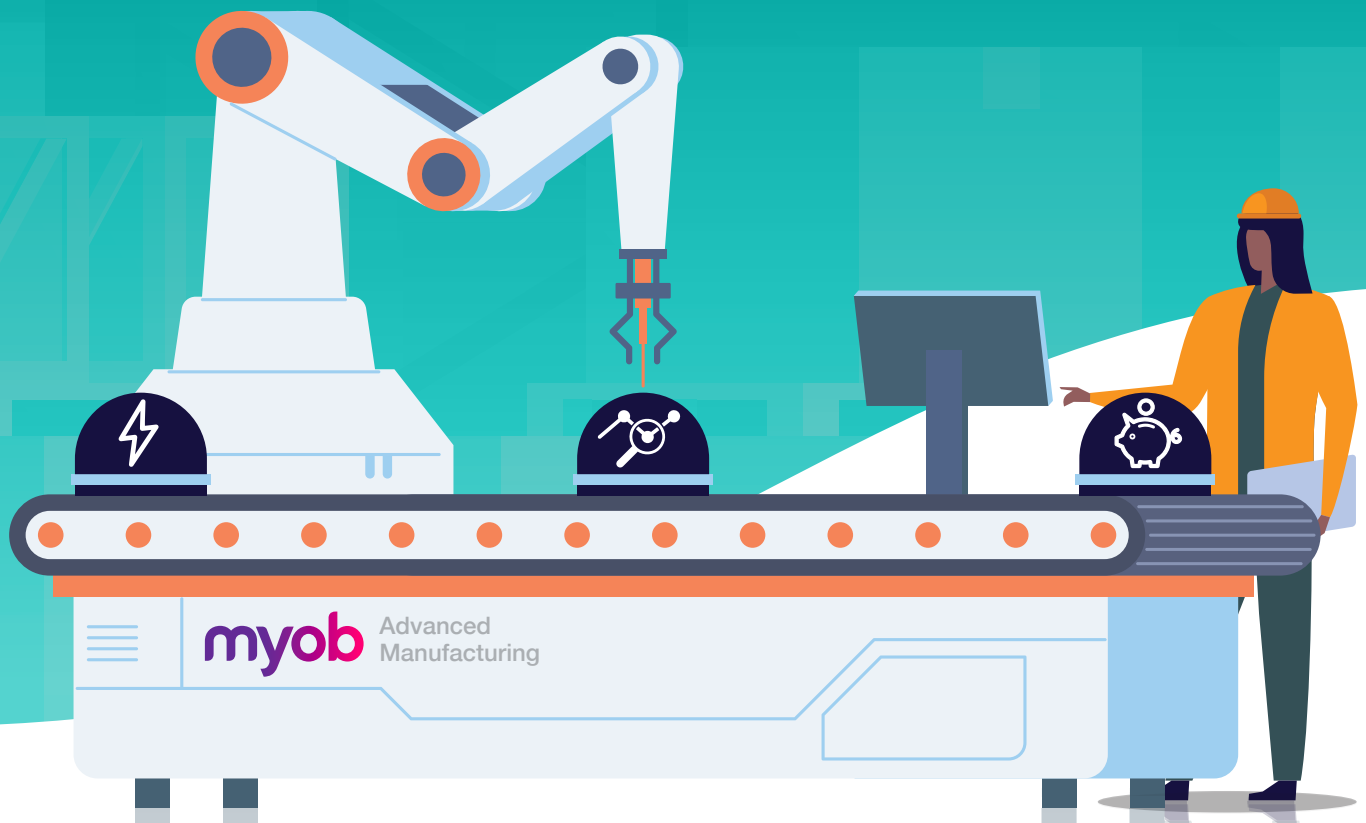


Manufacturing in the cloud

Streamlining, data access, cost control and
other cloud-based benefits for manufacturers



Contents

Introduction	2
Complex industry, complex challenges	3
1. One platform, many systems	4
2. Simplify and save	5
3. Real-time data on tap	5
4. Increase visibility, reduce costs	6
5. Any work, anywhere	7
6. Connect and communicate	7
Operational issues and market demands	8
Navigating a rugged manufacturing landscape	9

Introduction

Manufacturers have long led the pack in terms of automation and hyper-efficient processes – think Henry Ford’s revolutionary assembly line or Toyota introducing the concept of lean manufacturing. More recently, the industry has seen a surge in the use of robotics and AI, which could signal a major change in the sector.

However, while systems on the plant floor may be efficient, this isn’t always true on the operational side. Far too many manufacturers are still using older software systems to manage their staff, workflow and inventory, which can lead to slower processes, issues with supply and wasted time and materials.

In an industry grappling with COVID, increasing globalisation, competition and changing consumer demands, that sort of waste can be seriously damaging.



That’s why more manufacturing businesses are turning to cloud business management platforms. The right system could help resolve many of the challenges facing your business – and even help you find efficiencies in places you don’t expect.





