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**Those who know how to use data understand their business.** Simple as that may sound, it is no easy matter for manufacturers to find out what data they must select and process in what way. And most importantly – what for? Do we want to increase productivity, improve monitoring of product quality or reassess our business models? Without a clear goal and implementation strategy, it is something of a lottery whether, following a digital make-

over, a company hits the jackpot or just draws a blank. That could be one of the main reasons why the often quoted digital transformation (Industry 4.0) is generally considered to be making only slow progress. The others are apparently massive security problems.

In the plastics processing industry, every fourth SME had already been a victim of cyber attacks, and every tenth had even suffered repeated hits. These scary figures are the result of a representative

## The Core Questions of Digital Transformation

survey of 100 small and medium-sized plastics processors conducted by the Forsa Institute on behalf of the German insurance association GDV. Other findings of the survey were that two thirds of the companies were temporarily shut down following a successful attack. Further financial damage resulted from the serious expense of analyzing the act of sabotage and recovering stolen or blocked data. And what is almost worse: most companies blatantly underestimate the risk and are only taking inadequate countermeasures.

This raises two questions: what data are worth hard cash if used correctly? And, in a networked production world that will probably be increasingly autonomous in future, how can we design systems to be uncompromisingly secure? Each company must answer the first of these questions for itself, the other requires industry-wide and, if possible, certified IT standards.

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