



THE MINDS BEHIND THE MACHINES

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION AWARDS

AWARD APPLICATION

The Minds Behind the Machines (MBM) Technology and Innovation Awards recognize leaders advancing the future of manufacturing across ten categories. The program highlights breakthroughs in robotics, automation, AI, advanced technologies, and digital transformation, while also honoring operational achievements that drive productivity and real-world impact on the factory floor. Winners will be announced at the MBM Innovation Exchange Awards Luncheon on Oct. 15th at the Greenville Convention Center in Greenville, SC.

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION AWARD CATEGORIES

1. Excellence in Intelligent Manufacturing Systems

Recognizes the use of AI and machine learning to drive data-driven decision-making and measurable improvements in manufacturing performance.

2. Excellence in Advanced Automation

Honors the integration of robotics and automation to enhance efficiency, safety, and production scalability.

3. Excellence in Smart Factory Systems

Recognizes the implementation of connected technologies and the Industrial Internet of Things to create intelligent, data-driven manufacturing environments.

4. Excellence in Digital Manufacturing Technologies

Celebrates the use of additive manufacturing and digital fabrication to accelerate innovation and production capabilities.

5. Excellence in Digital Twin Innovation

Recognizes the use of digital twins, modeling, and simulation to optimize processes and predict performance outcomes.

6. Excellence in Industrial Cyber Security

Honors organizations that protect manufacturing and operational technology systems through advanced cybersecurity strategies.

7. Excellence in Workforce Systems Enablement

Celebrates the use of technology to enhance workforce skills, training, and productivity in modern manufacturing environments.

8. Excellence in Digital Supply Chain Resilience

Recognizes use of technology to strengthen supply chain visibility, flexibility, & risk management

9. Excellence in Plant Leadership and Execution

Celebrates leaders who successfully implement technology-driven strategies and drive results on the plant floor.

10. Lifetime Achievement in Manufacturing Innovation

Recognizes an individual whose career-long contributions have advanced technology, workforce development, and operational excellence in manufacturing.



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APPLICATION DEADLINE: AUGUST 15TH

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Organization / Company Name: _____

Plant / Facility Name (if applicable): _____

Contact Name: _____

Title / Role: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____ Website: _____

Which Award Are You Applying For: _____

If you apply for two awards, you must complete additional application

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (Maximum 2 pages)

Provide a clear and compelling overview of your initiative, project, or career achievement. This section should tell the full story of your submission, what you set out to accomplish, how you did it, and the results you achieved. Your summary should include:

Overview of the Initiative: Briefly describe project, program, or achievement, including the business challenge or opportunity it addressed.

Objectives & Strategy: Outline goals and approach taken to achieve them, including why this solution was selected.

Technology & Innovation: Detail technologies, systems, or methodologies implemented and what makes the approach innovative.

Implementation & Execution: Explain how the initiative was executed, including leadership involvement, team collaboration, and any challenges overcome.

Impact & Scalability: Describe the broader impact on the organization, workforce, or industry, and whether the solution can be scaled or replicated.

Tip: Strong submissions are concise, data-driven, and demonstrate innovation and real-world impact.



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MEASURABLE IMPACT

Provide clear, quantifiable evidence demonstrating the results of your initiative. Strong applications will include specific metrics, before-and-after comparisons, and real business outcomes tied directly to the implementation. Your response should address the following areas if applicable:

Operational Performance: Improvements in efficiency, throughput, cycle time, uptime, scrap/rework reduction, or overall equipment effectiveness (OEE).

Financial Impact: Cost savings, revenue growth, margin improvement, ROI, etc.

Quality & Safety: Enhancements in product quality, defect reduction, compliance, or improvements in workplace safety metrics (e.g., incident reduction).

Workforce Impact: Measurable gains in workforce productivity, training effectiveness, retention, engagement, or upskilling through technology adoption.

Technology Performance: Demonstrated effectiveness of the technology implemented, such as predictive accuracy, system uptime, automation rates, or data utilization.

Supply Chain & Responsiveness: Improvements in lead times, inventory optimization, demand forecasting accuracy, or supply chain resilience.

Sustainability Impact: Reductions in energy consumption, waste, emissions, or material usage.

Tip: Whenever possible, include specific or time-based improvements (e.g., “reduced downtime by 22%,” “increased throughput by 15%,” “achieved ROI within 9 months”).

SUPPORTING MATERIALS (Optional)

Provide any relevant documentation demonstrating results or innovations. This can include photos, diagrams, schematics, metrics, dashboards, videos, testimonials, etc.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applications are reviewed by the MBM Advisory Council. Winners are selected based on innovation, measurable results, technology adoption, leadership, and impact.

Applicants are requested to submit their completed application, along with all supporting documents, directly to Rick Jenkins, executive director of the Minds Behind the Machines Innovation Exchange, at rjenkins@LetsTalkBusinessSC.com. Please ensure all materials are included at the time of submission. The application deadline is Aug. 14th, 2026.

Award recipients will be notified in advance of the MBM Innovation Exchange and recognized at the Awards Luncheon on Oct. 15th.