

# Supply Chain Orchestration with Deloitte's Jagjeet Singh

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**Richard:** Welcome to the Future of Supply Chain, a podcast where we discuss hot topics, best practices, and the latest innovations in today's global business. I am Richard Howells, and in this week's episode I'll be chatting with Deloitte Jagjeet Singh, about the challenges facing supply chain executives as we move into the new year and the need for supply chain orchestration. So welcome Jagjeet, maybe you can quickly introduce yourself and your role at Deloitte.

Thank

**Jagjeet:** you, Richard. Thank you for having me. Absolutely, happy to. Excited to share some of the supply chain stories with the and audience in this podcast. To introduce myself, I'm a partner in Deloitte based out of Austin. Have been working in supply chain for more than 20 years in the past. Doing business consulting for a little over two decades. Have been working across multiple industries but mostly focused on consumer and life sciences. I have worked through the advice implement, operate spectrum where we have been advising our clients on [00:02:00] building their digital transformation roadmap for supply chain, helping them implement some of those initiatives to bring it to life, and then helping them optimize their solutions and processes so that they can reap the most value out of some of those initiatives as well. Would love to share my experiences today with you, Richard.

**Richard:** Great. It's great to have you on and welcome to the podcast. So let's start with a setting the scene type question as we enter the new year and look at 2026 and beyond, what are the most common challenges that global supply chain leaders encounter today?

**Jagjeet:** So, the first and foremost that I have heard from my customers that I've been working with over the last 20 years is visibility. Visibility to shipment statuses, visibility to inventory levels, visibility to suppliers commitments, visibility to when the carrier is going to pick up products from my premises.

It's easier said than done [00:03:00] because it involves a lot of cross organization systems and it involves a lot of applications that come into play in various areas of supply chain. And it involves having a common data set that can actually talk across these applications. So that's the number one challenge that I have seen. Lately, what we have also seen starting 2019, just before the COVID began. The supply chain disruptions are everywhere. The pandemic itself some of the conflicts that have been going on across the world, all of them impact the supply chain in one way or another.

Simple events like a ship stuck in Suez Canal can disrupt supply for many companies domestically here. So, ability to deal with those disruptions having processes and systems in place is one of the other biggest challenges that we have seen the supply chain leaders facing today.

And the third, and I would say equally important is availability [00:04:00] of talent. The availability of talented people with the right skillset involving technical skills, analytical skills and management skills that can be blended together to take the right decisions is another biggest challenge that I've seen the market facing these days.

**Richard:** So, so let's touch on all of those a little bit as we go through the conversation. 'cause it's really interesting. You talk about needing the resiliency to handle disruptions in geopolitical tensions. We also see sustainability as an issue and whether it's resiliency or sustainability, it always comes back to improved visibility, which you started us.

But I want to really to delve into the disruption topic a little bit because as the saying goes, we plan in the perfect world and we execute in the real world. And while we all know what happens in the real world, it doesn't go according to plan. We get those unexpected disruptions.

We get those suez canal blockages in a once in a lifetime environment, disruptions are not going away. [00:05:00] Whether it's supplier delays or demand spikes, what makes it difficult for many organizations to react quickly and efficiently to these disruptions?

**Jagjeet:** I would say three things.

Number one is silos in the organization. Number two I would say is not having the right technology and infrastructure that can help them do scenario planning is one of the other biggest factors. And the third one, which goes along with these two, is having rigid processes. Processes that are manual, that are based on batch processing processes that are not harmonized across different geos at different sites.

They can hinder ability to respond to these disruptions quickly. So, the silos, let me give an example. So one of my previous customers that I was working with, it was a food and beverage organization, and they had a planning department which reported into the chief S&OP officer, sales and [00:06:00] operations planning officer.

And then they had a transportation department that used to report into the VP of logistics. Now this organization got acquired by a PE firm. And the first thing that PE firm did was revise all of their transportation carrier contracts.

As a result. Those carriers never pick the products on time. Now guess what? The movement of the product is planned by planning. They plan the STOs that go from one point to the other point. And this organization happened to have a pretty complex network. The execution of those stock transfer orders is actually carried out by transportation, and they rely on these transportation carriers.

Now, having these two silos did not allow them to risk. Interact with each other and plan, Hey, this transportation carrier has not picked up on time. Can we plan an alternate supply? What that led to was there were a lot of backdated past STOs, which created inflated demand [00:07:00] and that inflated demand led to overproduction of products that were not even moving in the supply chain.

