Opinion piece: Manufacturers: find the right tech partnership to achieve exponential

By Charles McNamara, IBM Global Alliance Leader for Cloud and Infrastructure Services, Wipro Limited

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With the right technology partners by their side, manufacturers can achieve exponential change and digitisation in their operations, opening new opportunities and positioning them for the digital future. Core to achieving this is alliance between vendors and IT partners to create a powerhouse that delivers far more functionality and advantages, elevating the manufacturing firms to a new level on their digital transformation journey.

Through such alliances, local manufacturers of all sizes can gain access to a host of new benefits: speed-to-market, a de-risking of their technology investments, and rapid innovation capabilities.

These alliances leverage the strengths of each party. One vendor might have its roots in the manufacturing sector and another's strength may lie in the infrastructure space. The role of the IT partner would be to orchestrate applications, services, and infrastructure within a compelling IT strategy for the future.

It's a powerful combination covering every aspect of enterprise technology.

In the era of digital transformation and boundless digital opportunity, South African manufacturers must have confidence that their technology roadmaps are leading them in the right direction.

Manufacturers need certainty that their IT partners will design, deploy and optimise services across the entire value chain: from the IoT devices and front-end user applications, all the way through to the core systems at the back-end.

They need IT service providers with deep industry experience in manufacturing, capable of understanding the nuances of regulations, health and safety considerations, and evolving industry trends

Manufacturers also need partners that appreciate the subtleties and complexities of one's cloud migration journey. These alliances should accommodate any hosting configuration the client wants: fully on-premise, private clouds, hybrid clouds, hyperscale public clouds, or any combination of these models.

Finally, manufacturers need IT partners with extensive experience in the sector, across different regions around the world. They should feature domain-specific knowledge, for example in the manufacturing sector, with the myriad of preconfigured elements that has been purposefully built for this vertical. One such example is the chemical industry processes that enables the safe transportation of hazardous, flammable chemicals in a way that meets all industry regulations. The approach that has been taken was borne out of real-world consultation with key manufacturing clients, to ensure that the solutions meet the industry's needs.

In many environments, manufacturers outsource parts of their operations, or partner with other firms for certain activities. It becomes critical to keep track of documentation and physical assets, as they move through various value chains and ecosystems.

In today's ever-changing, fast-paced world of IT, it is difficult to know just where to turn next. The manufacturing landscape is being reshaped by rapid advances in connected technologies, robotics, artificial intelligence, self-driving vehicles and drones, and other next-gen technologies.

But integrating and benefiting from these innovations is often far more difficult than it seems.

To navigate through this complexity and uncertainty, strategic partnerships offer manufacturers the confidence that their technology estate is in safe hands - where the very latest new technology is woven into one's operations with agility and clear intent.