NORTH EAST AUTOMOTIVE ALLIANCE

Driving Cost-Down Innovation in the Automotive Sector

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Driving cost-down innovation across the automotive supply chain

Reducing operational cost while maintaining world-class performance has become one of the most pressing challenges facing automotive manufacturers. Rising energy prices, labour pressures and increasing complexity across production and supply chains demand smarter, more efficient ways of working.

Through the Automotive driving cost-down solutions initiative, the North East Automotive Alliance (NEAA) is bringing together proven, practical solutions from across the membership to support manufacturers in improving productivity, streamlining operations and strengthening competitiveness.

Solutions submitted through a structured Expression of Interest process have been reviewed and grouped into four key areas:

- Value-Added Cost-Down
- Non-Value-Added Cost-Down
- Plant Support Cost-Down
- Other Areas Cost-Down

This booklet is designed as a practical reference tool for plant managers and operational leaders, enabling you to quickly identify relevant ideas, technologies and services aligned to your specific challenges, and to engage directly with the solution providers for further discussion.

By connecting manufacturers with tested solutions and real-world expertise, the NEAA aims to accelerate cost-down performance, encourage collaboration across the supply chain, and support the long-term resilience and sustainability of the North East automotive sector.

ADM Automation (iCart Logistics)

Business category

Intralogistics, AMR (Autonomous Mobile Robot).

Company overview

ADM has supplied many multinational companies with innovative automated production facilities for more than 40 years. ADM now focuses on its in-house developed AGV, the iCart. Over the past 15 years the company has supplied robust AGV solutions to first tier automotive companies in the UK, France, Portugal and Macedonia. Clients now include Warburtons, the UK's largest bakery; Tesla at the Gigafactory in the Nevada desert; and Royal Mail at its Heathrow Worldwide Distribution Centre, London, where around 200 iCarts transfer three-quarters of a million roll cages per year through the sorting facility.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Mobile Cobot (MoCo) Application.

Summary

Introducing the Smart Intralogistics Group. Bringing together lean thinking, mobile robotics, cobots and secure control systems to transform internal logistics.

Description of solution

Mobile cobots are rapidly changing the economics of automation by bringing genuine flexibility to applications that were previously difficult, or prohibitively expensive, to automate.

The Smart Intralogistics Group demonstrates practical solutions, combining autonomous mobile robotics using ADM's iCart with Bosch's ctrlX and Kassow cobots for applications such as pick-to-pack, pick-to-kit, and intelligent material delivery.

iCart SOLO technology simplifies control architecture keeping costs to a minimum. These systems are designed to adapt to the building, not the other way around. No fixed rails, no structural modifications, no extended downtime.

For a mid-tier site this distinction matters enormously as when the operation changes, the automation can be reconfigured. That is a fundamentally different proposition from a fixed conveyor system that becomes stranded infrastructure the moment operational requirements shift.

Expected Return on Investment

18-24 months.

Implementation timeline

16-20 weeks.

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Preston Technical

Business category

Consumables.

Company overview

Preston Technical Ltd is a UK-based, family-owned specialist in industrial adhesive tape converting and engineered bonding solutions.

Serving automotive, aerospace and electronics sectors, the company delivers precision-engineered components that enhance product performance and manufacturing efficiency. From material selection and prototyping to full-scale production, Preston Technical combines deep technical expertise with responsive, personal service. The business is also the creator of TabTech®, a patented pull-tab fastening system designed to simplify assembly, maintenance and sustainable disassembly.

Preston Technical – precision converting, engineered for performance.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Labour, waste, efficiency.

Summary

Process improvement to convert high-performance adhesive materials into precision die-cut components.

Description of solution

Preston Technical supports automotive manufacturers in reducing costs without compromising performance. By converting high-performance adhesive materials into precision die-cut components, the company streamlines assembly processes, reduces part count and removes the need for mechanical fixings.

These solutions improve production efficiency, reduce labour time, minimise waste and support lightweighting initiatives, delivering measurable cost savings across the vehicle build.

Expected Return on Investment

ROI on converted adhesive solutions in automotive is typically fast. Savings come from reduced assembly time, lower labour, fewer components, less rework, and lightweighting benefits. In high-volume production, even a few seconds saved per vehicle can translate into tens of thousands of pounds per year meaning the solution often pays for itself within the first year.

Implementation timeline

Implementation timelines vary depending on the application, as projects may involve testing, validation and, where appropriate, refinement of existing solutions to deliver improved efficiency.

Sampling is rapid, with samples typically provided free of charge (subject to quantity) to support evaluation and approval. As each application is unique, timescales are agreed collaboratively, aligned to performance requirements and customer validation processes.

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Preston Technical

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Company overview

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Preston Technical – precision converting, engineered for performance.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

TabTech®.

Summary

TabTech® delivers cost-down opportunities by rethinking how long adhesive strips are applied in vehicle assembly.

Description of solution

This patented pull-tab technology is engineered for extended adhesive lengths commonly used to secure exterior body mouldings and has also been successfully adopted for interior applications, including dashboards and trim panels.

By improving application accuracy, reducing installation time, and enabling easier rework or removal, TabTech® helps lower labour costs, minimise waste and improve production line efficiency. Already in use across Europe, it provides a smarter, more serviceable bonding solution for modern vehicle manufacturing.

Expected Return on Investment

TabTech® typically delivers a rapid return on investment. Savings come from faster installation of long adhesive strips, improved positioning accuracy, and reduced rework.

In some applications, processes that previously required two operators can be completed by one, reducing labour cost while increasing line throughput. In high-volume vehicle production, even small-time savings per unit quickly add up, allowing it to pay for itself well within the first year.

Implementation timeline

Implementation time for TabTech® depends on the application and validation requirements.

Track record

An automotive Tier 1 manufacturer faced inefficiencies, quality issues and line stoppages due to the manual application of long adhesive tape strips, which required two operators and led to inconsistent results. Preston Technical introduced TabTech®, re-engineering the process into a pre-tabbed, easy-to-position format. The impact was immediate, delivering a 50% labour reduction, eliminating line failures, improving throughput and creating a more stable, predictable production process.

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Springfield NE Ltd

Business category

Automotive Manufacturing Cost-Reduction & Process Improvement Solutions encompassing Bespoke Automation, Robotics, Special-Purpose Machinery, Smart Manufacturing, Engineering and Technical Services.

