**New white paper from item**

**Digitalisation – opportunities and challenges for mechanical engineering**

**What really matters when it comes to digitalisation in mechanical engineering? How does the digital transformation affect a company’s ability to attract recruits at a time when skilled workers are hard to come by? In its new white paper** [**“Why there’s no avoiding digitalisation”,**](https://digital-engineering.de/en/?cnt=cnt4) **item demonstrates how and why SMEs in particular should prepare for the digital future. The market leader in building kit systems for industrial applications analyses how the educational landscape, employees’ skills and the demands placed on mechanical engineering companies are evolving. In doing so, item offers guidance for pinpointing opportunities and challenges, and implementing digital processes in business operations.**

Whether it’s a typical apprenticeship or university studies, the curriculum for budding mechanical engineers is increasingly focussing on digitalisation and Industry 4.0. In its white paper, item highlights that as graduates gain more qualifications, their expectations of potential employers are also increasing. At the same time, a clear requirements profile is starting to emerge for companies, setting out the skills employees will need to have in abundance in the future. IT skills, for example, are considered an absolute must for the digitalised world of mechanical engineering. Employees who can demonstrate appropriate training or hands-on experience therefore have a clear advantage. As item shows, broad digital know-how and the ability to transfer knowledge are more important than niche specialisms. Those who master the basics of 3D engineering, for example, are able to get to grips with different software applications. What’s more, the digital transformation calls for an interdisciplinary approach that will see engineers increasingly work between mechanics, electronics and software in the future. There will also be more coordination tasks to ensure information is shared between different disciplines, hierarchy levels and cultures. The importance of soft skills and intercultural competences will continue to grow as a result.

**Anchoring digitalisation within the business**

The white paper from item summarises the demands that digitalisation is placing on companies and the particular aspects that have to be taken into account. First and foremost, companies have to develop and adopt a digitalisation strategy, which needs to be driven forward from the top as a company-wide project. It is also important to promote employees’ continuous professional development by offering workshops, seminars and e-learning content. Moreover, having a well-equipped digital infrastructure is essential in providing an easy means of communicating with co-workers, partners and customers no matter where they are.

The white paper is available to download free of charge at https://digital-engineering.de/en/?cnt=cnt3 .

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**Caption 1 +2:** The new white paper [“Why there’s no avoiding digitalisation”](https://digital-engineering.de/en/?cnt=cnt4) shows SMEs how they can prepare for the digital future.

**Caption 3:** From apprenticeships to digitalisation strategies, the item white paper summarises the demands that digitalisation is placing on companies.

**About item**

item Industrietechnik GmbH is a global market leader in building kit systems for industrial applications and employs around 500 members of staff. It has been designing and marketing construction solutions for machinery, fixtures and plants since 1976. The product portfolio comprises more than 3,500 high-quality components designed for use in machine bases, work benches, automation solutions and lean production applications. Thanks to the inclusion of transport solutions and dynamic elements, the company’s products can cover virtually all working processes, from manual production to automated manufacturing. The highly skilled employees work day in, day out to develop innovative solutions for state-of-the-art mechanical engineering and also offer exceptional consulting services. item is headquartered in Solingen, Germany. Eleven branches and support centres ensure the company is always close to customers in Germany. The group has wholly owned subsidiaries in the USA, China, Mexico, Italy, Poland and Switzerland.

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