

After the all of the uncertainty of 2020, it is hard to imagine what changes to foresee for 2021. That said, there are trends especially in the world of manufacturing that have been in the making for a while and the pandemic will only make them more critical for businesses to embrace going forward. I've chosen six trends, though I'm sure there are more.

1. A bigger role for emerging technologies

Because of the need for fast response around Covid-19, emerging technologies will be necessary to increase productivity and communication.

2. Collaborating more closely with customers and suppliers

Supply chains suffered significantly during the pandemic, so they need to become more resilient in 2021. This can be accomplished by manufacturers pooling their data, investing in logistics operations centers and the emergence of supplier trust networks.

3. Adapting to new customer preferences

One of the most significant changes resulting from the pandemic is how people and businesses do their purchasing. Digital enablement must be a top priority. Companies must help customers understand products acquisition costs, utilization and post-sale requirements. Plus there must be a positive customer experience.

Preparing
for
2021

4. Putting employee safety front and center

After 2020, safety in the workplace has a whole new meaning. While it was always important in manufacturing before, the way workplace safety is viewed entirely different and just as important. Every 2021 plan must include measures for social distancing, sanitizing workspaces, monitoring those who enter and exit and how people interact with one another.

5. Reshoring manufacturing

For the past few decades, manufacturers have been offshoring to cut costs and stay competitive. But now the trend is coming back due to economic advantages and concerns about quality and supply chain issues. Part of any 2021 plan should be to consider if to offshore all or part of their manufacturing processes. We have many accounts that are bringing their manufacturing closer to home to insure greater control over the entire process.

6. Develop resiliency strategies

It is hard to imagine what exactly the next disaster might look like. But, if there is anything that we've learned from the past year is that every business must have a long-term resilience plan. This includes being able to run and manage production remotely, which will require investments in new smart manufacturing equipment and networking technology.

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The Lessons of 2020

By Jim Stavis

There once was a world that had lost its way. Everyone was moving so fast that they forgot to look around.

con't inside



32 YEARS

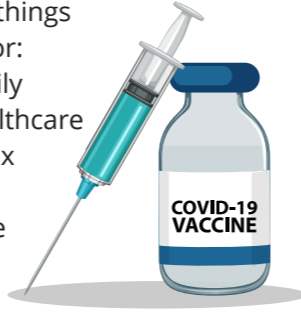


People didn't seem to notice one another. Some were blinded by their consumerism, others distracted by pleasure. Some idolized work and worried about the next big thing. Many sought power, wealth or fame. And everywhere, it seemed, people shared one common problem: all that should matter in life, didn't quite matter enough. People shared the fragility of their own existence. But then, a wakeup call came... via the smallest of messengers: a tiny bug or coronavirus from a land far away called SARS-CoV-2.

And now it seems that we are all wide awake. And all that we've taken for granted — our economy, educational system, health care system, community services, freedom to travel, jobs, investments and our lives — are all at risk. What a difference a year can

make. As we prepared for the New Year of 2020, no one had a clue of what we would experience over the course of this year.

I was recently thinking about the things that Covid-19 made us thankful for: a healthy immune system, a readily available food supply, a good healthcare system, Amazon, Zoom and Netflix and most of all a super scientific accomplishment that could create vaccines within a timeline that no one thought was possible.



The virus is waking us up to this truth. By bringing us to our knees, Covid-19 is forcing us to face the fleetingness of life itself. It's reminding us that we need one another. It's calling us to look beyond ourselves, to join the human race, to notice, to care, and to realize that even small things can change the world (for better or for worse). The truth is that one day we will all die. Covid-19 is forcing us to ask how we will choose to live. Though our future is still very unknown (as it always has been), know that you are not alone. You are part of a community, a country, a village— full of support. We will survive together.



Thank God we live in a time where science can see what it sees, and history can recall what it knows, and the internet can connect all that it connects, and neighbors can watch out for each other. Thank God we have health care workers who can help and heal and families can love how they love and communities can serve how they serve. Remember this — you too can help where you can. These are the lessons of 2020. Sometimes in life the best lessons we learn are the most painful to experience.

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