

Who Owns the Ideas? AI, Intellectual Property, and the Future of Manufacturing

written by Tricia Carl | September 3, 2025



In today's world of manufacturing, artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer just the future—It's a current tool being used to design products, optimize supply chains, predict maintenance needs, and even generate new ideas. But as AI becomes more integrated into manufacturing, one question becomes critical: Who owns the ideas created by AI?

AI as a “Co-Inventor”

Manufacturers using AI to assist in new product design or R&D may wonder whether the results generated can be protected with patents, copyrights, or trade secrets. And to make the issue even murkier: Intellectual property laws weren't built for machines that "think."

What This Means

Patents typically require a human inventor.

Copyrights require a human author.

And trade secrets require measures to keep something confidential—but what happens when AI develops something “new” without direct human involvement?

Who owns the design? If your AI system generates an innovative design, can you patent it? If AI writes a process manual or creates a visual model, can you copyright it?

Currently, in most jurisdictions, IP rights apply only to human creators. AI itself cannot own property rights or hold legal rights—at least not yet.

Practical Implications for Manufacturers

Manufacturers can take practical steps to manage risk and capture value:

- Clarify roles: When using AI tools from vendors or cloud platforms, check who owns the results—some terms of service may give ownership to the provider.
- Human oversight: Ensure there's a human in the loop who can be clearly identified as the contributor or author, especially for patentable ideas.
- Data Protection: Since AI relies heavily on training data, be cautious about feeding in sensitive or proprietary information that could become part of a shared model.
- Auditability: Keep clear records of how AI systems are used in the innovation process to support any future IP claims.

Looking Ahead

This area is evolving fast. Courts and lawmakers do not have a definitive answer on whether AI-generated work is protected under traditional IP laws. For now, manufacturers should see AI as a powerful tool, but it should be carefully managed when it comes to IP rights.

Disclaimer: This content is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. If you have questions about intellectual property or the use of AI in your business, consult a qualified attorney.

Written by Tricia Carl, Business Advisor, Innovative Manufacturers Center (IMC)

IMC Announces Using AI in HR Webinar Series

written by Lauri Moon | September 3, 2025



Using Artificial Intelligence to Support Human Resources in Manufacturing

Four 90-minute Modules

In the rapidly evolving landscape of human resources, artificial intelligence (AI) is emerging as a transformative force. HR practitioners must be aware of how AI can enhance HR practices to stay competitive, improve efficiency, and create a more engaged and satisfied workforce. This 4-session program explores the significance of AI in HR. AI can increase efficiency and productivity of HR operations to improve candidate experience and provide data-driven insights into decision-making and personalize employee development.

In this webinar series you will learn to:

- Analyze job roles effectively using AI tools and explore how AI enhances recruitment processes, improving communication and candidate experience in talent acquisition.

- Identify best practices in onboarding and employee engagement, utilizing AI technologies to automate processes and foster a more engaging workplace environment.
- Examine the role of AI in supporting employee relations and learning & development initiatives, focusing on strategies to improve retention and training outcomes.
- Assess the importance of HR analytics and compliance, exploring how AI can enhance data-driven decision-making and ensure adherence to regulatory standards within HR functions.

Schedule:

- No-cost Introductory webinar: December 5, 2024 - Using Artificial Intelligence to Support Human Resources
- January 16, 2025 - Using Artificial Intelligence to Support Job Descriptions, Recruiting, and Workforce Planning
- February 13, 2025 - Using Artificial Intelligence to Enhance Onboarding, Engagement, and Performance Management
- March 6, 2025 - AI-Driven Employee Relations, Development, and Retention: Building a Future-Ready Workforce
- April 3, 2025 - AI-Powered Analytics, Compliance, and Employee Assistance: Driving Data-Driven Success

Don't miss this opportunity to learn from one of the top thought leaders in the field. Register now to unlock the power of AI in HR.

You are welcome to register for each webinar individually but register for all four for only \$309!



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Presenter:



William J. Rothwell, PhD. is President of Rothwell & Associates, Inc., Rothwell & Associates, LLC, and Rothwell & Associates Korea. He has worked full-time in human resources, training, and organizational development in both government and in a multinational company. He has been a consultant for over 50 multinational companies. He has served many manufacturing clients in both the U.S. and abroad. Some of his clients include Ford Motor Company, General Motors, Siemens, Sony, Phillips, Erickson, and HP. Dr. Rothwell is a prolific author and has published more than 130 books and authored numerous training packages, guides, technical reports, and scholarly articles. He is a Distinguished Professor in the Workforce Education and Development program in the College of Education at The Pennsylvania State University. He holds top-level certifications and credentials with National SHRM and ATD.



This program is WEDnetPA eligible.

Robotics & AI Summit

written by Lauri Moon | September 3, 2025

The Robotics & AI Summit at LiveWorx is a two-day conference for company executives, engineers and investors from around the world seeking expert advice and new partners for developing, selling, purchasing and investing in robotics, AI and machine learning technologies.

This one-of-a-kind manufacturing business summit identifies the market forces driving change and the business strategies organizations need to adopt to sustain or regain competitiveness as digital automation revolutionizes all industry sectors of manufacturing.

The Robotics & AI Summit at LiveWorks is produced by Robotics Business Review, a market leading source for “actionable business intelligence” for the global robotics, automation and artificial intelligence market.

Price to attend varies on the package you pick once you decide to register via the link provided below.



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