



4 Ways to Embrace the Future of the Supply Chain



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Introduction

The rapid digital transformation in recent years has presented supply chain leaders with a world of new opportunities.

While the pandemic brought to light a host of unprecedented obstacles, even these challenges had some unexpected positive outcomes, such as organizations accelerating their digitization plans.

Companies are essentially operating in a completely different, and ever-evolving, environment. This means there is an opportunity to apply a fresh, new approach to every aspect of supply chain management, from workforce skills development to the way data and analytics are deployed. But, with so many great opportunities to take advantage of, how do you decide where to begin?

That is where **4 Ways to Embrace the Future of the Supply Chain** comes in. A group of thought leaders from DeVry University offers insight into the ways you can harness these advancements to future-ready your supply chain leadership approach — and ultimately ensure your teams are equipped with the work-ready skills needed to outperform your competition.

Contributors

Meet the group of thought leaders from DeVry University, whose expertise makes them the perfect fit to offer insights into the state of the supply chain, and how to prepare for the future.



Dr. Alex Hosch

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Before joining DeVry University in 2009, Dr. Alex Hosch worked in financial services, legal practice management, and software development for more than 25 years. Thanks to an extensive background in enterprise risk management and project management, he is adept at procurement and supply chain management. Over the years, he has used his expertise to ideate, innovate and create a lasting impact in the areas of procurement of information technology, as well as information system services and business information systems.



Dr. Issam Abu-Ghallous

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Dr. Issam Abu-Ghallous joined DeVry University in 2015 and is currently teaching, and designing, economics and international relations courses. He earned a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Business Administration from Bethlehem University in Palestine, an MBA from Lewis University, and a Ph.D. in International Economic Development from the University of Southern Mississippi.



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Clark Barber works alongside his team to help organizations align the right talent with relevant learning pathways, to reskill for the future of work. He partners closely with admissions, student services and academics to ensure the employee experience and learning pathways meet client expectations.



“ The digitization of the supply chain is critically important and long overdue in many sectors.”

By Dr. Alex Hosch



Digital Transformation: 3 Key Areas Where Supply Chain Leaders Should Focus

By Dr. Alex Hosch

Digital transformation, in all its myriad forms, affects every dimension of the supply chain. Many of these changes have also been accelerated thanks to the pandemic. Considering the industry is primed for digitization, these advancements can be applied to your supply chain leadership approach. Dr. Alex Hosch breaks down 3 key areas to focus on — from solutions in software to the team’s skill set. Equipped with these insights, you can work towards successful digital transformation within your organization.

Supply chain digital transformation is no doubt an imperative to help supply chains run more smoothly while providing actionable intel. Ambitious, yes, but that belief isn’t necessarily overstated. The digitization of the supply chain is critically important and long overdue in many sectors, particularly given the vast changes we’ve experienced over the past couple of years. According to a study by the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP), 42% of organizations have accelerated their digitization plans due to the pandemic.¹ However, a recent Harvard Business Review Analytic Services study showed that more than 70% of companies believe their key supply chain capabilities, including logistics, procurement, and inventory management, are digitally “immature.”²

“A supply chain is highly dependent on a multitude of vendors that must be able to work seamlessly with your systems.”

But where to begin? “Digital transformation” can mean so many things (what isn’t digital these days?) and impacts virtually every aspect of the supply chain. Oftentimes, it can feel overwhelming to the point of inaction for supply chain leaders.

That said, there are specific dimensions of the supply chain that are particularly ripe for digitization. Below we dive into three of them:

#1 Evolve the System(s) You Use to Track your Supply Chain

Even with all the machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) driven tools available to supply chain leaders today, many businesses still rely on manual or home-grown processes to track inventory levels, lead times and transportation visibility. More than 50% of organizations have not yet actively started to build a roadmap for supply chain digital transformation.³ Sure, those manual processes may have served those companies well in the past. However, going forward, the pace and volume of information, and the need to accurately track a business’ supply chain, demand automation to allow for more precise and responsive planning.

There is an inherent lag in information when businesses depend on manually updated tracking systems. Through 2023, less than 5% of control-tower-like deployments will fulfill their end-to-end potential due to mindset and cultural obstacles.⁴ In today’s highly distributed global supply chain, those manual systems simply can’t keep up. Plus, they present significant risks to data quality and integrity.

