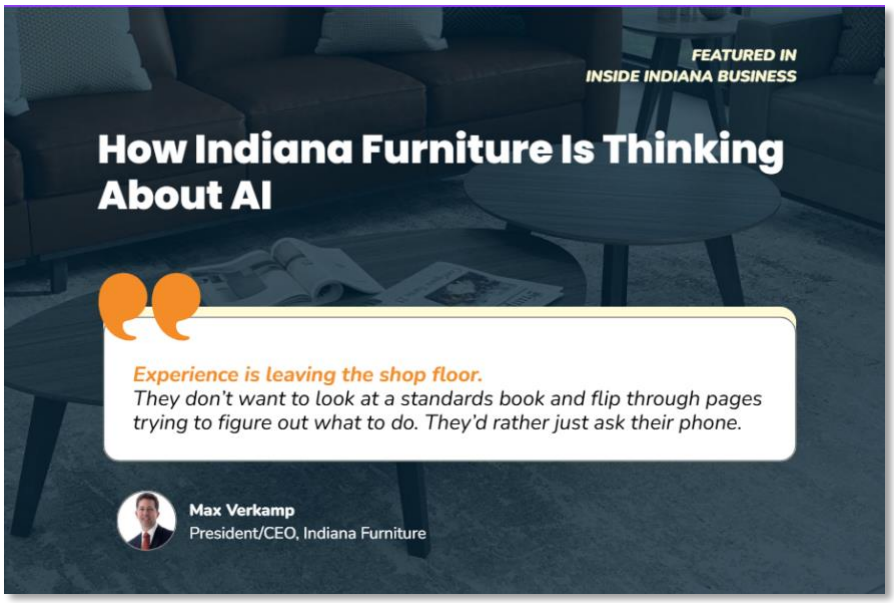


Indiana
FURNITURE

From a Standards Book to an On-the-Job Mentor: How Indiana Furniture Is Thinking About AI

AI in Manufacturing:
Insights from Indiana Furniture's CEO on Inside Indiana Business

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Honor the skill. Build the future.™

When a 120-year-old manufacturer talks about AI, it's worth listening.

That's what made a recent episode of *Inside Indiana Business* stand out. In a conversation with host Gerry Dick, Indiana Furniture President and CEO Max Verkamp reflected on how AI is beginning to shape manufacturing—drawing from more than a century of experience at one of Jasper, Indiana's most enduring companies.

Founded in 1905 by German immigrants, Indiana Furniture has grown into a nationally respected manufacturer while remaining deeply rooted in its Southern Indiana community. Verkamp's perspective on AI wasn't framed as hype or disruption, but as something more grounded: a way to support people, preserve experience, and carry standards forward.



In this clip, Indiana Furniture President and CEO Max Verkamp shares how he's thinking about AI's role in manufacturing today.

Full Interview here

Balancing Automation and Craftsmanship in Modern Manufacturing

Indiana Furniture's story sits squarely at the intersection of tradition and change. As Verkamp described it, the company continues to balance automation with craftsmanship, efficiency with pride in how things are made.

It's a reminder of something we believe deeply: **AI isn't replacing craftsmanship — it's preserving it.**

The Real AI Question Manufacturing Leaders Are Asking

Rather than talking about AI as a productivity shortcut, Verkamp framed it as a way to support people, especially as experienced workers retire and new ones step in.

That shift in framing is telling.

How Manufacturing Leaders Are Thinking About AI and the Workforce

One of the clearest themes in Verkamp's answer was the reality many manufacturers are facing: decades of know-how are leaving the floor as long-time employees retire.

Much of that experience isn't written down. It lives in habits, judgment calls, workarounds, and muscle memory.

As Verkamp put it, younger workers don't want to flip through binders when something goes wrong.

"They don't want to look at a standards book and flip through pages trying to figure out what to do… they'd rather just ask their phone."

He went on to describe everyday moments—how to shut a machine down properly at the end of the day, how to troubleshoot an issue, what to consider when something doesn't look right. These are small questions, but they add up to quality, safety, and consistency.

Why Standards Matter More Than Documentation in Manufacturing

Verkamp also made an important distinction between simply having information and understanding how *your* operation actually works.

Generic documentation, like an owner's manual, only tells part of the story. Over time, manufacturers customize machines, refine processes, and develop standards that reflect how work is actually done on their floor.

If AI is going to be useful, Verkamp explained, it has to be taught those standards, not just the original manual, but the modifications and decisions that make the operation run the way it does. Otherwise, the answers won't reflect reality.

That emphasis on standards and on capturing how work is truly performed came through clearly in his response.

Where Verkamp Sees AI Supporting Manufacturers

From Verkamp's perspective, AI has the potential to show up in many places across the business.

He spoke about its role in design processes, in manufacturing workflows, and especially in day-to-day troubleshooting—supporting people in the flow of work by giving them answers when they need them.

Rather than replacing human judgment, AI becomes a layer of support: a way to surface experience, reinforce standards, and help newer employees learn without slowing everything down.

What This Signals About the Future of AI in Manufacturing

What made this moment notable wasn't that AI came up—it was *how* it came up.

This wasn't a scripted answer. It wasn't vendor language. It was a manufacturing CEO, speaking plainly about retirements, standards, and the reality of running a modern shop floor.

At Murray Mentor, we focus on helping manufacturers capture the experience that lives on the floor and make it available in the moment it's needed—so standards don't disappear when people retire.

About Murray Mentor

Murray Mentor provides an AI powered, voice driven, software platform that captures and redeploys tacit knowledge, the hardest knowledge to document, but the most vital to preserve. Using AI, Murray records natural conversations with experienced operators, cleans and structures the content, and makes it instantly available as real-time, voice- or text-guided mentoring. Murray is like having your most experienced team members always available to answer any questions and address any issues. By capturing tacit knowledge, the unwritten, experience-based expertise of veteran workers, Murray makes what was once invisible both accessible and actionable. This transforms AI from a tool that simply recycles documentation into one that safeguards a company's unique processes and powers its future. Murray Mentor is about transforming industry, reviving skilled trades, and empowering a new generation of skilled workers.

Contact the Murray Mentor Team