

## "Quality builds trust, and trust brings repeat customers." — A Conversation with Manjunath Dharwad

### Manjunath Dharwad

#### SMT CONVEYORS AND AUTOMATIONS

##### Industry: Industrial conveyor systems

*Efficient material handling and ergonomic workspaces are the invisible backbone of modern manufacturing. Optimizing these critical factory floor dynamics is SMT CONVEYORS AND AUTOMATIONS, founded by Manjunath Dharwad. The company has carved out a strong reputation as a trusted provider of customized industrial conveyor systems, ESD-safe workstations, and lean manufacturing infrastructure. By focusing on practical, scalable, and cost-effective engineering, SMT enables industries to streamline their workflows and boost productivity. In an exclusive interview with smetimes.in, Manjunath Dharwad discusses the challenges of breaking into the competitive automation sector, the impact of digital design tools on MSMEs, and his roadmap for scaling end-to-end material handling solutions.*

##### Q 1. Could you briefly introduce yourself and your company?

I am Manjunath Dharwad, founder of SMT CONVEYORS AND AUTOMATIONS. We are a trusted manufacturing and automation solutions provider specializing in industrial conveyor systems and modular workspace solutions. We are deeply committed to delivering reliable, cost-effective, and highly customized automation products that improve productivity, efficiency, and workflow across various manufacturing industries.

Backed by strong technical expertise and customer-focused execution, we support sectors such as electronics, automotive, logistics, assembly lines, packaging, and material handling. Our comprehensive product range includes:

- Industrial Conveyors: Belt, roller, slat chain, table-top, pallet, and custom assembly line conveyors.
- ESD Solutions: Complete ESD-safe setups, including workstations, tables, and storage systems.
- Aluminum Profile Systems: Machine frames, enclosures, and custom industrial structures.
- ABS Pipe & Joint Systems: Lean pipe workstations, flow racks, and material handling trolleys.
- Integration Support: Pallets, sensors, stoppers, and automation fixtures.

##### Q 2. What is your long-term vision for the company?

Our vision is to become a leading, globally trusted provider of conveyor and industrial automation solutions. We want to deliver innovative, reliable, and cost-effective material handling systems that genuinely support manufacturing industries in scaling their productivity. We aim to build lifelong relationships with our customers through quality products, technical excellence, and dependable service. Concurrently, we are continuously expanding our in-house capabilities across conveyors, ESD workstations, aluminum profile structures, and lean manufacturing solutions to remain an end-to-end partner.

##### Q 3. Which key industries do you currently serve, and how do your solutions create a tangible impact for them?

We support a diverse range of manufacturing and material-handling industries by providing infrastructure that directly improves operational efficiency. Our key sectors include:

- Electronics & SMT Manufacturing: We provide ESD workstations and inspection conveyors. Impact: Protects sensitive components from electrostatic damage and improves assembly-line productivity.
- Automotive & Auto Components: We supply continuous production environments with pallet and roller conveyors. Impact: Drastically reduces manual material movement, enhances line synchronization, and improves production cycle times.
- Industrial Machinery & Engineering Units: We manufacture heavy-duty conveyors and aluminum machine frames. Impact: Enables flexible production layouts and improves structural reliability for machine integration.
- Logistics & Material Handling: We deliver flow racks and belt/roller conveyors for warehouses. Impact: Speeds up loading/unloading, reduces handling errors, and optimizes space utilization.
- Assembly Line Manufacturing: We provide custom assembly conveyors and lean pipe workstations. Impact: Enables lean manufacturing practices and creates scalable, highly productive operator setups.

##### Q 4. What would you like prospective clients or partners to know about your company?

We want prospective clients to know that we are a deeply dedicated manufacturing partner focused on understanding the minutiae of their requirements. We offer practical automation solutions designed to improve workflow efficiency and operator safety.

Clients choose us because of our customization expertise—every structure is designed based on actual application needs. Furthermore, we offer wide product capabilities under one roof, delivering industry-focused solutions that provide high value without exceeding practical project budgets.