So they had full warehouses of products that were not needed. They had a cloud supply chain because the carriers was not picking on time and the two departments were simply not talking to each other. So enabling that cross-functional collaboration by breaking those silos can make a lot of difference in how you deal with those disruptions.

The other biggest factor is once you have this visibility, once you break these silos, once you make these processes more flexible, and you allow these departments to interact with each other with common reporting hierarchies, common goals. You also need the right platforms to be able to do scenario planning because doing scenario planning in supply chain is not very simple.

You can, you simply cannot say, okay, what does it mean if my demand spikes and I should I just source additional products from the supplier? Well, what if that supplier doesn't supply on time? Or what if that supplier [00:08:00] does not have his supplier supplying enough raw materials on time so they cannot make on time?

So you need to be able to look at all of these factors together. So having a common platform that marries all of this data that allows you to do this quick. What if analysis on what is the probability of my supply delivering on time? What is the certainty of my production schedule? Do I have enough capacity in my manufacturing plant if my demand spikes to meet those demand spikes?

And what is the probability of my transportation carrier speaking those products on time and delivering to my customers on time? All of that requires a lot of what if analysis and having the right platforms and right tools available to you is another big thing.

**Richard:** It's interesting. Every department can have the right intentions. And if they're not aligned to the corporate goals, and if you don't have those corporate goals feeding down into the KPIs of the different departments, you're ultimately could make worse decisions for the company than the right decisions. [00:09:00] You may be reaching your goals, as you said, as a procurement department, but it's at the detriment of the company.

**Jagjeet:** Right?

**Richard:** But it's also at detriment of the customer commitments. So how do these internal silos and disconnected systems impact a company's ability to deliver on customer commitments?

**Jagjeet:** Well, the first thing they do is they lead to suboptimal decisions to be able to meet those customer commitments and customer service levels.

So, for example, you can have a customer service level a hundred percent if you maintain infinite inventory. But is that the desirable situation on the supply chain? It's not. As a supply chain leader, you should be able to service those

customers better while maintaining optimum inventory levels, while maintaining optimum run sizes in the manufacturing, while maintaining economies of scale and purchasing.

It's all interconnected and, to be able to see those interconnections in your data, again, it comes back to that visibility piece and to be able [00:10:00] to marry the planned data with execution, because like you said, planning is done based on any utopian world. That utopian world doesn't exist. So you need to be able to go into a probabilistic world where you plan different scenarios and then you figure out the best case scenario and the worst case scenario, and you prepare for both.

That is called agile supply chain planning and execution, and having the ability to marry this visibility with planning data, with execution data. Together, while breaking these silos will make a lot of difference.

**Richard:** I want to drill down a little bit on that particular topic because as you mentioned, with planning cycles getting quicker and quicker, we need to execute in shorter and shorter cycles and replan and simulate in shorter and shorter cycles and have that visibility between planning and execution.

So what does supply chain leaders need? To address the challenges of balancing all of these things in shorter cycles. It's not just balancing [00:11:00] costs and efficiency, but it's also having the resilience, having the agility and responding in the face of increasing disruptions, complexity and speed. So what's missing? What do these, supply chain executives need?

**Jagjeet:** I think the first thing they need is ability to orchestrate across these different functions by building agile and resilient processes and having platforms that can synthesize data across these different functions to give you a holistic view.

Like I was saying before, this requires you to marry planning and execution data and be able to work with those probabilistic scenarios. You also need to retrain your workforce. Do not just think about efficiency in supply chain, but also think about risk involved in the supply chain, the risk factors that come from external environment, whether it is weather events, whether it is natural disasters, whether it is a government controlling rare earth mineral [00:12:00] supply, or whether it is new sustainability regulations being introduced in Europe that controls your plastic taxes. All of those factors you should be able to quickly include and synthesize the impacts of those. Now, how do you understand the impact of those?

To understand the impact of those you need rapid decision making frameworks that you can rapidly apply and those decision making frameworks should be able to analyze the cost impact of making a decision, the value that you deliver to the customer, and the risk involved in that decision. Once you combine those three factors, then you can be sure that you're making the most optimal decision in that situation.

If you have any one of those factors missing, you are almost like flying a plane with only two parameters in front of you, which tell you the altitude and the wind speed, but they don't tell you what are the obstacles coming in front of you. And that's what supply chain leaders need and they sometimes lack in their organizations.

