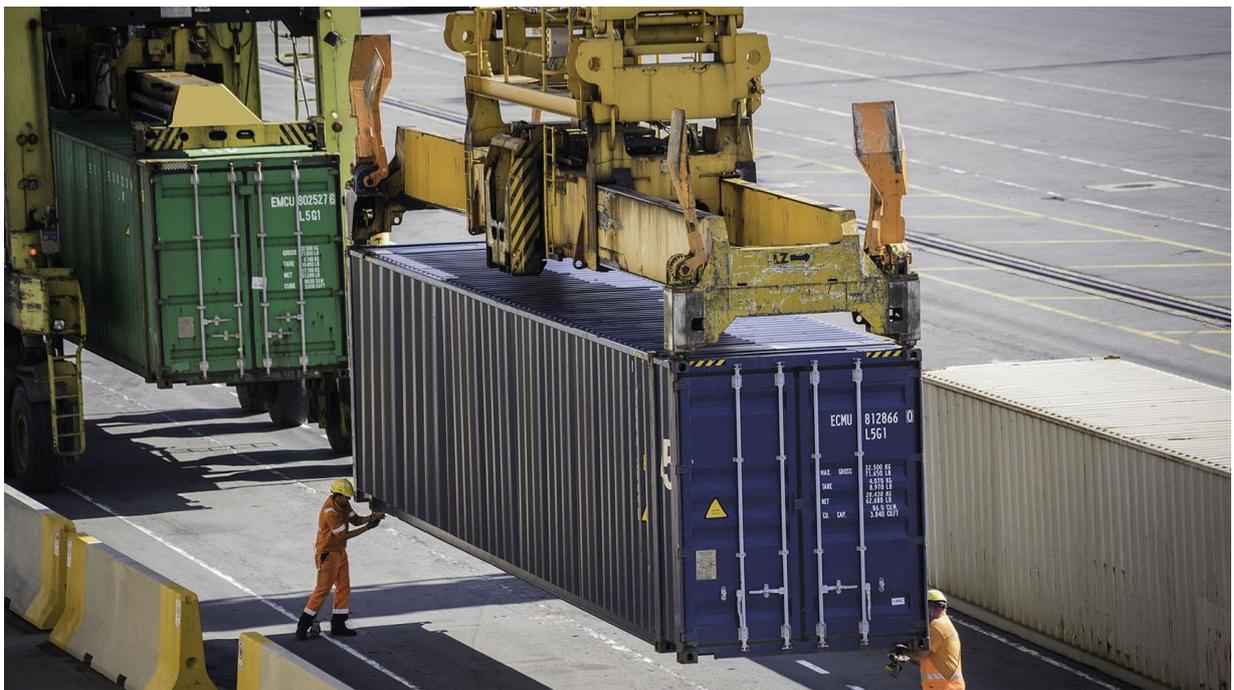


GUIDE

Optimum Agility: Managing the Supply Chain in a Post-Pandemic World



Overview

The impact of COVID-19 has been felt by businesses right across the world. Bringing with it economic uncertainty, unprecedented business challenges and major disruption, the long-term business effects of the global pandemic are as yet unknown, apart from the fact that a return to pre-pandemic conditions is highly unlikely.

For supply chains in particular, the events of 2020-2021 have shone a harsh spotlight on supply chain inefficiency, highlighting just how robust and resilient supply chains actually are, or as was the case for many, just how robust and resilient they aren't. Having weathered the storms of the last 12 – 18 months, the majority of businesses now have their sights firmly set on the future, taking the lessons learned during the pandemic and focussing on how best to manage the supply chain in a post-pandemic world.

Where previously supply chains were perceived to be good enough, the spread of COVID-19 showed up weaknesses in the supply chain, supply chains which proved to be far from 'good enough' when it came to dealing with unexpected challenges. The pandemic may have changed everything, but customers were still expecting orders to be fulfilled quickly and accurately. For businesses, longer lead times, higher return rates and increased costs only served to pile on even more pressure, highlighting weaknesses in their supply chains that had so far gone unnoticed.



System failure

In many cases, at the heart of these weaknesses, lay inefficient, outdated and disparate systems, unable to deal with the complex, highly pressurised supply chains that businesses across the world were faced with. Such systems at the heart of

organisations simply weren't robust or agile enough to deal with the rapid onset of change, not able to provide the depth and breadth of real-time information that businesses needed to respond quickly and effectively to the changing world around them. For too long, cost cutting measures have been the priority, measures which have perhaps been to the detriment of business resilience and the ability to stand firm in the face of adversity.

