4 Reasons Why Orchestration Is Invaluable to Your Supply Chain

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Today's supply chains are challenged by siloed decision making, poor visibility, and inconsistent responsiveness. With greater demand volatility, external disruptions, and increased fragmentation, supply chain management is more complex than ever before. As companies attempt to manage in this environment, orchestration may be their most useful tool. Following are four industry trends that require a "call to action" for digitally enabled supply chain orchestration.

1 Consumer expectations are changing rapidly.

Companies are facing increased competition for the same customers. Rapid speed-to-market requirements and faster cycle times have assumed greater importance, placing stress on supply chains. As a result, many companies have deployed digital ordering models, such as mobile apps, and have witnessed accelerated consumer adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic. These apps enable consumers to quickly interact with the company and expect a similar speed of response in return, requiring supply chains to be more nimble than ever before.

In addition, recent trends have shown that, in the post-pandemic world, consumers are increasingly basing buying decisions on such factors as convenience and customer service. As consumer patterns continue to change in this way, digitalization is critical to effective supply chain planning and agility.

2 Supply chains face supply and capacity constraints.

The pandemic highlighted how external forces can disrupt supply chains. The truth is that supply chains regularly face disruptions due to inclement weather, port congestion, and much more.

Recent incidents highlight how vulnerable supply chains are to disruption from external factors. In 2021 alone, an ice storm in Texas crippled the state's electrical utility, while a spate of cyberattacks jeopardized fuel supplies as well as shut down food manufacturers and warehouses. Between trade disputes, product shortages, geographical bottlenecks, and a scarcity of physical storage space, supply chain players are dealing with constraints at unprecedented levels.

With frequent disruptions appearing to be the new norm and the cost and time involved in mitigating them after the fact, the need for advanced detection and proactive measures has never been greater.

3 Logistics and distribution face new complexities and labor shortages.

Between consumer preferences and the complexities of capacity and supply sits logistics. Like other elements of the supply chain, it also has its challenges.

Shortages of truck drivers and warehouse labor are burdening the distribution process, a phenomenon which preceded COVID-19, and which, like so much else, was exacerbated by the pandemic. Not enough workers are available to fulfill the needs of logistics providers, especially as the economy attempts to recover from pandemic lows.

But logistics challenges aren't limited to labor shortages, nor are they all pandemic-related. In recent years, supply chains have also had to contend with ocean carrier and intermodal capacity shortages, both of which have made it more difficult to import goods and transport raw materials and products from seaports to inland locations for manufacturing and distribution.

The blockage of the Suez Canal earlier this year also upended the logistics picture and highlighted the necessity for supply chains to be agile in executing contingency plans.

4 Supply chain information is siloed and fragmented.

Many supply chains rely heavily on a network of trading partners to ensure successful fulfillment and flow of goods. Information flow is also critical to the success of supply chain execution, responsiveness, and agility. As supply chains become increasingly fragmented there is an increased potential for gaps in the flow of critical information.

Inevitable disruptions expose visibility gaps and underscore the necessity for new methods to digitally connect the supply chain in support of orchestrating collaborative, network responses.

The Armada Solution

Profitable Response Orchestration is a new offering from Armada, a provider of supply chain management solutions for the foodservice and other industries. Profitable Response Orchestration is the new standard for supply chain management combining extraordinary service with leading-edge technology. It enables end-to-end visibility and virtual stakeholder collaboration to optimize network responsiveness thereby helping companies meet their objectives.

Profitable Response Orchestration transforms data into intelligence, enabling supply chains to respond rapidly, even proactively, to potential disruptions. "There are many supply chain stakeholders with lots of variables," notes Joe Wildes, Armada's chief innovation officer. "They need orchestration to play together in harmony."

Armada's team of supply chain professionals brings a deep understanding of the industries they serve to supplement a client's internal team. Additionally, Armada's clients need not invest in developing or acquiring the advanced technology necessary to support their business.

Using the latest technologies and methodologies, Profitable Response Orchestration allows for new approaches. The Profitable Response Orchestration model connects the supply chain in new and effective ways leveraging emerging technology says Wildes, "this promotes effective orchestration of responses that optimize fulfillment across all network nodes."

Its high-touch service model and digital platform enable supply chains to detect disruptions early. "Getting even 24 hours ahead of a potential disruption or demand spike," says Loraine Yalch, Armada's chief commercial officer, "gives you an opportunity to mitigate rather than react after the fact."
"We execute contingencies proactively through virtual collaboration among supply chain partners," adds Wildes. "That is a step-change in supply chain management."