One solution is to invest in a manufacturing resource planning (MRP) software package, which is designed to create detailed production schedules using real-time data to coordinate the arrival of materials with machine and labor availability. Implementing an MRP can be a critical first step in digitizing and automating the basic infrastructure of many supply chain tracking systems. Eventually, many organizations choose to adopt an enterprise resource planning (ERP) tool, a more comprehensive solution that integrates areas such as planning, purchasing, inventory, sales, marketing, finance, and human resources.

#2 Invite Your Vendor Networks Along WITH You

As any supply chain leader knows, a supply chain is highly dependent on a multitude of vendors that must be able to work seamlessly with your systems. Therefore, as you go digital and automate your processes, so do your vendors. That can be easier said than done, of course.

When onboarding new vendors, the solution can be somewhat simpler. With an MRP or ERP platform in place, supply chain leaders can write into contracts, vendors must be able to work with those systems and demonstrate the capability to match if not improve operation efficiencies, with clear and detailed expectations.

However, for existing vendors, the approach will likely have to be more nuanced. A vendor may be a critical supplier of parts that could be difficult to source from elsewhere. Making a sudden demand for full digitization and integration with your systems could upset the apple cart in ways you don’t want. Switching vendors can be very costly and time consuming. Instead, take the time to walk key vendors through your plans for digitizing your systems and the rationale behind it. Ask them about any plans they have for upgrading their systems and processes. The solution might be to add an addendum to an existing contract with a timeline that works for both you and your vendor. The point is to go into the conversation in the spirit of collaboration with the goal of finding a mutually beneficial solution.

To successfully facilitate these conversations, supply chain leaders should also look inward to ensure their own procurement and vendor management teams are equipped and empowered to lead these more strategic discussions. Do they know how and why you are going on this digital transformation journey? They need to be able to articulate that story to your vendors.



“Supply chain leaders must place a priority on ensuring they have a team with the training and skills to manage it all.”

Finally, conduct annual due diligence evaluations on all of your critical vendors to determine if they are keeping up with your needs, particularly as you undergo a digital transformation. Weigh their importance to critical needs to your business with their ability to integrate with your systems. Use the outcomes of this due diligence process to thoughtfully plan for any changes to your vendor relationships going forward.

#3 Invest in Your People to Make Sense of it All

Finally, as impressive as automated MRP and ERP tools can be, it can be challenging to integrate them with your existing processes, especially if you don't have the talent on your team who knows how to make that happen. Therefore, when making the transition to a digital system, supply chain leaders must place a priority on ensuring they have a team with the training and skills to manage it all. After all, software solutions are only as good as the people and processes in place to set them up, use them to their fullest and manage them for the long-term. Working on spreadsheets and working with an integrated

ERP require very different skill sets. Gartner even goes as far to predict that “by 2025, more than 50% of supply chain organizations will have a technology leadership role reporting directly to the chief supply chain officer.”⁴

A digital supply chain requires a fresh set of skills like analytics to support in data-driven decision-making as well as organizational change and cross-functional collaboration. Take a look at your team and pinpoint those who would be good candidates for upskilling or reskilling. Then look across your organization to see if there are others you could source. Once you've identified these individuals, you'll likely find skills gaps that you need to help them close in order to be successful in these new roles. The great news is you likely have people you haven't even considered—you might just need a fresh perspective.

The bottom line is, supply chain leaders can't be putting out supply chain fires all day. They need a team they can depend on that has the tools and skills to make digitized systems and processes work. ML and AI are great at producing predictive models and pattern recognition can be extremely helpful in supply chain planning. Regardless, if you don't have the right people with the right skills to act, none of it does much good.

Ultimately, the success of supply chain digital transformation comes down to having people with the right knowledge, relationships and skills to keep everything running smoothly.

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**“What this requires,
is a dynamic digital
supply chain fueled
by real-time data
and analysis.”**

Dr. Issam Abu-Ghallow

Read On



Image: Christin Hume

Generational Preferences are Causing a Seismic Shift to the Supply Chain

By Dr. Issam Abu-Ghailous

“Safe to say that supply chain leaders operate in a dynamic environment.”

