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## “AM compliments the conventional manufacturing techniques”

Some of the main challenges that are often seen in the industry are related to the cost of AM systems and consumables. Professional AM Systems, today, are more affordable than what they used to be. However, the consumables, such as material price, need to be reduced for having economical results. However, it is subjective to the geometry and the complexity. AM is an associative process which compliments the conventional manufacturing techniques. Nevertheless, there needs to be a clear understanding in terms of adoption of AM, to benefit on the various factors such as cost, creativity, complexity and confidentiality, providing users a whole lot of intangible benefits. Speaking of cost, the cost factors that need to be considered when compared to conventional manufacturing processes are complexity in design, multi-material outputs in a single step process, end-product realisms with the multi-coloured and multi-material AM technologies and consolidated designs.

What's more, SMEs must consider investment in AM technology, something which will pay off in the long-run. It will help them to identify product design and functionality errors earlier in the design cycle and augment product design innovation. While initial investment might be a challenge for them, they can approach engineering clusters, 3D Printing service providers and bureaus that can help them realise the benefits of AM. But in the long-run, having a 3D Printer in-house will give them greater ROI if their 3D Printing needs increase in the times to come.

Additionally, conducting regular seminars and road shows enables SMEs to clearly understand the true potential of AM technology. Inviting SMEs to join AM webinars leads to better understanding of AM and its applications. Plus, using AM services through AM service bureaus from an early stage in the product development cycle will enhance the use of 3D Printing.