



Rockwell  
Automation

| KALYPSO

BEYOND TRANSFORMATION:

# Reshaping Aerospace & Defense Performance Through Digital Capabilities



# Introduction

Digital capabilities are no longer merely transforming aerospace and defense — they are redefining how performance, agility, and profitability are achieved at scale.

Across commercial aviation, commercial space, the defense industrial base, and government operations, leaders are moving beyond isolated digital pilots toward scaled deployment—driven by clear expectations for operational and financial return.

In this eBook, Rockwell Automation’s Aerospace & Defense (A&D) business shares insights from direct industry engagement on how digital capabilities, including artificial intelligence, are being applied across the A&D value chain.

We focus not on transformation as an abstract concept, but on how these technologies are reshaping core functions—from product lifecycle management and production to maintenance, cybersecurity, sustainability, and DevSecOps.

While digital transformation began more than a decade ago, its impact has accelerated sharply in recent years in response to sustained demand from airlines, space operators, government agencies, and the U.S. Defense Industrial Base (DIB).

What may appear to be an inflection point is more accurately the maturation of a long-term trend: digital adoption becoming foundational to enterprise operations rather than episodic experimentation. This shift is delivering measurable gains in capability, agility, resilience, security, and profitability.

The insights in this eBook are equally relevant to commercial airline operators and their Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul (MRO) providers, civilian and commercial launch and payload services, military users responsible for mission readiness through Condition-Based Maintenance Plus (CBM+), and manufacturers scaling production while embedding cybersecurity, asset interoperability, and operational resilience by design.

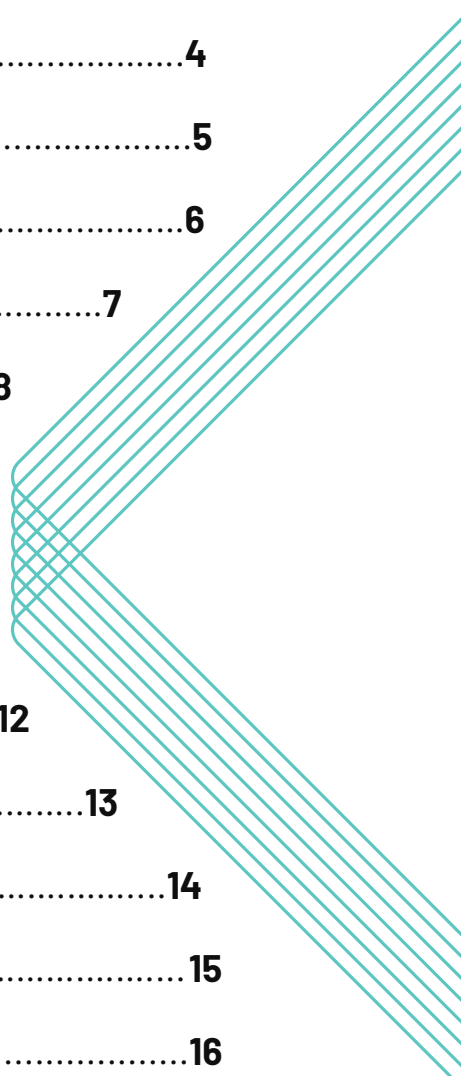
Digital technologies are presented as part of a broader industrial transformation—where AI, systems integration, and secure infrastructure are inseparable from performance, reliability, and long-term competitive advantage.

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# The New Operating Context for A&D

**A&D manufacturers and customers are entering a new operating era — one defined less by incremental change and more by structural industry change driven by rapid technology adoption.**

Technological advancement is converging with shifts in geopolitics, the character of conflict, economic policy, and global supply chains—reshaping how A&D organizations design, build, sustain, and scale their operations.

Governments are recalibrating defense doctrine to address a more complex and dynamic threat environment, emphasizing speed, adaptability, interoperability, and endurance. These changes extend far beyond frontline systems, cascading through the DIB, commercial aerospace manufacturers, supply chains, and sustainment ecosystems.

At the same time, long-term defense commitments and sustained commercial demand are elevating expectations for industrial capacity, execution speed, cost transparency, system availability, and lifecycle performance.

Across both defense and commercial markets, tolerance for inefficiency, fragmentation, and operational capacity is steadily declining. Traditional operating models—characterized by siloed data, manual coordination, and linear processes—are increasingly misaligned with

current requirements. Resilience, security, and scalability can no longer be addressed after the fact; they must be embedded into operations by design.