Company overview

Springfield is an established, innovation-led engineering business with over 20 years' experience. The company works in close partnership with customers to design and manufacture bespoke engineering and automation solutions from precision-machined components to advanced robotics and complete production lines aligned to long-term operational goals. Delivered as a fully in-house, turnkey service covering design, manufacture, controls, installation and aftercare, Springfield helps global manufacturers improve efficiency, reduce cost and achieve operational excellence without the complexity of managing multiple suppliers.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

The Bespoke & Turnkey Package.

Summary

Design, manufacture, and implementation of fully tailored solutions for automotive manufacturing challenges.

Description of solution

Springfield NE works closely with customers to understand their current manufacturing needs and future ambitions, designing and manufacturing bespoke solutions that evolve with production requirements. Capabilities include automated machinery, robotics, precision components, reverse-engineered parts, 3D-printed prototypes, and special-purpose machinery.

Its one-stop-shop approach covers the full lifecycle from design and machining to electrical, programming, installation, and aftercare, ensuring seamless integration and removing the need to manage multiple suppliers. Every solution is tailored to the customer's challenge, helping them stay ahead of the competition.

Expected Return on Investment

ROI depends on the solution scope, but bespoke projects typically deliver significant cost reduction, increased efficiency, improved productivity, enhanced workplace safety, optimised energy usage, reduced material waste. Payback is achieved through lower labour costs, minimised downtime, improved process efficiency, safer operations, reduced scrap and rework, and scalable solutions that evolve with production demands, ensuring long-term operational, financial, environmental, and safety benefits.

All solutions are normally with a payback within 12-24 months depending on the requirements.

Implementation timeline

Timelines are tailored to each project based on complexity and client requirements. Typical automation, reverse-engineering, or precision component projects involve 4-8 weeks for design and prototyping, with full manufacturing, installation, and commissioning completed within 12-20 weeks. All projects are managed in-house, allowing faster delivery, quality control, and solutions that can adapt to future production changes, subject to individual orders.

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Springfield NE Ltd

Business category

Automotive Manufacturing Cost-Reduction & Process Improvement Solutions – Automated Foam, Felt and Adhesive Tape Application.

Company overview

Backed by over 20 years of experience in automation and system integration, Springfield provides turnkey solutions that improves process consistency, reduces manufacturing costs, increases productivity, and enhances quality in automotive production environments.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Robotape – Automated Adhesive Tape, Foam and Felt Application.

Summary

Robotape is an advanced robotic tape application technology designed to replace labour-intensive, inconsistent, and costly manual adhesive tape application processes within high-volume manufacturing environments.

Robotape enables manufacturers to significantly reduce labour costs, eliminate process variation, improve product quality, and increase production throughput while delivering a rapid return on investment.

Description of solution

Robotape combines industrial robotics, intelligent tape feeding technology, automated liner removal, precision cutting systems, and advanced control software to create a highly flexible automated tape application platform.

The system provides a fully automated method of applying adhesive-backed tapes, foams, felts, seals, NVH materials, and protective films to complex automotive components with exceptional accuracy, repeatability, and process control.

A key differentiator of the Robotape system is its remote tape feed architecture. Unlike conventional robotic tape application systems that require heavy tape reels to be mounted directly on the robot arm, Robotape houses large-capacity tape spools externally to the work cell.

This innovative approach delivers multiple operational benefits:

- Reduced robot payload requirements
- Smaller, lower-cost robot selection
- Increased system speed and agility
- Extended production runtime between reel changes
- Reduced downtime and operator intervention
- Improved equipment utilisation

Sophisticated motion control and vision-guided options allow accurate application across complex three-dimensional surfaces commonly found in automotive interior and exterior assemblies.

Expected Return on Investment

All our solutions normally have a payback with 12-24 months depending on the complexity of the requirements.

Implementation timeline

Typical project delivery is dependent on application complexity and customer-specific requirements.

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Intralogistics, AMR (Autonomous Mobile Robot).

Company overview

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Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

AMR application.

Summary

Automated Mobile Robot to suit the container or load that requires transfer within the facility, whether this be a roll cage, trolley, dolly or pallet.

Description of solution

A range of Autonomous Mobile Robot (AMR) solutions is available to accommodate the safe and efficient movement of containers and loads within a facility, including roll cages, trolleys, dollies and pallets.

Each application is co-designed with the customer and delivered through full end-to-end project management, covering system design, manufacture and integration, with engineering and production based in Gateshead, UK.

iCart AMRs also offer significant labour-saving potential for organisations, improving productivity by reducing time spent on non-core activities such as walking to stores to locate parts.

Expected Return on Investment

8-18months.

Implementation timeline

16 weeks.

Track record

The latest installation of iCarts was completed for Warburtons in May 2026. Some sites process over 250,000 bakery items per day, where freshness is critical and efficient intralogistics is essential. iCarts are now operating across four Warburtons facilities, with a phased rollout planned for 2026-27.

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Siemens Digital Industries

Business category

Digital Transformation & Sustainability.

Company overview

Siemens Digital Industries is an innovation and technology leader in industrial automation and digitalisation. In close cooperation with partners and customers, they are the driving force for the digital transformation in the discrete and process industries.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Predictive Maintenance.

Summary

Senseye is a Siemens AI-powered, cloud-based platform for industrial predictive maintenance that reduces unplanned downtime by up to 50% and boosts maintenance productivity by 30-55%.

Description of solution

The Senseye software analyses machine data to predict failures, improving asset lifespan and Return on Investment (ROI).

It supports diverse industries with automated diagnostics, now featuring generative AI (Maintenance Copilot) for conversational, data-driven maintenance insights.

Manufacturers are using Senseye Predictive Maintenance to move from reactive to predictive maintenance across high-volume production environments. By applying a scalable, vendor-agnostic approach, automotive plants gain improved visibility of asset health, early warning of potential failures, and clearer maintenance priorities.

Expected Return on Investment

ROI depends on the application and use case.

Implementation timeline

Depends on the application and use case.

Track record

Siemens GWE, Germany – Asset unification with Senseye Predictive Maintenance. Siemens GWE, Germany faced challenges due to limited asset data, making it difficult to predict breakdowns, minimise unplanned shutdowns, and improve machine reliability. As part of a wider digitalisation and lean manufacturing programme, Siemens GWE implemented Senseye Predictive Maintenance, launching a pilot across three plants. The platform's vendor- and technology-agnostic approach enabled successful integration, unifying asset management within a single system. Insightful dashboards provided a clearer, site-wide view of machine performance, supporting more proactive maintenance decisions.

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SMS Technology

Business category

Digitalisation.

Company overview

Smart Manufacturing Solutions Technology provides operational control and traceability software that governs how work and data are managed internally and across the supply chain.

