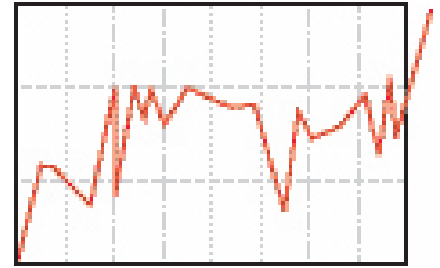


# Tech News

## Now is the Perfect Time to Reinvest in Your Business



Despite the current economic conditions, there are things that you can do as a business owner or manager to improve your company's position with existing and potential customers. Buying decisions are often made based on the smallest details, and minor investments found in this article could make a difference in attracting future business.

The characteristic that distinguishes you from your competitors might be the ability to show your customers that you have a clear view and firm understanding of everything that goes on in your manufacturing process. This can be as simple as accurate work flow diagrams, and as complex as complete genealogy in the manufacturing of products. Your existing staff and equipment may be in a position to help you with assistance from a third-party integration firm that can recommend the different ways to improve your process control systems and manufacturing processes. For example:

### Exploit Existing Investments in Machinery and Technology

Hardware that you have purchased in the last 5 to 10 years might put you in a position to offer your customers the visualization that will differentiate you from your competitors. Original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) have trended toward offering off-the-shelf technology in their control schemes. This movement away from proprietary controls means

that equipment you already own is capable of connecting to data collection and analysis systems. Furthermore, micro controllers have grown in their ability to connect to numerous devices so inexpensively that adding supervisory systems is neither the work nor the expense that it once was.

### Retrofit Existing Equipment Rather than Purchase New

Many OEMs or third-party suppliers now offer "bolt in" upgrade packages to equipment that was previously proprietary. Machinery retrofit companies or integrators can assist with upgrades where packaged options are not available.

### Take Advantage of Training Opportunities

Business managers often note that skilled employees are the source of ideas for improvement projects and the key to the successful implementation and maintenance of advanced technology. Companies routinely spend countless HR dollars trying to locate perfect employees to perform these functions for them.

You can leverage a strong integration partner to assist you in the further development of your existing engineering and maintenance staff. Providers can work with you to develop high-impact training that helps your employees better understand the relationship between plant technology and proper production. Other training can be tailored

to quickly identify and minimize downtime through improved maintenance procedures. All of these efforts assist you by fostering the skills required to effectively manage modern equipment and processes in-house.

### Conclusion

The key is to continue moving forward despite the current economic challenges. A strong and responsible integration partner will recognize the hardships facing manufacturers, and will help you find ways to advance your position even in lean times. You may find that the improvements you make now in your processes and personnel will help you stand out to your existing and future customers as they evaluate their relationships going forward.

*For more information on how a third-party integration firm can assist your business, contact Joseph Snyder at Process and Data Automation at 814/866-9600 Ext. 221 or [joe@processanddata.com](mailto:joe@processanddata.com).*

*Joseph Snyder is the president of Process and Data Automation, an industrial controls and controls-related data service integration company. Based in Erie, they service industrial and municipal clients regionally and throughout North America.*

