

Bespoke solutions make us strong. But they're complex

06 August 2026, 13:15

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Smart manufacturing: why productivity today calls for a different approach

The Flemish manufacturing industry has been renowned for its quality, flexibility, and craftsmanship for many years. Flemish companies deliberately set themselves apart by offering products and solutions tailored to the customer’s needs, rather than through mass production or low costs.

That choice is what makes them competitive. But it also has a significant impact on the way production is organised.

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More variety, more complexity

Whereas production used to revolve around large volumes of the same product, many Flemish manufacturing companies are now focusing on smaller batches, a wider range of variants and, increasingly, solutions tailored entirely to the customer’s needs. This evolution has become increasingly pronounced in recent years.

At the same time, this development increases the complexity at virtually every stage of the production process. Work preparation, planning, and stock management are becoming more challenging. Knowledge needs to be shared more quickly. Quality controls also have to take account of much more variation. As a result, even a minor deviation can have a much greater impact on lead times or delivery reliability.

Productivity takes on a new meaning

Consequently, the traditional view of productivity is now inadequate. It is no longer a question of how many products a company can manufacture, but of how it can keep an increasingly complex production environment under control.

- How do you prevent greater variation from leading to more errors?
- How do you maintain the same quality when products are constantly changing?
- How do you ensure that crucial knowledge isn’t confined to just a few staff members?

This calls for a different way of working. Not only in the workplace, but also in the way companies organise their processes, share information, and make decisions.

Technology is a means, not an end

That is precisely why more and more manufacturing companies are investing in **digitalisation, automation, and artificial intelligence**. Not because technology is an end in itself, but because it helps to organise increasingly complex production processes more efficiently.

Technology alone is not enough. A robot cannot resolve unclear processes. AI does not make poor-quality data any more reliable. And digitisation does not provide a clear overview when

processes are not sufficiently coordinated.

So successful companies do not start with technology, but with the challenges they want to solve. First, they bring structure to their processes, ensure reliable information and build a solid operational foundation. Only then can technology reinforce what is already well organised.

Understand first, then invest

The possibilities for digitalisation, automation, and AI are evolving at breakneck speed. However, not every technology offers the same added value to every company. The right investments depend on the maturity of the processes, the production context, and the company's ambitions.

That's why a smart investment starts with insight.

- Where does your company stand at the moment?
- What choices are other Flemish manufacturing companies making?
- Which technologies are they already using successfully?

Sirris's ***Smart Manufacturing Barometer*** provides objective answers.

For the first time, the barometer sets out how Flemish manufacturing companies are applying digitisation, automation, and AI. In doing so, it looks not only at the technologies they use, but also at their productivity, operational maturity, and future investments.

In this way, the barometer helps companies to better understand their own position and to make informed decisions about the next step towards '**smart manufacturing**'. While preserving the quality and flexibility that define the Flemish manufacturing industry.

Where does your company stand in terms of smart manufacturing?



Download the Smart Manufacturing Barometer and see how your organisation compares with other Flemish manufacturers. This will provide you with an objective benchmark to better justify future investments.

Download the Smart Manufacturing Barometer

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