This helps organisations standardise operations without removing local flexibility, creating a trusted foundation for performance, compliance, and Net Zero delivery.

Environmental impact is not an add-on. SMS Technology is a Business Carbon Assessed Net Zero organisation, with embedded carbon assessment completed on its product to quantify emissions reduced through its use, with no impact on Scope 3 emissions.

Headquartered in Durham, the team combines deep expertise in Operations, Quality, and Health & Safety with hands-on industry experience, allowing them to address real operational challenges, not theoretical ones.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Shop floor digitalisation.

Summary

Removal of paper-based data capturing and display of shop floor KPIs with quantified emissions reductions.

Description of solution

The SMS Technology platform captures structured operational data at source, enabling:

- End-to-end process and product history
- Governed operational area management
- Structured non-conformance and escalation
- Supplier oversight and traceability
- KPI-ready, auditable operational data

By governing how operational data is created – not just reported – this helps organisations reduce risk, improve consistency, and make sustainability measurable and provable.

Expected Return on Investment

4 months.

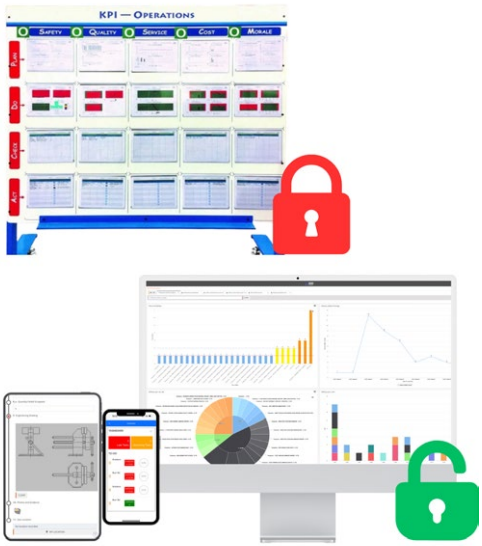
Implementation timeline

2 weeks.

Track record

The tool is utilised in the supply chain already via partner company SMS who use it to capture all production information and quality inspection data.

Daikin in Cramlington is a user.



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zest i/o

Business category

Process improvement, digitalisation, system for efficiency.

Company overview

zest i/o helps organisations digitise, automate, and streamline their operations through modular, agile software tailored for engineering, manufacturing, and field service. Its Cloudsuite provides an integrated digital backbone, bringing together CRM, sales, projects, manufacturing, finance, maintenance, and more in a single platform.

Alongside its software, zest i/o delivers expert consultancy to optimise processes before automation, embedding robust improvement methodologies and quality management systems. This holistic approach ensures technology drives measurable gains in productivity, quality, and overall business performance.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

CADENCE – Agentic AI for PPAP in Automotive supply chains.

Summary

Streamlining and revolutionising complex processes, multi-disciplinary decision and touch points, heaps of documents, files and workflows through intelligent automation of Production Part Approval Process (PPAP).

Description of solution

The automotive supply chain, particularly Tier 1 and Tier 2 suppliers, face growing pressure from OEMs while often lacking the digital infrastructure of larger organisations.

CADENCE (Collaborative Agentic DEsign & maNufacturing Coordination Engine) is an innovative Agentic AI platform designed to address these challenges by automating and optimising the Production Part Approval Process (PPAP).

CADENCE uses multiple specialised AI agents to analyse design data, manage compliance, assess manufacturability, evaluate supplier risk, and coordinate projects, all while maintaining human oversight and ethical AI principles.

Its modular, scalable architecture enables real-time insight, proactive decision-making, and seamless alignment with OEM requirements, delivering measurable productivity, quality, and efficiency gains for Tier 1 and Tier 2 suppliers.

Expected Return on Investment

Although these are modest estimates, the Agentic AI Platform will potentially deliver substantial market impact through quantifiable benefits that transform Tier 1 and Tier 2 PPAP operations, potentially driving 65-75% reduction in document preparation time and accelerating PPAP approval cycles by 50-70%, while simultaneously reducing project completion timelines by 40-50%. The platform will also generate significant cost savings by decreasing compliance-related expenses, reducing rework costs, and improving resource utilisation by 40-50%, directly addressing financial pressures suppliers face.

Implementation timeline

CADENCE can be technically set up and accessible within just 1-2 days, allowing customers to immediately begin experiencing the benefits of the Agentic AI Platform. Following this initial setup, a comprehensive 3-4-week implementation period follows, during which the platform is configured according to specific industry requirements.

Track record

zest i/o is currently in discussions with multiple potential customers primarily in the automotive sector. The first prospective customer for CADENCE will be TBox Limited, a Tier 2 supplier in the automotive supply chain.

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AR Power

Business category

Energy Saving / Sustainability / Carbon Reduction.

Company overview

AR Power's value proposition is built on trust, technical excellence, and over 14 years of delivering safe, high-quality commercial solar installations across the UK. Its reputation is underpinned by in-house expertise, repeat customers, industry recognition, and a consistent track record of successful projects.

AR Power differentiates itself through a genuine turnkey service, employing its own design, engineering, installation, and maintenance teams. This end-to-end control ensures high standards of safety, workmanship, project delivery, and long-term system performance. Customers are supported at every stage through a hands-on, consultative approach that reduces risk, removes complexity, and provides confidence in their solar investment.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Solar PV System.

Summary

On-site solar that cuts grid reliance, locks in energy savings, and strengthens manufacturing resilience.

Description of solution

Design and deployment of an on-site solar PV system to reduce grid electricity consumption, stabilise long-term energy costs, and improve operational resilience.

The solution focuses on maximising self-consumption within high-load manufacturing environments, integrating with existing infrastructure, and supporting cost-down targets while contributing to decarbonisation and Scope 2 emissions reduction.

Expected Return on Investment

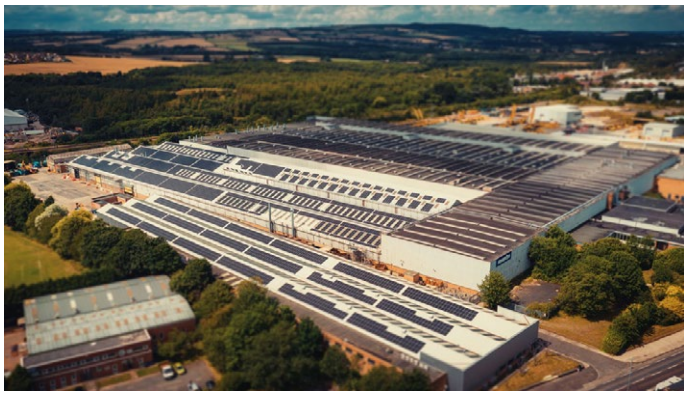
4-5 years for a 25-year plus system.

