



Playbook

From Integration to Unification: The New Standard of Supply Chain Excellence

Create a future-ready supply chain by moving beyond fragmented processes toward truly unified, intelligent networks.

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Unifying the supply chain for the age of intelligence

As industries accelerate toward autonomy, success depends not just on adopting more technology but on aligning every decision, dataset, and partner under one cohesive framework.

Through this report, you'll gain actionable insights into how unification transforms complexity into clarity—creating the foundation for agility, precision, scalability, and resilience.

All data in this report is from Incisiv's "Intelligent Supply Chain Transformation" survey. Detailed survey methodology and firmographics are available at the end of the report.

Rethink “good enough”

Uncover why incremental improvements are no longer enough, and how unified operations expose hidden inefficiencies to unlock new performance levels.

Close the intelligence gap

Explore the path to true AI readiness, which relies on unified systems where intelligence can act on shared context rather than isolated insights.

Accelerate your competitive advantage

See how unified platforms drive exponential gains in speed, visibility, and performance, compounding benefits that fragmented systems can't match.



Empower your people

See how unification reduces cognitive overload, captures institutional knowledge, and enables teams to focus on strategic growth.

Unify your data foundation

Learn why unified data is the backbone of agility, resilience, and real-time decision-making across multi-enterprise networks.

Build for long-term readiness

Understand why sustainable transformation begins with composable, stable operations that support continuous innovation.

Integration complexity is the silent killer of operational excellence

Modern supply chains depend on connected systems, yet most are held together by fragile integrations. Each new link adds friction, turning what should be real-time coordination into delayed reactions. The result is a patchwork of tools that slow decisions, create inefficiencies, and drain teams of focus.



51% of supply chain leaders say their employees spend too much time on repetitive or routine tasks.

Picture a cross-dock where one system shows inventory available while another commits it for shipment. Updates refresh hours later—after trucks are dispatched or left waiting for loads that never arrived. This isn't a process failure; it's an architecture problem. The answer isn't more integration, but unification. A unified data platform aligns information, decisions, and execution, removing complexity instead of multiplying it.

The growing web of disconnections

Traditional integration models connect processes but rarely synchronize them. Data is processed in batches rather than in real-time, creating blind spots that ripple through planning, fulfillment, and customer experience.

Complexity multiplies with growth

As organizations expand across multiple facilities, systems, and partners, integration layers pile up, each one adding new latency and risk. What was meant to streamline operations ends up slowing them down.

When people become the glue

When systems can't communicate effectively, employees become the bridge between them. Hours spent reconciling mismatched data replace time spent improving performance, making people the integration layer instead of the innovation driver.

The workforce crisis isn't about headcount, but about overload

The real workforce shortage isn't just about numbers; it's about fragmented knowledge. Years of expertise are locked within individuals who compensate for disconnected systems through personal intuition. As these experts retire, organizations lose not only people but the shared intelligence needed to keep supply chains resilient. Unified systems can capture and scale this expertise, turning institutional knowledge into an enduring advantage.

Capture experience into systems

Veteran managers know every pattern, carrier, and workaround, but this insight lives outside the system. Without a unified operational foundation, their knowledge remains inaccessible to the rest of the organization.

Reduce cognitive overload to restore productivity

With multiple systems to reconcile, even skilled planners spend more time fixing inconsistencies than driving improvement. Unification eliminates redundant effort, allowing teams to refocus on innovation and strategy.

Turn experience into lasting continuity

Without unified systems to capture and transfer knowledge, every retirement resets progress. Unification preserves operational wisdom, enabling the next generation to build on proven experience instead of starting from scratch.



73% of supply chain leaders say their employees lack the time and energy to handle workload demands.

57% of organizations struggle to retain skilled professionals, and **44%** face difficulties scaling expertise across multiple locations.



The illusion of efficiency is breaking down, and cracks are showing

What appears efficient often conceals fragile, manual effort. Executive dashboards may show green KPIs, but behind the scenes, performance depends on human coordination and disconnected systems. When disruption strikes, these hidden inefficiencies surface instantly. Unification resolves these cracks, replacing reactive patchwork with real, end-to-end performance.

Challenge the ROI illusion

Many organizations pursue transformation expecting rapid returns, but progress stalls when legacy systems can't scale. They measure success through isolated metrics instead of operational resilience. True ROI comes from rebuilding the foundation, not accelerating outdated processes.

