



25 Quick Questions to Get Your Machines Talking – and Your Team Winning.



Thinking about connecting your shop floor equipment and not sure where to start? You're not alone. With a mix of machines—old and new, from different vendors—it's easy to feel stuck or overwhelmed.

This checklist is designed to help you focus on what matters most: understanding your equipment, collecting the right data, and setting yourself up for a smooth, low-risk shop floor connectivity project. Use these questions to prep for your Rain Engineering assessment, or just to get the conversation rolling internally.

1. Know What You Have

- ✓ Do you have an up-to-date list of all production machines on your floor?
- ✓ Can you identify which assets are most critical to your business goals (quality, throughput, uptime)?
- ✓ For each machine, do you know the make, model, and approximate year?

2. Clarify Your Goals

- ✓ What are your top two or three reasons for connecting your equipment?
(Ex: reduce downtime, collect production data, improve traceability, etc.)
- ✓ Are you focused more on broad visibility or in-depth details from certain machines?
- ✓ Is there a specific production issue you're trying to solve (like frequent stoppages, missing quality data, or manual reporting headaches)?

3. Assess Existing Capabilities

- ✓ Which machines are already connected to your network, if any?
- ✓ Which assets have an available Ethernet port?
- ✓ Are there any machines currently delivering data to an MES, historian, or other IT system?
- ✓ For older equipment, do you know if there are serial or other data interfaces available?
- ✓ Have you attempted to connect any legacy/older machines before? What happened?



4. Map Data Needs

- ✓ Which pieces of information do you most want from each machine? (Options: status [run/stop], part counts, reject rates, quality checks, energy use, temperature, alarms, etc.)
- ✓ Who needs to see this data, and how often? (Ex: operators daily, management weekly, maintenance as needed)
- ✓ Are you collecting any of this data manually today?

5. Review Shop Floor Layout & IT/OT Realities

- ✓ Do you have clear access to each machine for any required wiring or device add-ons?
- ✓ Are there existing network drops near most of your assets?
- ✓ Are any machines in hard-to-reach locations, or areas with stricter safety requirements?
- ✓ Do you have up-to-date electrical and network diagrams for your facility?

6. Evaluate Change Readiness

- ✓ Will you need to schedule around production, or can equipment be briefly powered down for connection work?
- ✓ Who needs to be involved to approve or support a connectivity project? (operations, IT, health & safety, leadership)
- ✓ Are there IT security, data privacy, or compliance requirements in your facility?

7. Plan for Success

- ✓ How will you measure the success of the project? (Reduced downtime, more accurate data, fewer manual tasks, faster reporting?)
- ✓ Who will use the new data day-to-day? Are they prepared/trained?
- ✓ Do you have a process for supporting or troubleshooting new connections after go-live?



Final Thoughts

If you can answer most of these questions—or simply have this checklist handy during your Rain Engineering assessment—you'll be way ahead in your connectivity journey. Don't worry if you don't have all the answers right now. Our team specializes in helping manufacturers like you make sense of every asset, every connection, and every opportunity.

Ready to move from guessing to knowing?

Book your **FREE 20-asset Connectivity Assessment** with Rain Engineering today.

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