



A Post-Lockdown Outlook

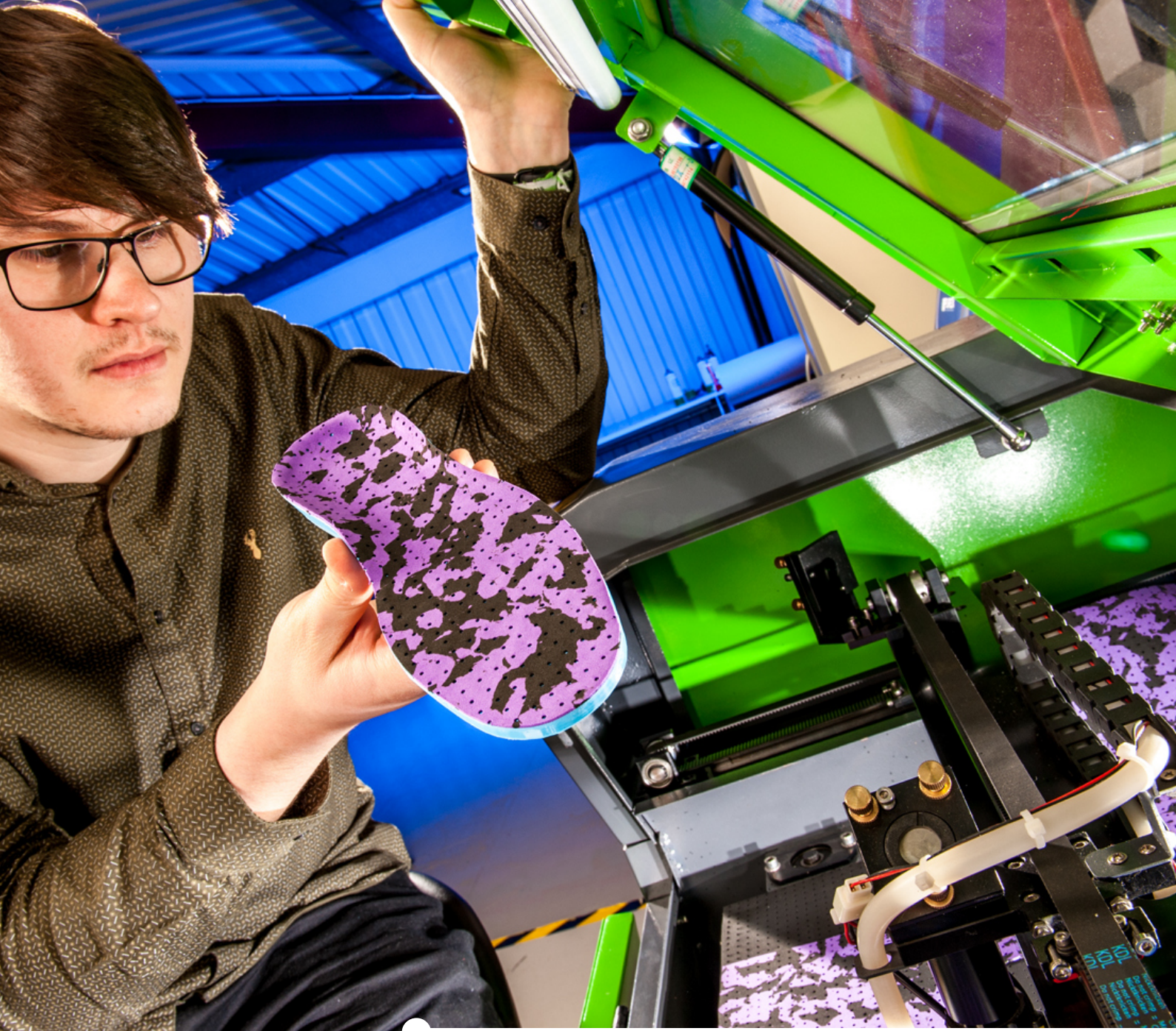
Tackling the challenges of market demand

How to use data to uncover a change in demand

3 key technologies that can gather and analyse data

How to reduce time to market and boost agility

Where you can find support and financial help



The country has begun to return to work with preventative measures in place. Yet there's still a big question mark hanging over market demand.

