

Top Trends for Manufacturing in 2021

Many industries have been tasked with rapidly adapting and evolving in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the manufacturing sector was no exception. The following are trends that are expected to continue into 2021:

- 1. Automated operations become autonomous**—As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes more engrained in the manufacturing industry, operations are likely to move from automated to autonomous. AI can improve the reliability and predictability of operations. And while there's no replacement for human intuition, AI can learn from historical and real-time data to make intuitive decisions that can educate workers on what's normal and abnormal in the plant's operations. This will help alleviate concerns about how knowledge is being passed on from an ageing workforce.
- 2. Remote work becomes the new normal**—The global health crisis found more workers than ever setting up shop from the comfort of their own homes. In 2021, remote work is expected to continue for those in manufacturing. Remote operations require technology that supports secure processes and efficiently connects employees. The right cyber-secure tools can connect workforces while controlling and meeting the challenges posed by remote work. Maximizing technology can lead to more collaboration, less paperwork and more efficient workflow processes.
- 3. Training and knowledge bases improve**—Research has found that employee turnover costs employers 33 per cent of a worker's annual salary to hire a replacement if that worker leaves. Organizations must prioritize retaining their workforce by encouraging continued education and training. In 2021, it's also likely that employers in the manufacturing sector will invest more in automation that improves working conditions for employees, which is another way to attract and retain talent. As more processes become automated and autonomous, engaging workers with daily employee education can increase product quality, safety and engagement.

If you have questions specific to your business, or would like additional information, please reach out to your local insurance and risk management advisor.



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