

“THE AUGMENTATION OF THE COLLABORATIVE ROBOT (COBOT)”



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Robots in manufacturing are not a new idea. But today an increasing number of collaborative robots are joining the ranks, working alongside their human co-workers. According to Research and Markets, the “global collaborative robots market is expected to reach \$36.84 billion by 2026 in terms of robot systems (including hardware, software, and service).” This represents a 2019-2026 compound annual growth rate of almost 45%.

Cobots are now so integrated into business that it’s something of a cliché to compare this new generation of automation to the clumsy, cage-bound robotics common two decades ago. Moving machines from sequestered danger zones to shared workspaces is now nothing new, and the future of cobots will likely depend on integrating humans and cobots safely and effectively.

To understand the future of cobots and predict the next generation of automation, we need to look forward. In this context, it’s worth noting that the central idea behind Cobots is likely to stand the test of time: by allowing human beings and machines to work

together in the same space, automation harnesses the creativity and problem solving of people and the repeatability and tireless precision of robotics.

Takeaways:

- ◆ The future of cobots will see widespread usage among manufacturers of all sizes, as prices continue to become affordable.
- ◆ Better machine learning, and the ability to recognize certain human actions will bring increased safety to Cobots.
- ◆ Cobots won’t contribute to increased unemployment, as they serve to assist human workers rather than take away their jobs.

In tasks like the final assembly of cars, judgment and decision-making are necessary, but a range of repetitive, predictable tasks remain, opening space for cobots to work alongside human beings. In short, despite their popularity, cobots have only begun to populate the world of work.