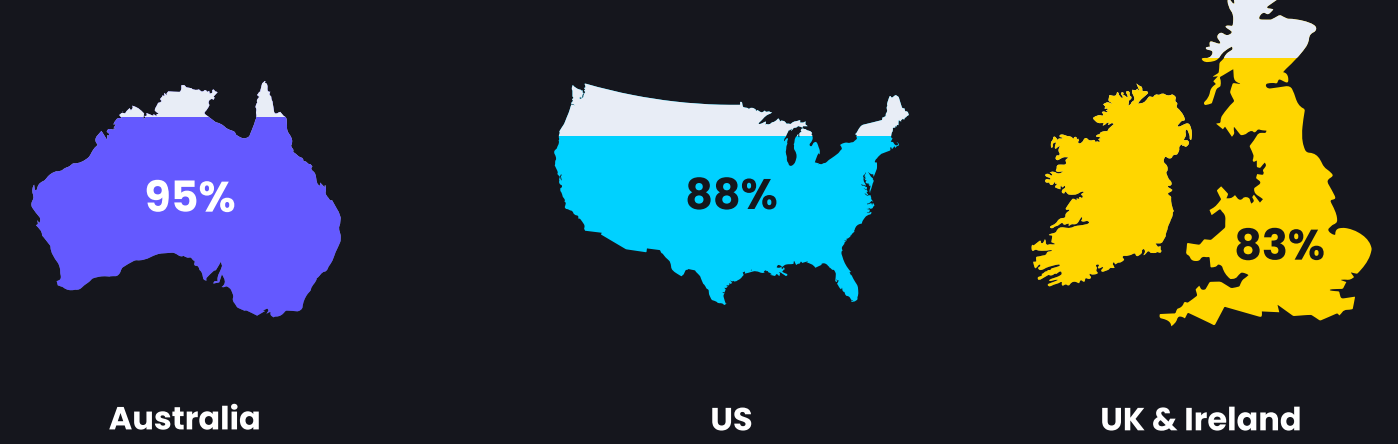


What managers in manufacturing told us



88% of middle managers have frustrations in their role today.



Middle managers are losing, on average, an estimated **5.47 hours** per week on low-value tasks that don't benefit their work, their team or customers.

- 5.13 hrs per week
- 5.46 hrs per week
- 5.95 hrs per week
- 4.89 hrs per week

Time spent on low-value tasks equates to an estimated **USD \$25.8bn** a year across the manufacturing industry globally*.

- AUD \$3.8bn
- USD \$17.4bn
- GBP £4bn
- EUR €406m

The **most common** low-value tasks taking up middle managers' time:

1. Meetings that could have been an email (**34%**)
2. Email overload and unnecessary communication (**32%**)
3. Correcting others' mistakes (**31%**)

Top response by region:

- Managing rosters/schedules including chasing staff availability (**29%**)
- Collating and reporting performance data (**29%**)
- Meetings that could have been an email (**43%**)
- Email overload and unnecessary communication (**37%**)

57% of middle managers have had an idea for improvement implemented in their organization.

- 62%
- 54%
- 55%
-

The **top impacts** of implemented improvement ideas, according to these middle managers:

1. More efficient operations (**59%**)
2. Improved workflow (**46%**)
3. Saved worker time (**44%**)

Top response by region:

- More efficient operations (**55%**)
- More efficient operations (**62%**)
- More efficient operations (**59%**)
-

Almost **one-third (30%)** of middle managers have had an improvement idea dismissed.

- 28%
- 35%
- 28%
-

As a result of having an **idea dismissed**, impacted middle managers claim:

1. Certain processes remain wasteful or inefficient (**48%**)
2. They feel disempowered (**38%**)
3. They don't put ideas forward (**37%**)

Top response by region:

- Certain processes remain wasteful or inefficient (**45%**)
- Certain processes remain wasteful or inefficient (**51%**)
- I don't put ideas forward (**53%**)
-

The **most common** reason an idea from a middle manager wasn't taken on board:

1. It wasn't seen as a priority (**45%**)
2. Senior leadership aren't receptive to ideas from middle managers (**35%**)
3. Competing priorities (**32%**)

Top response by region:

- Competing priorities (**39%**)
- It wasn't seen as a priority (**47%**)
- It wasn't seen as a priority (**48%**)
-

Amongst middle managers impacted by their organization's **continuous improvement programs**, the top frustrations are:

1. They are driven by people who don't understand how the work is done (**31%**)
2. They feel like a tick-box exercise by senior management (**31%**)
3. They create additional workload without clear benefits (**31%**)

Top response by region:

- They are driven more by commercial gain than by real workplace needs (**28%**)
- They create additional workload without clear benefits (**38%**)
- They feel like a tick-box exercise by senior management (**40%**)
-

Methodology

We surveyed 804 middle managers aged 18 years and older in small, medium, and large manufacturing businesses in Australia, the US, the UK, and Ireland (excluding sole traders).

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov. Fieldwork was undertaken between 28 August - 9 September 2025. The survey was carried out online. The figures are unweighted results.

*The cost of low-value tasks

This figure was calculated by YouGov based on the average local weekly wage, estimated average hours lost on low-value tasks as reported by survey respondents, and the estimated number of middle managers in the specified frontline industry.

Local wage estimates were sourced from national statistical agencies, and the number of worker estimates were sourced from YouGov Profiles.

