# AI automation trends in manufacturing: insights from Microsoft's Simon Floyd



Simon Floyd, the General Manager for Manufacturing and Mobility Industries for the Americas at Microsoft, recently discussed his insights on the growing trends in AI automation within the manufacturing sector. With a rich background in manufacturing and a career that spans several key roles, Floyd is uniquely positioned to comment on the future of technology in this industry.

Floyd's connection to manufacturing is deeply rooted in his family history; both his parents operated small businesses that focused on children's furniture and toys. Additionally, his grandfather was a notable pioneer in plastics, responsible for the creation of the first commercial application of Bakelite and advancements in plastic injection moulding in the mid-20th century. This early exposure to manufacturing technology and processes fostered Floyd's affinity for the industry.

With his professional journey beginning as an industrial designer for technological products, Floyd transitioned into the world of software in the late 1990s, specialising in product life cycle management and manufacturing execution software before joining Microsoft in the early 2000s. His move to Microsoft was motivated by the company’s commitment to innovation in manufacturing and its ability to effect positive change in the industry. “With my grassroots experience, I saw numerous opportunities where digital solutions could make a significant impact,” Floyd stated.

His leadership approach is characterised as transformational, prioritising clarity, shared purpose, and ongoing development within his team. He believes that providing team members the freedom to contribute creatively while staying aligned with company goals enhances productivity. This collaborative environment allows team members to leverage their unique skills and interests, promoting professional growth aligned with the company's strategic objectives.

When asked about the most exciting development in manufacturing currently, Floyd pointed to the rise of artificial intelligence. He noted that generative AI (Gen AI) has rapidly gained traction, largely due to its accessibility and its integration into consumer experiences. This accessibility allows businesses to quickly realise tangible benefits from AI applications. Floyd explained, “At Microsoft, we have demonstrated practical applications that deliver real business value.” He elaborated on the reasoning behind naming Microsoft’s AI solution, “Copilot,” as it encapsulates its assistive nature while remaining a capable partner in the manufacturing process.

Floyd emphasised that while concepts like machine learning and anomaly detection have existed for years, the emergence of Gen AI has revitalised interest and awareness among manufacturers. This shift has positioned AI as a crucial tool for innovation and growth in the industry. The ability of AI to manage vast amounts of data to extract insights is transforming business practices, making it an integral component of future advancements in manufacturing.

Floyd's insights reflect a broader trend within the manufacturing industry towards embracing AI and automation as fundamental drivers of efficiency and innovation. As technology continues to advance, its application in manufacturing promises to reshape how businesses operate and compete on a global scale.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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