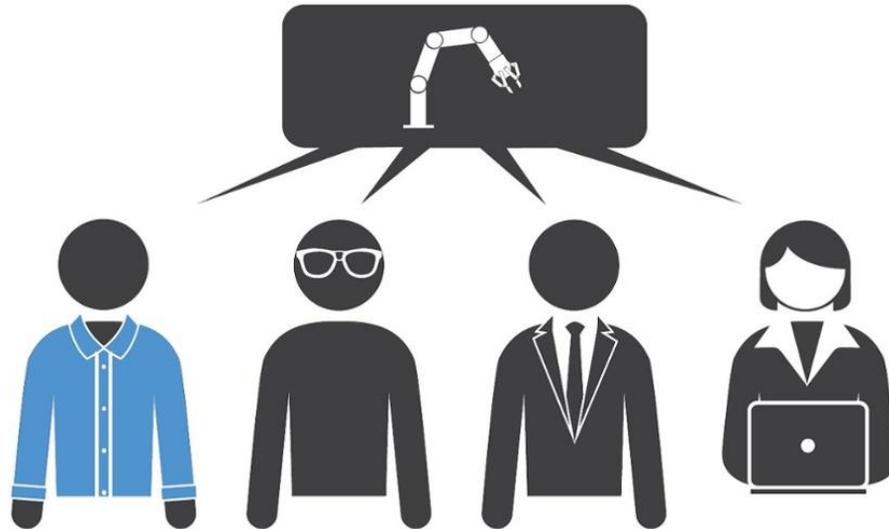


# How to Convince Your Boss to Go With Cobots

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# Lean Robotics: Simplify Robot Cell Deployments

Whenever you ask if robots could work in your factory, the answer you receive is always a hesitant “It depends.” It depends on your factory, your team, which robot you choose, what you want it to do... and a whole lot more.

If you're a first-time robot user, how can you get started? How do you get from your initial idea to a productive, working robot? And if you've already got a few robotic deployments under your belt, how can you scale up your robotics efforts throughout your factory—or across multiple factories?

The answers can be found in lean robotics: a methodology for simplifying robotic cell deployments.

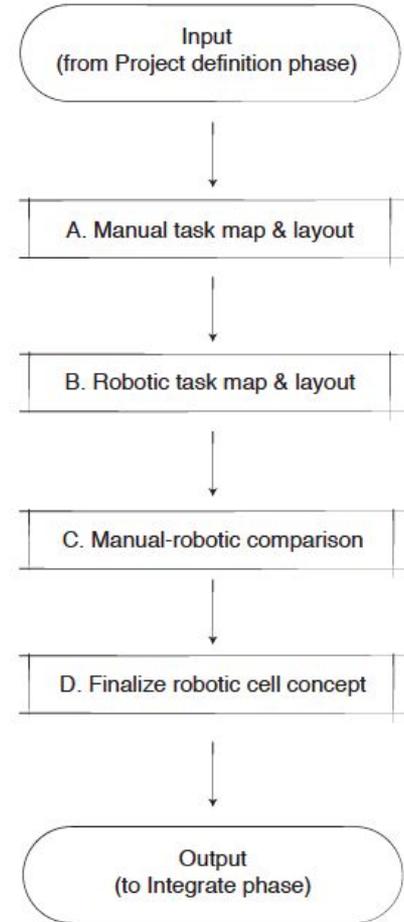
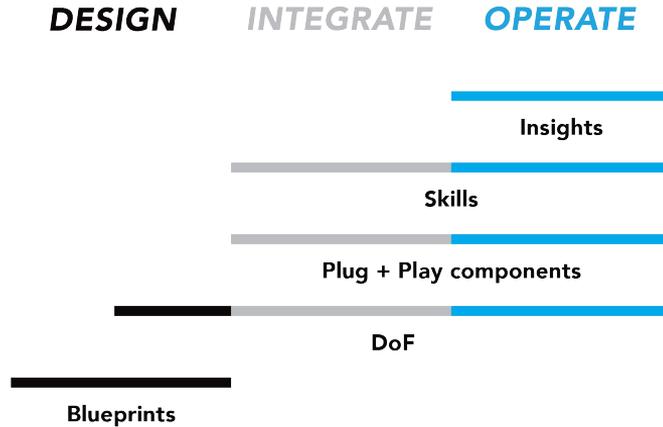
Lean robotics is a systematic way to complete the robotic cell deployment cycle, from design to integration and operation. It will empower your team to deploy robots quicker and more efficiently than ever before. Lean robotics divides robotic cell deployments into three phases: Design, Integrate and Operate.

