



Fewer Supply Chain Leaders Feel Ready for the Future

Supply chain leaders say they're less prepared this year as disruptions pile up and decisions get harder.

Supply chains have become pretty unpredictable. Ever since the global pandemic tore the cover off of the industry and educated the general public on how supply chains and logistics actually work (or as was the case in that situation, don't work), more attention is being paid to these global networks.

All of that attention also brought a steady stream of new reports, all focused on key supply chain pain points, strategies and outlooks. And every time a new disruption emerges—the war in the Middle East and subsequent oil price hikes being two of the most visible right now—it sets off a string of headlines, analyst notes and corporate responses.

Companies reassess sourcing, rethink inventory levels and look for ways to reduce exposure to the next shock. Blue Yonder set out to capture that thinking in a new survey, which found that the news cycle, tariff whiplash and world events have left many supply chain leaders with a severe case of decision fatigue. Most of them (66%) are also concerned about the future and focusing harder on improving their organizations' productivity and efficiency.

Key Trends to Watch

For its second-annual *Supply Chain Compass*, Blue Yonder focused on several core areas of interest to supply chain leaders. The report outlines the key strategic priorities for about 700 supply chain professionals across North America and Europe. The research found that fewer supply chain leaders believe they are ready for the future now (66%) than last year (73%). Amid widespread uncertainty, leaders' top two priorities are improving efficiency and productivity and achieving faster, better decision-making.

Blue Yonder also looked at the 46% of leaders who identified as highly optimistic about the future of their supply chains to find any differences in performance or outcomes over those who were not highly optimistic. "Confidence correlates strongly with expected financial performance," the company points out in its report.

"The most optimistic leaders are doing things differently, taking an end-to-end approach, collaborating and breaking down silos, and investing in technology, particularly in AI

and unified data platforms," it continues. "As a result, they're much less concerned about disruption or the pace of technological change."

Addressing Top Priorities

When asked what their top three strategic priorities are for the upcoming year, the highest ranking (at 35%) answer across all organizations surveyed was "improving efficiency/productivity." Among the report's other key findings:

- Only 48% of less optimistic leaders believe they are ready for the future, compared to 87% of optimistic leaders.
- Improving efficiency and productivity is the top strategic priority for 2026, selected by 35% of leaders, followed by faster, better decision-making, which moved up significantly this year to claim the number two spot after only ranking seventh in last year's report.
- While supply chain leaders felt more equipped to handle technological threats or operational issues, they are slowest to be able to effectively respond to geopolitical disruptions.
- Only 20% of leaders can develop and deploy a response within 24 hours.
- Another 38% take longer than a week to develop and deploy a response to geopolitical disruptions.
- AI adoption is widening: 45% are using machine learning and predictive AI today, 24% are using generative AI (double from 2025), and only 8% are using agentic AI.

"The top five priorities of supply chain leaders highlight a focus on fundamentals and resilience in the face of an increasingly complex and unstable environment," Blue Yonder says. "Becoming faster, leaner, more profitable, and more cost effective is the name of the game, but that's becoming more difficult than ever, as leaders have to manage this at the same time as withstanding constant disruptions."