Safe to say that supply chain leaders operate in a dynamic environment. You not only need to keep up with the rapid digital transformation, but also the ever-evolving tastes and preferences of consumers, which can differ among generations. Dr. Issam Abu-Ghailous delves into the behavior of each of these generations and offers key takeaways to consider, helping you stay ahead of the game. With these key findings in mind, you can ensure your team is equipped to run a dynamic supply chain that matches the expectations, demands and buying trends among different generations of consumers.

The supply chain disruption that has been dominating the headlines is a complex and multi-faceted issue to be sure. Much has been said and written about what is snarling the global supply chain: too few truck drivers, dormant factories due to COVID, backlogged ports, you name it.

However, one contributing factor that has been less explored, but which is perhaps one of the most significant disruptors of the supply chain, is the rapidly evolving purchasing preferences of the different generations. How, where, and why we buy looks very different than just a few years ago, and that stretches from Baby Boomers to Gen Z. Taken together, it represents a massive shock to the supply chain, and one that supply chain leaders need to be fully aware of and plan for going forward.

“Millennials are a generation that works to live, not lives to work.”

How Adoption of Online Shopping Has Changed

Consider this, prior to the pandemic (2018), only 14 percent of Baby Boomers reported grocery shopping online. By 2020, more than 60 percent of Baby Boomers were online shoppers. Among Generation X, just 29 percent shopped online pre-pandemic. After COVID hit, that jumped to 72 percent. With that many more people now shopping online, and with all the different expectations that come with the virtual experience, it's no wonder the supply chain is rattled. ^{5,6}

How Generations are Upending Supply Chain Dynamics

Baby Boomers

The influx of Baby Boomers (born 1946–1964), who've joined the ranks of online shoppers, represents approximately 38 million Americans ... in just that generation. While many of them are projected to continue online shopping, the majority of Baby Boomers still prefer to pay now and avoid debt, if they can.⁷ That points to a hybrid shopping experience going forward, which supply chain leaders must be prepared for.

Baby Boomers also spend 93 percent of their annual income, which demonstrates enormous buying power.⁸

Generation X

Like Baby Boomers, Generation X (born 1965 – 1980) now shops online in a big way—with 90% shopping online.⁹ The wealthiest of the generations based on the income they generate,¹⁰ they tend to value status and have loyalty to brand names.¹¹ They also place a premium on customer service, both when shopping online and in-person, and expect rapid resolution of any issues or questions they have.

Millennials

Still relatively new in their careers, Millennials (born 1981–1996) spend 90 percent of their annual income.⁸ Not surprisingly, they are very comfortable with online shopping. What is more interesting is the number of Millennials who report being comfortable with buy now pay later, this is expected to grow from 18 percent to more than 40 percent by the year 2025.⁷

This is a generation that “works to live, not lives to work.” They came of age during the Great Recession and place a premium on work-life balance and the social impact of their purchase decisions. Many Millennials delay major life milestones, such as getting married, having children and buying a home. As they continue to earn more, they will likely increase their spending.¹²

Generation Z

True digital natives, online shopping is nothing new to Generation Z (born 1997 – 2012). Generally, they don't tire of researching their purchase decisions, both online and in-person, but when they've found what they want/need, they often buy impulsively, “with 47% of them agreeing overall they often make purchases on the spur of the moment.”¹³

Gen Z also places a high value on the social impact of the products they buy and the businesses they support. With a fifth strongly agree that the brands they buy from must share their values.¹³ Think fair-trade coffee, carbon-neutral businesses or products from conflict-free zones. They are not as impressed by brand names and status and are more rooted in social responsibility and climate impact, and they are willing to pay more to support the causes they care about. Finally, Gen Z craves authentic, “real” messaging in the products they buy. They can see right through marketing ploys and know when they are being “sold” with meaningless puffery.¹⁴

Key Takeaways

So what to make of it all? For supply chain leaders who want to stay ahead of the rapidly evolving tastes and preferences of the different generations, the following are eight key takeaways to consider:

#1 Access to information:

Across the generations, consumers now expect immediate access to product information. Not only that, but the information needs to be clear, relevant, and personalized with product descriptions and reviews.

#2 Understand that speed is everything:

Regardless of the generation, they all expect near instantaneous fulfillment. Waiting days, or even hours, to receive what they want when they want it, is now less and less acceptable. And when it comes to Gen Z, they will choose the retailer and brand that can provide what they want the quickest. To keep up, delivery should be nimble and include different options.

