and sales configurations, or quotes that don't accurately reflect what can be built) introduces risk at every handoff across the lifecycle.
2. Without visibility into that shared data, each team is forced to operate in isolation, limiting their ability to make informed decisions that reflect the full business context.

Learn More

See how Tacton helps manufacturers of highly configurable products connect the entire manufacturing lifecycle to enhance buyer engagement and make it easier to sell what's buildable, manage product complexity, and deliver profitably on the promises to your customers.

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Without this connected foundation, adding AI intelligence only amplifies existing inconsistencies. Intelligence is only as reliable as the data it's built on. To move forward, the smart factory must become a smart enterprise built from one digital thread, starting with the first customer interaction and the decisions shaping their solution, to the fulfillment and service of that solution.

The next phase of manufacturing transformation will focus on connecting systems across product and engineering, commercial, and product. Manufacturers who build this thread see more, decide faster, and catch disruptive, margin-eroding issues earlier.

www.tacton.com

Headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden and Chicago, USA

About this report

Survey methodology: The 2026 State of Manufacturing report is based on an online survey of 280 manufacturing leaders fielded in April 2026, part of an ongoing annual study first conducted in November 2022 with Researchscape. Total responses across all four years: 1,084. Respondents represented eight countries across North America and Europe.



Tacton is a global leader in software for manufacturers of complex, highly configurable products. Tacton delivers the Buyer-Centric Smart Factory, connecting buyer engagement with engineering and order fulfillment through a single source of truth. By uniting Configure, Price and Quote, Configuration Lifecycle Management, and Configured Order Fulfillment, Tacton helps manufacturers manage complexity, protect margins, and deliver with confidence across the lifecycle.