

Creating a Risk Resilient Supply Chain with Paige Cox from Everstream

Paige: [00:00:00] I think the next chapter is clear. The future supply chain will need to be intelligent, but it needs to be adaptive and measurable. So intelligent because AI and data can turn billions of signals into foresight. Adaptive because companies can pivot quickly across plan stores, make, and deliver. Measurable because resilience will be judging outcomes, revenue protected, disruption avoided, ESG strengthened.

Richard: I'm Richard Howell, and this is The Future of Supply Chain, a podcast where we discuss hot topics, best practices, and the latest innovations in today's global business. In today's episode, I'll be discussing a very hot topic of geopolitical and economic uncertainty and the impact on global supply chains, and I could not think of a better person to be joined by to discuss this than my long-term friend and former colleague, Paige Cox from Everstream. So, Paige, welcome to the podcast [00:01:00]. Welcome back to the podcast. Actually, you've been on it before.

Paige: Thank you, Richard. Yeah, it's great to be back. I know it's always great to catch up. Thank you for having me.

Richard: No problem. Maybe you can introduce yourself a little bit and tell us a little bit about Everstream.

Paige: Sure. So, I'm the Chief Product Officer at Everstream Analytics. I think Richard, you and I go way back, so back in our SAP days working on the supply chain and the Business Network from Ariba and Procurement to Logistics, Business Network to Asset Intelligence, we saw firsthand how powerful it is to connect the ecosystems that at scale. But we also know that connectivity alone doesn't shield you from disruptions, right? And that's what drew me to Everstream because the our mission at Everstream is to really move companies from firefighting to actually engineering resilience. So, [00:02:00] currently what we really focus on is also what we do is through three core offerings. One part is about real time sensing over 120 plus disruption types. So it's a solution area we call reveal. And another pillar we focus on is called Explore. That is more focusing on predictive supplier and network risk sensing and scoring. Last but not least, we also do multi-tier transparency. So we call it Discover for that AI power sub tier mapping. What it makes our work is a

combination of scale and expertise. So we build a data mode so that over 10 years, a decade of history over 128 billion plus data points, right? And then using really agent AI agents to refining product flows and sub [00:03:00] tier, but on top of that is our supply chain analyst that really adding the test context, that machine cannot. So, so something that blend is why we work with the complex supply chains like Siemens, cutting storage by 40%, or Nissan saving millions that avoided a disruption. So we focus on resilience, so that creates measurable business value.

Richard: I love the description there and how you combine the technology and people, because I think many companies are thinking, how can I leverage technology? How can I leverage AI? Sometimes they're thinking it'll replace people, but you still need people to make certain decisions and have that experience that you mentioned.

Paige: Yeah. It's that task, the context, right? So it, because the supply chain. Like what is really a disruption? Would a disruption really become a risk and what is [00:04:00] actually the real impact to your specific supply chain? I think you still need that human expertise, that elements on top.

Richard: But we certainly have no shortage of disruptions at the moment between ever changing tariffs, multiple conflicts around the world. There's lots of geopolitical and economic instability right now. So what are the biggest concerns of effects on supply chain that you are seeing at the moment?

Paige: I mean, we both have seen a lot over the years. The event itself isn't always the hardest part. It's the ripple effect, which is always unknown, right. A conflict, let's say a tariff or sanction, one part of the world can definitely cascade across the suppliers and across the logistics and customers everywhere. Most companies stop right now at tier one and most sophisticated or more digitalized. The [00:05:00] companies is only at tier one and half, right? But risks rarely stop at tier one or one half. That is where adaptive sensing comes in and can you tie early warning signals into planning tools like SAP IBP, for example. So you've got time to act before the disruption reaches your value chain.

Richard: That is the most important thing is that butterfly effect of that the butterfly flaps its wings, and there's a tsunami somewhere at the other side of the world around that multi-tier supply chain. So maybe you can share an example where geopolitical tension disrupted a major supply chain, and could the effect have been avoided with better insights, better visibility, better prediction, and.