Robotiq's library of eBooks covers the different phases of the robot cell deployment to ensure that you have access to tips from robotics experts all along.

# This Ebook Covers the Design Phase

The design phase includes all the tasks needed to go from a manual process to having the plan and materials for the robotic cell.

You'll be able to task map the robotic equivalent of your process and compare the manual-robotic options. After validation, finalizing the robotic cell concept will be the last step before starting the integrate phase.



You've probably been thinking about automation for quite some time.

You've kept up with the latest developments in collaborative robots. You've realized that now is a great time to get started with them.

And you've started picturing the benefits cobots could bring to your company:

More flexibility

Smarter innovations

Greater productivity

Better consistency

**There's just one problem...**

Your boss is not nearly as convinced about cobots as you are.

Perhaps you've already mentioned the idea to your boss, only to be told “no.”

Perhaps your company is already using automation elsewhere, but you want to take it to the next level while your boss isn't sure.

How do you convince management that using cobots is the right way to go?

In this eBook, we explain how to get your boss on board with your ideas.

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Imagine you've just walked into a coffee shop near your work.

There's a long line-up, and it's going to be at least five minutes until you're served.

Suddenly, you spot your boss in line behind you.

You've wondered whether collaborative robots could be introduced to the business, and now seems like the right time to ask.

**Can you pitch the idea to your boss in the next five minutes?**

Do you believe your pitch will be successful?

If not, why not? What more information do you need to make a strong case?

## **Worksheet: What Stage Am I at Now?**

How confident am I feeling about pitching my idea to management?

Why?

Has anyone brought the topic of automation up with management before?

If yes, what sort of response did they get?

Have I ever tried introducing a new technology before, either here or at another company?

What factors contributed to my success (or lack thereof)?

Do I have any personal experience working with automation?

How could I use this to my advantage?

## **Worksheet: How Receptive Is Management?**

Is the company already using some form of automation?

What have been the results been like so far?

How does the company typically respond to new ideas proposed by staff?

Why do you think that is?

In a move to introduce cobots at the company, who would be the main decision maker(s)?

How does my boss typically respond to my team members' ideas?

What would be the best way to approach my boss with my ideas?

# Why Do I Want to Introduce Cobots?

Write down your top three reasons for wanting to introduce cobots:

1.

For most of us, it's easier to imagine how our ideas will affect our own lives than it is to imagine how they will affect someone else.

2.

3.

When you are pitching an idea to someone, try to see the world through his or her eyes.

For each reason, ask yourself:

How exactly would this make my life easier or bring me closer to my goals?

How exactly would this make my boss's life easier or bring him closer to his goals?

What is most important to your boss?

How can you approach automation in a way that makes sense to him?

# How to Speak Your Boss's Language

Imagine your company has had more orders recently. Your job has been reduced to the boring, repetitive task of loading the CNC machine all day. A machine tending cobot would really help you out.

Your personal reasons for wanting to go with cobots might be:

1. I can focus on more varied, interesting tasks.
2. I can return to some side-projects that I had to drop when we started getting more orders, which could result in future innovations.
3. I can finally work on addressing a longstanding bottleneck that exists elsewhere in the process.

Your Potential Main Goal:  
Long-term Innovation

But, are these reasons important to your boss?

Unless your boss has exactly the same goals as you—which is unlikely—these reasons might not be persuasive enough.

How do you frame your ideas in a way that your boss will appreciate?

If you pitch automation using your personal reasons, your boss will either:

- Have to put in the work herself to understand how automation aligns with her own goals.
- Reject your idea, because she doesn't see the benefit.

By "translating" the benefits of cobots to align with your boss's goals, your chance of success is much higher.

**Your Boss's Main Goal:**

Short-term Growth



1. We are struggling to keep up with current orders. Our current setup has reached capacity.
2. The robot will increase the throughput of the CNC machine so we can meet our current orders and take on 30% more orders from new customers.
3. Introducing the robot will give me time to resolve a longstanding bottleneck that exists elsewhere in the process, which will ensure it does not restrict capacity in future.