Despite these challenges, the A&D industry is entering a prolonged growth cycle in which competitiveness and modernization are inseparable. Organizations supporting aviation, defense, space, aftermarket services, and logistics must evolve their operating models, skill sets, and technology foundations in parallel to compete effectively over the next decade.

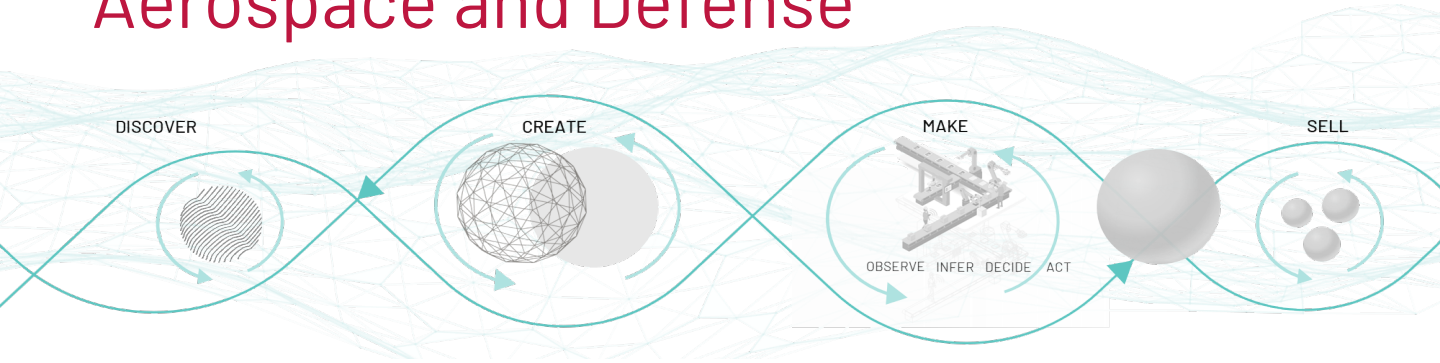
The emerging competitive blueprint begins with the digitization and modernization of core operations—linking product, production, and sustainment through secure, interoperable IT/OT environments and the responsible application of advanced analytics and artificial intelligence.

In this context, digital capabilities are not isolated tools; they must act as the connective tissue that enables performance, resilience, and sustained value creation at scale.

It is within this environment that the capabilities outlined in this Rockwell Automation eBook become essential—not as discrete solutions, but as an integrated response to an aerospace and defense ecosystem undergoing profound and lasting change.











# The Digital Thread for Aerospace and Defense



A&D industry leaders are prioritizing purpose-built and configured software and emerging technologies to weave seamless digital threads throughout their organizations and networks.

**A comprehensive digital thread connects every stage of a product’s lifecycle, reaching from internal operations to suppliers, customers, and frontline users.** By linking processes—from concept and design through manufacturing, supply chain management, and service—a closed loop is formed between the digital and physical realms. This continuous loop drives operational improvements and efficiency across the entire value chain.

To begin the journey to a comprehensive digital thread, A&D organizations must start by embracing the following eight solutions:

-  Product Lifecycle Management
-  Model-Based Enterprise
-  Production Performance Improvement
-  Condition-Based Maintenance
-  Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul
-  Cybersecurity
-  DevSecOps
-  Sustainability & Energy Management

## BUILDING THE DIGITAL BACKBONE

# Product Lifecycle Management (PLM)



PLM manages product data, configurations, and engineering processes across the entire lifecycle to ensure traceability, control, and compliance.

## ROLE:

**In A&D, Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) is foundational to managing product complexity, regulatory compliance, and continuous change across long-lived programs.**

As systems incorporate more software, variants, suppliers, and regulatory constraints, PLM provides the single, authoritative source required to maintain configuration control, lifecycle traceability, and alignment from engineering through sustainment.

PLM anchors the digital thread—ensuring engineering intent and approved configurations remain consistent, controlled, and auditable across the enterprise.

## OPERATION:

**PLM enables secure, governed collaboration across internal teams, suppliers, and partners while enforcing export controls, cybersecurity, and regulatory requirements.**

Modern platforms support cyber-resilient control, standardized workflows, and integration across engineering, manufacturing, and enterprise systems.