Complex industry, complex challenges

If you work in manufacturing, you'll know that it's one of the most complex industries around. Balancing the incoming supply of materials and parts with production and storage of goods and outgoing orders and shipping is a constant challenge, where small errors can result in major problems.

Because there are so many moving parts, factors like communication and visibility are crucial. If you can't see customer orders or incoming stock in real time, it's easy to miss delays and compound problems. If your teams can't communicate effectively or access the right data, it's harder for them to maximise their productivity and resolve problems effectively. Balancing stock levels and fulfilling orders efficiently, staffing shifts with the right number of people, ensuring orders aren't missed or delayed – it's all more difficult without the right systems in place.

Many manufacturers struggle with these issues – particularly as margins get thinner. As with many industries, manufacturing is being

hit by increased costs caused by supply chain issues and inflation. In this already difficult climate, disconnected systems and no 'top down' view make decision-making harder, lack of integration wastes staff time on manual tasks and inefficient workflows eat into those ultra-slim margins even more. If your competitors are already using tech to boost their efficiency and deliver better, cheaper products faster, it's even more challenging.

It's a complicated puzzle, but there are ways to solve it – cloud business management systems being chief among them.

Here's how the right technology can help...

1. One platform, many systems

Using multiple software systems to manage different parts of your business quickly becomes unwieldy – especially if integration doesn't work as it should. If your sales system and financial reporting software don't link up, for example, your staff might need to spend time tracking down sales figures to generate a simple monthly report – and by the time it's complete, the figures may well be out of date. If your ordering information doesn't feed into your inventory management, you could end up with shipping delays and disappointed customers.

With a cloud business management system, all those internal systems can be managed through a single platform.



Sales, inventory, ordering, operations, financial reporting, staff management and payroll can all be integrated. This doesn't just simplify operations in your plant, it immediately eliminates many of those time-consuming workarounds. Because everything is integrated and all data taken from the same source, you're less likely to run into missed orders or shipping mix-ups. Sales data feeds into your ordering system, helping balance incoming stock and outgoing product. Sales and production information is accessible for financial reporting and daily decision-making, and manual data entry is minimised.



2. Simplify and save

Integration also offers an opportunity to streamline workflows throughout your business, saving time and money. As you switch day-to-day processes over to a business management system, you'll be able to see each step – and remove those that are no longer needed. In some cases, you'll be able to automate steps and eliminate the need for manual tasks.

For example, where your original ordering process may have involved a staff member double-checking inventory and printing a shipping label, your business management platform could cut some of these steps by automatically printing labels and linking orders to your inventory system.

In a business where time is precious and margins are tight, making seemingly small improvements across your organisation can add up to major savings.

