BUILDING THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MANUFACTURING RESILIENCE

Manufacturing resilience decisions carry operational, financial, and strategic consequences. A strong business case brings those consequences into focus by showing where the business is exposed, how much disruption it can absorb, and what leadership needs to decide.

A stronger case starts by defining the minimum level of production the business must sustain or restore during a disruption, then identifying the systems, dependencies, people, and support capabilities required to meet that threshold.

The following framework can help IT leadership define that exposure, align stakeholder priorities, compare options, and build an approval-ready business case for manufacturing resilience.

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Define the exposure you are asking the business to reduce

Start with the business consequence, not the age of the technology.

- Which production capability becomes unacceptable if a system, connection, supplier dependency, or recovery path fails?
- How long can the business tolerate the impact?
- And which of those assumptions have actually been tested?

The goal is not to put a perfect dollar value on every possible disruption. It is to give leadership enough evidence to understand the current exposure, decide whether it is acceptable, and weigh the risk against the cost and disruption of addressing it.

Building the case across leadership

No single leadership function owns manufacturing resilience.
A strong business case anticipates the priorities and evidence each stakeholder will expect.

Stakeholder	Likely Question	Lead With	Be Prepared To Demonstrate
COO / Operations	What production risk are we actually reducing?	Continuity and restart confidence	Which systems and dependencies are required to maintain acceptable production, expected recovery timelines, restart assumptions, plant constraints, and how implementation risk will be managed
CFO	Why should we invest now instead of accepting the current level of risk?	A staged investment that makes current exposure more visible and manageable	Current-state exposure, credible downside scenarios, options considered, lifecycle costs, a phased investment path, and what evidence would justify the next phase.
CISO / Security	Does this strengthen recovery without introducing additional security risk?	Limit the damage and restore systems safely	Recovery architecture, validated backups, testing cadence, containment controls, incident-response responsibilities, and clear ownership across the organization and provider
Compliance / Risk	Can we demonstrate these capabilities during an audit or customer review?	Prove the recovery plan works	Recovery documentation, testing records, and evidence supporting regulatory and customer requirements
IT / Infrastructure	Will this improve resilience without increasing the burden on internal teams?	An environment the team can actually operate and support	Support model, staffing and tooling impacts, escalation paths,provider responsibilities, and implementation and decision gates

Show the business impact

Aging infrastructure, recovery gaps, and capacity constraints are not business cases on their own. The case gets stronger when IT connects each issue to its business impact, the evidence behind it, and the decision leadership needs to make.

Technical Condition	Business Exposure	What The Business Case Should Show
Aging infrastructure supporting production workloads	Greater exposure to production interruptions and emergency maintenance	What happens if it fails, what evidence supports the concern, and whether or not the exposure is within "business tolerance"?
Recovery capabilities not recently validated	Uncertainty about how long production could be impaired	Which recovery assumptions remain unproven and what evidence would establish confidence?
Performance constraints affecting manufacturing applications	Lower efficiency or production throughput	Where does the constraint affect the business and what operational evidence supports investment?
Multiple providers supporting critical environments	More coordination and accountability risk during incidents	Who owns each dependency, where handoffs occur, and how escalation will work?
Capacity nearing operational limits	Less room to support growth or changing requirements	When capacity becomes a business constraint, what options exist, and when a decision must be made?

Evidence leadership will expect

Leadership decisions are strongest when supported by evidence rather than assumptions. Key evidence should include:

- **Production-critical workloads**

  Identify the systems and dependencies required to keep product flowing at an acceptable level, including production, quality, inventory, shipping, and customer commitments.

- **Recovery readiness**

  Document current and target recovery objectives (RTO/RPO), recent recovery testing, dependencies, and unresolved gaps.

- **Operational exposure**

  Estimate disruption scenarios at time intervals that are meaningful to the operation, including lost production, overtime, recovery costs, delayed shipments, and penalties.

- **Compliance obligations**

  Document recovery procedures, testing records, required controls, and customer or regulatory requirements.

- **Capacity requirements**

  Assess current utilization, projected demand, and available expansion capacity to support future growth.

- **Operating accountability**

  Define support responsibilities, escalation paths, response commitments, and provider accountability during an incident.

- **Implementation controls**

  Document workload sequencing, testing approach, rollback criteria, maintenance windows, and success measures.

Together, this evidence gives leadership a basis to compare the current state with the options under consideration and decide what should be funded now, deferred, or accepted as residual risk. Turn the business case into a phased decision.

Give leadership a few realistic options and show what each one costs, what it disrupts, and what level of risk remains.

> **The choice isn't "do nothing" or "change everything."**

Decision Path	What Leadership Needs To Choose	What To Check
Accept the current state	Continue with the existing model and explicitly accept the known exposure	Risk owner, business tolerance, and what would trigger reconsideration
Strengthen what is in place	Address a specific recovery, capacity, governance, or support gap without broader change	Scope, cost, expected risk reduction, and how the improvement will be validated
Make a targeted change	Address a workload or dependency creating material exposure	Success criteria, implementation risk, rollback plan, and evidence required before expanding
Phase a broader change	Sequence several changes rather than commit to everything at once	Decision gates, funding by phase, ownership, and evidence required to move forward

Start with one manageable step, be clear about what it should prove, and use the results to decide what comes next.

"Ask for a decision, not a transformation"

A strong resilience business case does not ask leadership to approve "better infrastructure." It lays out the risk, the available choices, and what leadership gets in return for the investment.

The strongest ask may be a small one: tackle the biggest risk first, see what changes, and use the results to decide what comes next.

Start by identifying the systems and dependencies that determine how much production the business can tolerate during a disruption, then document the current assumptions, gaps, and options. DartPoints can help manufacturers turn that assessment into a phased plan focused on the areas of greatest exposure.