SPIRO

Bringing it All Into Focus:

How Legacy Sales Tools Are Stunting Manufacturers' Growth

The manufacturing industry is at a **turning point**.

WHILE MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO MODERNIZE AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NEW TECH, THE LAST FEW YEARS HAVE BEEN CHALLENGING. THE PANDEMIC. WAR. LABOR SHORTAGES. SUPPLY CHAIN BOTTLENECKS.

And so the industry tried to make do with legacy sales tools. Anyone in sales has, at some point, tried to use a clunky CRM. Or perhaps your ERP included what they call a CRM. (*It's not.*) Or maybe you heard enough horror stories and went right to putting all your customer info in spreadsheets. (*Oh boy.*) No matter which path, it's safe to say it's Just. Not. Working. Out.

How do we know? In our recent survey, **200 manufacturers and distributors** chimed in about how their business runs. Based on the results, it's clear that relationships with customers are what most manufacturers bank on: 3 in 5 manufacturers say customer relationships are their biggest competitor differentiator.

But the results also make it clear that outdated and inefficient technology is holding many back.

The Results are **IN**.

We were curious.

How many manufacturers are working with tools that are basically blinding them? Unfortunately, it seems most of you.

A full **62%** of respondents said they don't have centralized visibility over their customers. And **31%** need to schedule a meeting every time they need information regarding a customer.

62%
of manufacturers **don't have full visibility** over their customers

31%
of manufacturers **need to schedule a meeting** to know what's going on with customers

So not only can most manufacturers not see what's going on with their customers at a glance, they have to call a friend to try to understand. A bit too much of the blind leading the blind for us, truthfully. We can see the arguments over whether a contact's name was "John" or "Jack" now.

No matter which of the systems our respondents used — a legacy CRM, ERP, or spreadsheets and email — there's a pretty big disconnect between the tech they thought would help them with their customer relationship management and what's actually happening.

Even worse, the ones with the older, legacy systems are having a worse time: **80% of manufacturers** who use spreadsheets and emails to manage their customer relationships lack clear, centralized customer visibility.

80%
manufacturers who use spreadsheets flying blind when it come to customers

Most manufacturers are already **paying** for it.

Of course, not having visibility on your customers isn't ideal. (*Thanks, Captain Obvious.*) It certainly makes talking to them more difficult. And keeping good relationships is tougher without all the right info. That's not so bad, right?

How we wish it were so. The truth is, not having visibility is costing you business. And most of the time, we found that it happened unexpectedly.

**4 IN 5** MANUFACTURERS LOST BUSINESS THEY WEREN'T EXPECTING LAST YEAR.

And it gets worse.

More than half of those who lost business unexpectedly valued it at more than $100,000.

Even worse, almost a third of manufacturers lost hundreds of thousands of dollars, with 10.9% reporting they lost over half a million dollars they didn't expect to lose.