COVID-19 will have long-term implications, there's no doubt about that. Uncertainty is simply part and parcel of the future. So it'll be difficult to predict manufacturing market demand for the foreseeable.

Having said this, there are ways that this challenge can be tackled. Here, we guide you through technology's role in helping you adapt to fluctuations in market demand.

Understanding the role of data

To be able to deal effectively with market change, you first need to know exactly what the change is. Only then will you be able to make informed decisions, and know the speed at which you can introduce new products and services. Data really has never been more important.

And to get this data and truly unleash its power, you'll need to shift your mindset and adopt a creative problem-solving approach. Technology will be key, and you should be agile with it – innovation will bring you much more insight than any theoretical strategic document.

Acquiring and analysing data

Securing the most accurate, up-to-date information will require you to use the Industrial Internet of Things (IIOT). Through networked sensors and intelligent devices on the factory floor, you can gather relevant and timely data – you could use it to alert someone when a machine stops working, for example, or even predict when it may stop working in the future. This data can be further augmented with information from other sources, like your website or particular datasets.





With a clear acquisition strategy, you'll then need to think about how to successfully collate and store your data. Technologies like cloud computing are ideal. These will ensure you can unify it in a sole central location and gain a holistic view of all your data, avoiding the difficulties that arise from having distinct data silos.

The next step is analysis. The progression of artificial intelligence technologies like machine learning means you can leverage data to improve your forecasting accuracy. This will empower you to make better-informed decisions that will ultimately drive profitability. Through helpful applications, including buying optimisation, stock allocation and product pricing, you can effectively predict future demand.

Meeting demand

There are also specific digital technologies that are designed to support you in meeting a sudden boost in demand.

For product development, turn to additive manufacturing. It allows for a quicker speed-to-market and simplifies the multi-stage prototyping process by producing samples in mere hours. This is a big competitive advantage – you'll have the opportunity to be responsive in your approach to quick fluctuations in market demand, building innovative products in shorter time frames.



Additive manufacturing easily trumps traditional processes as it reduces the high capital investment and volume requirements for these product lines. This allows for more flexible manufacturing without the usual supplementary overheads from extra product lines, or the additional setup time that usually comes with switching between low-volume products.

Technology in action

Here at Made Smarter, we help many manufacturing businesses make their processes more efficient through new technologies. One such example is Storth Limited, who implemented automation to boost the resilience of their product line:

"Our adoption of a robot welder, through support from Made Smarter, has been a success from day one. We were experiencing bottlenecks within our welding process, which was causing delays in schedules. The robot has helped us overcome the delays, and has also helped us to continue operations at a time when some of our welders have been self-isolating, which has caused staff shortages."

"In order to keep up with supply, we are now keen to upgrade our cutting equipment to enable us to operate unsupervised automatic cutting and feeding during the night."

– Julian Lopez, Export Manager at Storth Limited

Getting support with technology

Storth Limited received personalised help from Made Smarter to successfully introduce digital tools into their business. Technology is within your grasp too. We work closely with manufacturing SMEs to empower them to get the best out of emerging technologies. Our specialist advisers can provide you with free, tailored guidance, helping you to pinpoint the most suitable tools and the ways in which they'll benefit your manufacturing line.

Plus, we can support you financially as well, delivering up to 50% match-funding for technology implementation. There is also the option to develop your leadership skills through our subsidised [leadership programme](#). This is designed to help you introduce digital tools effectively and ensure employees embrace them too.

We can additionally assist you in developing a clear digital roadmap. This is in one of two ways: our [dedicated workshops](#), and a fully-funded [Digital Technology Internship programme](#). This digital native will not only help you as you build your digital strategy, but can also bring a [fresh perspective](#) on the role of technology in your business.





Taking action now

Taking action is often the best way of tackling uncertainty. By setting your digital transformation strategy in motion today, you can move forward into this post-lockdown world with confidence.

Speak to a member of our team by registering over at madesmarter.uk. We'll get to know your business, understand how exactly it works, and determine the ways in which digital tools could take it to the next level. Adopt technology now, and help your business #ComeBackSmarter.