# Five Strategies to Find Your Boss's Main Goal

## 1. Check Your Intuition

Before you try anything else, just ask yourself:

What is my boss most interested in?

What does he talk about more than anything else?

Does he have any favorite "business mantras"? (e.g. "Time is money," "Don't stagnate, innovate," etc.)

## 2. Listen With Purpose

Pay attention to the topics, issues and phrases that your boss uses in meetings, presentations and conversations. Note the phrases that come up again and again.

Example phrase	Focus
"the bottom line"	budget
"I/we don't have time for that"	time

## 3. Check Previous Emails

Read over previous emails from your boss. Note any topics, issues and phrases that come up frequently..

## 4. Ask Your Boss

Ask your boss about his goals. This requires some tact—try to bring it up naturally in conversation, if possible.

## 5. Ask Others

Ask your colleagues about what's important to your boss. As with the previous strategy, be tactful.

# What is Important to Managers?

81% of CEOs are concerned with keeping up with new technologies.<sup>1</sup>

Use this research data as a starting point as you try to figure out what's most important to your boss.

50% of manufacturers expect to increase investment in technology and innovation in the next 12 months as part of their strategic business plan.<sup>3</sup>

33% of manufacturers are already operating at or near full capacity.<sup>2</sup>

But only...

16% of manufacturers use automated material handling technologies.<sup>2</sup>

10% of manufacturers use advanced robotics.<sup>2</sup>

1. KPMG U.S. CEO Outlook 2016

2. Canadian Plant Advanced Manufacturing Magazine Manufacturers' Outlook 2017

3. UK EEF The Manufacturers' Organisation Executive Survey 2017

## Top Priorities <sup>4</sup>

- 47% Cutting operation costs
- 46% Seeking new markets
- 41% Long-term strategic planning

## Top Challenges <sup>2</sup>

- 50% Pressures on pricing
- 50% Controlling/reducing costs
- 48% Increasing sales/orders

67% of small businesses say growth is a key business objective for the next 12 months.<sup>5</sup>

But only... 19% of manufacturers are very confident about their company's prospects for growth over the next 12 months.<sup>1</sup>

# Top Concerns About Automation <sup>6</sup>

1. Unsure where to start
2. Could take too long to realize a return on investment
3. Seems impossible to automate the making of bespoke products
4. Unwilling to take on ongoing costs
5. Too busy with day-to-day operations

*If you present cobots to your boss by showing how they would meet her top priorities and address her top concerns, she's more likely to go for it!*

# Worksheet: What's Important to Your Boss

Use this worksheet to fill in your findings. If possible, list both your boss's personal goals and the goals of the company—which will make it easier for your boss to pitch the idea to upper management later.

## My Boss's Goals

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
- (4. \_\_\_\_\_)
- (5. \_\_\_\_\_)

## The Company's Goals

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
- (4. \_\_\_\_\_)
- (5. \_\_\_\_\_)

# Worksheet: How Will You Pitch Your Idea

Look back at the reasons you gave for choosing automation, then "translate" these into reasons your boss will appreciate.

My Reason for Choosing Cobots	My Boss Will Appreciate This If I Say...
<i>Example: It will allow me to focus on more varied, interesting tasks.</i>	<i>Example: It will free me up to work on three specific tasks, all of which will contribute to bringing in more customers.</i>

# Seven Steps to Building Your Proposal

## 1. Select the Most Important Goals

The more you can incorporate your boss's goals into your proposal, the greater your chances of success.

What is your boss's number one goal?

How can your automation proposal help him achieve this goal?

How can your automation proposal help the company achieve its goals?

It's useful to include at least one company-wide goal so your boss can present this benefit when discussing the idea with upper management.

## 2. Pick a Specific Application

First, make a list of all your ideas for robot applications. Note how each application could contribute to your boss's goals. Select the one which seems most aligned with his goals.

It's a good idea to focus your attention on one particular application for now, as this will give your proposal the best chance of success. It allows you to demonstrate the specific benefits of automation and takes less of your time. If you have other ideas for applications, then by all means mention them in your proposal—just don't go into detail.