In one implementation, Rockwell deployed Windchill (PLM) on a FedRAMP IL4 cloud, integrating multiple business units and automating access to sensitive program data—improving operational efficiency while establishing a secure foundation for digital thread maturity.

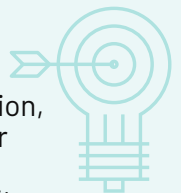
Today's PLM platforms extend beyond document management to connect Model-Based Systems Engineering (MBSE), manufacturing, and analytics. Embedded intelligence improves data quality, surfaces configuration risk, and reveals lifecycle insights otherwise hidden by product complexity.

## VALUE:

By establishing a single, authoritative source of product and configuration data, **PLM reduces fragmentation across engineering, manufacturing, quality, supply chain, and sustainment.**

Organizations benefit from faster, more controlled change, stronger traceability, and improved readiness for audits, certification, and cybersecurity compliance.

AI-enabled PLM accelerates decision making, reduces downstream disruption, and provides a scalable foundation for digital engineering—supporting lower lifecycle cost, improved product quality, and more resilient A&D programs.



TURNING DIGITAL ENGINEERING INTO REAL-WORLD ADVANTAGE

# Model-Based Enterprise (MBE)



An MBE is an operating model where trusted digital models—rather than static documents—become the authoritative source for defining, building, certifying, and sustaining A&D products.

## ROLE:

Model-Based Enterprise (MBE) is the most reliable way for teams to **define products, plan how they will be built, and verify quality.** In A&D, MBE is essential for managing complexity, reducing rework, and maintaining traceability across long-lived, highly regulated programs. As products comprise more variants, software, and advanced materials, document-centric processes can no longer keep pace with the speed and rigor required to deliver and sustain mission-critical systems.

In commercial A&D programs today, MBE is applied where complexity is highest and the cost of rework is severe. **Ultimately, MBE shifts digital engineering from a siloed activity to an operational advantage across the lifecycle.**

## OPERATION:

An MBE replaces static drawings and disconnected artifacts with authoritative, model-based definitions that carry product requirements, geometry, tolerances, and configuration data throughout the lifecycle. By linking Model-Based Definition (MBD), Model-Based Systems Engineering (MBSE), manufacturing planning, inspection, certification, and sustainment, MBE ensures decisions remain traceable from requirements through in-service performance.

In practice, A&D organizations apply MBE to complex and high-risk work such as the manufacturing of engines, avionics, flight-critical structures, and mission systems.

Digital twins extend MBE by connecting “as-designed” models to “as-built”, “as-tested”, and “as-operated” data. Increasingly, analytics and AI applied to model data help automate validation, surface inconsistencies, and accelerate downstream activities like inspection programming, quality analysis, and root-cause investigation.

Rockwell Automation is uniquely positioned to connect the model-based digital thread to the systems that run production and maintenance, bringing engineering intent, industrial execution, and data-driven optimization together in a secure and scalable way.

## VALUE:

By making digital models the single source of truth, MBE reduces manual interpretation, shortens build and inspection cycles, and lowers the cost of rework and non-conformance. Manufacturing, quality, and MRO teams gain faster access to accurate configuration and tolerance data, improving consistency and decision making on the shop floor and in sustainment operations.

As part of a broader digital thread, MBE enables tighter feedback loops between engineering, production, and in-service performance—supporting faster certification, improved readiness, and more resilient programs. The result is a scalable operational advantage that helps A&D organizations deliver complex systems with greater speed, confidence, and lifecycle efficiency.



## MANUFACTURING EFFICIENCY AT ENTERPRISE SCALE

# Production Performance Management (PPM)



PPM systematizes the capabilities needed to deliver engineered A&D products at the rates customers require.

## ROLE:

For A&D manufacturers, **Production Performance Management (PPM) is a strategic capability—not just a set of operational metrics.** Delivering complex, highly regulated products on time and at scale requires tight coordination between shop-floor execution, upstream planning, and downstream quality and certification processes.

## OPERATION:

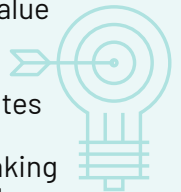
A&D production environments operate under inherent constraints: long and variable cycle times, specialized equipment, serialized configurations, and strict quality requirements that leave no margin for a “ship now, fix later” approach. Performance issues rarely stem from a single bottleneck; they emerge from the combined effects of schedule volatility, labor constraints, tooling availability, engineering changes, unplanned downtime, and rework embedded in manual processes and paperwork.