**Richard:** We have so much data available to us as [00:13:00] supply chain executives now, whether it's the data coming from the ERP and supply chain systems the unstructured data coming from other sources, whether it's sentiment analysis or weather patterns, et cetera, and better visibility into things affecting the supply chain. How do we manage all of that data and how are companies leveraging technologies such as AI to help orchestrate supply chains?

**Jagjeet:** Yeah, great question by the way. So I think the first thing you should look for is automate routine processes within supply chain by using some of the AI tools. The second thing the supply chain leader should look at, and this is what I've seen leading organizations doing not. Deploy specific use cases, but really look at end-to-end processes within the supply chain and identify which of those processes can be enabled by AI, including some of the decisions that can be automated to develop that string of pearls that you can really apply across the supply chain.

So looking at it [00:14:00] as a whole, looking at it from an end-to-end process perspective, and then breaking the barriers and using the right tools, automating the right routine processes. Will give you the ability to respond quickly. The other thing I would also say is this is extremely important if you really want to be a destination company that hires the best of breed talent. Because guess what? All of the employees and in organization, they want to be recognized for their work. And if you're continuously firefighting instead of responding to risks, you cannot be a winner. And employees can only be recognized when they're winners in their work. So everyone wants to work for an organization that is proactively planning for those risks and to proactively plan for those risks, you need processes that are flexible, you need end-to-end visibility, you need to be able to look at these processes from an end-to-end perspective,

whether it is order to cash plan to make or secure to pay, and then combine the impacts of those processes [00:15:00] together.

**Richard:** You mentioned the three of the things that are the big challenges and talent was one of them, and you just brought up talent again. And having the right technology within an organization helps you not only, obtain talent and recruit talent, but also retain that talent. Are you seeing that people leveraging technology and highlighting the technology that they have in the system to keep and retain talent?

**Jagjeet:** Absolutely. Absolutely. I've seen both ways. I have actually seen organizations that have antiquated systems with black and green screens and people leaving because they don't want to work with those black and green screens. Guess what? The generation of today has grown up with chat GPT or with Gemini or with Rock.

Asking them to work with technologies where you cannot even make use of any of similar tools is like asking them to work for a very old, outdated company. So, it is extremely important for organizations to modernize their [00:16:00] infrastructure, to modernize the underlying foundation and then build the right analytical and AI tools on top that can incentivize talent.

And companies have handled this bull by the horns and they have organized their supply chain functions and departments considering all of these. AI tools and people want to work for those companies like those. So I've seen it both ways where people leave because the right tools and technology is not in place, and where people want to stay and want to make their career in those companies because they have the right infrastructure, tools, and technologies in place.

**Richard:** A little earlier you talked about breaking down silos within an organization. And sharing the data and business goals across the organization. But we also need to collaborate outside of our organization as well, and share real time data outside of our organization with our suppliers, our contract manufacturers and other partners. So how are you seeing companies leveraging [00:17:00] technology to collaborate outside of the organization with their partners?

**Jagjeet:** Absolutely. So, it started years ago with something called Electronic Data Interchange or EDI technology where you're trying to integrate with your suppliers. These days what I'm seeing is companies are leveraging more and more collaboration platforms to engage with. Suppliers. And the benefit of leveraging some of those collaboration platforms is they, there are a lot of

suppliers that are already onboarded on those platforms. So sometimes the suppliers of your suppliers are also on the same platform and it provides you multi-tier visibility across the supply chain, which is a prerequisite for certain industries like high tech that rely heavily on contract manufacturing.

**Richard:** Okay.

**Jagjeet:** To give you an example, one of my other clients, they used to manufacture these exercise bikes. Where assembly of the components was done in Taiwan, and the actual components were made in other Asian countries. They, the, they thought that the bottleneck was in Taiwan and they [00:18:00] were trying to pressurize like, can you supply us on time? Can you supply us on time? But when they analyze this data end to end from where the components are originating, they realized the bottleneck was not in Taiwan, it was in another Asian country. So having that visibility gives you the ability to respond to some of those challenges appropriately instead of pressurizing directly your suppliers and not achieving the desired results. So, the right collaboration platforms that can integrate your planning and execution data. Because a lot of times the demand for your suppliers comes from your planning platforms while the actual execution of your orders they on, based on what you're purchasing from them lives in your core ERP having combining of both of these data in the collaboration platform and then having, providing visibility across your organizations gives you a lot of edge in the marketplace. Right.