Next, plan your application. See our eBook [How to Present Your Robot Application to Management](#) for a guide to assessing applications.

Focus on the high-level outcomes, and don't worry about developing the whole application yet. For example, if your goal is to increase process throughput, simply note the rough value you'd like to achieve.

### 3. Choose Your Metrics

Metrics will give you data to strengthen your case. Pick a few metrics that relate to your boss's goals. See our article [How to Benchmark a Robot Application in 10 Steps](#) for guidelines.

Calculate the effect your proposed automation would have on these metrics as best you can. If you are introducing automation for the first time, you will have to make some educated guesses. If you already have robots, you may be able to test out aspects of your idea with them to get more precise results.

### 4. Get Others on Your Side

It can be a good idea to involve other members of your team before you bring the idea to your boss. That way, you can iron out the creases in your proposal before the big presentation. It also makes it more likely that the rest of your team will be on board with cobots once they finally arrive. However, keep in mind that your boss might prefer you to run new ideas past her first.

Keep in mind that you will probably pitch your idea to your colleagues in a different way than you would to your boss. Depending on who they are, your workmates' goals may be more similar to your own.

You don't need to bring *everyone* on board. In fact, it's often better to just include the few key stakeholders who would be most affected by cobots. If you involve too many people too early, your boss could feel pressured, which could damage your case and your reputation.

Also consider pitching the idea to your boss as a team. If your boss sees that a varied group of team members are on board (e.g. people from finance, applications engineering, and workplace safety), it will make for a more solid proposal and she'll be more likely to go for it.

## 5. Inspire FOMO

The Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a powerful force. Management will sit up and take notice if they see that other companies are getting an easily implementable benefit while they're not. Show how cobots will give them an advantage, and they may view your idea more favourably.

Collaborative robots are great for inspiring FOMO. [Check out the case study section](#) of our website for examples of companies who have successfully implemented automation. Consider including some of these examples in your proposal. If you can't find a case study in your industry, try asking others to tell you about their experience by posting a question on the DoF professional robotics forum.

## 6. Rehearse Your Proposal

When you have built up your proposal, go through it out loud several times until you are comfortable presenting the information clearly. Rehearsing aloud helps clarify what you're going to say in a way that writing it down does not.

At this stage, you probably don't need to make any presentation slides. First you'll just be pitching the idea to your boss in an informal setting. A more formal presentation may come later.

Remember, practice makes perfect!

## 7. Prepare an Elevator Pitch

Finally, condense your proposal down into a short "elevator pitch" of less than two minutes. This pitch will include the key points of your proposal without going into too much detail. (See examples given later in this eBook.)

The reason to prepare your pitch in two stages (full proposal first, then elevator pitch) is so you'll have all of your supporting information prepared, while being able to pitch the main idea succinctly and effectively.

# Six Ways to Derisk the Decision for Your Boss

1. **Propose a simple experiment**—Instead of presenting automation as a massive change, propose conducting a low-cost experiment to demonstrate how automation can work. Perhaps you could even hire a robot for the experiment instead of buying one.

2. **Set a time frame**—Specify how many hours a week you will spend implementing cobots and set a date for when you will give a report on your progress. This shows how automation won't take up all your time, and provides a definitive end date.

3. **Use objective data**—Even though most people make decisions on an emotional level (which is why your pitch should speak to your boss's personal goals) hard data can help reduce their concerns.

6. **Calculate ROI**—Your boss will want to know if automation will be a financial risk. Cobots are usually quick to earn a return, but be sure to calculate your expected ROI (perhaps using [our ROI calculator](#)) and include it in your pitch.

4. **Be realistic**—Under-promise and over-deliver. It's best to promise realistic benefits, which reduces the risk for both you and your boss.

5. **Address specific concerns**—Your boss may be concerned about automation for various reasons, such as worrying that it will mean firing staff. Anticipate any potential concerns so you're prepared to respond to them if they come up during your pitch.

# How to Pitch Your Boss

Your proposal should be in pretty good shape by now. The pitch is when it all comes together. You probably know your boss quite well, so make the extra effort to tailor it to his or her preferences.

## When's the Best Time?

We all have times of the day when we are more receptive to other people's ideas.

When is your boss in the best mood to listen?