Modern production performance improvement solutions address this complexity by integrating real-time execution data with planning, quality, maintenance, and engineering systems. A modern MES layer captures work-in-process, genealogy and serialization, electronic travelers, and quality checkpoints, while integrating with controls, historians, and automation systems to expose true constraints. Once production data is trusted and contextualized, analytics and machine learning can identify losses, predict disruptions, and enable faster, more effective decisions—often within the same shift.

## VALUE:

By improving visibility into the true constraints effecting throughput, **organizations may stabilize production, reduce variability, and increase first-pass yield and on-time delivery.**

Predictive insights help prevent downtime and quality escapes before they impact schedules, while clearer operational data directs improvement efforts to the highest-value opportunities.



As part of the digital thread, PPM creates a closed-loop connection between “as-designed” and “as-built” states—linking product definition, process plans, and equipment behavior. **The result is a more agile and resilient factory**, capable of absorbing change while delivering certified, traceable product at the speed and scale aerospace and defense programs require.

FROM REACTIVE TO PREDICTIVE

# Condition-Based Maintenance (CBM+)



CBM+ uses sensor data, analytics, and machine learning to predict failures before they occur, improving reliability and reducing downtime.

## ROLE:

For A&D organizations, **Condition-Based Maintenance (CBM+) is critical to maintaining readiness and reliability while reducing the cost and disruption of reactive maintenance.** With assets becoming more complex and operational demands increasing, CBM+ is gaining traction across the DIB as organizations find that time- or failure-based maintenance alone is falling short of mission, safety, and availability targets.

## OPERATION:

A&D asset maintenance and MRO processes have traditionally been reactive, fixing issues only after they arise. Supported by recent mandates from the US DoW, **digitally-enabled CBM+ solutions flip that paradigm, helping organizations prevent failures altogether.** CBM+ enables data-driven decision making by leveraging sensor data, operational context, and advanced analytics to assess asset health in real time. Using industrial internet of things (IIoT) platforms, machine learning models, and predictive algorithms, CBM+ solutions detect early signs of degradation and estimate remaining useful life (RUL) before failures occur.

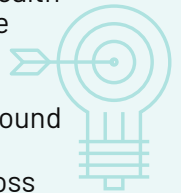
Across the DIB, CBM+ has been adopted to support both military and commercial aviation programs where readiness, mission flexibility, and asset longevity are paramount. These solutions integrate maintenance, operational, and engineering data—closing the loop between in-service performance and sustainment planning. Increasingly, CBM+ is also informing upstream design and reliability

improvements by feeding real-world performance insights back to manufacturers and MRO organizations.

As defense spending increases and commercial aviation continues to recover post-COVID, digitally-enabled CBM+ solutions from Rockwell Automation offer a scalable, data-driven approach aligned to both strategic and tactical maintenance goals.

## VALUE:

For manufacturers, **CBM+ creates a feedback loop between in-service performance and product design, helping validate assumptions and drive continuous improvement.** By transitioning from reactive to predictive maintenance, CBM+ enables organizations to detect potential failures earlier and act before operational impacts occur. Improved visibility into asset health and RUL supports better maintenance planning, higher asset availability, and reduced unplanned downtime. At scale, CBM+ supports faster turnaround times, stronger readiness, and more resilient maintenance operations across both military and commercial fleets.



## MODERNIZING ASSETS THROUGH DATA-DRIVEN MAINTENANCE

# Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul (MRO)



MRO is the set of processes used to inspect, sustain, repair, and modernize aerospace assets throughout their service life.

### ROLE:

**If we are to fulfill the US national security priority of keeping mission-ready and extending the RUL of all our land, sea, and air assets, modern Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul (MRO) methodology must undergo a complete digital overhaul.** Per the US DoW, an MRO organization must invest in its workforce as a first step in its digital transformation.