Paige: Yeah, so maybe let's just talk about the Red Sea, 'cause it's like everybody's still fresh with the Red Sea crisis and how that brings [00:06:00] this topic to home. So when the Red Sea crisis happened to shifted or rerouted around the cape, and then basically weeks are added to the transition time and cost spiking. And the signals were there but only companies are linking them to their material flow and order flow could really respond in time. So, and now, like with the average range data ingested in natively inside SAP planning, like IBP planners could actually immediately see what factories or what SKUs or what customer were exposed to that and being able to run scenarios the same day and rerouting, buffering, or shifting production. Right? So I think you cannot stop geopolitical shocks, but you can absolutely shape your impact with your more forward looking foresights

Richard: Right. That highlights the the wonderful combination of the partnership we have because SAP is known for the [00:07:00] business system, the business data. But Everstream brings the intangible data, the real time changes because we plan in the perfect world and we execute in the real world. And Everstream brings the real world to life in the business system. Maybe we can talk about another topic that's quite hot at the moment. I'm guessing that if when we look back at 2025, the word of the year will probably be tariff. So how have the recent tariff negotiations, how does that fit into the broader picture of economic and geopolitical disruption and its impact on the supply chain?

Paige: Yeah, I always think tariffs are funny. They're coming, but you don't know where they will land until it's the very last minute. So they can definitely flip sourcing costs overnight.

Richard: I sometimes think the person that's implementing the tariffs doesn't know when they're coming until right.

Paige: That's true. And I think that [00:08:00] this is, tariffs is just the one trigger. And but essentially we're talking about diversification of sourcing and the supply chain design of my supply base. So if we could leverage historical trade And supplier data company can. Stress test the sourcing against the different tariff scenarios and have backup plans ready before new rules hit. So, leaders don't just see tariffs as threats. They use them as chance to rebalance resilience because I think like right now you only hear what's happening, but you don't know what the is gonna happen, right? So one policy comes, another policy kind of overact to that that, So, you can't just localize all your supply chain overnight or completely changing your sourcing behavior or design. But I think what you can do is to start a building that predictive diversification and

that's where [00:09:00] you can handle these kind of exceptions. So it might be terrible for this year. It might be something else next year. Right.

Richard: That's a very important point because tariffs are just the latest disruption. And they won't be the last disruption. It will be

something

Paige: that's right.

Richard: something else next year. And there'll always be another disruption. And designing your networks are key then. And as you mentioned, having multiple sourcing strategies, inventory optimization policies, et cetera. And with that in mind, what do you see the role of a collaborative business network in building supply chain resilience against this unrest?

Paige: You know me, right? So passionate. I'm about the network. This one kind of takes me back to SAP. You, we've always believed that the power of networks and the network of networks. We were right. And this is, I've learned that Everstream is also like connectivity on, its on its own isn't really enough. So if a tier two supplier goes [00:10:00] offline it takes weeks for the network to notice and it's too late. Right. The real breakthrough is when intelligence flows through the networking hours, that's when network evolved from transactional hub into resilience engines. So therefore it's really important to get that transparency, how your critical path of your multi-tier supplier network look like and where is your dependency and vulnerability of the key material flow, whether it's based on the geography itself or based on certain category. I think it's very important to, for you to understand that how your network extends into its value chain. Not just the pure supply network itself. So I think, yeah, so the I think that the importance is really knowing and what's happening in the sub tier. How does that trace back to your first tier [00:11:00] and then to the material and the orders that you need to pay attention to.

Richard: One of the big reasons for tariffs is to bring manufacturing local, locally and reshoring.

What effects do things like

reshoring have? Supply chains both good and bad.

Paige: So, reassuring is a good example where the things get nuanced on paper. It really reduces exposure to certain geographies. But actually thinking reality, it

just introduced new risks. For example, labor shortages, bottlenecks, or local logistic issues because those are the things that people normally don't consider.