Uncover false stability

Steady performance can be deceptive. "Good enough" systems appear to work until disruption reveals their dependency on manual fixes. Unification removes this fragility by synchronizing decisions, data, and execution across the network.

Look beyond deceptive KPIs

Standard metrics mask complexity. Targets for service levels, cost, and cycle times often conceal underlying inefficiencies, such as email chains managing exceptions, notes tracking shipments, and hours lost reconciling data.



79% of organizations expect transformation ROI within two years, yet only **52%** achieve measurable value within six months of deploying their AI-powered, cloud-native platform.

40% of organizations report that their teams lack real-time insights for making fast decisions.





The unified data platform isn't optional; it's foundational

Supply chains run on information, but when that information is scattered across disconnected systems, every decision becomes a best guess. A warehouse may release orders based on outdated carrier data while transportation teams remain unaware of dock delays. These gaps slow performance and compound into network-wide disruption. A unified data foundation eliminates these disconnects, aligning every decision to real-time reality.

Replace fragmentation with resilience

When data exists in silos, small inconsistencies quickly scale into costly disruptions. Service levels drop, costs rise, and visibility reduces. Unification replaces this fragility with resilience by creating a single source of truth.

Remove blind spots across silos

Without real-time visibility into supplier constraints, carrier capacity, or customer shifts, operations rely on outdated signals. Unified visibility eliminates these blind spots, allowing operations to run smoothly.

Drive measurable gains through unification

Unified data delivers double-digit improvements in service reliability and cycle times—not by adding tools, but by aligning systems around shared intelligence. Integration only connects data; unification synchronizes it across the enterprise for lasting agility and long-term relevance.



56% of supply chain leaders cite integration complexity as a leading barrier to modernization.

67% of supply chain leaders say their teams struggle due to increasing business complexity and speed.



Real platforms unify, everything else just integrates

The market is flooded with “platforms” that promise unification but deliver complexity under a new name. Most are stitched-together systems sharing only a user interface, not a foundation. A truly unified platform operates from a single data model, a unified decision engine, and a consistent user experience that keeps every process connected and every decision aligned.



Only 16% of organizations have a fully unified supply chain platform across all functions. The remaining 84% still make decisions with incomplete information.

When integration stops at connecting systems instead of unifying them, intelligence remains fragmented. Automation without alignment only accelerates inefficiency, and while systems may optimize individual steps, they still miss the bigger picture. True unification connects every operational node, enabling AI to act on live, shared context.

Unification begins with a single source of truth

When functions still rely on separate databases or batch syncs, you're managing integration, not running a platform. Real unification starts with one shared data model that ensures accuracy, trust, and speed across every decision.

Composability defines future readiness

A real platform scales without reengineering. If every new capability requires another connector, you're adding fragility, not flexibility. Integrated systems grow brittle with each expansion, diverting time and resources from innovation.

Integration disguised as innovation

Many vendors rebrand acquired tools under a shared interface and call it a platform. Beneath the surface lie multiple databases, workflows, and support teams. This only shifts integration pain from IT to operations, hiding complexity behind a uniform design.



AI adoption exposes a readiness gap you can't ignore

Every organization wants to harness AI, but many are layering intelligence on unstable foundations. Deploying algorithms without fixing underlying data and process gaps leads to insights that can't be acted on. When intelligence runs on fragmented systems, even advanced models deliver only partial truths. True readiness begins with unification, where data, decisions, and execution operate within a shared context.

Connect prediction to execution

Most enterprises use predictive AI for planning and forecasting, but few connect those insights to automated action. Intelligence without synchronized execution turns foresight into frustration. A unified foundation links prediction to performance, closing the gap between insight and impact.

Break intelligence out of silos

When AI systems operate within functional boundaries, they optimize isolated processes but miss broader dependencies. A delay upstream or a change in customer demand can have unforeseen consequences. Unification extends visibility across the network, ensuring AI responds to real conditions.

Make readiness enterprise-wide

True AI readiness is about preparing the organization so intelligence can scale across every function, partner, and decision. Without unified data, governance, and execution layers operating in sync, AI can't scale beyond experiments.



