

The Future of IT Operations in the AI Era

riverbed®



Exploring the present and future of AIOps in the Manufacturing Industry

Whilst there is strong enthusiasm for AI in the manufacturing industry to help streamline operations, reduce costs, and navigate complex supply chains, significant barriers to AI implementation remain. The industry recognizes that AI success depends on improving data quality, considers network performance to be essential for AI data movement, and increasingly views OpenTelemetry as a strategic standard for AI-driven automation and future innovation.

Riverbed's Survey on 'The Future of IT Operations in the AI Era' examines trends related to AIOps. The survey, fielded by Coleman Parkes Research in July 2025, presents a high-level view from 1,200 business leaders and technical specialists, including 250 working in manufacturing organizations.



AI Confidence vs Reality in the Manufacturing Sector

While optimism around AI is growing, actual preparedness continues to lag. Compared with other sectors, manufacturing organizations appear slightly more realistic in assessing their AI strategy.

57%

Of manufacturing organizations say they are confident in their AI strategy – 2 points lower than organizations across other industries.

87%

Say ROI from their AIOps initiatives has met or exceeded expectations.

12%

Yet, only 12% of AI initiatives have reached full deployment, with 62% still in pilot or development stages.

Despite growing confidence, manufacturing organizations still face persistent AI readiness gaps.

37%

Currently, only 37% consider themselves fully prepared to operationalize AI.

85%

However, 85% of manufacturing respondents expect to be AI-ready by 2028.

AI Ambitions Hampered by Data Quality Gaps

Although data readiness is critical for AI, manufacturers question the quality and security of their data.

47%

Only 47% are fully confident in their data quality, consistent with total averages across industries.

34%

Just 34% of manufacturing respondents rate their data as 'excellent' for security and protection (3 points below the total average).

90%

Agree that improving data quality is critical to AI success (total average is 88%).



Tool Consolidation is an IT Priority in the Manufacturing Sector

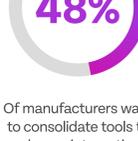
Like organizations across other industries, manufacturing companies typically deploy 13 observability tools supplied by 9 different vendors. Their aim is to streamline these toolsets.



Are consolidating tools and vendors.



Are considering new vendors as they consolidate tools – a 2 point drop against the total average.



Of manufacturers want to consolidate tools to enhance integration.

The strategic value of a Unified Platform

95%

Of respondents across this sector agree that a Unified Platform would make it easier to identify and resolve operational issues (total average 93%).

Manufacturers Face Unified Communications Performance Gaps



Support Burden Across Manufacturing

16% of tickets

UC issues represent 16% of IT support request tickets.

46 minutes

UC tickets take an average of 46 minutes to resolve (total average 43).

1 in 5 tickets

20% of UC tickets take over an hour to resolve.

Unified Communications (UC) tools perform a critical business function across all sectors but performance could be improved.

Top Performance Challenges with UC Tools



Of manufacturers cite limited visibility – a 3 point rise against the total average.



Report dropped calls or inconsistent connectivity.



Say integration challenges with other systems.

Manufacturing Mandates OpenTelemetry



Manufacturing organizations are adopting OpenTelemetry (OTel) as a standard for observability that enables successful AI adoption.

86%

Of organizations in this sector have implemented or begun implementing OTel.

97%

Say cross-domain OTel correlation is critical to their observability strategy (total average is 95%).

93%

Report that OTel is a foundation for future initiatives such as AI-driven automation.

Importance of Network Performance and AI Data Movement for Manufacturers

The manufacturing industry relies on high-performance networks to move growing volumes of data, making this central to scalable AI.

91%

Say that the movement and sharing of AI data is critical or very important to their AI strategy

Top four considerations for effective data movement in manufacturing organizations:

96%

Network performance and reliability

94%

Cost of data movement and storage

93%

AI model proximity to data

93%

Interoperability between environments

Across the manufacturing industry, there are several important success factors supporting enterprise-wide AI initiatives. These include:

79%

Manufacturing respondents say network performance and security are essential to their AI strategy

75%

Plan to support AI initiatives by establishing an AI data repository strategy by 2028

Recommendations for AIOps Success

To accelerate AI readiness and realize meaningful outcomes, organizations should:

- Align business and IT on AI readiness, talent, and timelines
- Consolidate tools to eliminate silos and reduce operational drag
- Prioritize unified observability and eliminate blind spots
- Standardize on OpenTelemetry to enable scalable AI observability
- Enhance network infrastructure to support AI data movement
- Invest in data quality and governance



Riverbed – Delivering Practical AI to Optimize Digital Experiences and IT Operations

Riverbed is helping organizations globally improve user experiences and IT operations. With extensive experience in data collection and AI and machine learning, Riverbed's AI is safe, secure and accurate, and supports AIOps and digital experience efforts.

The Riverbed Platform provides open full-stack observability with full-fidelity data, enabling customers to optimize digital experiences by using AI to prevent, identify, and resolve IT issues. The Riverbed Platform consists of next-generation AIOps, Observability and Acceleration solutions.



Gain further insights from the Riverbed Future of IT Operations in the AI Era Survey by viewing the full report.

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