#3 Show your social responsibility:

As stated above, newer generations care deeply about the social and environmental impact of their purchase decisions. They expect clear and detailed information about how a product, and the company behind it, is making the world a better place.

#4 Prepare to personalize:

Millennials and Gen Z expect their digital experiences to be reflective of what they'd experience in person—speak directly to them. Literally, them as individuals. The messaging and products they encounter online should be specifically curated to their tastes and interests. Brands need to make the case that they “know” their consumers personally with their product positioning, which requires robust data analytics and predictive modeling to make that happen.

#5 Amplify with social media:

Social media IS the new online marketplace. Many Gen Z and Millennials are learning and, get this—engaging—with brands, the latest trends, and products through their Instagram and TikTok feeds. Brands need to be present on social media if they are going to be competitive with these generations. Consider this: more than 76 million people in the United States will make a purchase via a social network at least once this year.¹⁵

#6 Be ready for tomorrow:

Millennials and Gen Z make up 51 percent of the population.¹⁶ They are the most educated and will soon likely have more purchasing power than the other generations. Prepare for this eventuality by gathering data about their preferences and building a dynamic and efficient execution strategy going forward.¹⁴

#7 Be flexible in delivering your goods:

Our purchasing experience is now fluid, consumers are no longer thinking of online and brick-and-mortar buying as separate. For example, have you ever been in a store and looked at your phone to see what aisle something was in or what the reviews were on the different TVs available? Recognize that and develop systems and processes that accommodate this “hybrid-buying” future.

#8 React to new trends:

All generations are collapsing their online and in-person shopping habits. While the online world offers quick and easy ways to research products (price, quality, origin), there is still a desire to experience (see, feel, touch) products in the real world.

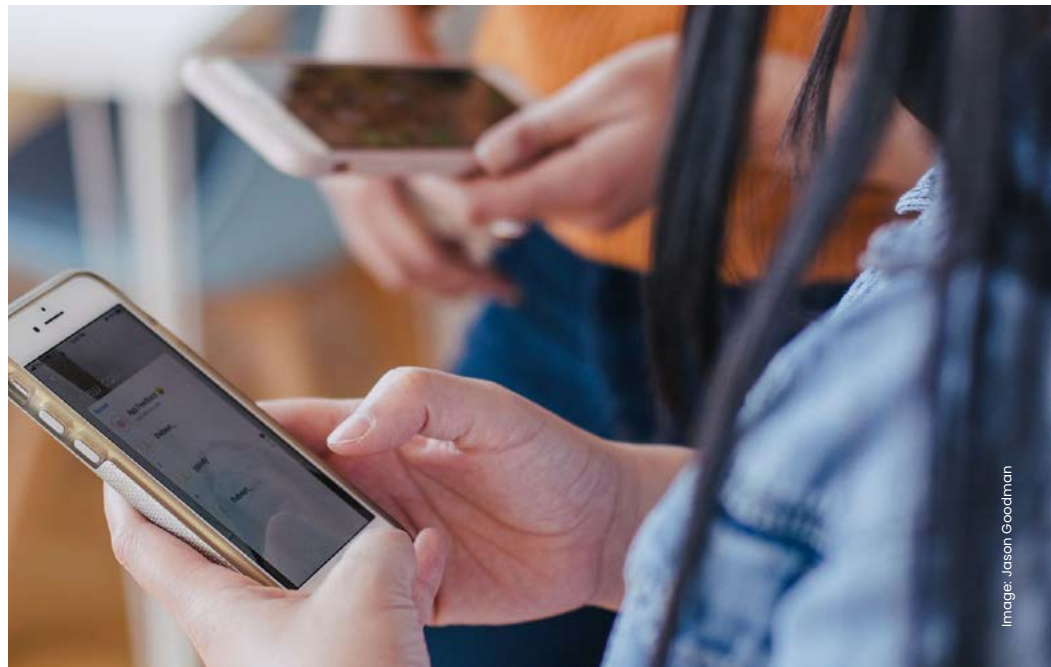



Image: Jason Goodman

“What this all comes down to is the convergence of generations and how they expect to be treated during their purchasing process.”

What this all comes down to is the convergence of generations and how they expect to be treated during their purchasing process. New trends arise on a near daily basis, and consumers respond quickly and make purchasing decisions accordingly. However, they are also more likely to move on to another trend just as quickly. What this requires, is a dynamic digital supply chain fueled by real-time data and analysis. What’s possibly even more important, is that your team has the digital skills needed to run this dynamic digital supply chain to match expectations and demands.

