
Are UK manufacturers ready to ride a profitable wave of change?

Radically better ways of doing business have begun to unlock enormous value for a few far-sighted manufacturers – and now a new organisation plans to help UK firms join the revolution.

A new not-for-profit group has been set up to help the UK benefit from an imminent revolution in the manufacturing sector. The new organisation is inviting contributions to a landmark collaborative study, designed to place UK manufacturers at the crest of a wave of structural change. Participants will gain the insight they need to grasp the revolution's huge potential for profit improvement.

The new organisation, called Next Manufacturing Revolution (NMR), has been founded by the University of Cambridge's Institute for Manufacturing together with 2degrees, the online network for sustainability in business, and consulting firm Lavery Pennell.

The trio have identified interrelated changes in business practices, resource use, technology and business models that have created momentous new opportunities in the manufacturing sector. They have also uncovered early adopters – example companies including Toyota and Xerox – that have achieved substantial improvements in margins through revolutionary new approaches.

NMR is now embarking on an ambitious research programme designed to give UK manufacturers the strategic information needed to unlock their own potential for profit improvement. Among other benefits, participants will gain privileged access to the detailed case studies and other data that NMR has collected. The UK as a whole stands to gain through new jobs, reduced environmental harm and a vital boost to the economy.

"This research is a serious attempt to give the UK a head-start, as manufacturers around the globe wake up to a time of unprecedented opportunity," said Dr Greg Lavery, CEO of Lavery Pennell. "If UK industry takes heed, and takes decisive action, the nation is well positioned to seize massive economic improvements. The first step for manufacturers is to learn about the opportunities – and that is precisely what our survey is designed to achieve. Our landmark project will bring benefits to every company that participates."

The transformation of the manufacturing sector will be driven by the confluence of many different factors, including rising energy costs, worsening resource scarcity, the growing preference for services in place of products, improved manufacturing flexibility, new ways of communicating with customers and of organising supply chains, fresh opportunities for identifying customer needs, and innovative materials and technologies.

Many of these trends have already begun to bite, and the NMR study aims to:

- Quantify the impact of new opportunities on jobs and profitability
- Uncover further case studies in a variety of manufacturing sectors
- Identify barriers preventing change together with potential solutions

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- Establish benchmarks and best practice guidelines

NMR is urging all UK-based manufacturers to participate in the study. Survey respondents will each receive a report analysing the findings for their company, written for C-level executives, together with clear opportunities for profit improvements and case studies of best practices in their sector to demonstrate what is possible.

“We are poised on the brink of changes that will bring huge economic benefits to those manufacturers that are best prepared,” said Dr Lavery. “New leaders will emerge, competitive advantages will be cemented for decades, profits will soar, and a boom in jobs, exports and the economy will follow. We need to pool our insight and take action now, if we want those positive effects to be felt here in the UK.”

More information about the aims of NMR’s survey and how to participate can be found at:

www.nextmanufacturingrevolution.org

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Next Manufacturing Revolution (NMR) is a not-for-profit collaboration that aims to unlock significant performance improvement in the manufacturing sector. The founding members of NMR are Lavery Pennell, 2degrees, and the University of Cambridge's Institute for Manufacturing.

Lavery Pennell is a strategy consulting firm assisting clients to unlock extraordinary value while improving sustainability performance.

www.laverypennell.com

2degrees is the world's leading business community for driving growth, efficiency and profit through sustainability. It has over 20,000 professional members in more than 90 countries.

www.2degreesnetwork.com

The Institute for Manufacturing (IfM) is the public face of the Manufacturing and Management Division of the University of Cambridge's Department of Engineering. The IfM brings together expertise in management, technology and policy to address the full spectrum of industrial issues.

www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk