

The connectivity advantage

How high-performing manufacturing companies built a bridge across functions, departments, and organizations.

Introducing high performing manufacturers

Manufacturing is at an inflection point. The companies pulling ahead aren't the ones with the most advanced tools – they're the ones that have figured out how to connect them. What they appear to share is not simply a larger technology budget, but a more connected approach to how data, workflows, and customer relationships fit together.

Drawing on research across 147 manufacturing firms, we found that leading firms share a common technological foundation. They focus on connecting previously siloed systems and data, which leads to better processes and decision-making. In turn, these high performing organisations are able to meet, anticipate and exceed the expectations of their customers. For manufacturers still navigating fragmented systems and isolated data, the path forward is clear – and this report shows what it looks like in practice.



Greater connectivity across Design, Make and Operate

When we looked at what these high performing manufacturers had in common, a clear pattern emerged. These were not necessarily the largest or most resourced organisations.

What set them apart was connectivity: a common platform and advanced integration across all three stages of the manufacturing lifecycle – **Design, Make, and Operate**.

They had built a working bridge between their data, their workflows, and their customers, and that connected infrastructure appears to be closely linked to stronger performance.

Defining high performers

Understanding what customers want is the starting point for any meaningful transformation. The research is clear on this front: quality and reliability dominate customer priorities at 83%, with speed of delivery (61%), value for money (59%), and product performance and efficiency (49%) also featuring prominently. Customers expect products that work, arrive

on time, and deliver tangible value. Meeting these expectations reliably, at scale, is where most manufacturers fall short.

The gap between expectation and delivery is what defines the leader group in the research. Of the 147 manufacturing firms surveyed, 16% stood out as consistently exceeding customer expectations; we call them the **high performers**.