71% of organizations report that their teams use predictive AI for forecasting, but **only 14%** have autonomous agents for execution.

50% of organizations say that their limited internal AI/ML expertise acts as a barrier to modernization.





BUILD FOR LONG-TERM READINESS

Sustainable transformation starts with the right structure

Transformation isn't a single leap; it's a sequence. The most resilient organizations advance one layer at a time, building stability before intelligence and structure before autonomy. Success depends on strong operational foundations that support innovation without disruption. Skipping these stages only magnifies inefficiency.

Build foundation before intelligence

Real transformation begins with stability. By unifying data, standardizing workflows, and strengthening core operations, organizations create the base for intelligence to thrive. Without this stability, AI becomes another layer of complexity rather than a capability.

Align intelligence with structure

AI is only as effective as the systems it depends on. When data is outdated or processes are inconsistent, even the most advanced tools make unreliable decisions. Unified, structured operations ensure that insights lead to action.

Use composability to sustain progress

Composable systems enable transformation to unfold without disruption. By starting where the need is greatest and expanding in controlled phases, organizations scale success naturally—supporting continuous innovation and long-term relevance.



59% of organizations plan to complete their supply chain transformation across warehouse operations within 12 months.

Only 5% of organizations have fully achieved supply chain transformation across their AI-native decisioning layer.





ACCELERATE YOUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Unification compounds advantage, while fragmentation compounds risk

Fragmented systems slow thousands of micro-decisions every day. Teams toggle between warehouse, transportation, and order systems to solve issues that should take minutes. Unified operations resolve the same exceptions instantly, with shared context and automated recommendations. Over time, that consistency becomes a structural advantage, while fragmentation multiplies cost and delay.

Turn speed into momentum

When every decision draws from the same real-time data, progress compounds. Each quick, accurate resolution fuels the next, widening the gap between unified and fragmented operators.

Earn reliability to strengthen networks

Unified operators earn trust by coordinating in real-time and delivering results predictably. That reliability attracts the strongest partners—suppliers, carriers, and customers—creating network effects that amplify performance and resilience.

Eliminate the fragmentation tax

In disconnected environments, every task requires rework, validation, or manual correction. These hidden taxes drain efficiency and scale with every new system added. Unification removes this friction, freeing capacity for innovation and growth.



69% of supply chain leaders define success from modernization initiatives as enhanced data accuracy and visibility, and **63%** define it as faster speed of decision-making.

44% of organizations would like to prioritize transportation cost savings using AI, and **35%** would like to prioritize predicting and responding to network disruptions.



The competitive edge belongs to the unified

The market isn't waiting. Nearly three-fourths of organizations have already modernized or are in the process of transforming their supply chains. The rest are falling out of step with the pace of change and losing their competitive edge. Unified operators now coordinate entire networks in real time, achieving the predictability, resilience, and agility that fragmented systems can't sustain. The era of network-based collaboration is defining who leads and who follows.



Advantage no longer lies within the four walls of your enterprise. It comes from the strength of your ecosystem and your ability to act as one network. Organizations that have unified their operations are already realizing double-digit gains in cost, speed, and reliability. These structural advantages make traditional competition unsustainable.

Here's what supply chain leaders must now focus on:

Act today, not tomorrow: Momentum compounds, and each delay widens the gap. Begin aligning systems, partners, and data around shared visibility today, before structural disadvantages become permanent.

Think beyond internal excellence: Competitive advantage now comes from multi-enterprise coordination. Building a unified platform will determine precision and long-term relevance.

Anchor every innovation in unification: Whether deploying AI, automation, or analytics, ensure each initiative strengthens the same foundational platform, so every advancement builds on the last, and intelligence and execution grow together.

The transformation is already underway. The market will consolidate around network orchestrators, while fragmented players are left to follow. Those who unify now will lead what comes next.





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Survey firmographics

Incisiv conducted a hybrid online + computer aided telephonic interview (CATI) survey of **133** executives in the **USA**. The study was conducted in **September 2025**.

Respondents by role

VP/CXO level	64%
Director	36%

Respondents by industry

Automotives	17%
Consumer goods	17%
Life sciences	16%
Logistics service providers	16%
Manufacturing	17%
Retail	17%

Respondents by implementation maturity

Running pilots	28%
In active rollout	38%
Fully transitioned	34%