I believe the smarter place is balanced, right? How do you regionalize where it strengthens resilience, globalize where efficiency [00:12:00] still matter. So, and with the sub-tier mapping powered by AI and expert validation, companies can actually see whether they are actually removing risks, not just shifting risk from one place to somewhere else. So I think that's the whole thing. If you have that multi-tier transparency. You are actually building the resiliency into your tiering rather than trying to just move risk from one region to another.

Richard: I like the fact that you said it's a balancing act because I've always thought that supply chain was a balancing act. It used to be a balancing act between cost and efficiency. We've just made it more complex now with, resiliency, with sustainability. There's just many more things we have to consider when we're balancing our supply chains. And my next question is really a follow on from that. What strategic shifts should companies consider making in supply chains to cope with this [00:13:00] increased uncertainty and to manage this balancing

Paige: Yeah, so we talk to a lot of customers and I personally talk to a lot of procurement leaders and supply chain leaders. And I often frame it as three different kind of shifts. First, I think is diversify. So diversify your suppliers, they, your geographies, your materials. Second digitize. So like moving from manual, from paper, from bottlenecks to predictive end-to-end visibility. These are now becoming table stakes. Third is being able to demonstrate resilience has to be expressed in some kind of business outcomes, right? So, because otherwise it's very difficult, especially in our business risk, some people compare that to insurance policy. A little bit difficult to justify value. But I actually believe this is why we built risk scoring and ROI dashboards that show disruption [00:14:00] avoided revenue protected and compliance maintained, because those are the things that are true business outcomes. I think it's more than insurance policy because it's actually that real trigger of a signal that is happening, and it's a forward looking predictivity and intelligence how you build resiliency into your action planning and the impact assessment. So when you can measure resilience in those terms, it stops being the cost center and then become a growth driver and the competitive advantage.

Richard: You know that you've got the right information and the right tools in place to manage risk. When a risk becomes an opportunity which is what you were describing there is turn it into a competitive advantage not a, just a reactive situation.

Paige: And that's the early signal. So if you are, imagine, things nine days before your competition

does. Right. So that what kind of advantage it gives to you. [00:15:00] Yeah.

Richard: One of the things that you just mentioned, diversifying, digitize, and resilience. I want to focus on the digitized one for the next discussion, because what do you think about the future of supply chain technology platforms and how they need to evolve to handle this increased geopolitical complexity?

Paige: Yeah, that's a great question. Richard, you and I spent years at SAP building our system of record, right? Systems of record that connect global ecosystems and value chains. And I think what excites me now at Everstream is seeing those systems evolving into platforms of foresight. So like moving from just being the system of record to that system of sense and response. So by embedding our intelligence into SAP IBP or SAP Business Network Logistics, Ariba and planners don't just record what happened. They see what's coming and they can test [00:16:00] response right in their own workflow where they work. They don't have to go into another place or change to a different environment. And that really shifted to predictive embedded and outcome focus the platform where I think that where the future lies, right? So it's how do we bring data and technology and land and where people need to take actions, where they need to orchestrate that, the next workflow. And I think that's the key. So SAP and Everstream one plus one becomes five, right?

Richard: Absolutely and you've then got that base data to build your decisions around, to use your predictions and one of the hottest topics we talk about it. Every podcast is the topic of AI, which is of course, reliant on good data. But how can AI change not just the prediction capabilities, but also the actual [00:17:00] architecture of how companies will build resilience into their supply chains?

Paige: Yeah. So, AI in supply chain has come a long way. At Everstream we were a AI company before AI was hot, we were doing that for 10 years, but I think now at ever our we also evolve our AI into more agent technology. So our AI agents can refine and enrich vast data sets and map, for example, mapping the sub tier and creating generic product trees in the absence of bill of material scoring the supplier health. And then plus, if we combine with our human experts adding that context and judgement. I think that AI is just the leapfrog... So, so much steps that normal technology or application cannot achieve in very short amount of time. And in [00:18:00] that kind of impact. And I think in the AI role itself, the real value is the combination. So, if what we're saying is AI

can bring scale and speed but only humans can bring strategy and nuance, right? So together they create adaptive systems that sense, predict and respond faster than ever before. So I think this AI and human combination it's going to shape how supply chain will evolve and how people actually work in the future.

