

A Simple Guide to the ABCs of Modern Manufacturing

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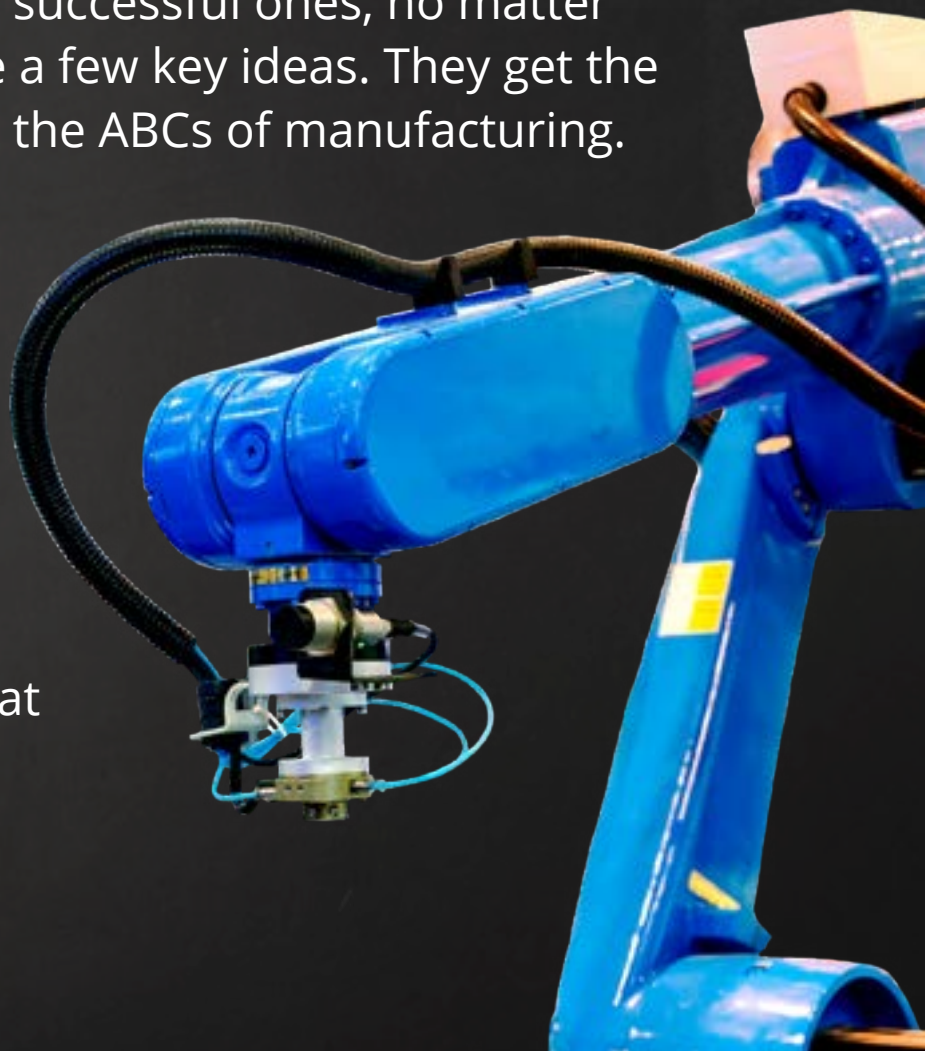
To stay profitable as a manufacturer, you have to run a tight ship. I've been lucky enough to visit with the owners and key people at thousands of our manufacturers all over the world. My main goal during these visits is to listen and learn what makes them so good at what they do.

It turns out that the most successful ones, no matter what they make, all share a few key ideas. They get the basics right. Think of it as the ABCs of manufacturing.

They build their success on:

- **A for Automation**
- **B for Business Intelligence**
- **C for Customer Care**

Let's break down what that really means for you.



A is for Automation: Let Your Systems Do the Heavy Lifting

Automation is the engine of efficiency. To compete on a global scale, you have to keep your costs under control. Automation is absolutely about cutting costs, but it's also about unlocking your team's true potential. It's about eliminating the "wasteful minutes" spent on repetitive, manual tasks so your people can focus on innovation, problem-solving and proactive management. When you let your systems handle the busywork, you empower your people to do their best work.

