

Building the future of smart manufacturing

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The Great Lakes region (Michigan, Ohio and Indiana) is home to some of the most iconic manufacturers in the world. It's also been my home for decades where I've raised my family and when not working, spend most of my hours chauffeuring my children to soccer, lacrosse and hockey games throughout the region

I've been fascinated by manufacturing since I was a kid. You know the names of many of our customers in this region. They are global brands, often with networks of factories around the world. As a Lumen Technologies regional General Manager, we have built a team of innovative people serving the global enterprises doing business here. Our goal is to make those factories as efficient as possible. Yet, efficiency alone is not enough today. The very nature of manufacturing is undergoing rapid evolution.

The days of mass production are giving way to an era of mass customization. We're not just building millions of one thing anymore. We're crafting specific items for different audience segments, and sometimes it's a one-of-a-kind product for just one customer. In some cases, the physical product is just the beginning of a customer relationship. It becomes the conduit for selling services to that customer. This is a very different business model from our classic view of manufacturing. It requires a new level of flexibility.

The companies we work with every day are at the forefront of what is often called the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) where digital technology drives new levels of process control, efficiency and business model possibilities. Manufacturers are looking at technology in new ways. That's where my team and I start our conversations.

Being smart about smart manufacturing

This latest manufacturing era is not just based on machinery. It's about making everything in the factory intelligent. Smart manufacturing is really nimble manufacturing that accelerates the time it takes to optimize and monetize those processes. Marketplaces are very dynamic today, constantly evolving. The whole manufacturing system needs to be able to pivot when demand shifts without missing a beat on efficiency. Doing so requires a new form of assembly line that collects data, analyzes it and extracts insights that make the entire business more efficient.

Based on the [Lumen Platform](#), we are helping companies build that new assembly line, from the factory floor to the cloud and back again. Our customers are leveraging this Platform to drive that competitive advantage – from architects and professional services to cloud connections and edge compute resources. In today's world, a new assembly line is taking shape. How you acquire, analyze and act on your data drives a manufacturing business forward.

It's an exciting time when my team and the customers' internal teams act as one. And I'm grateful that my career path has allowed me to pursue

my lifelong passion for manufacturing here where I call home ... the Great Lakes.

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