Implementation timeline

4-6 months including grid / planning applications.

Track record

AR Power has installed a 1.76MWp roof mounted solar PV system for Komatsu UK Ltd based in Birtley, Tyne & Wear. The system consists of 3,912 panels and is expected to generate 1,641,862 kWh for the machinery manufacturer each and every year, potentially saving the company just under £400,000 on its energy bills annually.



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Chemetall Ltd

Business category

Chemical Manufacturer / Supplier.

Company overview

Chemetall is a global leader in high-performance surface treatment technologies, operating a worldwide network of production sites and technical centres to provide reliable regional support and supply continuity.

Serving more than 17,000 customers, Chemetall has a deep, long-standing presence in the automotive sector, supporting OEMs and Tier 1 and Tier 2 suppliers across body-in-white, components, EV platforms, machining, and finishing operations. Its technologies, including pretreatment solutions, metalworking fluids, functional coatings, and specialty chemicals, are embedded in vehicles produced by almost every major OEM, reflecting decades of automotive manufacturing expertise.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Water-based metalworking fluids (TechCool™), commonly referred to as coolants or lubricants.

Summary

High-performance coolant solutions designed to improve system stability, reduce consumption, and enhance machining performance – delivering significant reductions in coolant usage and operating costs.

Description of solution

Chemetall's TechCool™ portfolio supports cost-efficient, sustainable, and future-ready manufacturing by improving coolant stability, extending sump life, and reducing maintenance frequency. The solution optimises machining performance while lowering overall fluid consumption, supporting reduced CO_2 emissions, lower waste generation, and simplified process management.

TechCool™ coolants are engineered to integrate seamlessly into existing machining operations, delivering consistent performance without production disruption.

Expected Return on Investment

No investment was needed by the customer for this implementation.

Track record

Chemetall UK supported an automotive manufacturer producing aluminium chassis components that was experiencing high coolant consumption and frequent maintenance issues. Following a detailed machining line audit, Chemetall implemented TechCool™ 35650W across four CNC machines.

The solution reduced coolant consumption by approximately 84%, cutting annual coolant costs by 82% (from around £210,000 to £40,000). Additional benefits included extended tool and sump life, significantly reduced maintenance, and the transition to oil-free machining, improving compatibility with pretreatment and wastewater processes and enhancing overall operational efficiency.

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Emissis

Business category

Energy efficiency / Power conditioning technology.

Company overview

Emissis provides advanced active power conditioning technology designed to reduce energy consumption across manufacturing sites. Through its enPact® FilterPro solution, the company enables automotive OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers to achieve measurable energy savings without operational disruption or infrastructure replacement.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Active power conditioning to reduce site-wide electricity consumption without replacing existing systems or interrupting operations.

Summary

Emissis' enPact® FilterPro technology delivers measurable energy reductions of up to 18% across manufacturing facilities by optimising electrical performance at a system-wide level. The solution operates without disruption to production and complements existing energy-saving initiatives, providing immediate and scalable cost reduction.

Description of solution

The enPact® FilterPro solution uses advanced spintronics and Carbon Nanotube (CNT) technology to condition electrical power across an entire site. It reduces inrush current and compensates for electromagnetic interference (EMI) losses, improving overall system efficiency.

Unlike traditional power factor correction, the technology operates across the whole electrical system and requires no infrastructure replacement, IT integration, or production downtime. Savings are independently measured and verified using IPMVP Option C methodology, ensuring credible and transparent performance outcomes.

The system is particularly suited to high-energy manufacturing environments, including press shops, paint lines, compressor systems, machining centres, and assembly lines with motor-driven equipment.

Expected Return on Investment

- Energy reduction of up to 18% across the site.
- Guaranteed minimum 7% saving via proof of concept.
- Verified case study: 13% reduction with a 5.4-month payback.
- Additional 9% reduction demonstrated on specific systems (e.g. compressor feed).

Implementation timeline

Rapid deployment with no disruption to operations or production processes.

Track record

Proven results in UK manufacturing and cold storage environments. Independently verified savings using IPMVP Option C methodology. Strong proof-of-concept conversion rate (90%+) indicating consistent performance delivery.

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Energy Gain UK Ltd

Business category

Energy Efficiency & On-Site Generation / Process Optimisation.

Company overview

Energy Gain Ltd specialises in delivering energy cost reduction, operational efficiency, and sustainability solutions for manufacturing and automotive sectors.

Its expertise includes solar PV integration, energy monitoring, and targeted cost-down initiatives that improve energy performance, reduce operational expenditure, and support ESG objectives.

With a proven track record helping Tier 1 suppliers and OEMs optimise energy usage while maintaining compliance and production efficiency, Energy Gain understands the demands of the automotive sector.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Rooftop and ground-mounted solar.

Summary

Turnkey rooftop and ground-mounted solar PV solutions designed to offset grid electricity consumption, reduce carbon emissions, and stabilise long-term energy costs.

Description of solution

Energy Gain delivers fully integrated solar PV systems that align seamlessly with existing plant operations, maximising self-consumption while minimising disruption to production. The solution strengthens operational resilience by reducing exposure to energy price volatility and supply disruption.

Key benefits include lower Scope 2 emissions, directly supporting OEM and Tier 1 decarbonisation and sustainability targets, alongside enhanced ESG reporting and compliance, increasing confidence among customers, investors, and regulators. The solution also supports OEM-supplier alignment, enabling Tier 1 manufacturers to meet ESG requirements and sourcing criteria.

By converting volatile operating expenditure into a stable, depreciable infrastructure asset, solar PV improves cashflow certainty, strengthens balance sheets, and reduces long-term exposure to grid price inflation for OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers.

Funding options: Flexible delivery models are available, including Capex, Finance, or a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). A PPA enables access to low-cost, predictable renewable electricity with no upfront capital investment or maintenance responsibility, paying only for the energy generated.

Expected Return on Investment

2-3 years, depending on site consumption profile.

Implementation timeline

12-16 weeks from site survey to operational handover.

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Energy Gain UK Ltd

Business category

Energy Efficiency & On-Site Generation / Process Optimisation.

Company overview

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Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Solar carport.

Summary

A turnkey solar carport solution that transforms existing parking areas into productive assets, generating on-site renewable electricity while supporting energy cost reduction and decarbonisation goals.

