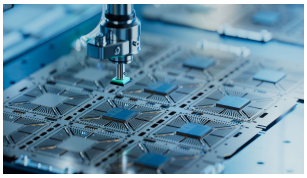

AI Governance Across the Manufacturing Lifecycle: Facilitating Innovation Through Responsible AI Use

Sep 15, 2026

Categories:

Publications

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Across the manufacturing sector, AI is quickly becoming an operational and strategic priority as companies seek to enhance efficiency, resilience, competitiveness, and product innovation. Deployment is now moving rapidly into production operations, quality systems, supply chain management, connected products, predictive maintenance, workforce tools, and customer-facing processes. That shift creates meaningful opportunities, but it also raises a more complex question: How should manufacturers capture the benefits of AI while responsibly managing the unique risks that arise when it touches the entire lifecycle of the business?

For manufacturers, AI governance must go beyond a general legal risk framework. An AI model used to screen résumés presents different issues than an AI model used to detect product defects, manage supplier risk, optimize production schedules, guide robotics, or support safety-critical equipment. Effective governance, therefore, must be designed to uniquely account for how each company selects, tests, approves, oversees, and retires technology within its own manufacturing operations.

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Mapping AI Use Across the Business

A practical governance program starts with visibility. Manufacturers should know where AI is being used across their business model, what operational function it supports, what data it relies on, how

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humans may use its output, and which entity owns any associated risk. From there, manufacturers can build approval pathways for new use cases, assess vendor and contracting issues, and implement appropriate privacy and cybersecurity safeguards. They can evaluate safety and quality implications. And they can create oversight mechanisms to ensure AI systems perform as expected, in a manner consistent with the organization's own policies, risk tolerance, and representations made to its stakeholders.

Governance as a Growth Strategy

The goal is responsible innovation: Manufacturers that engage in thoughtful AI governance are better positioned to scale AI in ways that are practical, defensible, and aligned with business objectives. Clear governance helps organizations move from isolated use cases to enterprise adoption by creating the visibility, accountability, and decision-making discipline needed to evaluate opportunities, manage operational and legal risk, and build trust across business teams and with stakeholders. A strong governance framework should account for transparency, data integrity, third-party technology, regulatory expectations, customer commitments, workforce impact, safety, quality, and reputational risk.

Deeper Dive: Manufacturing Week 2026

During FBT Gibbons' Manufacturing Week session, "AI Governance Across the Manufacturing Lifecycle," we will explore how manufacturers can translate responsible AI principles into practical governance structures tailored to manufacturing realities. Presented by Mason Clutter, the firm's data security and privacy lead and former chief privacy officer to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, this session will walk through the AI governance lifecycle, from identifying and approving use cases to managing data, vendors, privacy, cybersecurity, safety, transparency, accountability, and responsible-use considerations. It will also offer practical insights for reducing operational, regulatory, reputational, and ethical risk while supporting continued innovation.

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To explore the full Manufacturing Week 2026 lineup, featuring daily webinars on a host of topics critical to manufacturers today, visit the event page.

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