HIGH
PERFORMERS



OTHER
MANUFACTURERS

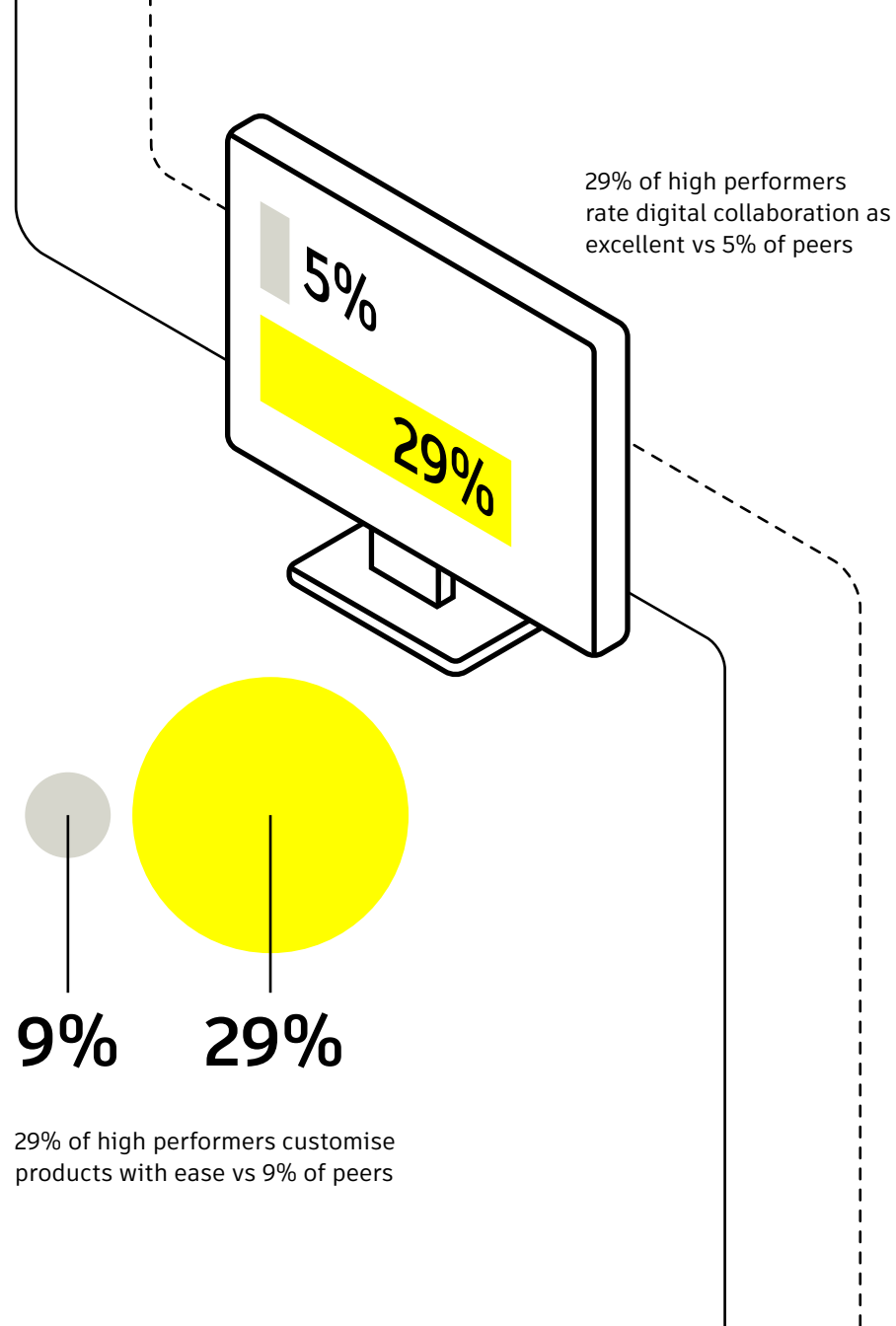


Design

High performers are accelerating time to market through enhanced design efficiency.

The Design stage is where competitive advantage is built before a product ever reaches the factory floor. For high performers, this means two things: frictionless customisation and connected collaboration. Leaders are able to tailor products for individual customers without triggering lengthy engineering or sales processes – 29% do this with ease, compared to just 9% of their peers.

Collaboration tells a similar story. In high-performing organisations, digital collaboration is an embedded operational capability, not an afterthought. Leaders are nearly six times more likely to rate theirs as excellent, creating environments where decisions move faster and the friction caused by siloed working can be reduced.



“We need to exchange a large amount of data and must be certain that everything is saved and that the most up-to-date information is always shared. Autodesk Vault is the tool that ensures our data is organized, shared, and managed from a single, centralized source.”

ING MARCO PASOTTO
Design Manager, MINO S.p.A.

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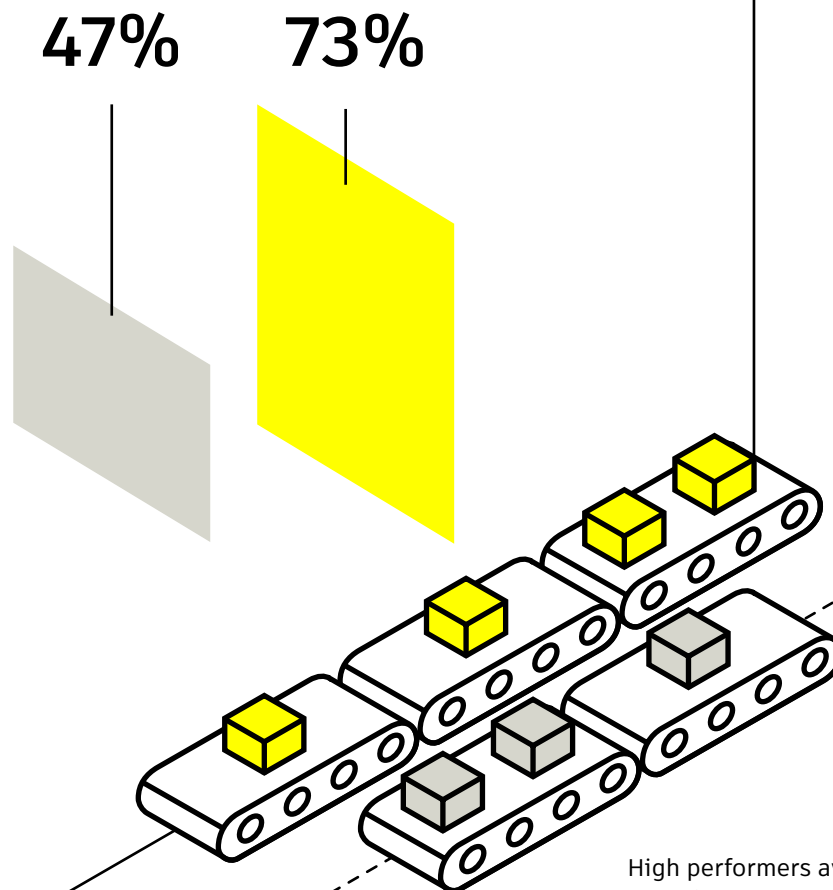
Make

High performers are increasing manufacturing throughput and quality through digitized manufacturing processes.