Yes, you read that correctly — manufacturers and distributors are unexpectedly losing hundreds of thousands of dollars every
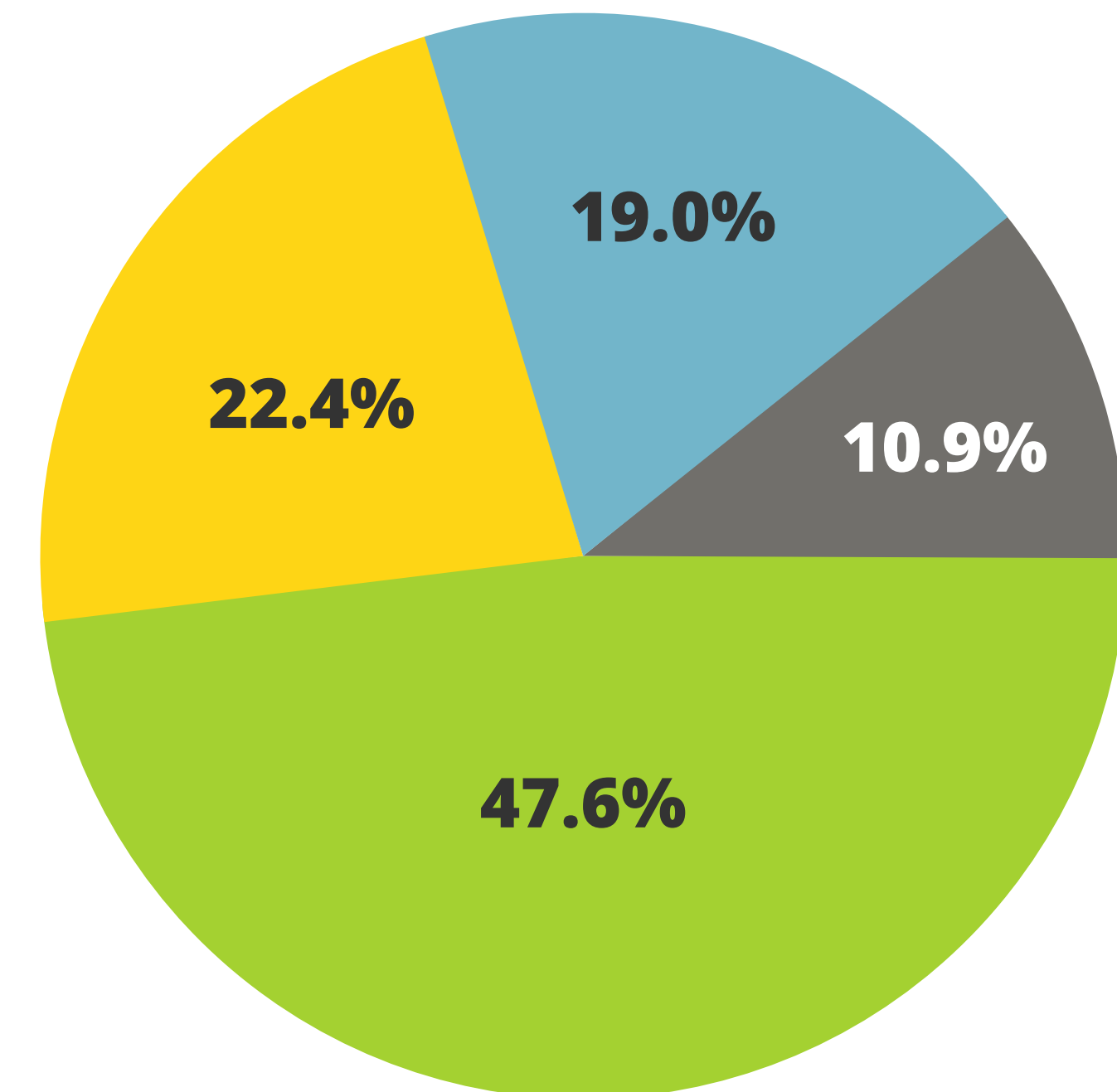
Pie chart:
- 47.6% — Less than $100,000
- 22.4% — $100,000 - $249,999
- 19.0% — $250,000 - $499,999
- 10.9% — $500,000+

Clearly, customer visibility matters. A *lot*. Not having a modern customer platform is resulting in the bad kind of surprises: lost customers and revenue.

Manufacturers who are managing customer relationships using ERP or spreadsheets predict low growth.

We know outdated CRM tools are bad. So, many manufacturers try to make due with their ERP or spreadsheets. But unfortunately, that didn't help.

40% OF OUR SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO USED ERP OR SPREADSHEETS TO HANDLE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS EXPECT UNDER 5% GROWTH NEXT YEAR.

And, the factors limiting that growth aren't small problems to fix. The top challenges manufacturers are most concerned about are:

❌ Unpredictable order flow

❌ Not having enough repeat business

❌ Spending too little time on the right customers

There's simply no way spreadsheets with tens of thousands, or even hundreds of thousands, of cells can make it easy to know what's going on with customers. Just getting that data updated is a challenge on its own.

SPIRO

Finding the right fit.

Manufacturers need something to help them clearly see their business. You already put a ton of resources into the factory floor; what's stopping you from supporting what gets you all the orders you need to fulfill?

Enter artificial intelligence (AI). We know, it's all the rage right now, and you're pretty curious. But if you're like three-quarters of our survey respondents, you haven't found a clear way to use it. We get that. After all, the news is focused on novel uses of AI, not ones addressing the core issue that manufacturers have: managing customer relationships at scale.

The truth is, AI is the perfect way for you to get the clarity you need and improve your business processes.

With the right setup, like an AI-powered CRM, you can do so much more than you thought possible:

✅ Find patterns to detect changes in customer buying behavior

✅ Alert you that you're about to lose business so you can recover it

✅ Remind you when it's time to talk to your valuable customers

✅ Automate entering all your customer data

✅ Auto-summarize sales activity including emails, texts, and calls

✅ Generating draft emails so your team can focus on selling, not writing

✅ Analyze your data and tell you what's going on — without needing to call a meeting or hire a data analyst

Well, **get ready** to enter the **world of tomorrow.**

Spiro is an AI-driven CRM specifically built for you, the manufacturer who hates CRMs, but wants to grow. We get you.

SPIRO

🌐 SPIRO.AI