

Putting People First: Building the future supply chain workforce



It's a new era for supply chains.

Humans and intelligent machines are fast becoming teammates, collaborating for business outcomes that have never been possible. The result? Companies can fundamentally change how they engineer, plan, source, manufacture, supply, service and reclaim/recycle goods.

Seismic shifts are rocking the supply chain and its workforce.

New skills and roles on the horizon

With increasing digitization and automation, new skills will be needed.

Only **27%**

of supply chain leaders agree that their function has all the talent needed to meet current supply chain performance requirements.

Source: Supply Chain Executive Report, Gartner

7 in 10

leading companies are building a talent pool of AI and machine learning skills to enable real-time monitoring of manufacturing operations.

Source: Accenture Research on Supply Chain [unpublished raw data]

+50%

of supply chain executives expect to have a new technology leadership role reporting directly to the chief supply chain officer by 2025.

Source: Gartner Predicts 2021: Supply Chain Technology



Big changes in existing supply chain roles

Many existing supply chain roles will evolve from a focus on executing manual tasks to one of monitoring, interpreting and guiding the work of intelligent machines.

How supply chain roles in three key domains will likely change



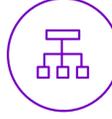
Procurement

Procurement roles will require business acumen paired with entrepreneurial, collaboration and analytical skills.



Manufacturing

Factory managers will have far more information at their disposal and they'll need to be extremely adept at using it to make the right decisions.



Planning

AI algorithms will make most decisions by themselves, while humans react to alerts or anything the machine can't decide.

Digital transformation speed is outpacing people.

64%

of supply chain executives report the pace of digital transformation is accelerating.

Source: Accenture Technology Vision 2021

81%

agree they're facing technological changes at unprecedented speed and scale.

But many companies have moved so quickly they haven't engaged their workforce enough as part of their initiatives.

Only 38% of supply chain executives feel their workforce is mostly or completely ready to leverage the technology tools provided to them.

Trepid employee adoption of expensive new technologies can prevent companies from capitalizing on new opportunities and leaves substantial value on the table.

Another complication: As the older generation of workers retires, companies lose valuable "historical knowledge" vital to how the supply chain operates.

Source: Accenture Business Futures 2021

Leading companies put people first.

How do companies prepare their supply chain workforce for this future? The key is to put people first—before technology.

01

Develop new skills at scale using AI and analytics

Leading companies are using advanced digital tools to take an in-depth look into what it takes to build new in-demand skills, both within and between industries.

02

Foster the traditional skills that are still valuable to the organization

Leaders are mindful of how important some existing skills are. Ensuring access to institutional knowledge is critical, especially for traditional skills that haven't been automated, and may never be.

03

Involve people in initiatives from the start

Engage employees and give them ownership from the beginning, especially those who will be most impacted by the change.



It's time to start preparing your people for tomorrow.

The human + machine era is upon us. Creating the ideal collaboration that harnesses the power of human ingenuity and intelligent machines—and gets the best out of each—is essential for companies to truly capitalize on digital technologies and gain competitive advantage to win in the years ahead.