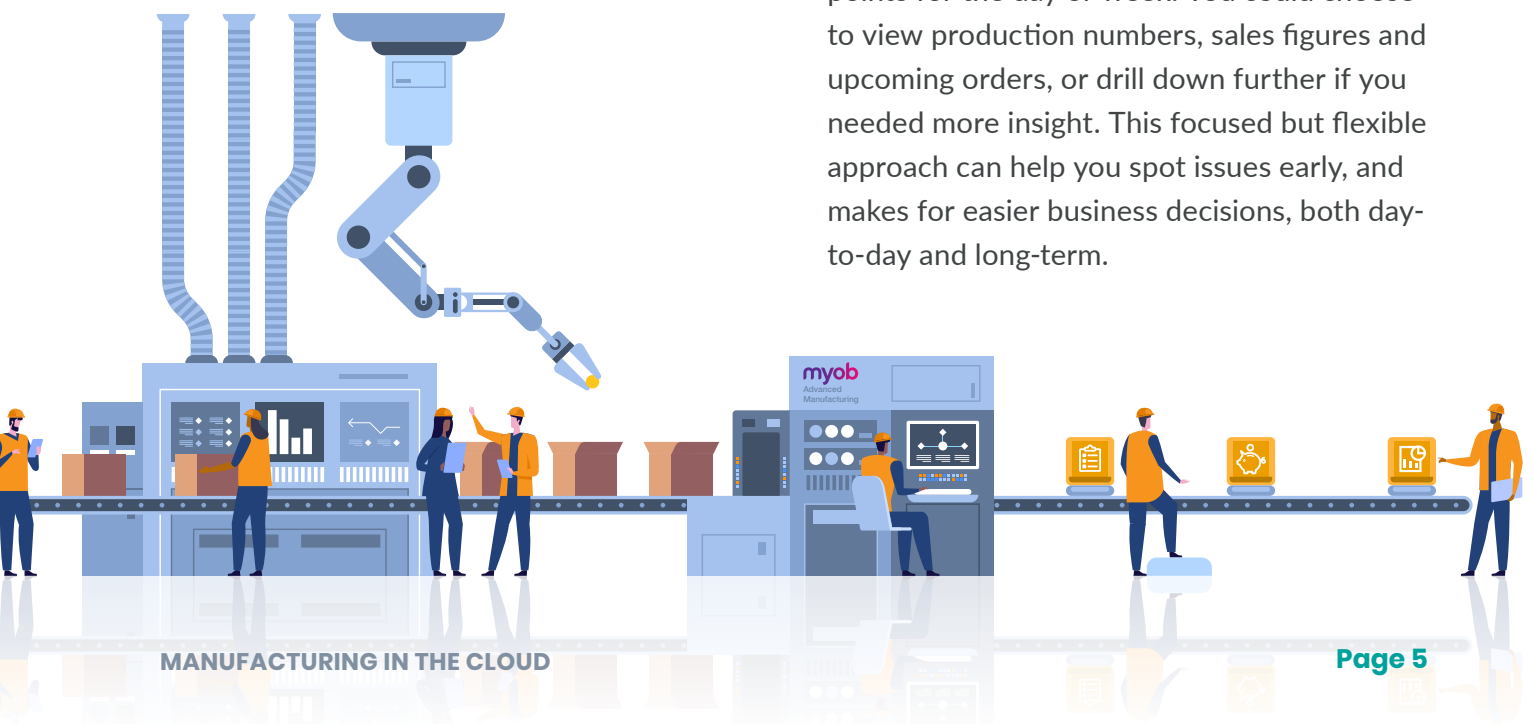
3. Real-time data on tap

There is such a thing as information overload, even in manufacturing.



With some systems, you get swamped with data that may or may not be useful, and may even be out of date by the time it reaches you. If you're running a busy manufacturing business, you need key metrics and focused information rather than endless spreadsheets or impenetrable lists of figures.

With a business management system, data is – most importantly – up-to-date and accurate. Most systems will also give you a quick view or dashboard that shows your chosen data points for the day or week. You could choose to view production numbers, sales figures and upcoming orders, or drill down further if you needed more insight. This focused but flexible approach can help you spot issues early, and makes for easier business decisions, both day-to-day and long-term.



4. Increase visibility, reduce costs

Getting your orders and costs right can be a complex process. Raw materials and parts can fluctuate in price from day to day, and exchange rates and shipping costs change rapidly. Sales orders may vary wildly from season to season or rise suddenly in response to market changes.

This makes forecasting profitability and ordering materials a complicated and risky process. Get it wrong, and you risk over or under-ordering.



With an integrated system, you get better visibility across your supply chains along with smarter reporting and forecasting tools. By pulling in current data on the cost of materials along with past and current order information and manufacturing times, you get a far more accurate view of costs and timing, helping you order the right materials at the right times. You can also use this information to tweak product pricing as needed.

It all adds up to cost savings – accurate data means you won't over-order and waste money on storage or unsold product, or under-order and risk losing customers or having to buy expensive, last-minute materials.

5. Any work, anywhere

Most business management platforms are now based in the cloud. This means anyone in your business can access files and programs when they need them, from practically anywhere.

If your manufacturing plant includes several facilities – factories, offices, warehouses and more – this can be a real benefit. You no longer need IT services to install and maintain an in-house network and link it to devices – everything just works as it should, with automatic updates and accurate, up-to-the-minute data available to everyone. Staff can use devices like phones or tablets to access work systems, update orders and check details, reducing the risk of mistakes, delays and double-handling.

It's also easier for people to tick all the boxes. For example, if your warehouse staff struggle to remember to record inventory coming and going, a tablet or phone they can carry around makes it easier, and therefore more likely for them to do.



6. Connect and communicate

Communication is crucial in every business, but in manufacturing, where teams can be spread across different sites with little in-person contact, it's particularly important. Disconnection between teams and individuals increases the risk of errors and miscommunication. Not only that but opportunities for collaboration and improvement are missed if staff members are rarely in the same room.

A business management system can help here, making it easier for your staff to communicate and share ideas. Because all your staff members from various teams are working from the same playbook and using the same tools, it's easier for them to share data and discuss work details.



Operational issues and market demands

Manufacturing has always been a complex business.

These days, with inflation, supply chain problems and changing consumer demand putting pressure on businesses, it's even more difficult to navigate. That's why so many manufacturers who still rely on older software systems are running into issues around efficiency, process management and access to data.

If you can't see what's happening at every point in your workflow, it can be difficult to make positive changes and maximise your productivity. And if there's no way to view accurate data about upcoming orders and incoming materials, it's almost impossible to balance the needs of your customers against changes in pricing and delivery.

These internal deficiencies, combined with external pressures from a fast-moving market and tough competition, can make it almost impossible for manufacturers to keep up.





Navigating a rugged manufacturing landscape

The manufacturing landscape is increasingly rocky but there are ways to smooth your path.

Enter **MYOB Advanced Business**. Our cloud business management system is designed for New Zealand and Australian manufacturers, with a focus on streamlining processes, delivering accurate data, increasing productivity and reducing costs. With all your key business management needs on one platform, you don't just reduce errors and eliminate inefficiencies, but you can also see how your business is functioning day to day. In today's industry, that's essential.

Want to know whether **MYOB Advanced Business** is right for you? Talk to David Brown from our Cloud ERP team today.

[Learn more](#)

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