

# Are robotics set to play a starring role in the next ten years of British manufacturing?

*Technology is constantly changing our day-to-day lives and has had a particular impact on the working world. Automation is fast becoming a key conversation within multiple industries in Great Britain, including manufacturing with robotics emerging as the solution.*

*Over the past few years, a need to move towards more automation in the manufacturing industry has been seen. In fact, a survey done by ABB Robotics found that of 250 SME and manufacturing companies, 81.2% were considering incorporating robotics into their processes to combat issues with workforce shortages and supply chain disruptions.*

*In this article, we'll look at how, in order to keep up with the demand British manufacturing faces, more businesses are adopting robotics as a solution. We'll also dive into what they can do for your business.*

## What can robots do for you?

A big question from businesses still on the fence about bringing in robots is what can they do to improve processes. By automating sections of your manufacturing processes with robots, you're given an opportunity to stay competitive within a constantly evolving industry.

Substituting traditional labour with robots within your processes can help to provide added efficiency. Robots don't require breaks, and they're programmed to carry out specific practices with much smaller margins for error than humans. This results in a more cost-effective output from your business, which could see greater revenue for less paid labour.

Robotics can also be useful when it

comes to tasks that require a steadiness that can't always reliably come from humans. Whether it's handling or removing materials that can be harmful or dangerous, welding, or separating materials from one another, robotics makes those tasks much easier to carry out.

## They work among us...

The UK's manufacturing industry has leant into a 'quality over quantity' mentality, focusing on top value from each product made, and robotics are now being incorporated into processes.

Between 2020 and 2021, the UK became one of the top 15 for sales of industrial robots globally. The International Federation of Robotics (IFR)

found that 2,205 industrial robots were installed throughout 2020, which brought the total in the country to around 23,000.

These robots are primarily found in the automotive manufacturing industry in the UK with around 875, making up 16% of those that were installed in 2020. Several sectors are seeing a benefit in robot application due to a lack of workers, including the food and beverage sector, which already uses industrial machinery and hydraulic cylinders, has seen an increase to 304 robots in 2020. This is a 96% increase in volume since the previous year.

## Looking to the future

Though these numbers continue to rise,

the IFR still ranked the UK outside of the top 20 countries with robot density within manufacturing. We can take from this that there is still room for robotics presence in manufacturing to grow on our shores.

The government itself outlined how much growth was possible in a Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), estimating that there was a potential 40% annual growth for robotics and autonomous systems in the UK between 2020 and 2030. This could in turn mean an extra £6.4 billion in value for the UK economy by 2035. And if our creation and sale of autonomous robots is set to increase, our use of them across a number of industries may be set to increase alongside it.

Automating your business process with robotics is not something to be scared of. The myth that robotics steals jobs has long since been debunked, and there is plenty of room for improvements within the manufacturing industry that they can help solve. Implementing robotics can help keep your business competitive in the global market, as well as provide an efficiency that is impossible to achieve with manual labour. There are currently a record number of robots installed; however, there is still room for growth, and the amount of revenue that could stimulate the UK economy if more is installed is staggering. ■

## Sources

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