Description of solution

This solar carport solution integrates seamlessly with existing site operations, enabling high levels of on-site energy consumption without disrupting day-to-day production or logistics. By generating clean electricity at the point of use, it enhances operational resilience against energy price volatility and potential supply interruptions.

The system delivers measurable reductions in Scope 2 emissions, directly supporting OEM and Tier 1 sustainability and decarbonisation strategies, while strengthening ESG reporting and compliance for customers, investors, and regulators. It also supports closer alignment between OEMs and suppliers, helping Tier 1 manufacturers meet evolving ESG requirements and sourcing criteria.

As a long-term infrastructure asset, a solar carport converts unpredictable energy operating costs into a stable, depreciable investment. This improves cashflow certainty, strengthens balance sheets, and reduces long-term exposure to grid price inflation for OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers alike.

Funding options: Projects can be delivered through Capex, Finance, or a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). A PPA provides access to low-cost, predictable renewable electricity with no upfront capital investment or maintenance responsibility, with customers paying only for the power generated.

Expected Return on Investment

4-5 Years.

Implementation timeline

12-16 weeks from site survey to operational handover.

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Masfix

Business category

Process Improvement, Supply Chain, Stock Management.

Company overview

Masfix is a Fasteners, Fixings, Tools, PPE and Engineering Consumables Distributor in the North East of England, offering bespoke Stock Management Solutions including Kanban, Vending, RFID.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Stock Management RFID Solution.

Summary

Masfix's managed RFID Kiosk delivers real-time, fully automated control of tools, consumables, and critical items, cutting downtime, eliminating manual stock management, and reducing procurement and inventory costs across automotive operations.

Description of solution

The Masfix managed RFID Kiosk provides accurate, real-time control over products including tools, PPE, fasteners, high-value items, and consumables. With up to 99% scanning accuracy, every item movement is automatically captured, eliminating manual stock management while maintaining a complete and auditable inventory trail.

The RFID Kiosk supports external RFID antennas, extending read coverage to storerooms, workshops, benches, and access points. This ensures that all Masfix-supplied items are consistently tracked, providing real-time stock visibility, reducing waste, and improving accountability of product usage.

By implementing this solution across automotive operations, downtime caused by searching for parts is significantly reduced. Masfix also consolidates supply across a broad product range, reducing the need for multiple purchase orders and administrative effort. By leveraging this consolidated purchasing power, overall procurement costs can be reduced, while Masfix manages inventory, replenishment, and ongoing optimisation to ensure reliable access to critical items and streamlined operations.

Expected Return on Investment

Usage decrease of 15-40% is seen once initiative is in place, in addition to reduction of downtime, stock losses, and administration tasks.

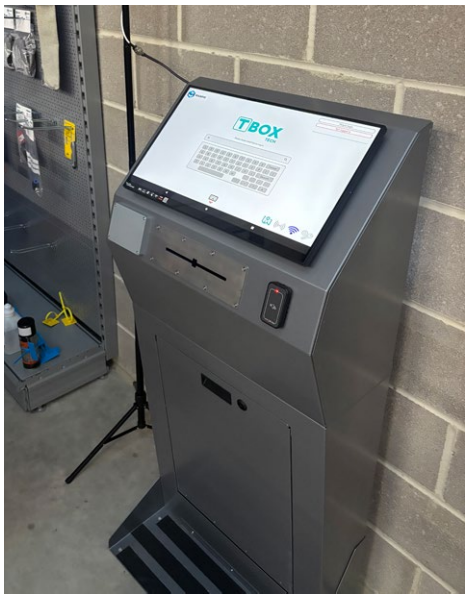
Implementation timeline

1-3 days depending on full requirements and setup required.

Track record

Marrill RFID Kiosk installation.

Highly Marelli RFID Kiosk installation.



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Optimas

Business category

Industrial fastening solutions and distributor.

Company overview

Optimas International is a tech-enabled industrial distributor providing fasteners, components, inventory management and supply chain solutions across APAC & EMEA. Partnering with domestic and global manufacturers, the company delivers bespoke, engineering-led and technology-enabled programmes designed to improve efficiency, quality, supply chain resilience and profitability for its customers.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Process optimisation, automation and digitalisation; back-office systems optimisation.

Summary

A digital engineering and Bill of Materials (BOM) management solution that standardises specifications and components, reducing engineering effort, material cost, and back-office administration while accelerating time to market.

Description of solution

Optispec® is Optimas' engineering and BOM management platform, designed to drive cost reduction by digitalising and standardising how components, specifications, and engineering data are created, governed, and reused.

By providing a single, structured source of truth, Optispec® enables organisations to commonise parts and specifications across programmes, platforms, and sites reducing unnecessary variation, rework, and risk. Automated workflows, controlled data governance, and clear visibility of component usage help teams identify duplication, leverage preferred parts, and make faster, better-informed decisions. This supports operational efficiency and competitiveness.

Expected Return on Investment

Value dependent on volume and complexity:

- Reduced inventory (improved cash flow)
- Speed to market – new products
- Supplier consolidation

Implementation timeline

3-6 months.

Track record

Tailored Solutions Power Production for Luxury Vehicle Manufacturer: Optimas has supported the manufacturer's production growth since 2003, evolving from a small point-of-use service into a long-term strategic partner integral to daily operations. As production scaled, the complexity of managing thousands of low-value but critical fixing components increased, driven by a high number of SKUs, suppliers, and point-of-use locations.

Optimas addressed this through engineered storage (154 OptiBeam racks with 6,000 bins), BOM analysis and standardisation support, on-site personnel, quality assurance via Centres of Excellence, and global strategic sourcing. Today, Optimas supplies over 42 million parts annually, manages 1,000 SKUs and 150+ vendors, and supports 3,000 points of use, delivering reliable, high-efficiency production support over a 22-year partnership.

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SATO UK Ltd

Business category

Consumables, Process Efficiency.

Company overview

SATO UK supplies durable labels, RFID tags, and tracking solutions that help automotive manufacturers improve efficiency, accuracy, and traceability across demanding production environments. Its solutions support critical processes including parts identification, work in progress tracking, inventory control, and shipping.

By combining high performance consumables with reliable printing and RFID technologies, SATO enables OEMs and suppliers to reduce errors, minimise downtime, and streamline production workflows while maintaining full operational visibility.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

RFID Inventory and Asset Tracking.

Summary

RFID-enabled inventory and asset tracking solutions that automate visibility of parts, materials, and finished goods, reducing labour effort, minimising errors, and preventing losses.