For many industries, the pandemic expedited increased digitisation almost overnight, with the rapid shift to homeworking forcing the hand of some organisations to adopt



certain technologies earlier than planned. When it comes to supply chain optimisation, this increased digitisation certainly isn't a bad thing, especially if it means a thorough review of existing systems and processes to fully

understand what is and isn't working, and how technology can help to remedy these issues not only in the short term, but on a long-term basis.

Bringing it all together

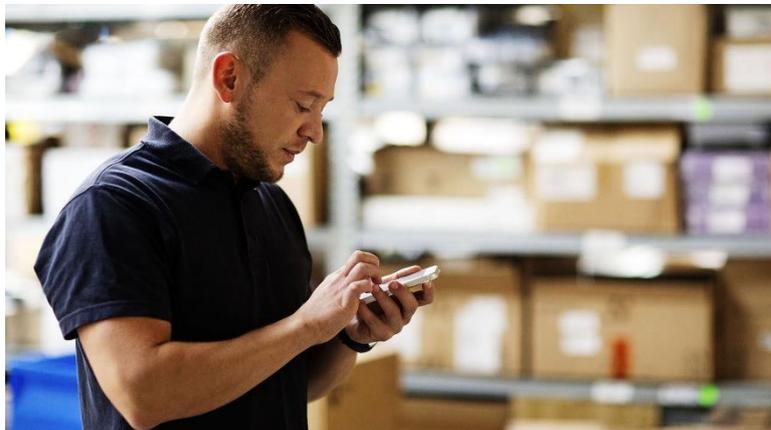
In the quest to ensure a seamless, risk-free supply chain that's resilient enough to withstand future volatility and uncertainty, more businesses are turning to technology for help, placing integrated and interconnected systems at the very heart of their operations. With a centralised supply chain management system in place, one with the capacity to integrate and interface with other third-party systems, businesses can achieve the truly joined-up working model that our post pandemic world requires.

Such systems pull together different parts of the business, unifying sales, purchasing and stock management functions with financial management capabilities too. This approach facilitates optimum levels of visibility across the supply chain, delivering comprehensive, business-wide information via a single solution. It's this visibility and, in turn, transparency that hold the key to becoming a truly agile business. This timely,

accurate business insight underpins rapid, robust decision-making, one of the core components of any agile business. At the same time, enhanced visibility ensures the easy identification of any looming issues or supply chain bottlenecks, enabling remedial action to be taken before there's too much of an impact on operations.

Accuracy and efficiency

Additionally, such insight across the supply chain informs more accurate forecasting and demand planning, two things which again are crucial to get right when building an agile business, able to cope with rapid shifts in demand. The precision of stock information available boosts the sales teams' confidence when taking orders too, safe in the knowledge that the stock's available to fulfil the orders, eradicating the need for awkward conversations with customers if there's a delay to order fulfilment and boosting customer satisfaction considerably.



Excess stock holding is also a thing of the past, resulting in considerable cost savings for the organisation. The transparency afforded by a centralised system makes for even further benefits too, with businesses able to track stock across multiple locations at any time.

The right systems can eliminate many time-consuming manual processes, freeing-up teams to focus on more value-add activities and creating a more autonomous, intelligent supply chain. Effective, accurate stock management enables the automation of customer orders too, further increasing customer satisfaction with shorter lead times and rapid delivery guaranteed.

Built for growth

At the same time, systems need to be able to grow alongside the business. An organisation can implement a very effective supply chain management solution but if



it's inflexible and unable to scale in-line with changing business requirements, the very solution that's designed to optimise operations, could be the very thing that holds the business back. Agility and scalability go hand-in-hand, giving the business the

flexibility and capability needed to keep pace with market conditions and consumer demands.

For the majority of businesses, the information they need to optimise their supply chains is already there, but it's bringing it all together that must be the priority. By reviewing existing processes and systems and pinpointing where they're lacking, organisations can implement the right technology solutions to boost supply chain resilience even in the face of unprecedented adversity. It's vital that firms maintain any commitment to supply chain optimisation born out of the global pandemic, focussing on increasing efficiency and visibility. Only then it is possible to boost organisational agility, standing firm even in the face of the most challenging situations today, tomorrow and beyond.

July 2021

This document was created by Pegasus Software, an award-winning supplier of accounting and business software. Using our 35+ years of experience to help businesses navigate supply chain management in a post-pandemic climate.

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