Across the current portfolio of Military and Commercial assets—in-service and new—is a litany of sensors, each of which produces a large volume of data. Within the next 1-3 years, MRO organizations must implement new diagnostic tools and system architectures to better manage and leverage this data. **The increasing density and variety of sensor types represents an opportunity for the DIB to fully exploit the power of the new AI/ML engines and advanced algorithms for more real-time asset health monitoring and MRO prediction.**

### OPERATION:

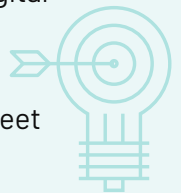
**Digitally-enabled MRO platforms integrate sensor data, maintenance history, configuration, and operational context to create a real-time view of asset health and RUL.** Advanced analytics and AI/ML models translate this data into actionable insights—supporting predictive maintenance, optimized planning, and faster, more informed repair decisions across global operations.

Built on secure, cloud-native architectures, these solutions are designed to scale across

multiple plants, programs, and geographies while maintaining strict data segregation and regulatory alignment. Standardized APIs (v2.0 REST) and modular services allow MRO teams to see clearly how data flows from the asset into analytics and back out into maintenance actions.

### VALUE:

By replacing manual, reactive processes with integrated, data-driven workflows, digital MRO systems directly enable higher readiness rates, reduced downtime, and longer asset service lives—precisely the outcomes required to meet today's commercial and defense sustainment demands.



## SECURING THE A&amp;D DIGITAL THREAD

# Cybersecurity



For an A&D organization's digital thread to function, it must be protected from cyber threats. Lives depend on it.

## ROLE:

Cybersecurity is foundational to every digital capability in A&D—without it, the digital thread cannot operate safely, reliably, or at scale. As A&D organizations accelerate digital engineering, AI adoption, and connected operations, cyber risk directly impacts safety, mission readiness, intellectual property, and production continuity. **For the DIB, cybersecurity is no longer optional or downstream—it is a prerequisite for participation.**

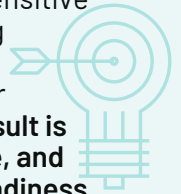
## OPERATION:

The US government has elevated cybersecurity to a strategic priority for the DIB through mandates and DevSecOps requirements. As A&D organizations digitize engineering, manufacturing, and sustainment, the cyber attack threat surface now spans enterprise IT, operational technologies, cloud platforms, and software pipelines.

**Protecting the digital thread requires security to be embedded across the full lifecycle**—from engineering environments to factory-floor systems and connected assets. Rockwell Automation Secure Digital Operations (RA SDO) delivers this integrated approach by combining industrial cybersecurity, secure cloud and edge architectures, and DevSecOps practices aligned to US DoW and NIST standards. Recent defense engagements have embedded automated security testing and continuous monitoring directly into delivery pipelines, reducing risk while accelerating deployment.

## VALUE:

By embedding cybersecurity solutions across the digital thread, A&D organizations can confidently scale digital initiatives without introducing unacceptable risk. Secure digital operations protect mission-critical systems, safeguard intellectual property and sensitive data, enable compliance with evolving defense mandates, and reduce the likelihood of production disruptions or cyber-driven safety incidents. **The result is faster innovation, stronger resilience, and a digital foundation that supports readiness, trust, and long-term operational advantage.**



# SECURING THE SOFTWARE DIGITAL LIFECYCLE

## DevSecOps



DevSecOps is a modern approach to software development that embeds security, compliance, and risk management into every stage of the lifecycle.

### ROLE:

As software becomes mission-critical across A&D platforms, **DevSecOps is essential to delivering secure, reliable software at the speed modern programs demand.** In environments where cyber risk directly impacts safety, mission success, and national security, security can no longer be treated as a downstream control—it must be embedded throughout the software lifecycle.

### OPERATION:

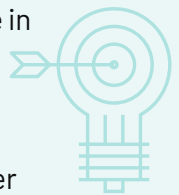
DevSecOps integrates security practices directly into software development, integration, and deployment workflows, ensuring vulnerabilities are identified and addressed early rather than after systems are fielded. In A&D environments, this includes embedding automated security testing, compliance checks, and threat detection into CI/CD pipelines supporting both IT systems and operational technologies such as PLC-based control systems.

Driven by DoW mandates and evolving threat landscapes, DevSecOps has become a required operating model across the DIB.