##### Q 5. From your perspective, how is digital transformation changing the way MSMEs operate today?

Digital transformation is accelerating our operations on two main fronts: customer response and engineering accuracy.

First, tools like WhatsApp Business, email automation, and digital catalogs allow MSMEs to respond instantly to customer inquiries. Today, we can share digital drawings, layouts, and revisions within hours instead of days, leading to faster quotation turnarounds and higher conversion rates.

Second, digital design tools like CAD software, simulation tools, and 3D modeling have revolutionized our engineering capabilities. They allow us to design conveyors and structures with pinpoint accuracy, which reduces design errors, enables better customization, and leads to much faster project approvals.

##### Q 6. What are your expansion plans for the near future?

Our near-term expansion strategy is anchored in strengthening our manufacturing capabilities, broadening our portfolio, and increasing our Pan-India presence.

- Upgrading Manufacturing Infrastructure: We are enhancing our production capacity to handle larger, more complex automation and assembly-line projects efficiently.
- Expanding Automation Solutions: We are moving beyond standard conveyors into integrated, semi-automated turnkey material-handling solutions tailored for the electronics and automotive sectors.
- Growing ESD & Lean Solutions: We are increasing our focus on ESD-safe infrastructure and ABS lean pipe systems to support the booming electronics manufacturing sector.
- Expanding Geographic Reach: We aim to extend our services to new industrial clusters by strengthening partnerships with system integrators nationwide.
- Adopting Digital Tools: We are further integrating digital tracking and design systems to improve project transparency and RFQ response times.

##### Q 7. What has been your proudest moment since starting this venture?

Our proudest moment has been successfully earning the absolute trust of our customers and securing repeat business in a highly competitive automation industry.

Starting as a growing enterprise, successfully delivering complex projects within challenging timelines and maintaining strong relationships through quality execution has been incredibly rewarding. A major milestone was achieving the capability to provide complete, end-to-end conveyor and workstation solutions under one roof. Most importantly, seeing our systems installed, running flawlessly, and actively improving a client's factory floor workflow remains my biggest motivation.

##### Q 8. What has been the most challenging phase in your entrepreneurial journey?

The most difficult phase was establishing ourselves in an industrial automation market where clients naturally lean toward older, more established suppliers for their critical assembly-line projects.

In the early stages, earning that initial customer confidence, managing limited working capital, and balancing raw material procurement against strict delivery expectations required immense planning. Executing highly customized projects within tight margins for precision-critical sectors like electronics and automotive was a steep learning curve. However, these very challenges forced us to strengthen our technical capabilities and project management systems, ultimately transforming into the reliable solution provider we are today.

##### Q 9. What advice would you give to someone just starting out in manufacturing or industrial automation?

It requires patience, commitment, and a willingness to continuously learn. My core advice would be:

1. Focus on Quality from Day One: Even the smallest projects must be executed with absolute professionalism. Quality builds trust, and trust brings repeat customers.
2. Understand Requirements Deeply: Spend time understanding the exact application before pitching a solution.
3. Manage Cash Flow Carefully: Proper planning of materials, payments, and operational timelines is critical for stability in heavy manufacturing.
4. Start Small but Think Long-Term: Consistency matters far more than speed.
5. Build Strong Vendor and Team Support: A skilled team and reliable suppliers are the backbone of on-time delivery.
6. Maintain Business Integrity: Honest communication, realistic commitments, and operational transparency will always guarantee lasting success.

##### Q 10. Which of your leadership traits do you believe have been key to your success?

I attribute our steady growth to a few core principles. First is an uncompromising commitment to quality and reliability across all our product lines. Second is a deeply customer-centric approach—listening closely to offer practical, customized solutions rather than off-the-shelf compromises.

I also believe in hands-on involvement; I stay closely connected to design discussions, execution planning, and delivery coordination. Furthermore, maintaining a solution-oriented, problem-solving mindset when facing production bottlenecks ensures we keep moving forward. Ultimately, being adaptable to new technologies and building transparent, respectful relationships with clients and my team have been the true drivers of our success.