Description of solution

RFID technology enables manufacturers to automate the tracking of parts, materials, and finished goods, providing real-time visibility of inventory and work in progress across the shop floor and supply chain. Automated data capture removes the need for manual scanning and paperwork, significantly reducing errors, mis-shipments, and lost items.

By improving inventory accuracy and availability, RFID supports smoother production flows, fewer delays, and lower labour costs. The enhanced visibility also allows manufacturers to optimise stock levels, reduce waste, and avoid costly rework. Overall, the solution streamlines operations, improves decision-making through reliable data, and delivers a scalable foundation for more efficient, resilient manufacturing operations.

Expected Return on Investment

RFID can deliver measurable cost savings by reducing manual scanning and shortening tasks like goods in / out checks and cycle counting. With better real time visibility and higher inventory accuracy, manufacturers typically see fewer picking / shipping errors, less rework, and improved traceability, which can reduce waste and disruption. Overall, the ROI is usually built from a combination of labour time saved, fewer errors, and improved inventory control.

Implementation timeline

Usually within a few months.

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TBox Tech

Business category

Process Improvement, Stock and Asset Management solutions.

Company overview

TBox Tech is a UK-based provider of patented RFID storeroom and industrial vending solutions that automate the control of consumables, tools, and production-critical parts.

With over ten years of deployment within Tier 1 automotive and engineering manufacturers, its solutions are designed to operate reliably in high-volume, high-pressure production environments.

Its technology focuses on process improvement through accurate, real-time control of parts usage, delivering measurable cost-down by reducing stockholding and waste, improving labour efficiency, and strengthening operational governance across the supply chain.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

RFID Inventory Management Solutions.

Summary

RFID ProPod Portal and RFID Kiosk solutions deliver up to a 60% reduction in labour required to manage large Stock Keeping Unit (SKU) environments and up to a 30% reduction in lost or misplaced items, improving control, availability, and cost efficiency.

Description of solution

The RFID ProPod Portal and RFID Kiosk solutions automate the issue, return, and track inventory within secure stores and point-of-use locations.

RFID-tagged items are captured through automated walk-through portals or controlled scanning, recording who accessed each item and when, and allocating usage in real time to individuals, cost centres, or jobs – eliminating manual paperwork and administration.

The solutions support the reuse and recycling of durable RFID tags, reducing consumable cost and waste while maintaining full traceability. This provides accurate, real-time stock visibility and measurable cost-down through reduced loss, lower stockholding, improved process control, and reliable long-term performance in harsh, high-volume manufacturing environments.

Expected Return on Investment

40-72 weeks.

Implementation timeline

2-6 Weeks.

Track record

Unipres UK: RFID ProPod Portal storeroom solution.

Parker Hannifin: RFID Kiosk storeroom solution.

Marrill Group: RFID Kiosk storeroom solution.

Highly Marelli: RFID Kiosk storeroom solution.

Dana (Dana Axles): RFID ProPod Portal storeroom solution.

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Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

ProVyda 2.0, Industrial Vending Solution.

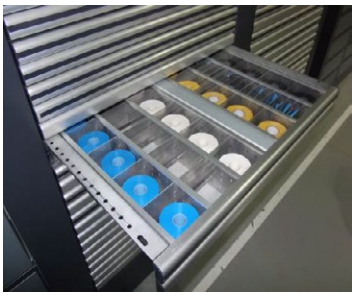
Summary

TBox Tech's patented industrial vending system, designed for controlled, single-item dispensing at the point of use.

Description of solution

ProVyda 2.0 combines secured user access with semi-automatic, infinitely configurable drawers and RFID enabled lockers, capturing every issue and return in real time and allocating usage to the user, cost centre, or job.

ProVyda 2.0 delivers accurate stock visibility while reducing consumable waste and ongoing cost. It achieves measurable cost-down through reduced over-consumption, lower stockholding, improved process discipline, and reliable operation in harsh high-volume manufacturing environments.



Expected Return on Investment

60-100 Weeks.

Implementation timeline

6-8 Weeks.

Track record

Unipres UK: 7x ProVyda industrial vending unit.

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BGA (Dontyne Gears)

Business category

BGA: Trade Association.

Dontyne Gears: Software and services for the gear industry.

Company overview

BGA: The development and support of the UK gear industry.

Dontyne Gears: Formed in 2013 to address a requirement in the gear industry to facilitate small design, development, and testing programs for large and small companies. This would utilise all modern techniques for both Dontyne and 3rd Party CAD with integration into production equipment for supply of prototype gears or small batch runs and support for testing programs.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Novel gear design for lower cost and CO_2 reduction in gearbox production.

Summary

A next-generation gear design that delivers significant cost, weight, and CO_2 reductions by enabling smaller, lighter gearsets without compromising torque performance, particularly suited to EV powertrains.

Description of solution

A novel gear design, not currently used in mainstream production, has demonstrated the ability to transmit the same torque using gears that are 20-50% smaller. This directly reduces material usage, gearbox size and weight, leading to lower housing, manufacturing, and transport costs.

The reduced mass and material intensity deliver meaningful CO_2 savings across gearbox production, with strong benefits for lightweight and electric vehicle applications.

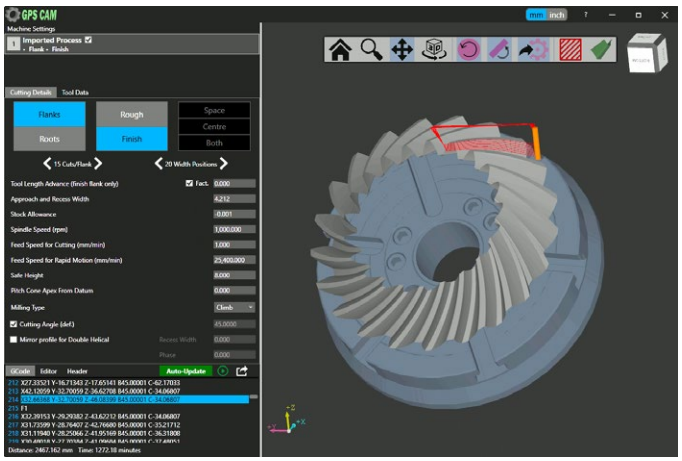
Expected Return on Investment

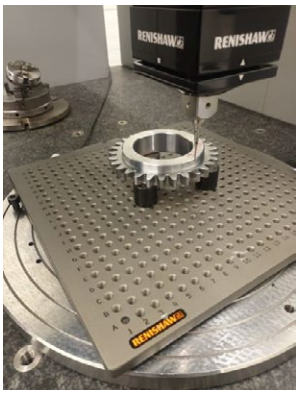
1,000 - 100,000%.

