



operations

# Operational excellence on the shop floor

Why **connected work** is the missing building block  
for **future-proof production**.

## Digitization of employee-led processes: the key to operational excellence and future viability

International competitive pressure, a high diversity of variants, increasing quality requirements, cost pressure and the shortage of skilled workers are not new phenomena in the industry. But that does not make them any less acute. External shocks such as supply chain disruptions, climate events, and political crises, coupled with full order books, pose additional challenges for companies. These challenges ultimately have to be overcome in production processes – with a major contribution from **operational staff**. Be it maintenance, assembly or quality testing processes: day after day, operational employees ensure integrated value creation despite all challenges. But while industrial companies have already realized that digitization can help them meet the high demands, the "deskless" production employees continue to work in a paper-based and unconnected manner. As a result, the production process cannot react flexibly to volatile market developments – despite all digitization efforts. **Because these usually end with the ERP.**



Most manufacturing companies have already recognized that there is no alternative to digitizing production.

What the digital strategy looks like in detail, what investments are made in new technologies, and how these are embedded in existing IT systems, varies from company to company.

However, the same applies to all companies: **operational employees should always be taken into account in the planning!**

## The problem with the ERP system

ERP systems are typically used in manufacturing companies. These systems are central control points for a wide variety of company processes.

For the so-called **last mile to the worker** – i.e. the information route from the ERP to the maintenance engineer, inspector and fitter – two options can be considered:

1. **Direct ERP use** of operational employees
2. In addition to the ERP usage a provision of **further (printed out) documents**

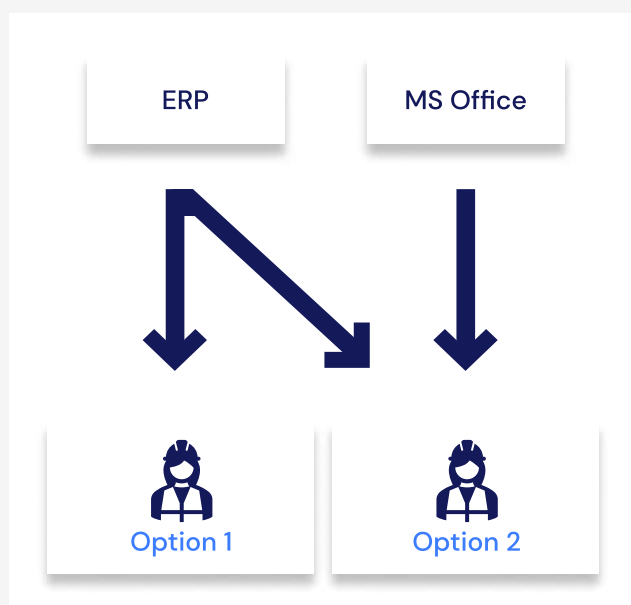
Neither of these options is suitable for supporting operational staff due to their difficult handling.

The "problem with the ERP system" is particularly demanding in the case of **complex, variant-rich products**. Here, employees need variant-specific information. When assembling a complex technical machine, the textual description from the ERP or the unspecific display of images in a PDF is not sufficient.

In addition to ERP, there are more efficient solutions for the shop floor, such as MES or digital shop floor management. However, these systems are primarily used for comprehensive production control and visualization. Their subject is also the machine, not the human being.

**The result: a digitization gap.**

### Problems with the mapping of the "last mile to the worker"



**Option 1:** Operational employees work directly within the ERP system. Stored operations are processed and mandatory inspection points are executed. This is usually done in a highly **text-based manner** in the ERP interface.

**Option 2:** The lack of informational depth for the execution of processes is compensated for by **additional documents**, which are typically created in MS Office. Employees thus operate the ERP interface and print out additional instructions and checklists, the values of which are subsequently reported back manually to other systems.

## The solution: digitization of employee-led processes

To become more resilient, many manufacturing companies are introducing operational excellence programs alongside digitization measures.

The simplest and most efficient lever for excellent processes lies in the **digital support of operational employees**. Equipping them with digital tools and connecting them with the rest of the organization automatically leads to more efficient processes, which in turn contribute to the resilience and flexibility of companies.

Employees need **visual guidance** which can be provided by images, videos, and multilingual text to perform complex work instructions. The same applies to subsequent quality checks. Relying solely on an ERP system or MS Office is at odds with operational excellence.

### Future readiness:

By connecting employees across the entire production plant and locations, new data pools are opened up. Flexibilization and ramp-up times are reduced.

### Operational Excellence:

In connected teams, productivity increases by over 20% while error rates decrease by over 50%.

### Worker Empowerment:

Complexity for individual employees is reduced, engagement and retention increase.

Digital tools can support the implementation of an Operational Excellence program with the help of intuitive software and employees, who are **reliably guided through processes**.

By connecting workers, the former analog process is transferred to the digital world so that the **digitization gap can be closed**. With the new data pools that result from closing the digitization gap, informed management decisions can be made.

# 9,8

AVG. ROI FOR THE  
INTRODUCTION OF  
NETWORKED WORKING

Source: Operations1 ROI study

## Thanks to an employee-centric approach:

- ✓ **New products and variants** can be introduced quickly and without loss of quality
- ✓ Data can be captured at a much higher granularity **for CIP and traceability purposes**
- ✓ **Employee productivity and satisfaction** can be increased
- ✓ Companies can **respond more flexibly to external shocks** through process adjustments and shifts





- **Step 1:** Standardize & organize  
incomprehensive process knowledge in  
systems like the Operations1 platform
- **Step 2:** Make process knowledge available  
to employees digitally, intuitively and  
media-based
- **Step 3:** Transfer process data into variant-  
specific production and testing processes,  
and feed the data back into the system  
landscape.

FASTER  
RAMP-UP

## Easy launch, maximum scalability

Digital tools empower your production workers, help establish operational excellence on the shop floor, and make your business more resilient to external shocks and volatile market conditions.

The Operations1 platform can be implemented within 6–8 weeks and easily integrated into your IT system landscape. Our platform allows you to close digitization gaps in employee-led production processes in a systematic and structured way.

In addition to the modular design of media-based instructions or limitless language selection, Operations1 software is designed to scale limitlessly across your enterprise through other sophisticated functionalities such as the use of structure classes from your ERP, interaction tags, and much more, you can gain insight into never-before-seen process data and use these insights in your operational excellence program for sustainable process optimization.

Selected companies that are already digitizing employee-led processes with Operations1



To the on-demand webinar: "On track for growth with operational excellence".

[View webinar recording \(German only\)](#)



For us, it was important that we digitally map the last mile to the employee in an integrated way. The ERP or MES is not suitable for this.

Steffen Paul  
Head of Industrial Engineering at POLIPOL

## Achieving **operational excellence** on the shop floor with digitization

Strengthen your employees, establish excellent processes and make your company sustainably fit for the future.

**Do you have any further questions? Contact us!**

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