- **Put Scheduling on Autopilot:** Many manufacturers feel like they're constantly juggling schedules. As one manufacturer put it, "We used to spend too much time on scheduling." Lean manufacturers do it automatically. This saves an incredible amount of time and frees up your schedulers to become strategic planners, looking for efficiencies instead of just plugging in data.
- **Take the Guesswork Out of Purchasing:** Knowing when to buy parts and in what quantity shouldn't be a guessing game. Automation removes the uncertainty, allowing your purchasing team to focus on negotiating better prices and improving delivery times, which directly impacts your bottom line.
- **Make it Your Own:** True, effective automation isn't a one-size-fits-all solution. Every manufacturing business is different. That's why automation, from quoting to shipping, requires a flexible system that can be tailored to meet your specific processes, machines and philosophies.

When you fully embrace automation, it becomes a powerful engine for growth.

Manufacturer Proof Point

"In the three years since going live with Global Shop Solutions ERP, we've averaged 56% year-to-year annual growth."

— *Rugo Machine Shop Services*

B is for Business Intelligence: Your Blueprint for Profitability

Your business produces a massive amount of data every single day. Business Intelligence harnesses that data to make smarter, faster and more profitable decisions. This starts by breaking down information silos and creating a single source of truth for your entire operation.

- **Get Everyone on the Same Page:** The most successful manufacturers manage their entire business, from quote to cash, with a single, integrated ERP system. Juggling separate software for accounting, sales and production is a recipe for errors and inefficiency. When all your data lives in one system, your team can trust the numbers they're seeing, and everyone from the shop floor to the front office is working with the same real-time information.
- **Know Your Numbers Cold:** You can't manage what you don't measure. Healthy manufacturers live by their key performance indicators (KPIs). These are the vital signs of your business – metrics like on-time delivery rates, gross profit margin by job and scrap percentage. Tracking these KPIs allows you to spot positive trends and identify money-draining challenges before they become major problems. It lets you manage your business with facts, not just gut feelings.
- **Make Data-Driven Decisions:** When you have accurate, real-time data at your fingertips, you can make better decisions about everything. You can quote jobs with confidence, knowing your true costs. You can manage inventory more effectively, protecting your cash flow. And you can see which customers and product lines are the most profitable, allowing you to focus your efforts where they'll have the biggest impact.

Manufacturer Proof Point

"Knowing where we stand with inventory at any given time improves our quoting accuracy and ability to determine margins on every job. In today's markets, if you can't accurately track your costs and margins, it puts you at a real competitive disadvantage."

— C.E. Smith Company, Inc.

C is for Customer Care: The Heart of Your Business

Ultimately, all the efficiency and data in the world serve one primary purpose: to take better care of your customers. Excellent customer care is the cornerstone of growth. When you make your customers' lives easier and help them succeed, they don't just come back – they become your biggest advocates.

- **Win More Jobs with Faster, Smarter Quoting:** In today's market, speed and accuracy win business. The more quotes you can get out the door and the more accurate they are, the more jobs you'll win. It's that simple. An integrated system allows you to generate quotes that are not only fast but also highly accurate, based on real historical job costs and material prices.
- **Provide Instant, Confident Answers:** The last thing a customer wants to hear when they ask about an order is, "Let me check on that and get back to you." A culture of exceptional customer care is built on providing immediate and accurate answers. When your ERP and CRM systems are fully integrated, your entire team has access to the same up-to-the-minute customer information. They can answer questions about job status, shipments and invoicing on the first call, building trust and strengthening relationships.
- **Become a True Partner:** When you have a complete view of your customer's history, needs and ongoing projects, you can move beyond being just a supplier and become a true partner. You can anticipate their needs, alert them to potential issues and use tools like "what-if" scheduling to accommodate rush orders and changes, proving that you are a flexible and reliable part of their success.