Is it after lunch? First thing in the morning?  
During a coffee break?

Pay attention to the times of day when your boss is most often chatting comfortably with team members, and try to pitch him or her during a similar moment.

## What's the Best Situation?

Does your boss prefer to hear new ideas during the weekly meeting?  
Would he rather you book an appointment, or chat over coffee?

Does your boss prefer one-on-one pitches, or would she rather have the whole team present? Does she prefer email or face-to-face communication?

Pay attention to how other members of your team have brought up their ideas in the past. Which proposals were most successful? Which were least successful?

Remember, choose the situation that suits your boss best.

## Get Them on a Good Day

We all have days when we're feeling overloaded, stressed out, and anything but open to new ideas. For example, many managers do accounts at the end of the month—a bad time to raise new proposals.

Pay attention to your boss's mood on the day you've chosen. You might have to wait until he's in a more receptive mood.

The perfect moment for a pitch often arrives suddenly. Be prepared.

## Prepare Yourself, Not Just Your Idea

Practice your pitch out loud until you're completely comfortable with it. Do whatever you need to do to put yourself in the right frame of mind before you pitch your boss.

Take a few quiet, deep breaths before you approach your boss.

## Be Confident

You've done the work, and you know your cobots plan is a great idea!

So even if your boss is initially skeptical, you can remain confident that cobots are the right solution for the business.

## Follow Up

Once your boss has shown some interest in your idea, send a follow-up email as soon as possible. In this email, outline the main points of your pitch and the key benefits (see our email template for an example). Your boss may ask you to prepare a presentation about your idea, in which you can present the data and metrics that you gathered as you built up the proposal.

# Example Elevator Pitches

Your elevator pitch should take 30 to 60 seconds and include the key elements of your proposal:

1. The problem you aim to solve.
2. What your solution is (cobots) and *how* it will solve the problem.
3. How it will benefit the business (and achieve your boss's main personal goal).

At right are two examples to get you started:

## Example 1 (Manager's main goal: growing customer base)

“There have been a lot more orders recently, which is exactly what we want, but we're about to hit the CNC machine's capacity. I'm now operating the machine all day and don't have time to solve other issues. By installing a collaborative robot to tend the machine, we can increase the machine's throughput by 10% and I can focus on increasing our capacity further down in the process. This will let us handle 20% more orders, so we can bring on new customers with ease.”

## Example 2 (Manager's main goal: cutting costs)

“The manual packaging process has been producing a lot of inconsistencies for a while now. It's taking four workers to correct the mistakes and they can barely keep up. If we add a collaborative robot to the station, it will increase the quality of the product and reduce the wasted man hours. It will also let us move two of the workers to the gluing station, which is currently prone to holding up orders. I estimate that the robot will earn back what it cost within six months.”

If your boss prefers to receive new ideas by email, you should include similar information as in an elevator pitch. However, people tend to scan emails quickly. Make sure you arrange the information so it's easy for him or her to read. Take a look at this email pitch example:

Subject Line: Plan to save 10% buffing time

Hi [your boss's name],

The surface finishing stage is starting to hold up the rest of the process.

I have a potential solution and I'd like to run it past you.

The problem is:

The complex buffing action is straining the worker's arms.

Two people have been moved from the station due to injury risk.

The revised risk assessment says that operators should use the buffing machine for no more than 20 minutes at a time, but this is causing a bottleneck.

Manager's goal: better quality products in less time

We can solve this problem by using a collaborative robot for the buffing action.

It will improve the quality of the surface finish.

It will speed up the whole process.

It will remove the risk of injury to workers.

Since these robots mimic human actions, they won't compromise the handmade nature of our product.

I expect it would take me two weeks to implement one.

When would be a good time to discuss this further?

Kind regards,

[your name]



# Make it Work!

You've convinced your boss that cobots are a great idea.

Now the real work begins!

Implementing anything takes effort in the beginning. It's up to you to make sure the project is successful.

Remember, your reputation is on the line. If you can demonstrate that you have great ideas *and* you're able to see them through, management will be eager to take your ideas on board in the future.

So do everything you can to make it work!

Good luck!

**Need help? [Contact us to discuss your project.](#)**

Together, we can build an excellent case for cobots in your company.