The Make stage is where operational agility is put to the test. High performers stand out on two fronts: agility and seamless workflow. When demand shifts or late-stage changes arrive, leaders absorb them – 73% can respond without significant cost or delay, versus 47% elsewhere.

High performers deploy a broader range of manufacturing capabilities on average (3.8 vs. 2.9), giving them the foundation needed to move toward intelligent automation and new service-based revenue models. Without that foundation in place, manufacturers may struggle to realise the full value of emerging technologies like AI.

73% of high performers respond to change without significant cost or delay vs 47% of peers

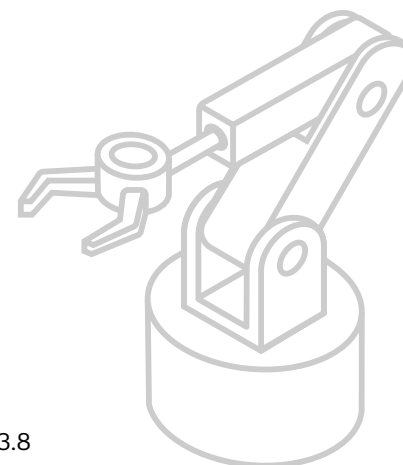


High performers average 3.8 manufacturing capabilities vs. 2.9 among peers

“Where I want to go in the future is live recommendations and leveraging machine learning and AI”

JIM BELOSIC
CEO, SendCutSend

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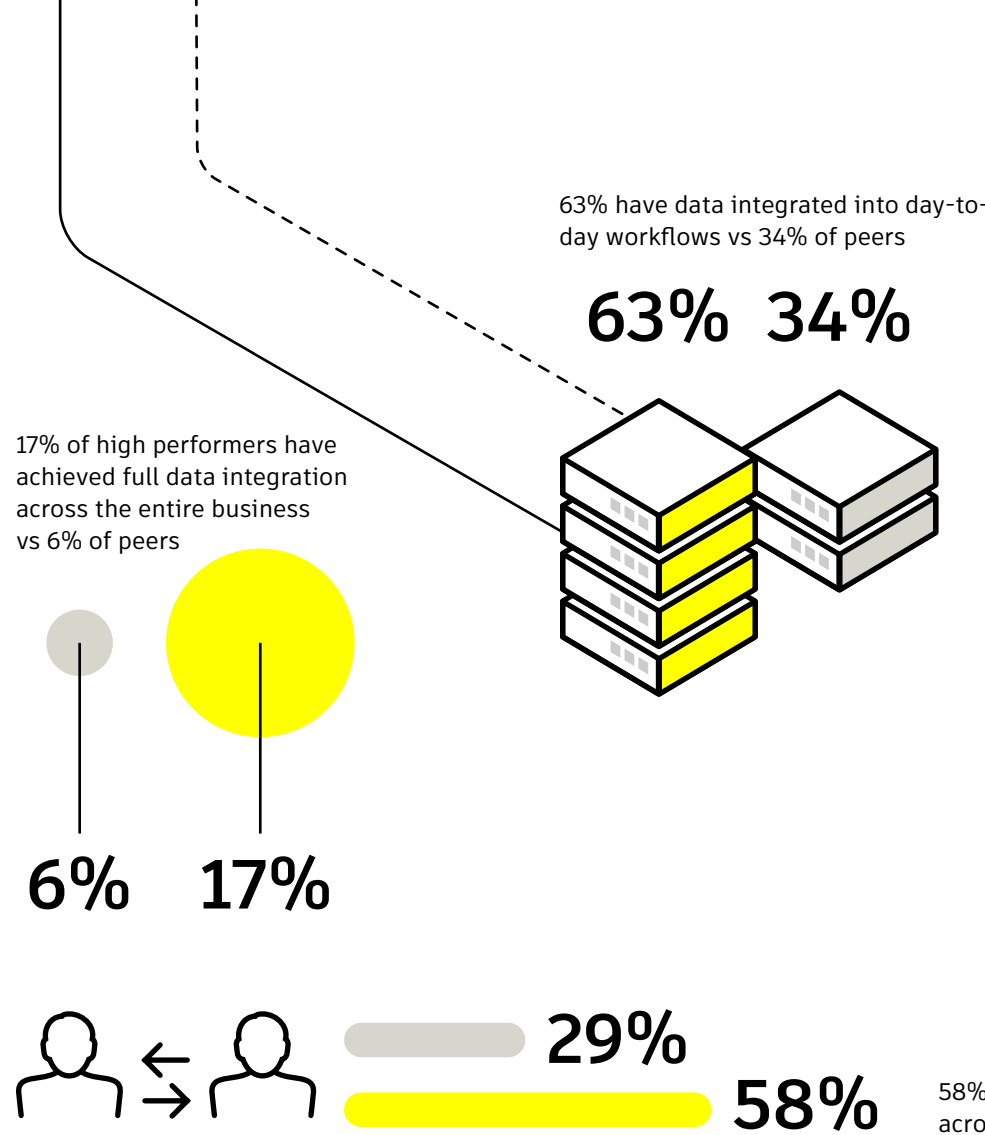


