Aerospace & Defense Leaders Prioritize AI-Enabled Sourcing to Strengthen Domestic Supply Chains and Support Program Growth

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Survey data from Xometry shows A&D organizations are investing in AI-driven solutions, additive manufacturing and workforce upskilling to accelerate programs in 2026

NORTH BETHESDA, Md., Feb. 03, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- As aerospace and defense (A&D) programs accelerate and production demands increase, organizations across the defense industrial base are preparing for a period of rapid growth. To prepare, A&D leaders are investing in new capabilities to support speed, scale, and resilience, according to a new survey commissioned by Xometry – the global AI-powered marketplace connecting buyers and suppliers of custom manufacturing.

The survey found that 41% of A&D leaders anticipate significant acceleration in 2026, outpacing expectations across general industry. As programs scale and timelines compress, leaders are increasingly focused on aligning advanced technologies, supplier capabilities, and workforce skills to support program readiness and long-term resilience across the domestic supply base.

Trends Driving A&D Readiness
To support this growth, A&D organizations are adopting advanced technologies at a faster pace than other sectors:

- **AI-enabled sourcing:** 85% of A&D leaders are prioritizing AI-driven solutions to enhance pricing visibility, streamline sourcing workflows, and support faster, more informed procurement decisions – compared to 63% across general industry.
- **Workforce evolution:** Leaders expect nearly half (47%) of the A&D workforce to be upskilled or reskilled in response to increased use of AI-enabled tools, reflecting continued investment in both technology and talent.
- **Expanding use of additive manufacturing:** Additive manufacturing is expected to be the fastest-growing manufacturing process in 2026, as A&D programs expand their use of qualified additive suppliers for rapid prototyping, lightweighting, sustainment applications, and access to advanced materials.

Reshoring and Supply Chain Resilience Remain Strategic Priorities
An overwhelming 90% of A&D leaders cite reshoring as essential to their success, reflecting a continued emphasis on domestic capacity, sourcing flexibility, and resilient supply chains. Following a year in which 60% of organizations experienced significant supplier delays, leaders are increasingly focused on diversifying their supplier mix and improving visibility into qualified domestic manufacturing partners.

“The data is clear: as aerospace and defense programs scale, innovation and execution are increasingly intertwined,” said Randy Altschuler, Co-founder and CEO of Xometry. “Our role at Xometry is to provide a secure manufacturing platform that helps teams move faster, improve visibility into qualified suppliers, and adapt as requirements evolve – strengthening the domestic industrial base while supporting program agility.”

Compliance and Qualification as Enablers of Production Readiness
A&D leaders are prioritizing advanced quality assurance to meet performance demands, yet regulatory complexity creates a persistent bottleneck. With 47% of leaders citing compliance as a primary supply chain vulnerability, mission success now depends on a rigorous commitment to standards including AS9100, ITAR, and CMMC, backed by end-to-end dimensional validation and documentation.

“Xometry is uniquely positioned to bridge the A&D readiness gap. Our marketplace is ITAR-registered and CMMC Level 2-certified, providing instant access to AS9100D-certified facilities and full-scale quality assurance, including First Article Inspection Reports (FAIR) and hardware traceability,” said Mike Cavalieri, SVP of Marketplace Operations at Xometry.

Find out more about Xometry.

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 or follow Xometry on LinkedIn.

About the Survey Methodology
Xometry commissioned John Zogby Strategies to field an international interactive survey of 150 US and 150 EU manufacturing leaders from December 15–17, 2025. Aerospace and defense companies were oversampled (51% of the sample) to ensure high-fidelity sentiment data for the sector. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 5.7 percentage points.

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