

Manufacturing Tech Survey Reveals Progress in AI Adoption & Digital Transformation Amid Economic & Trade Pressures

Rootstock's 2026 survey shows manufacturers using technology to consolidate platforms, improve operational agility, and scale for growth amid rising volatility



SAN RAMON, CA, UNITED STATES,
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Rootstock Software, a recognized leader in cloud ERP for product-based companies, today announced the results of its [2026 State of Manufacturing Technology Survey](#). Responses reveal an industry making measurable progress in both AI adoption and digital transformation—even as manufacturers contend with economic uncertainty, global trade pressures, and persistent workforce constraints.

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Rick Berger, CEO of Rootstock Software

The survey found that AI has moved decisively into the mainstream, with 94% of manufacturers now utilizing some form of AI. But the data also reveals that the execution of digital transformation initiatives is becoming more complicated as manufacturers attempt to balance progress with uncertainty around customer demand, concerns about supply chain reliability, and tariff-driven cost pressures—leading many manufacturers to prioritize tech investments that can streamline operations, improve business agility, and continue to support growth.

“Manufacturers aren't slowing down on digital transformation, but they're being more selective about the initiatives they move forward with, ensuring projects will help improve performance and results,” said [Rick Berger](#), CEO of Rootstock Software (<https://www.rootstock.com/manufacturing-erp-software/>). “With this strategy in mind, many manufacturers are actually increasing investments in enterprise software, as they see these solutions as being able to help them respond faster to market conditions, plan with greater confidence, and operate more effectively in today's volatile market.”

The survey also points to a growing emphasis on [platform and process consolidation](#), particularly using ERP to help reduce complexity, connect business domains, and better support workforce challenges.

“Manufacturers are increasingly looking to ERP as a way to consolidate platforms and bring fragmented parts of the business together,” said Ohad Idan (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ohadidan/>), Vice President of Product at Rootstock. “The survey shows rising expectations around ERP to unify data across sales, operations, and supply chains. This type of unified view helps manufacturers modernize processes and gives them clearer insights to meet customer demand. As AI adoption continues to expand, having a unified foundation becomes essential for improving forecasting, decision-making, and employee productivity.”

Key findings from the 2026 State of Manufacturing Technology Survey (<https://clouderp.rootstock.com/2026-state-of-manufacturing-technology-survey>) include:

- AI MATURITY IS RISING AS ADOPTION EXPANDS INTO HIGHER-IMPACT APPLICATIONS. 73% of manufacturers now believe they are "on par" with or "ahead" of peers in AI adoption. Predictive AI saw the largest adoption gain, rising 12 points to 48%, while AI investment shifted most sharply toward supply chain planning (+19 points to 35%) and process optimization (+11 points to 36%), signaling a move toward execution-focused applications.
- MANUFACTURERS ARE BACKING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WITH INCREASED ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE INVESTMENT. 61% of manufacturers plan to increase spending on enterprise software over the next 12 months, with the largest share planning on increases of 11 to 25%, demonstrating continued commitment to modernization despite economic uncertainty.
- DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PROJECTS ARE INCREASINGLY CONSTRAINED BY INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS. 33% cite lack of the right talent as a primary barrier, while 31% report insufficient cross-department collaboration, highlighting that people and operating-model challenges are key inhibitors to progress.
- PLATFORM CONSOLIDATION HAS BECOME A LEADING ERP PRIORITY. Nearly half of manufacturers (49%) now cite simplifying infrastructure and standardizing application platforms as a key ERP outcome—the highest-rated response—signaling a growing push to reduce data silos and improve cross-functional alignment.
- MANUFACTURERS FACE ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY AND TRADE VOLATILITY. Manufacturers enter 2026 with a mixed outlook: 31% expect customer demand to decrease, compared with 19% anticipating growth. Tariffs represent another cost pressure: 39% of manufacturers expect higher raw material or component costs due to tariffs, while 29% anticipate greater difficulty with cost forecasting, driving focus on tariff-related planning and sourcing strategies.

METHODOLOGY

The 2026 State of Manufacturing Technology Survey (<https://clouderp.rootstock.com/2026-state-of-manufacturing-technology-survey>) was conducted by Researchscape (<https://researchscape.com/>) and commissioned by Rootstock Software. The study surveyed 520 professionals leading digital transformation initiatives at mid- to large-sized manufacturers across North America, Europe, and Asia.

ABOUT ROOTSTOCK

Rootstock Software (<https://www.rootstock.com/>) provides the leading ERP for product companies (<https://clouderp.rootstock.com/tec-insight-report-erp-for-smb>), empowering manufacturers, wholesalers, and distributors to turbocharge their operations. Natively built on the Salesforce Platform, Rootstock is a modern, future-proof ERP with a fresh user experience. Users appreciate Rootstock's focus on customer success and its AI capabilities that offer a human-first approach. IT teams value Rootstock's platform as it minimizes the need to coordinate complex customizations and third-party integrations. All of these factors have contributed to delighted customers. As Rootstock continues to grow, stay tuned to the company's latest LinkedIn posts (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/2389168/admin/feed/posts/>).

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