Operate

High performers are increasing operational efficiency through connected data and digitized operations.

The Operate stage is where the value of a connected organisation is fully realised. Leaders outperform on integrated data – 63% have embedded data directly into day-to-day workflows compared with 34% elsewhere, and 17% have achieved full integration across the entire business compared to 6% of peers.

Equally important is data access. Leaders ensure that the people who need information to make decisions actually have it: 58% report organisation-wide data accessibility, double the rate of their peers. In an environment where slow decisions compound into missed deadlines and customer dissatisfaction, this gap can have real commercial consequences, from slower decisions to missed deadlines and lower customer satisfaction.



“Our goal for the future must be the acceptance and deepening of digitization. There is great potential here.”

NORBERT SCHMIDT
Digital Factory Expert, Viessmann

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Conclusion

The pattern is consistent across the lifecycle: high performers are not simply adopting more tools; they are connecting systems, teams, and data so that decisions can move faster from customer need to design, production, and service.

In **Design**, a connected platform lets leaders customize products and collaborate without friction – accelerating time to market before a product ever reaches the floor. In **Make**, that same foundation translates into agility and a broader base of manufacturing capability,

so shifting demand and late-stage changes are absorbed rather than disruptive. In **Operate**, integrated data and organisation-wide access turn information into faster, better decisions across the business.

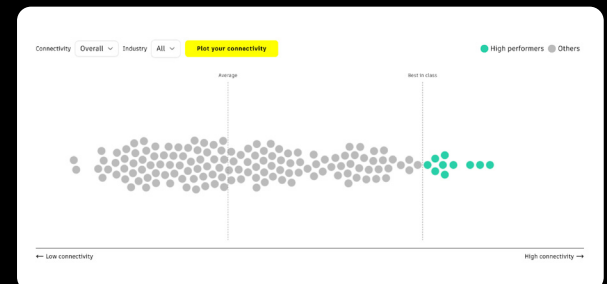
Individually, each is an advantage. Together, they compound. Connected workflows across Design, Make, and Operate are what allow high performers to do the one thing that matters most: consistently meet, anticipate, and exceed what their customers expect – and keep them coming back.

Benchmark against high performers

Are you maximising your advantage?

Compare your connectivity across Design, Make and Operate with this tool.

→ Start here

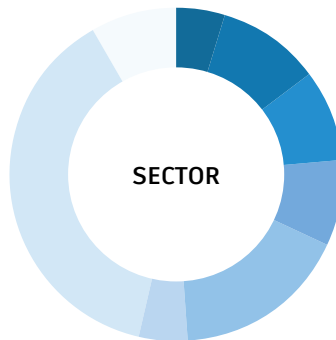


Methodology

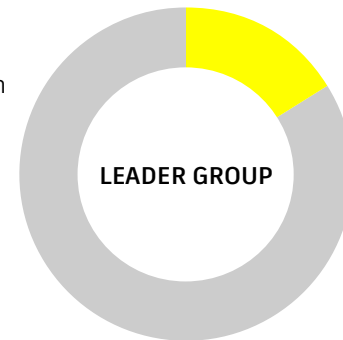
The Autodesk Digital Readiness survey was conducted from January to March 2026 and surveyed 147 manufacturing organisations.

The survey was run in conjunction with **The Manufacturer** magazine.

THE MANUFACTURER



- 5% Aerospace and Defense Equipment
- 10% Automotive and Other Transportation
- 9% Building Products and Fabrication
- 8% Consumer Products
- 17% Industrial Machinery
- 5% Life Sciences Manufacturing
- 38% Manufacturing Other
- 8% Process Manufacturing



- 16% High performers
- 84% Other manufacturers



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