Get in Touch

An aerial photograph of a winding asphalt road cutting through a dense, lush green forest. The road curves from the top center towards the bottom right. The trees are a mix of various shades of green, suggesting a diverse forest. The lighting is soft, creating a serene atmosphere.

“Your customers expect you to offer exactly what they want, when and how they want it.”

Dr. Issam Abu-Ghallow & Dr. Sid Ahmed Sahnoune



Do Predictive Analytics Have a Future in Supply Chain Management?

By Dr. Issam Abu-Ghailous & Dr. Sid Ahmed Sahnoune

While the pandemic brought about a lot of uncertainty, customers still expect the ideal purchasing experience. This means that companies need to continue to place data and supply chain analytics at the core of their business strategy. But there is a great opportunity to deploy it in a way that's meaningful and that makes sense in this new and ever-evolving environment. Dr. Issam Abu-Ghailous and Dr. Sid Ahmed Sahnoune explore some recommendations to help you harness the power of data and analytics going forward.

In the initial shock of the “black swan” event that was (and is) COVID, it should come as no surprise that many people questioned the validity and effectiveness of predictive analytics in the supply chain. However, those in the logistics and supply chain field know, “If not predictive analytics, then what?” Do supply chain leaders simply operate in the dark? Should they focus only on immediate demand and turn a blind eye to what may (or may not) come to be?

Obviously, that is not the answer. Supply Chain Analytics still has a very important place in supply chain management, perhaps more so than ever. In a report by Thomson Reuters, ONESOURCE stating, “The three biggest benefits for using big data within supply chains are traceability, relationship management (e.g., better customer service), and forecasting/predictability.”¹⁷ However,

it's how we harvest, analyze and deploy that data that has evolved. Below are five recommendations for supply chain leaders to consider to help make the most of predictive analytics moving forward:

Focus Less on Demographics, and More on Tastes and Preferences

Historically, customer data analytics has been rooted in the segmentation of fairly static demographic information. Think age, gender, location, income level, and educational attainment. Today, that data is largely considered to be too simplistic or generalized. The businesses that are

positioned well to win are the ones that are tuned into, and that react to, the constantly evolving tastes, trends, and preferences of their customers. It's no longer about "who they are," but rather "how and why they buy." It's a more nuanced, personalized focus on the customer. It's also what customers today expect—personalized experiences.

Harness Social Media

To help predict the tastes and preferences of customers, as discussed above, brands should look to engage with their customers where and how they want to be engaged. That means having a robust presence on social media. A recent Harris Poll found that "as a result of positive social media interactions with a brand, consumers are more willing to: buy from a brand (78%); choose a brand over the competition (77%); recommend a brand (76%); increase their spending with that brand (72%); and develop a stronger bond with a brand (70%)." ¹⁸

Being present on social media also means thoughtfully analyzing and leveraging the wealth of data and analytics that social media platforms provide. Whether it's Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn or TikTok, ensure you have the resources on your team to leverage the data within those tools to keep a pulse on your consumers. Customer ratings and reviews on social media are also an excellent source of intelligence about what customers want (and don't want). Do you have a data scientist on our team dedicated to digging into this wealth of real-time consumer feedback?

Move to the Cloud

The concept of "big data" is nothing new. It wasn't that long ago that most companies invested heavily in servers and teams of data administrators to store all their data. That typically represented a huge expense, which often proved not to be scalable over time. Fortunately, today there are cloud-based solutions, such as Google Cloud or Amazon Web Services, which can be affordable, scalable, secure, reliable, faster to implement and provide access to information anywhere in the world.¹⁹

"The cloud can help you efficiently scale to meet data needs."

Supply chain leaders can rely on this flexibility to efficiently build and act upon the vast amount of data required for supply chain analytics. That volume of data will of course keep growing. The cloud can help you efficiently scale to meet data needs.

Leverage the Internet of Things

The Internet of Things (IoT) is often the powerhouse behind the tracking of the many moving parts of the supply chain. Therefore, as you can imagine, advances are coming at lightning speed so you should be aware of the benefits of further adoption. Some of the major advancements are RFID, Bluetooth and NFC tags for asset tracking and warehouse management. And when it comes to managing fleets, companies are using GPS technologies and real-time tracking to stay informed on routes, delivery speed, and tracking. All of this combined allows you to make more informed decisions around creating efficiencies.²⁰

Make Sure Your Team Has the Skills Needed

Even if you leverage all the recommendations above, your success will largely depend on your people.