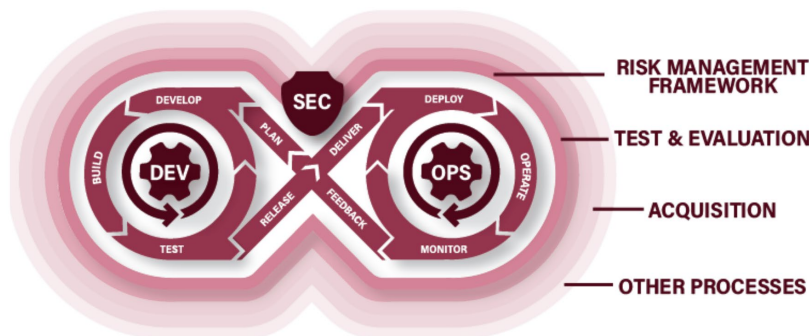
Rockwell Automation’s experience with defense programs demonstrates how **DevSecOps principles** can be extended beyond traditional enterprise software to industrial and cyber-physical systems—**aligning software development velocity with stringent standards from NIST, DoW, and other regulatory authorities.**

### VALUE:

By embedding security into every phase of the software lifecycle, **DevSecOps reduces cyber risk without sacrificing development speed or system reliability.** Organizations catch vulnerabilities earlier, lower the cost of remediation, and improve confidence in the software running mission-critical systems.



At scale, DevSecOps enables more frequent and secure updates, stronger regulatory compliance, and greater resilience against increasingly sophisticated cyber threats. As part of the A&D digital thread, DevSecOps supports faster innovation while protecting the integrity, availability, and trustworthiness of operational systems.



## ALIGNING INNOVATION WITH RESPONSIBILITY

# Sustainability & Energy Management



Sustainability and energy management is the capability to monitor, analyze, and optimize energy usage and environmental impact without compromising throughput, quality, or mission delivery.

## ROLE:

For A&D manufacturers, **sustainability and energy management have become operational imperatives**, not side initiatives. Energy-intensive, mission-critical processes must be optimized in ways that lower cost and emissions while preserving production performance, compliance, and readiness.

## OPERATION:

A&D relies on some of the most energy-intensive and least-interruptible processes in manufacturing—such as producing engine components, heat treatment, composites layup and curing, machining, test cells, and paint operations. At the same time, customers, governments, and investors are raising expectations for transparent reporting, lower emissions, and credible progress toward long-term sustainability goals.

The challenge is that energy data is often fragmented across utilities, buildings, equipment, and sites, while production and maintenance context reside elsewhere in MES, SCADA, historians, and asset management systems. Modern digital sustainability and energy management solutions address this by instrumenting critical utilities and assets, integrating energy data with production and asset context, and applying advanced analytics to understand true energy drivers, losses, and tradeoffs. Emerging AI- and ML-based capabilities further enhance these systems by detecting anomalies, forecasting demand, and optimizing energy-intensive processes without disrupting operations.

## VALUE:

By unifying energy, production, and asset data, **organizations gain actionable visibility into where energy is consumed, wasted, or misaligned with production goals**. This enables more informed decisions that reduce cost and emissions while protecting throughput, quality, and delivery commitments.

At scale, sustainability and energy management capabilities support standardized KPIs, improved regulatory and customer reporting, and more resilient operations across plants and programs. As part of the broader digital thread, these solutions help A&D organizations embed sustainability into day-to-day operations—driving measurable operational improvements while strengthening long-term competitiveness and mission-readiness.





# From Strategy to Financial Impact

A notable trend that has surfaced in this new and promising era of Digital, is the reluctance of boards, shareholder groups and top executives continuing to invest in capabilities, without more rigor around expected outcomes. Gone are the days of companies optimistically investing in enterprise SaaS or another SAP project without a performance-based contract. The new world of Digital that includes artificial intelligence and autonomy will not be immune to this reality.

This trend has contributed to a significant shift in how companies like Rockwell Automation reorient their business models.

We have moved from strategy to a hyper-focus on execution and value creation. Digital transformation either delivers value, or it stalls under complexity, lack of clear outcomes, risk, or competing priorities.

The following cases provide a practical look into how leading A&D organizations have successfully crossed this threshold. By translating best practices into concrete actions—applied to real operational challenges—they unlocked measurable financial results in cost reduction, productivity gains, improved asset utilization, and risk mitigation.

More importantly, these examples illustrate how targeted digital investments create momentum: converting early wins into scalable capabilities that sustain long-term performance improvement and enterprise transformation.

# Insights from the Front Lines

**Case studies** offer a window into how organizations have navigated this journey—applying digital capabilities to solve real problems, deliver measurable outcomes, and build momentum for transformation.



