



## The Time for a Digital Management System Is Now

As more states issue stay at home orders in response to COVID-19, many manufacturing and distribution companies are pausing operations, reducing staffs, or moving to A/B days. Others, considered essential, are required to continue operating in some capacity. However, your daily work is changing, it's probably becoming clear that social distancing isn't easy to enforce in environments where hands-on work is critical.

### Key Takeaways:

- As the world shifts to remote working to promote social distancing, manufacturers are looking for ways to apply these concepts within an environment that's traditionally very hands-on and face-to-face.
- Leveraging your digital management system—or using your downtime to put one in place—can help your employees stay connected to each other and the business even when close physical contact isn't safe.
- Digital management systems can help manufacturers navigate the current crisis while positioning them for greater levels of success well into the future.

### Manufacturing Technology Can Help Manufacturers Work Safer and Smarter During the Global Pandemic and Beyond

The current pandemic the world is fighting is causing TBM, like everyone else, to adapt policies and find new ways to get work done. We have long been proponents of face-to-face communication between supervisors and their teams, advocating for huddle meetings at least once a shift, encouraging leaders to walk the floor and check in with employees, and calling for teams working shoulder to shoulder at the point of impact to drive rapid results. Right now, protecting the health and welfare of the world means much of this has to happen in different ways, as it's no longer feasible for large groups of people to come together.

While other industries are turning to technologies like Zoom to keep their workforce together, we're seeing more and more manufacturers lean on their digital management systems. And we believe this is the best solution for manufacturing organisations to stay connected and productive right now. These technologies aggregate and visualise critical performance data and allow managers and employees to view information on their devices or on screens located throughout the facility.



## The Technologies Are Helping to Promote Safety and Productivity at the Same Time By:

### **ENSURING MANAGERS AND EXECUTIVES WORKING REMOTELY CAN KEEP THE PULSE OF THE BUSINESS AND TAKE ACTION AS NEEDED**

Whether your leaders are stranded due to travel restrictions, self-isolating, or working from home to comply with state orders, cloud-based manufacturing applications can keep them connected to up-to-the-minute performance data, providing a clear window into the business.

Depending on the software suite you use, managers can actively participate in the business even from a distance by analysing the data, looking into the root causes of any performance misses, and creating countermeasures and actions plans to help keep work on track.

### **SERVING AS A PROXY FOR DAILY HUDDLE MEETINGS**

Many manufacturers that use digital management systems already have screens in place located in various locations on the factory floor. This can allow workers to see performance data and view where the company stands in terms of hitting its daily goals without the need to leave their designated workspaces or physically come together to communicate.

### **ELECTRONICALLY COMMUNICATING UPDATES AND ALERTS**

Many digital management systems include alert capabilities that notify the right people at the right time via alerts and notifications sent to smart phones and tablets. As workers receive alerts, they can take action to help avoid critical misses and correct the situation, then update the system to keep everyone on the same page, further reducing the need for face-to-face interaction.

## If You Aren't Already Using a Digital Management System, Now's the Time to Put One in Place

What if your business doesn't already have a digital management system? Well, as they say, there's no time like the present. Right now, we are seeing many of our existing clients who use manual based systems reach for help with digitising their management system. Even if your business is experiencing some downtime, take advantage of the opportunity to work on your business and put solutions in place that will not only help you work safer today and as the world comes out of our current situation, but that can help you work smarter well into the future.

The reality is, even as stay at home orders are lifted, people are still going to want to practice social distancing for some time, and remote working is likely going to become more of the norm. Putting a digital management system in place now will set you up for this future in more ways than one. Beyond enabling remote work and promoting social distancing within facilities, a digital management system is the key to promoting greater visibility and transparency across your business. And this will be the catalyst to ramping up production when the time comes, understanding vulnerabilities in your supply chain, and making smarter business decisions at all levels of the organisation.

Looking further out, a digital management system will position your business to embrace the future of digital manufacturing and better understand where new digital technologies can make the most impact and can drive the most value for the business.

## A Digital Management System in Action

Even before the outbreak of COVID-19, one of our current clients set the bar for how to operate in a remote working situation. The manufacturer uses several technologies to conduct business reviews at multiple levels, with TBM's own digital management system, [Dploy Solutions](#), as the core. When combined with video cameras and touchscreens on which participants can write notes, the solution allows anyone from plant managers, to vice presidents, and C-level executives to come together virtually, view real-time business performance data, and collaborate as a team in these daily, weekly and monthly online reviews.

## The Author




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Ken is responsible for driving TBM's technology strategy, creating value-added technologies and services for client business operations. He is also widely recognised for his expertise in translating lean principles to supply chain and customer-facing processes in manufacturing and service organisations.

## We're Here to Help

Even while we may not be able to be with you face-to-face, our consultants and technology experts are available via phone and video conferencing to support your technology endeavors, including helping with standing up a digital management system and providing the remote training your team may need to get up and running quickly. Reach out to learn how we can continue to work together during these times and what actions we can take now to ensure the best possible future for your business, your employees, and the customers you serve.

Learn more about our strategic approach to digital manufacturing. 

## SPEED WINS EVERY TIME

TBM specializes in operations and supply chain consulting for manufacturers and distributors. We push the pedal down in your operations to make you more agile and help you accelerate business performance 3–5x faster than your peers.

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