#1 Data inputs:

The information you get is only as good as the data that's put in. Therefore, you need to ensure the people using the technology are properly trained. That's mainly vehicle drivers and warehouse workers, think of these people as anyone with responsibility for inputting data into the system. Don't forget they'll need training on security practices, to help protect your data.

#2 Data setup and analysis:

Data is largely meaningless if you don't have the people with the skills to establish, dissect and draw actionable conclusions from it all. To successfully leverage supply chain analytics, you need data scientists and analysts who understand how to collect, curate, and analyze complex data sets from multiple sources.

The need for these analytical skills is clear: the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts the number of jobs in the data science field will increase by 28 percent through 2026, which is roughly 11.5 million new jobs in the field.²¹ Clearly, the demand is high, and the competition for talent is no less fierce. If you have high potentials on your team, consider [upskilling](#) as an option. At the very least, make sure you have a [talent succession plan](#) mapped and you're checking in with your team consistently. Keeping pace with the market and competition is complex, ensure your team is engaged and focused on business outcomes.

Your customers expect you to offer exactly what they want, when and how they want it. Creating that ideal purchasing experience requires companies to place data and supply chain analytics at the core of their business strategy—and the demands have never been higher.

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“ It’s critical that supply chain leaders have the people with the skills to analyze data in real time.”

Dr. Issam Abu-Ghallow

Read On



Image: Etienne Girardet

Q&A: What Happens Now? Planning for the Future of Supply Chain Management

By Clark Barber, Dr. Issam Abu-Ghallowis & Dr. Alex Hosch

So far, we have delved into what we can learn from the way supply chains have been impacted by digital transformation, rapidly evolving generational preferences and shifts in the use of data and analytics. You have had to react in real-time to a lot of these unprecedented changes. But, what's next? Our experts discuss their predictions for the future — and what you can do to develop your organization and prepare for what is ahead.

Supply chain leaders reacted in real-time to the unprecedented challenges over the past 2 years, and they must leverage what they have learned to stay competitive as they continue navigating uncertainty. I recently connected with Alex Hosch, Ph.D., MBA, MPM, PMP, associate professor at DeVry University; and Issam Abu-Ghallowis, Ph.D., MBA, associate professor of economics at DeVry University, to discuss what the supply chain could look like 3-5 years from now, and more importantly, the steps supply chain leaders can take to prepare.

#1 Issam and Alex, I know you don't have a crystal ball, but what do you think the supply chain environment will look like a few years from now?

Alex:

Well, that all depends on the preparations we undertake today. We are not out of the woods, not by a long shot. That said, we've also learned an enormous amount about the stressors on the supply chain and where the weakest points are. That is of course specific to each industry, but it presents supply chain leaders with valuable insight into where future disruptions could occur and provides a roadmap for how to get in front of those potential issues.

“Those who have chosen to wait and see are likely to be behind when the next shock comes.”

So, take a hard look at your contingency plan, and if you don't have one, create one. Do a deep dive into your tracking systems, labor force, suppliers, etc. How did they fare during the pandemic? Have you addressed the weaknesses that were exposed? Do you have an actionable plan to shore up those elements in the event of the next pandemic or global crisis? Have a plan and redundancies in place for the next supply chain shock, because it will come.

Issam:

I agree with Alex. Every supply chain leader should update their contingency plans based on what we experienced throughout the pandemic. I would also add that we need to fully realize and appreciate the massive shift in consumption patterns that have happened in the last two years. How, where, and why we buy – everything from toilet paper to watching movies to going to college – has changed dramatically. Some of that purchasing behavior is shifting back to pre-pandemic patterns, but much of it hasn't. It was wishful thinking for supply chain leaders to hope that all of our purchasing habits would revert back to the predictable patterns prior to the pandemic. Those days are gone.

The challenge now for supply chain leaders is to explore what the next disruption could look like, whether from a pandemic or natural disaster or another global crisis and make sure they are prepared as they can be for it.

#2 Talk more about supply chain leaders who may have taken a “wait-and-see” approach. Who were counting on the “old norms” to re-establish themselves? How likely is that to happen?