## Modernizing PLM for a Major Defense Manufacturer

### CHALLENGE:

A major defense manufacturer needed to standardize how it managed product design data across global product lines. It also needed better visibility, stronger process consistency across divisions, and better design collaboration within their workforce.

### SOLUTION:

Rockwell Automation helped implement a global PLM platform using PTC Windchill with an out-of-the-box configuration tailored to the organization's needs. The solution standardized processes, change management, centralized document management, integrated MCAD data, and enabled closed-loop ERP integration.

### VALUE:

The new platform improves access to real-time information, increases consistency across product lines, and supports best practices for document and SOP management. It also creates a more connected and efficient product development environment.



## Improving Operations for a Leading A&D Manufacturer

### CHALLENGE:

A leading A&D manufacturer needed to move from legacy requirements tools to a more unified and traceable ALM platform.

### SOLUTION:

Rockwell Automation guided implementation of PTC Codebeamer to centralize requirements management and better align with systems engineering workflows.

### VALUE:

The new approach improves traceability, supports compliance, reduces ramp-up time, and enables secure access across ITAR and non-ITAR programs.



## Building DevSecOps Capability for Naval Defense

### CHALLENGE:

A naval defense client needed to harden its software development process against security risk tied to updating programmable logic controller (PLC) code on deployed equipment and systems.

### SOLUTION:

Rockwell Automation partnered with onboard systems leaders to evaluate each system's technology, functionality, and development approach. From that assessment, the team created a diagnostic and recommended improvements to software tooling and development processes.

### VALUE:

The resulting DevSecOps prototype inserts a cyber resilient set of processes that supports a Naval defense platform by enabling more secure software delivery.



# How to Get Started

Digital transformation isn't a straight path. It's a journey marked by experimentation, adaptation, and learning. Across our experience in the field, certain lessons have emerged that can guide future efforts and help organizations avoid common pitfalls:

## Prove value vs. technology

Technology works. Find and prioritize specific digital use cases that solve manufacturing and operational issues.

1

## Plan for scalability

To deliver desired outcomes at scale, plan for the optimal set of technologies with integration to the existing backbone. Focus on common work processes across the enterprise.

3

## Learn, iterate and improve

Long-term planning helps, but inflexibility can mean missed opportunities. Keep an eye on your digital vision while learning and adjusting your strategy and execution to build on proven value as it emerges.

5

## Define and apply governance

Protect sustained value. Embrace new ways of working, including adherence to process and data standards.

7

DISCOVER

CREATE

MAKE

SELL



2

## Investments with a short-term payback

Transformations stall when ROI is slow. Build a rapid, steady flow of value to drive adoption and self-funding.

4

## Foster enterprise collaboration

Siloed solutions are a dead end. Enterprise (OT/ IT) digital connectivity and collaboration unlock exponential value.

6

## Communicate progress and success

Momentum matters. Spread the word beyond the impacted group to build and maintain excitement for what's possible.

8

## Equip and champion people

To get ROI from digital, empower people beyond introduction of new technology. Skills and mindsets that support new ways of working are key to success and driving self-service.

# About Kalypso, a Rockwell Automation business

**At Kalypso, a Rockwell Automation business, we help A&D companies harness digital solutions to bring products to market more efficiently, sustainably, and profitably.**

The industry is at a critical juncture. From legacy infrastructure and aging assets and workforce, to disruptive digital technologies, A&D companies face challenges that impact business operations, performance, and results. Organizations are compelled to right-size, lower fixed costs, increase investment in digital tools, and migrate to remote business models. The industry is also under increasing pressure to address sustainability concerns and meet escalating cybersecurity regulatory standards.

These challenges affect all roles within A&D organizations, forcing leadership to rethink

business models, organizational structures and product delivery methodologies. They also open new opportunities for companies to digitalize, optimize and transform their business processes and operations.

After years with big firms, we built Kalypso to deliver a new kind of consulting experience, one clients were asking for:

- ▶ **Radical candor and 100% transparency**
- ▶ **A rapid-results, lean startup approach**
- ▶ **Deep knowledge of both IT and OT**

There's a lot of hype about digital, but we prefer to focus on results and reality. That's the only way to deliver the promise of digital.

For more information, visit [kalypso.com](https://www.kalypso.com)

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