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Technology in the Food and Beverage Industry: Here's Where to Invest

Technology in the food and beverage industry can be a key resource to help manufacturers streamline their operations and maintain efficiency in a competitive market. But if your software is outdated, difficult to use or not a good fit for your business's needs, it can be more of a hindrance than a help.



Investing in up-to-date technologies can help food and beverage manufacturers stay competitive and improve their bottom line. There are several key areas where it's smart to make sure you have the latest, most powerful technology, even if getting started with these systems requires an upfront investment.

ERP systems

Enterprise resource planning, or ERP, systems are a cornerstone piece of technology in the food and beverage industry, but some manufacturers are using legacy systems that are as old as a decade. These systems may not be able to support the complex demands of the industry today.

An updated ERP solution can deliver data analytics tools that generate reports with real-time information on quality control, inventory management, distribution and other key operational areas. Management can use these insights to inform decisions and improve processes. This can be especially important for the food and beverage industry, where inefficient supply chains can lead to spoiled product and lost revenue.

Collaboration tools

To succeed in today's competitive environment, food and beverage manufacturers must make critical communications between team members as seamless as possible. Collaboration tools allow for more efficient project management, which can boost productivity and efficiency.

Video conferencing technology can allow groups to collaborate more efficiently in age when more work is taking place remotely. A shared project management platform can also empower teams to work together with more visibility, giving them a space where they can see each stage of a project's life cycle and how they're progressing toward the end result. These tools can be particularly helpful during the ideation and research phases of product development or when putting together strategic plans for business success.

CRM software

Having quick access to customer and supplier data is key to an efficient, effective sales process. Customer relationship management, or CRM, systems provide a one-stop shop for this critical information. They provide a single repository for not only contact information, revenue data, outstanding invoices and other tactical information, but also a log of customer interactions. Organizing this complex set of data can be particularly useful for food and beverage manufacturers, as they often do business with a large number of clients that purchase high volumes of product on an ongoing basis.

The best CRM systems offer a high level of customizability for each business's needs. They can also alert each department when a task involved in building or maintaining a relationship with a customer or prospect needs to be completed. Investing in these systems can provide strong ROI, as they empower teams to more effectively service customers and improve their experience—all of which can lead to better client retention.

Process automation

ERP and CRM systems allow for automation of many office tasks, but forward-thinking companies are also using automation elsewhere in their firms. Automation and robotics can take over just about any repetitive task. That means they can empower food and beverage companies to make their operations more resilient and available without having to overburden their staff members. Automating some manual processes can also free up workers to focus on more complex projects.

With so many different types of technology available, it can be difficult to figure out where to start. While the ultimate goal is for the company to undergo a full digital transformation, most companies aren't able to implement all of these systems at once. Plus, there are financial and logistical barriers to consider.

Look at all your company's processes to pinpoint the most important pain points to immediately address. The right amount to invest in such systems will vary by your organization's needs and the availability of cash to invest in improvements.

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