AI and Agility Top the List of Critical Trends that Will Define Manufacturing Competitiveness in 2026

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Xometry unveils its inaugural global Manufacturing Outlook, highlighting key trends and strategies for manufacturers

NORTH BETHESDA, Md., Sept. 08, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Xometry, Inc. (NASDAQ:XMTR), the global AI-powered marketplace connecting buyers with suppliers of manufacturing services, unveiled its inaugural *Manufacturing Outlook* report, a forward-looking analysis of the forces shaping the manufacturing industry for 2026.

Drawing on proprietary research with manufacturing executives across the U.S., U.K. and Europe, along with insights from Xometry and external subject matter experts, the *Manufacturing Outlook* provides a global perspective on strategies and capabilities that will define success in the year ahead. It is designed as a resource for decision-makers across the manufacturing industry, offering practical insights to help them navigate rising expectations, accelerating technology, and persistent cost pressures.

The report identifies four trends that will shape global manufacturing in 2026:

1. **AI as a Competitive Necessity** – 82% of executives view AI as a core growth driver, with nearly half already reporting significant ROI. AI has moved beyond the hype to become a business-critical tool for manufacturing, and adoption is expanding into critical areas such as supply chain, procurement and quality control—areas that will set the pace for industry innovation.
2. **Agility as the New Currency** – 74% of executives are reshoring or planning to reshore operations, underscoring the need for resilient digital workflows. The most successful companies will be those that proactively architect systems for speed, resilience and adaptability. Integrating digital workflows and strengthening supplier networks will help manufacturers reduce overhead, move faster and empower teams to focus on high-value tasks.
3. **Rising Customer Expectations** – 54% of executives cite higher quality demands, with faster delivery and greater transparency also among the most striking shifts in customer demands. In response, manufacturers are embracing market-driven pricing strategies and forming strategic partnerships that extend beyond traditional cost, quality and speed considerations.
4. **Sourcing for Stability** – With 76% planning price increases in 2026, manufacturers are rethinking their pricing models and supply chains to stay competitive. In response, there is a notable shift toward market-driven pricing emerging. Instead of rigid formulas, many companies are embracing new strategies including forming strategic partnerships and diversifying suppliers across regions.

Rising Customer Expectations, According to the 2026 Manufacturing Outlook

Xometry's 2026 Manufacturing Outlook spotlights customer expectations and how manufacturers can prepare for the year ahead.

"Manufacturers are under intense pressure to do more with less and to meet growing customer expectations, even as costs are rising and global disruptions persist," said Randy Altschuler, CEO at Xometry. "This report reflects the conversations we're having every day with manufacturers about the challenges and opportunities ahead. The *Manufacturing Outlook* is intended to serve as a barometer for where the industry is headed and how companies can prepare."

Download the Report
The 2026 Manufacturing Outlook is available now, with insights tailored for the United States and European markets.

Methodology
All data points are sourced from Xometry, Thomas, and a joint survey conducted by Xometry and Zogby Strategies. The survey was conducted in August 2025 and had a total of 300 respondents.

About Xometry
Xometry's (NASDAQ: XMTR) AI-powered marketplace, popular Thomasnet® industrial sourcing platform and suite of cloud-based services are rapidly digitizing the manufacturing industry. Xometry provides manufacturers the critical resources they need to grow their business and streamlines the procurement process for buyers through real-time pricing and lead time data. Learn more at xometry.com and xometry.eu.

Media Contact
Lauran Cacciatori
VP Communications
773-610-0806
lauran.cacciatori@xometry.com

Investor Contact
Shawn Milne
VP Investor Relations
240-335-8132
shawn.milne@xometry.com

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