Implementation timeline

1 year motorsport.

3-5 years large scale automotive production.





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Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Integrated Gear Design and Manufacturing Software (Industry 4.0).

Summary

A fully integrated digital gear design and manufacturing platform that reduces development time, improves accuracy, and lowers production costs by linking design, machining and inspection in a single workflow.

Description of solution

This Industry 4.0 software platform connects gear design, load analysis, manufacturing simulation, machine tooling and inspection into one structured digital process.

Gear designs are analysed underload and exported directly to 5-axis CNC machine centres and CMM inspection equipment, removing manual handovers and reducing rework.

By supporting recognised international standards (including ISO) alongside advanced and non-standard gear geometries enabled by modern CNC and 5-axis machining, the software improves accuracy, shortens development cycles and lowers total production cost. Its modular architecture allows manufacturers to deploy individual tools or integrate the full suite, supporting both prototype development and scalable automotive production.

Expected Return on Investment

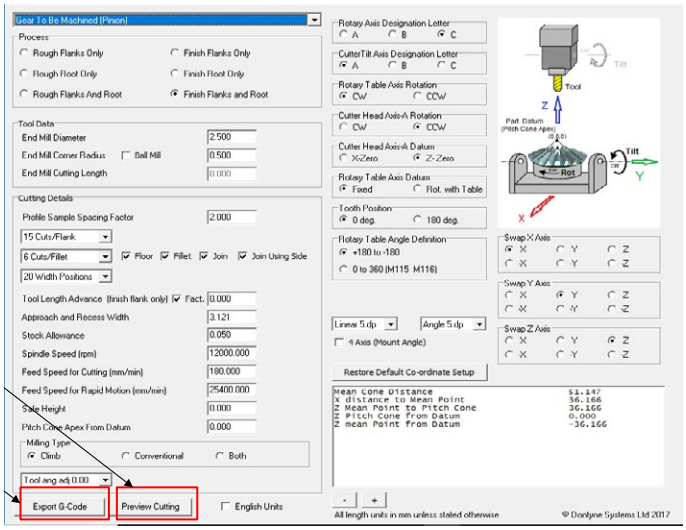
1,000%+.

Implementation timeline

2-3 months.

Track record

Demonstrated improvements in production efficiency through the integration of design software with 5-axis machine centres and CMM inspection systems, enabling rapid, flexible and low-cost product development and testing without the need for expensive, dedicated gear machines.



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Edwards Commercial Cleaning Ltd

Business category

Commercial cleaning.

Company overview

Edwards Commercial Cleaning is a family-owned and operated business working across the North East and Yorkshire, providing commercial cleaning services to factories, offices, medical and educational facilities.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Productivity-led commercial cleaning and site support.

Summary

A productivity-focused cleaning and site support service that reduces total cost through smarter scheduling, supervision, auditing, and performance management, delivering more value per hour while lowering tendering, onboarding, and management overhead.

Description of solution

Edwards Commercial Cleaning delivers a productivity-led cleaning service model designed to maximise output within paid hours rather than simply competing on hourly rates.

Through structured scheduling, active supervision, regular audits, KPI tracking and continuous review, the service improves quality, consistency and efficiency across manufacturing and commercial sites.

The approach is supported by the use of innovative cleaning equipment and products, reducing task time while improving cleaning outcomes. Reduced variation in service delivery lowers disruption to operations and minimises follow-up work.

By streamlining mobilisation, onboarding and ongoing contract management, the solution also reduces tendering and transition costs, freeing up management time for the customer. The result is improved value for money, reduced operational oversight, and a more efficient, reliable site support function.

Expected Return on Investment

Improved value for money through time savings, reduced management effort and higher productivity per hour delivered.

Implementation timeline

Immediate.

Track record

Edwards Commercial Cleaning is proud to support a range of world-class NEAA members, including automotive manufacturer Unipres, battery technology leader AESC and leading North East law firm Muckle LLP.

Working within fast-paced manufacturing and industrial environments, we understand the importance of safety, reliability and consistency. Our experienced team delivers high standards across offices, welfare facilities and production support areas, helping clients maintain clean, safe and productive workplaces.

Alongside our work in manufacturing, we also support professional service organisations and commercial offices, giving us a broad understanding of the operational requirements, compliance standards and expectations across multiple sectors.

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Global Manufacturing Supplies

Business category

Supply chain management of cost competitive engineered components, manufactured in China.

Company overview

GMS is a well-established supply chain management organisation with 27 years of experience supplying engineered components to a wide range of industries, including the automotive sector.

A key strength of the business is its direct procurement network in China, enabling GMS to offer highly competitive pricing while upholding consistent quality, dependable supply, and long-term supplier relationships built over many years.

With an annual turnover of approximately £8 million, GMS specialises in metal pressings, aluminium die castings, forgings, and precision machined components and shafts.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Cost down on bought-in engineered components.

Summary

GMS reliably sources and supplies lower cost, like-for-like replacements for engineered components where annual spend exceeds £10,000 per annum.

Description of solution

At GMS, we take away the headache associated with procurement of parts from China regarding quality, logistics, and capacity management.

Buyers in the manufacturing sector often assume that Chinese manufacture is only suitable for high-volume, large-scale production however, with our extensive network of manufacturing partners, we are able to produce cost-effective component supply solutions for higher and lower volume work.

Expected Return on Investment

For components where no tooling is required, savings can be seen as soon as a first production order is delivered into our customer. For components where tooling is required, our customers typically report a ROI of twelve months or less. We'd generally expect piece part prices to be 20% - 30% lower than current UK sources however this can be higher or lower dependent on type of component, specifications, and the organisations current purchasing strategies.

Implementation timeline

From date of sample order, inclusive of development of tooling, sample verification, PPAP compilation and sample approval, we regularly achieve delivery of serial production parts within six months.

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Optimas

Business category

Industrial fastening solutions and distributor.

Company overview

Optimas International is a tech-enabled industrial distributor providing fasteners, components, inventory management and supply chain solutions across APAC & EMEA. Partnering with domestic and global manufacturers, the company delivers bespoke, engineering-led and technology-enabled programmes designed to improve efficiency, quality, supply chain resilience and profitability for its customers.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Process optimisation, automation and digitalisation; back-office systems optimisation.

Summary

Optimas reduces Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) across fastener and C-Class supply through process optimisation, automated inventory management, and locally supported, digitally enabled supply models.