Alex:

I don't recommend that. There is simply too much at stake, and the world has changed too much to hope, or expect, that life – and supply chains – will return to what they once were. The time is now to recognize and evaluate the ongoing risks, and opportunities, that the pandemic has exposed in the supply chain. There are both of course, and we have an immense amount of data and learnings to inform our future decisions. Those who have chosen to wait and see are likely to be behind when the next shock comes.

Issam:

We won't wake up and find ourselves in 2019 again. Some of the changes we've experienced have become permanent, others will continue to evolve. The point is to be ready. To use the data at your fingertips to bolster your people and processes both today and for whatever the future may bring. We should not live in fear or trepidation of what's to come, but rather choose to embrace what we now know to make our supply chains stronger and more resilient.

#3 So, I'm clearly hearing that supply chain leaders should plan for a future that could be very different from the past. Without knowing specifically what that will look like, what can supply chain leaders do now to prepare?

Alex:

Know your industry. How have things shifted? Are they likely to continue to shift? Take a deep dive into what you've been through as an organization. Look at the purchasing patterns of your customers, as covered in this report. How have they evolved? How will they

likely continue to evolve? Do you have the systems, people and processes in place to meet this demand? If not, take action.

All this analysis takes time. It also requires having the people on your team with the skills and capabilities to analyze the data and make meaningful insights from it all. Invest and upskill your team to ensure you have that capability. Data scientists and analysts are critical to supply chain teams going forward.

Issam:

One silver lining of the pandemic was that we witnessed an enormous amount of pent-up demand (i.e., money waiting to be spent). And people have spent it when they felt safe to do so ... on restaurants, travel, entertainment, the list goes on. According to a consumer trends report from McKinsey & Company, by October of 2021, nearly half of US consumers were engaging out-of-home, compared to a third back in February of that year.²² This percentage is undoubtedly increasing now that the mask mandates have largely subsided. This could represent a massive economic boom for many industries, assuming the supply chains of those industries are ready for it.

To be ready, supply chain leaders should study market trends, daily if they can. That data gathering will be hugely important. What does consumer spending look like in your industry? What do your social media feeds tell you? It's critical that supply chain leaders have the people with the skills to analyze that data in real time, as covered in this report.



“To be ready, supply chain leaders should study market trends, daily if they can.”

Alex:

Issam makes a great point, and I'd like to add that supply chain leaders must also “protect” their teams, their most valuable asset. By that I mean provide them with the tools and resources they can use to keep growing themselves, their teams, and organization. That means ensuring they have the right technology, equipment, training, and skills to get the job done wherever, and however, they need to. If nothing else, the pandemic has shown us the day-to-day reality of how we work can change incredibly quickly. We need to make sure our teams have the skills to be ready for the next “seismic” change or disruption. If not, everything could fall apart again.

Issam:

Let's also not ignore the reality of the “Great Resignation,” as it has come to be known. With the stresses that have been put on supply chain teams, burnout is a real threat. Back in November of 2021, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics reported 4.5 million quits—a record high of 3 percent. Many of those occurred in the supply chain sector.²³ It is for this reason that we should take the lessons gleaned from this trend and ensure that our

supply chain leaders are having meaningful conversations with their teams. Ask how they are doing. Do they feel valued? Supported? Do they have the training they need? If they are thinking about looking elsewhere, investigate why and work together to see what changes can be implemented to prevent attrition. These conversations are vital to retaining your top talent. And you'll need the best of the best for the new world of supply chain management.

Get in Touch



Where to From Here?

Before now, supply chain leaders have had to navigate uncertainty and react to changes in real-time. However, it is time to take a fresh, proactive approach. Get your team and processes ready to meet future demands by considering these insights from DeVry University thought leaders.

How Can DeVryWorks Help?

While readying your team for future demands on the supply chain, it may become evident that skills gaps exist on your team. This shouldn't be seen as an obstacle, but rather an opportunity to further develop your existing talent.

That is where DeVryWorks comes in. Our consultants can help analyze where the gaps exist on your team, create succession plans, and build learning pathways that leverage your workforce development plan. This means your team will have the diverse and future-ready skills needed to keep your business growing and innovating in this ever-evolving climate.

Ready to explore the way guided learning pathways from DeVryWorks can help prepare your team for the future?

Classes start every 8 weeks.

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