

**NEW Manufacturing Alliance
INDUSTRY 4.0 TASK FORCE**

July 30, 2026

8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.

Werner Electric, Appleton

Minutes

ATTENDEES: **Scott Janssen**-James Imaging Systems, Ann Franz-NEWMA, Melissa Gregory-Automation Bird Dog, Joe LaChapell-M2 Technology, **Michael Mapes**-Tanduo, **Erik Rasmussen**-Rockwell Automation, Jon Stoppie-Control System Integrators, Michael Schulze-Rockwell Automation, Chris White-CMD Corp., Owen Fezatte-Tanduo Technical Partners, Sarah Putbress-NEWMA, Paul Buschkopf-Rockwell Automation, Bruce Wisnefske-Sargento, Omare Alauthman-ABD, Steve Pavlat-M2 Technology

Topic 1: What to know about implementing automated guided vehicles (AGV) and autonomous mobile robots (AMRs) and Introduction to Digital Twins presented by Rockwell Automation

(Presentation sent to members with minutes)

- Manufacturing trends driving technology investment include workforce challenges, energy and supply-chain volatility, cybersecurity risk, and the need for greater flexibility and access to useful data.
- Rockwell reported that manufacturers are dedicating significant operating budgets to industrial technology, with quality, cost and risk reduction among the primary drivers.
- Automated Guided Vehicles (AGVs) vs. Autonomous Mobile Robots (AMRs):
 - AGVs follow predetermined routes and generally require infrastructure such as magnetic strips, pins or reflectors.
 - AMRs navigate dynamically, can reroute around people or obstacles, and are generally easier to scale or redeploy as workflows change.
 - AGVs may be a better fit for repetitive point-to-point work, very heavy payloads or specialized environments such as washdown areas.
 - AMRs are often better suited to flexible, high-traffic facilities and applications involving multiple workflows.
- Environmental conditions, payload, floor conditions, workflow variability and required return on investment should all be evaluated before selecting a solution.
- Fleet management software is a major consideration.
 - Rockwell is developing FactoryTalk Orchestrator as a middleware layer to coordinate multiple fleets and connect with higher-level systems while retaining fleet-specific analytics.
- Digital twins can support the full equipment lifecycle, including concept development, testing, commissioning, operator training, maintenance and line improvements.

- Rockwell tools discussed included Emulate3D, FactoryTalk Echo and Studio 5000 Simulation Interface. Connecting the physical model and controller code can identify problems before equipment is fabricated or installed.
- Digital-twin adoption is increasing, particularly in automotive, pharmaceutical, robotics, packaging and material-handling applications.
 - AI-assisted model and code generation may accelerate adoption further.

Topic 2: Unlocking efficiency in manufacturing: Why now is the time to modernize operations presented by Tanduo Technical Partners *(Presentation sent to members with minutes)*

- Manufacturers are under pressure from shorter lead times, shrinking margins, skilled-labor shortages and growing digital and AI expectations.
- The central message was that organizations cannot improve what they cannot see. Work visibility is necessary to capture reliable data and make timely decisions.
- Tanduo frequently finds that organizations make a large share of decisions reactively because information is scattered, delayed or unavailable in real time.
- Good decisions require accurate, trusted, consistent and connected data delivered to the right people at the right time.
- Modernization should be approached in the following order:
 - **People** - confirm that the right individuals are in the right roles.
 - **Process** - standardize how work is performed and establish a minimum level of accountability.
 - **Data** - improve quality, consistency, accessibility and integrity.
 - **Technology** - integrate or automate systems only after the underlying process and data are ready.
- AI should not be used to automate inconsistent or poorly defined work. Without process discipline, technology will reproduce the existing chaos rather than solve it.
- Companies should first identify business goals, the decisions required to reach those goals, the data needed for those decisions and where the current process breaks down.
- Existing systems may not need to be replaced. Better integration and standardized use can often produce more value than purchasing another platform.
 - An RFP example illustrated measurable ROI: integrating and cataloging information reduced the time required to gather proposal resources from roughly six hours to 15-20 minutes. AI could then be layered on to create an initial draft for human review.
- Leadership standard work is necessary to verify that standardized processes continue to be followed over time.

- Tanduo will lead a NEWMA lunch-and-learn workshop on **August 12** to help companies identify where to begin, prioritize opportunities and connect technology investments to measurable business goals.

Topic 3: Update on AI grant and training

- NEWMA submitted an approximately \$85,000 grant request for AI-related programming. Thirteen companies expressed interest; an award decision is expected by September.
- Additional proposed training drew interest from approximately 22 people for predictive maintenance and 50 people for change management.
- The ninth cohort of NEWMA AI training began July 29 with 84 participants. More than 600 Alliance members have participated since the program began.
- Data analytics training will be offered in September. Discussion noted that only about 43% of collected data is used effectively.

Topic 4: NEWMA Industry 4.0 Survey for 2027

- The taskforce will review and update the Industry 4.0 survey previously conducted in 2019, 2021 and 2024.
- St. Norbert College is expected to administer the 2027 survey, with results targeted for May 2027.

Topic 5: Discuss next meeting on 9/23/2026 Cybersecurity conference

- The event is planned for Wednesday, September 23, approximately 2:00-4:00 p.m., followed by a networking mixer.
- The format will include a 20-25 minute keynote and an open forum with three IT/security leaders who can share practical experiences and answer questions.
- Confirmed panelists include representatives from Lakeside Foods and Country Visions Cooperative. A third panelist and keynote speaker are being secured.
- The event will be promoted to the full NEWMA membership, with a target attendance of approximately 50-75 people.
- Members are encouraged to recommend potential speakers, advocate for attendance and share relevant cybersecurity examples through their networks.
- Discussion emphasized that many manufacturers remain early in protecting legacy operational technology. Vulnerable or outdated equipment can provide an entry point for attacks that disrupt an entire production environment