Description of solution

Optimas helps automotive manufacturers and suppliers reduce TCO across C-Class components and fastener supply by optimising processes, automating inventory management, and deploying digitally enabled back-office systems. Its TCO-led approach addresses not only unit price, but the wider cost impact of procurement effort, inventory holding, downtime risk, quality, and logistics complexity.

Real-time, automated inventory solutions improve visibility, reduce manual intervention, and support leaner stock profiles while ensuring line-side availability. This frees up engineering and operational resources, reduces working capital, and strengthens supply resilience. The opening of Optimas' Wynyard distribution facility further enhances this proposition by providing localised supply, shorter lead times, and improved service levels for North East automotive manufacturers.

Expected Return on Investment

Value BOM dependent.

Implementation timeline

3-6 months.

Track record

A global commercial garage door manufacturer faced production downtime due to long lead times and inventory shortages caused by a screw-machined brass component. Following a product teardown, Optimas identified opportunities to improve material choice and manufacturing methods.

Optimas redesigned the component as a cold-formed low-carbon steel part with electroplated zinc and clear chromate finish, maintaining corrosion protection while simplifying production – without requiring changes to mating components. The solution reduced part cost by 75%, delivered £120,000 in annual savings, improved manufacturing efficiency, and eliminated line disruption through faster, more reliable supply.

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SATO UK Ltd

Business category

Consumables, Process Efficiency.

Company overview

SATO UK supplies durable labels, RFID tags, and tracking solutions that help automotive manufacturers improve efficiency, accuracy, and traceability across demanding production environments. Its solutions support critical processes including parts identification, work in progress tracking, inventory control, and shipping.

By combining high performance consumables with reliable printing and RFID technologies, SATO enables OEMs and suppliers to reduce errors, minimise downtime, and streamline production workflows while maintaining full operational visibility.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Linerless labels.

Summary

Linerless labelling solutions that eliminate backing liner waste, reduce disposal costs, improve sustainability performance, and support cleaner, more efficient production environments.

Description of solution

Linerless labels are supplied without a backing liner, removing a significant source of production line waste and eliminating the need for liner disposal. While direct material cost savings may vary by application, the solution delivers clear sustainability benefits by reducing waste volumes, lowering environmental impact, and improving housekeeping on the shop floor.

For automotive manufacturers, Linerless labels support sustainability and ESG objectives by reducing landfill waste, simplifying waste management, and contributing to more efficient, environmentally responsible operations without compromising label durability or performance in harsh manufacturing conditions.

Expected Return on Investment

Solutions are highly bespoke, making it difficult to provide specific financial savings, although this will provide reductions in waste disposal costs.

Implementation timeline

Fairly quickly, working with the customer on timelines.

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Siemens Digital Industries

SIEMENS

Business category

Digital Transformation & Sustainability.

Company overview

Siemens Digital Industries is an innovation and technology leader in industrial automation and digitalisation. In close cooperation with partners and customers, they are the driving force for the digital transformation in the discrete and process industries.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Totally Integrated Automation (TIA).

Summary

Where every component interacts seamlessly to reduce complexity and boost performance.

Description of solution

Siemens delivers end-to-end industrial automation that seamlessly connects the real and digital worlds, empowering manufacturers to become more efficient, flexible, and sustainable. With our Totally Integrated Automation (TIA) approach, every component – from field devices to advanced control, drives, and industrial software – interacts seamlessly to reduce complexity and boost performance.

Expected Return on Investment

ROI depends on the application and use case.

Implementation timeline

Depends on the application and use case.

Track record

Virtual Commissioning for Automotive Line with Tecnomatix Process Simulate and PLCSim Adv. The project highlights how Siemens applies advanced digital technologies and engineering expertise to help industrial customers solve complex challenges. By combining interdisciplinary engineering knowledge with digital tools, automation, and data driven approaches, Siemens enables more efficient design, improved operational performance, and faster innovation. The approach focuses on creating flexible, scalable solutions that support productivity, resilience, and long term competitiveness across industrial environments.

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TR, part of the Trifast plc Group

part of the **Trifast plc** Group

Business category

Design, engineering, manufacture and supply of fastenings and Category 'C' components.

Company overview

TR, part of the Trifast plc Group, supplies major assembly industries worldwide, delivering innovative fastening solutions that improve efficiency and performance.

Operating in around 65 countries, the Group supports sectors including automotive, medical equipment and smart infrastructure. As a full-service partner to multinational OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers, TR provides end-to-end support from concept design and engineering consultancy to manufacturing, supply chain management and global logistics, backed by regional service locations, specialist manufacturing facilities and global Engineering & Innovation Centres.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Supply chain simplification.

Summary

Fastener engineering support and vocational training to upskill automotive teams, enabling improved technology knowledge, simplified Bill of Materials (BOMs), and lower total cost of ownership.

Description of solution

TR provides fastener engineering expertise alongside vocational training to upskill and realign joining technology knowledge across automotive assembly engineering, production and quality teams.

This enables lower total cost of ownership through standardisation, rationalisation and BOM simplification.

Further value is unlocked by integrating these improvements into a Vendor-Managed Inventory (VMI) model. Combined insights from product-usage heat maps, and identified production and design bottlenecks, drive a continuous improvement cycle allowing customers to focus on core operations while TR ensures fasteners are delivered exactly where and when they are needed.

Expected Return on Investment

Initially cost competitive, allowing for additional total cost of ownership savings.

Implementation timeline

It depends on size and complexity. Initial value can be realised immediately following the first VAVE improvement, while more complex engagements may take several months and are managed through a structured project management approach from initial engagement through to full integration.

Track record

LEVC.

COKO works.

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Team Valley Group

Business category

Marketing.

Company overview

Team Valley Group is a specialist in branding, websites, marketing and print, helping drive business solutions that generate results.

Cost-Down Initiative

Type of initiative

Digital process optimisation.

Summary

Transforming company websites and digital channels into efficient, data-driven sales tools to reduce cost of sales and business development.

Description of solution

Team Valley Group delivers digital process optimisation solutions that streamline sales and marketing operations by improving website performance, lead qualification, and conversion rates. By optimising user journeys, integrating data and automation, and aligning digital activity with sales objectives, the solution reduces wasted sales effort, lowers cost per enquiry, and shortens sales cycles.

This approach enables automotive businesses to reduce reliance on high-cost outbound sales activity, improve return on existing resources, and create scalable, data-driven digital channels that support sustainable growth.

Expected Return on Investment

Depends on business.

Implementation timeline

A new custom-built website can be delivered within 12-16 weeks.

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