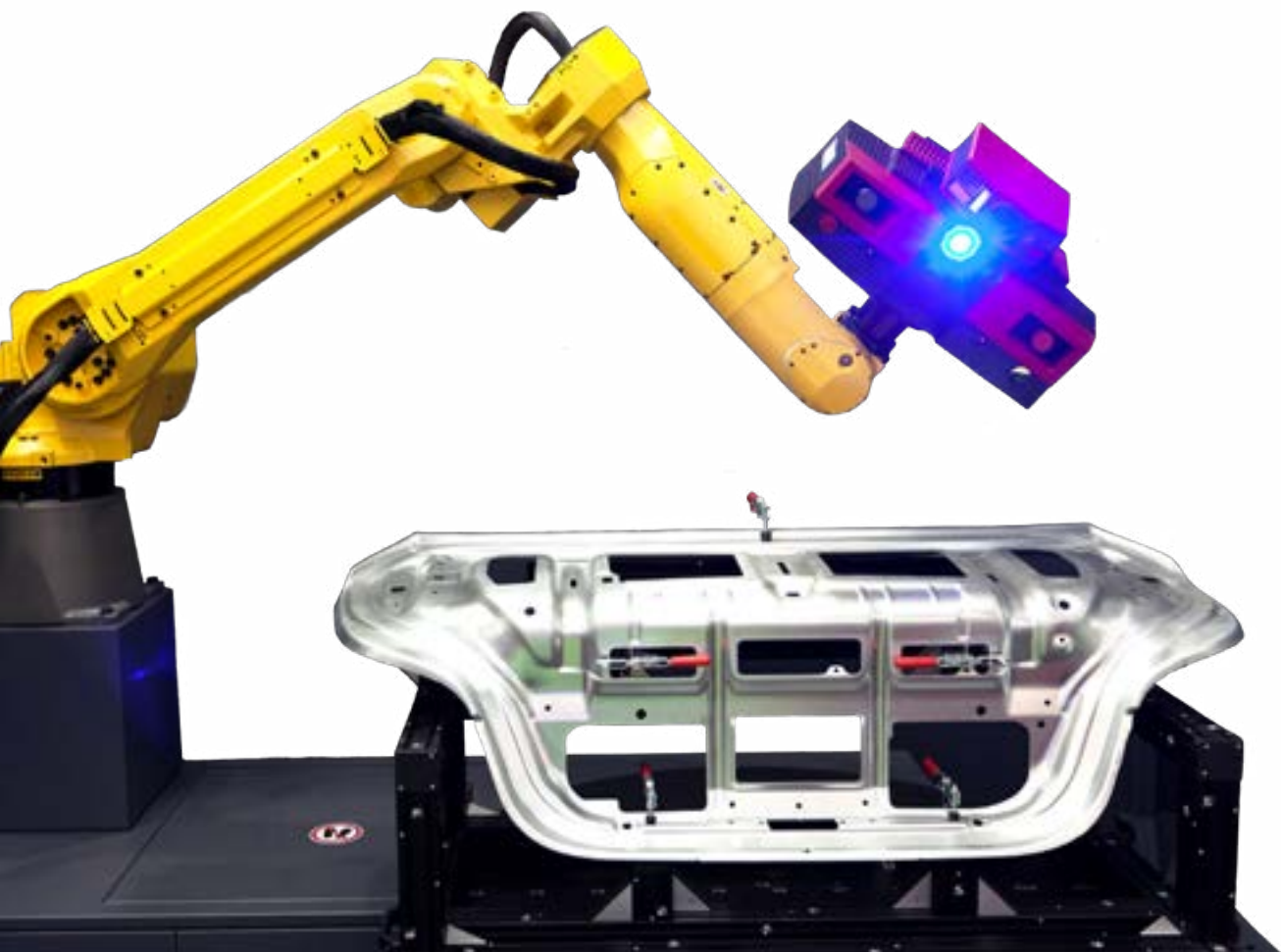
Manufacturer Proof Point

"With Global Shop Solutions, all customer data resides in the system so that everyone has access to the same knowledge. It's convenient when you can talk to someone who really cares and has the knowledge to help you with the first phone call. [It] has certainly enabled us to provide our customers with much greater service than our competitors."

— *The Cleveland Punch & Die Company*

Making It How You Work, Every Day

Mastering the ABCs of modern manufacturing – Automation, Business Intelligence and Customer Care – is a transformative journey. It's a commitment to continuous improvement that pays dividends across your entire organization. With the right integrated ERP system as your foundation, these principles become more than just a strategy; they become the way you do business, leading to leaner operations, greater efficiency and a healthier, more profitable future.





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adam Grabowski is the Director of Marketing at Global Shop Solutions. He is responsible for translating the company's business objectives into successful brand, marketing and communication strategies to drive awareness, revenue and loyalty.



We simplify your manufacturing.™