

News Impacting the Manufacturing World in Washington State and Beyond.

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Monthly Newsletter

November 2018

Automation and Robotics

Automation and robotics can have a reputation of being expensive, limited to high-volume runs and potentially dangerous – not to mention the concerns employees might have about robots taking their jobs. As we've been learning about robots, the narrative we are seeing includes robots that cost less, are relatively easy to program and can be changed out for mixed runs, helping employees do their jobs and creating excitement for new employees who are used to new technology – so called cobots which stop working if they interact with humans.

The approach certainly is not for every company to consider, but as challenges arise with increasing productivity, with employee recruitment or retention, etc. – the opportunity to consider adding some automated capability, with the support of the employees is real. The article that you can click through to shows one example, we have several more among the clients we serve. Give us a call if this approach peaks your interest.

Regards,

[Tab Wilkins](#)

Impact Washington President and Center Director



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The New Era of Manufacturing Is Fueled by Cobotics and Human Ingenuity

Imagine yourself on the factory floor of a computer manufacturing facility. What do you see? What do you hear? While 77 percent of Americans own smartphones, very few understand where they're built, by whom, and how.

Sure, you could point to a billion-dollar computer company that outsources production overseas and say, "There. That's how computers are built." And you'd be right. That system does work. But not for everyone—and that's a problem.

Instead of relying on foreign labor, we can combine cutting-edge technology with human ingenuity to produce high-quality products right here at home. Here's how. [Read more here.](#)



Cobots, currently 3 percent of all robot sales, are forecast to have a 34 percent share by 2025, when global spending on robotics is estimated to hit \$13 billion, according to the Robotic Industries Association.

Disruptive Opportunities for Cobots in Manufacturing, 2018:

Collaborative robots or cobots are robots that can perform tasks alongside humans. The interoperability and the ease of integration into existing factory environment are encouraging its development and adoption in recent years. Their interaction with humans is



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reprogrammed. [Read more here.](#)



[Featured Client Success Story](#)

Company Profile

Applied Industries is a not-for-profit sheltered workshop located in Longview, Washington. They currently have 8 employees and manufacture wooden pallets for a variety of industries.

Situation

Impact Washington, a NIST MEP affiliate, introduced the Core Value Assessment tool to Applied Industries as a way to help them improve their business. The tool looks at 18 drivers within an organization and Applied Industries hoped that it could help them position themselves for future growth.

[Read more here.](#)

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Companies in advanced economies are investing in automation to close the labor cost gap with developing economies. Cobots, which sit alongside humans to enhance labor productivity in manufacturing, cost less than one-quarter the price of traditional robots, and by 2013, they were already cheaper than human workers in every advanced economy. By enhancing the productivity of humans, automation will likely make manufacturing costs attractive closer to home.



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*Manufacturing is a vital arm of Washington's economy, and it's our mission to support and energize our local industry. The Made in Washington program is a free service to the community that certifies, promotes, and connects Washington State manufacturers. Check out our [directory of Made in Washington businesses](#), or get certified and listed today! The program is at **no cost** to*

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What types of grants are available? Would my business qualify for a grant? Find out more [HERE](#).



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Collaborative robots, one of the fastest-growing segments in robotics, are becoming an increasingly popular automation tool for manufacturers seeking to boost productivity. [Read more here.](#)



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