



By Jim Stavis

This month, we celebrate our 35th anniversary of business. We opened Paragon Steel way back in 1988 above an Irish pub in the seaside section of Long Beach called Belmont Shore. As legion would have it, we had to close on holidays like St. Patty's Day due to the noise and celebration going on down stairs. Those days preceded the internet, cell phones, GPS and virtually every other gadget we have today. We thought it was groundbreaking just to have a Fax machine! My partner had one of the first versions of the Apple Macintosh (now called the Mac). It is important to remember that back then steel companies had to run their operations in large warehouses to store inventory, manage processing and freight from a single location. We realized that we

could manage an entire operation from a small office and outsource all the other services. This allowed us to save on overhead and be very versatile in our operation.

Over this 35-year period, we've seen many companies come and go. In fact, most of our competitors have either gone out of business or sold to others. California in its heyday was a boomtime for steel companies both in construction and manufacturing. Since we started Paragon, many companies have left the state or even the country in search of better business climates in which to operate. We have actually expanded our network in an effort to support those companies that have moved away.

I remember making the comment after our initial year that the majority of businesses fail after the first year. I'm proud that we have withstood the test of time. I appreciate all of the loyal employees we've had, plus the long term relationships we've developed with our customers and vendors. We would not be here without any of them. I've been asked before if there was one thing that I could say was the reason for our success, what would it be? My answer has always been resilience — the ability to overcome whatever challenges that come our way. No one ever said it would be easy, but for 35 years we are *Steel the One*.

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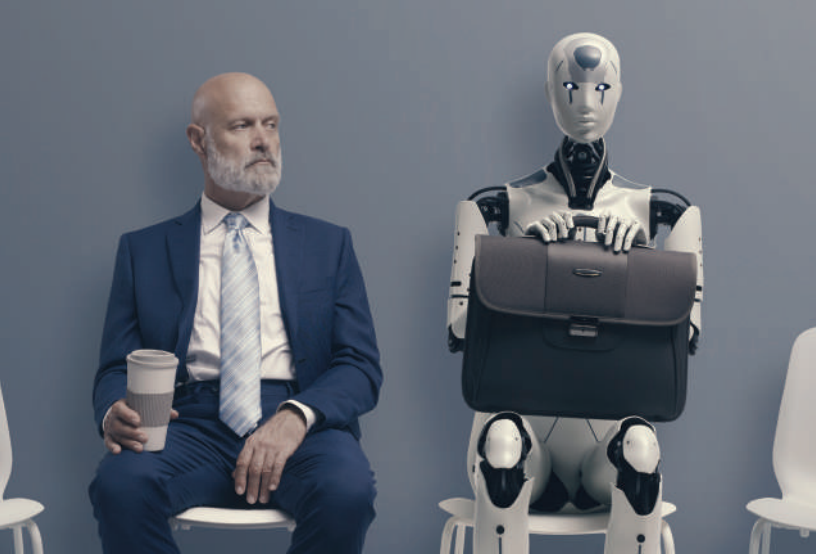


SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER

ARE YOU READY FOR AI IN YOUR BUSINESS?



35 YEARS



First off, let's address the elephants in the room: the obstacles. Implementing AI in manufacturing may sound like a walk in the park, but it does come with its fair share of challenges. One major obstacle is the fear of job displacement. People worry that machines will replace human workers, but that's not entirely true. AI is here to augment human potential, not replace it. It empowers workers by taking care of repetitive tasks, freeing up their time for more creative and complex activities.

Another hurdle is the initial investment required for AI adoption. It's no secret that integrating AI technologies can involve significant costs, such as acquiring the necessary hardware, software, and expertise. However, it's crucial to recognize the long-term benefits and cost savings that AI can bring to manufacturing operations. By optimizing processes, minimizing errors, and improving efficiency, AI has the potential to pay off handsomely in the long run.

Now, let's turn our attention to the juicy opportunities AI brings to the manufacturing table. One of the most exciting prospects is predictive maintenance. By leveraging AI algorithms, manufacturers can monitor equipment performance in real time, detect anomalies, and proactively schedule maintenance before breakdowns occur. This not only minimizes costly downtime but also extends the lifespan of machinery, ultimately saving resources and boosting productivity.

Another compelling opportunity lies in quality control. AI-powered vision systems can rapidly analyze vast amounts of visual data to identify defects or anomalies in products. This helps catch issues early on, reducing waste and ensuring only top-notch products make

it to market. Plus, AI can learn from patterns and continuously improve its detection capabilities, making it an invaluable asset in maintaining high standards.

Last but not least, AI's potential in process optimization cannot be overlooked. By analyzing vast amounts of data, AI algorithms can identify bottlenecks, inefficiencies, and areas for improvement. This data-driven approach enables manufacturers to optimize workflows, increase throughput, and enhance overall operational performance.

CHEERS TO DOUG

I cannot celebrate our anniversary without a salute to my business partner of 25 years, Doug Carpenter. We started Paragon back in 1988. Unfortunately, Doug became ill in February of 2012 and passed away a few years later. His memory and influence on the company cannot be understated. Doug was loved by all and he was like a brother to me — one that I never had. He died at the tender age of 58 — too young for sure. When I reflect back on all that we accomplished together, I wish he were here to celebrate this anniversary. If you were lucky enough to meet Doug, you would know what I mean.

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