Richard: I'm sure even the people who are the experts in your team the analysts who have had whatever, 30 years of experience in a certain topic now also leverage AI to improve their productivity to improve their level of competence and expertise.

Paige: Absolutely. Yeah.

Richard: What are the biggest misconceptions companies have about supply chain risk management and how can better data [00:19:00] and analytics change that mindset? So how do you win people over?

Paige: I think the biggest myth that people have is risk is occasional and, right. But in reality, I think it's constant. Just changing in form and the intensity and too many companies still treat resilience like insurance policy we talked about before, but today it's measurable. You can actually track disruptions, avoided revenue protected ESG compliance achieved. Once board sees that you CFO sees that, then the resilience shifts from defense to performance. And I think that kind of a data driven insight and floor sites. Like people need to begin to start putting that as a top agenda.

Richard: So it's really seeing, is believing sometimes of they start seeing the benefits. So I would imagine when you start an implementation with a [00:20:00] customer, having some quick wins would to get that buy in.

Paige: Absolutely have that data driven, and it's really having that measurable ROI right in mind. So you have a value in mind. That's something I think you, you have to not just being alerting or pure event signal, but actually correlate that into a outcome, a business outcome.

Richard: We've talked a lot about the business network and the multi-tier supply chains. But how do you get companies to share information? How important is real-time data sharing across that network and the tiers of that network rather than just leveraging internal information? Because an example would be sustainability where when you talk about scope three emissions, for example, that's a hundred percent outside of the organization. So what is the value of sharing that real time data across your partners?

Paige: Yeah, we've talked about this all the time. Everybody wants insight and nobody wants to share data. [00:21:00] So that's always the dilemma. But I think more and more companies are getting around that, particularly now with the technology evolving into much more easier data sharing with the security and the residency where data they belong, right? People can still have ownership of data, but then certain data can drive different things. So I always thought about like data sharing is more of a headlights analogy. So like internal monitoring only let you see what's right in front of you. But the real resilience is more like having sensors across the entire highway. So for me it's the decision to be made here for organization is the intelligence, the insight. Can only be as good as the input data that you have, right? Otherwise it could be garbage in, garbage out. So that's the part is [00:22:00] trying to really sense and response that having that sensor across your entire highway, which is your entire supply chain. And this is what happens when average stream intelligence integrates into SAP IBP, ERP or TMS, right, or Business Network. Suddenly every team sourcing planning logistic is working off the same risk picture, right? Not in its own siloed verticals, and therefore, that we believe that blind spots now can turn into foresight. Because it is also like collectively you're looking at that real data together.

Richard: It's going back to my comment a little earlier about living in the real world and not the perfect world and being able to respond to those changes based on real world information. We're coming to the end of the podcast and 'cause you've been on the podcast before, I always ask the same question to our guests, so looking forward to this [00:23:00] one. In a sentence or two, what is the future of supply chain?

Paige: Richard, we talk about this all the time, and you and I have lived through all the evolutions. So I think we are moving from automating transactions to building networks and now to building foresight, predictive analytics. I think the next chapter is clear. The future supply chain will need to be intelligent, but it needs to be adaptive and measurable, so intelligent because AI and data can turn billions of signals into foresight. Adaptive because companies can pivot quickly across plan stores make deliver measurable because resilience will be judging outcomes, revenue protected disruption avoided, ESG strengthened, like I said before, and then this is where our [00:24:00] Everstream North Star is. We want to help companies move from reacting to disruption to truly engineering resilience.

Richard: Great answer and great conversation, and as ever, it's great talking to you, Paige. Thanks for joining.

Paige: Thank you, Richard. Always a pleasure.

Richard: That's been a lot of fun. And thanks everyone for listening. Please mark us as a favorite. You can get regular updates and information about future episodes, but until next time, from Paige and I, thanks for discussing the future of Supply Chain.