

THE TOP TEN TRENDS FOR SUPPLY CHAIN AND LOGISTICS IN 2017



2017 is here and the supply chain and logistics landscape is excited to gain insights into what's in store for them. The top 10 trending aspects of the coming year reflect a mix of data-enabled technologies, approaches, solutions, and parameters. Often charged with being the slowest adopters of change, supply chain stakeholders can certainly look forward to a supersonic drive across the landscape empowered by the benefits they can derive from these trendsetters for the year 2017.

So let's take a quick peek at the game changers of 2017:

BOTing and Digitizing Operations from within and Outside the Four Walls

Although hardware devices that normalize data are commonplace, modern demand-driven supply chains will seek lighter weight, more flexible and, most important, scalable software systems that can normalize data, make it accessible, and support effective transformation of the aggregated data into performance-enabling information. The use of desktops for system interaction will dwindle, being increasingly replaced by mobiles of different shapes and forms. Chatbots will start popping up in daily operations and planning. The year 2017 will be signified by the start of the "end of data entry" era.

Supply Chain Collaboration and Visibility

Supply chain visibility (SCV) is increasingly becoming an area of focus. SCV adoption is no longer a "nice-to-have" option for supply chains. SCV adoption rates are rising across industry segments, with manufacturing supply chains leading the way at the rate of almost 20%. In 2017, visibility initiatives will be closely aligned with business drivers and risk management delivering focus and realizing remarkable initial returns. Command centers will also make an entry into logistics operations in 2017 in a big way.

Smart Data, Smart Decisions - Managing Big and Not-So-Big Data

Business intelligence tools have been around for a while; however, supply chain stakeholders are still forced to rely on constrained IT resources to access any required report. Modern demand-driven supply chains require easy-to-use tools that empower everyone in the organization to conduct their own analysis and create their own reports and dashboards with data aggregated from multiple sources. Flexible report and intelligent analytics creation by the end users themselves will find roots in 2017.

Automating Manual Processes

The digitization of supply chain certainly automates the arduous task of data collection, aggregation, and sharing across machines and systems. However, a surprising number of supply chains still use spreadsheets for their core operations, planning, and inventory management. Modern demand-driven supply chains will automate these manual activities in 2017 faster than ever before and earn quicker returns on their technology investments.

Extended Multi-Enterprise-Wide Visibility

Visibility at all levels is becoming increasingly critical for innovation, competitive value, synchronizing activities, traceability and many more functionalities. As customer and customization demands increase, an increasing number of modern demand-driven supply chains will rely on greater visibility at the value stream, supply chain, and extended enterprise levels to drive increased performance. Command centers will start at local and regional levels and global consolidation across the complete ecosystems will start maturing in 2017 to deliver extended multi-enterprise-level visibility. In the world of 'Sharing Economy' this is a must have now.

Real-Time Communication Processes

A single version of truth generates a more consistent, lean, and waste-free supply chain. An option that can enable this objective is a visual factory information system that can connect to any data source and display graphical visualizations configurable to the individual user, work center, plant or multi-enterprise level. Order status, system alerts, stock buffers, KPIs, and other details

can be made accessible to everyone - anytime, from anywhere - providing a single source of real-time information. The year 2017 will see this dream coming true, although it may take years to encompass the majority of the supply chains. The benefits accrued will drive investments to further levels in this area. This cycle is likely to be initiated in 2017.

Compliance and Traceability

Modern demand-driven supply chains need to keep a tight rein on the statutory obligations that track and trace process flows using serialization. Such workflow systems need to be highly configurable to adjustments as mandated requirements change and be digitized to easily pull data from other systems, including historical, asset management, and inventory management. Non-compliance in this scenario is a risk that no business can afford; hence, automation, which is currently low in this area, will make an entry in 2017.

Actionable Metrics

More modern demand-driven supply chains are turning their focus toward actionable metrics grounded in lean, constraints management, and Six Sigma principles. Actionable metrics are operational indicators that can be acted on to improve flow, throughput, and ultimately achieve a perfect delivery. Digitization will drive this area in 2017.

Solutions vs. Systems

As more technology options become available, more supply chains seem to be wrestling between the value of investing in best-of-breed solutions that meet specific functional requirements and the value of large, multi-functional systems (ERPs). Solution-based applications will push out the large ERP systems, and integrated role-based solutions will be the customers' preference in 2017.

Cloud Technology and SaaS Delivery

Modern demand-driven supply chains are already looking at the cloud to extend, or add value to, the existing legacy system investments. Rather than ripping and replacing large systems, supply chains will augment them with highly flexible, scalable, and interoperable cloud-enabled solutions that can be configured to work exactly as desired - without exorbitant customization fees. In 2017, these hybrid cloud environments will be a popular option to validate the value proposition of cloud computing.

Supply chain stakeholders certainly have an exciting 2017 to look forward to. But with the long list of transformations awaiting the landscape, from bots implementation to data-enabled visibility and actionable metrics, the ecosystem needs a trustworthy technology partner with proven experience in these areas to help them make a seamless transition from good to the best. Time has almost run out - so grab your prized tech partner who will help you stay ahead of these trends in the coming year.

Wish you an amazing ride across 2017, with loads of accomplishments throughout your journey!



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