**Richard:** I think there won't be many people listening to this podcast that won't agree. Everything that you've said about the [00:19:00] need for the technology and leveraging the technology, the need for more agility and the need for digitization, but companies are in different levels of maturity when we talk about digitizing supply chains, or automating supply chains, and ultimately orchestrating the supply chains. So in your experience, what best practices can help companies get started on this journey to be a more agile and orchestrated supply chain? And where do you see the greatest quick win opportunities?

**Jagjeet:** So, the quick wins, one of those you just touched upon collaborating beyond your organization's four walls across the ecosystem of your supply chain is one of the biggest wins. You don't have to do it 100%, you can stratify it by saying. These are the 80 20% of the suppliers that are supplying 80% of your products. So start with them. These are the 20% of the transportation carriers or three PL service providers who handle 80% of your products. Start with them. And it can be a [00:20:00] gradual phase journey, and it is, it provides tremendous results in the short term. The other quick win, I would say is building a supply chain control tower that gives you that end-to-end visibility.

And that allows you to see across functions KPIs that where you marry data across different functions is a tremendous opportunity for many organizations.

And it is a bit troubling that a lot of leading organizations still lack this capability. So it is something they can do right now, right away, and it'll give them a huge amount of benefits. The third thing I would say is I would touch, would like to touch upon ai. The easiest way to leverage AI in supply chain is to be able to make use of this external data that impacts supply chain and baking it into your internal planning or execution platform. So for example, if the, one of the parts of the world is impacted by a natural disaster, if the weather is really bad do you want to reroute your products through an automated [00:21:00] route using that data, which is not typically available in your planning platform.

So that simple example of how you can make use of some of these tools as well. And it gives you tremendous savings and benefits and real value that you can show it to your CFO and the rest of the leadership team. The third thing I would say is automation is the name of the game as well in supply chain because the more you can automate, the more you can motivate people to work on really meaningful decisions and really meaningful analytical strategic tasks instead of doing menial repetitive work. And at some point we should become the idea generators and decision makers, and then the AI digital assistants are available to do the repetitive process work for us. There are a lot of leaders in the supply chain that think that way, and they are already on that journey. But there are some other organizations that are fast followers as well. [00:22:00]

**Richard:** That's great advice, great guidance. So maybe we can ask how companies can learn and do more. How can the partnership between SAP and Deloitte help companies better orchestrate their supply chains?

**Jagjeet:** Absolutely, Richard. So, in my view, SAP provides that end-to-end suite of robust products that handle planning, manufacturing, distribution, storage.

And your even product development, design activities as well. Yep. The other thing that SAP is bringing to the market is also an orchestration platform where you can do predictive scenario planning, what if analysis doing decision analysis of based on cost, risks and value that you bring to your organization and to the customers.

On the other hand, Deloitte has tremendous industry experience of solving some of the most complex and intricate supply chain problems across multiple industries. So if we combine these leading products with deep industry

[00:23:00] expertise, we form a combination that can help our organizations and customers to build resilient, nimble supply chains that can effectively respond to some of those product disruptions that we are seeing in the market today.

The other thing I would say is there is also an element of, Hey, I don't want to embark on this digital transformation initiative that will take me three or five years. So if you have some rapid deployment kits, which Deloitte can bring to the table, and if you have accelerators that can accelerate that journey and compress it into one to one and a half years, it becomes a much simpler decision and much more lucrative as well from a value standpoint.

So, bringing those pre-configured solutions, accelerators, rapid deployment kits working alongside SAP that brings best practices that helps our clients as well. And last one, not the least, I would say change management and enablement where we can help organizations [00:24:00] go through this change process because working with tools of today versus working with digital tools of tomorrow, there are different ways of working involved. You need to realign the roles, the skills, the incentives, and Deloitte can work with SAP to help our customers and companies to absorb that change and drive adoption of some of those new tools in the market as well.

**Richard:** Jagjeet, we've covered a wide array of topics, and now I'm gonna ask you the most difficult question 'cause I'm gonna ask you to summarize everything we've just talked about in a few sentences. So from your perspective in a sentence or two, what is the future of supply chain?

**Jagjeet:** Well, in my view, Richard, the future of supply chain is hyperconnected. It'll be a complex web of networks that goes through multi tiers. It goes beyond the four walls of their organization. And it will involve data that talks across organizations. It'll involve tools that through which that data runs to almost create a flywheel of data [00:25:00] tools and applications that allows companies to respond to some of these disruptions and risks very quickly.

The chief supply chain officer, will assume the role of almost an orchestra conductor. That will ask his several supply chain department stakeholders to operate in complete symphony, to create the supply chain music. And the companies that embed resilience digitalization that embed sustainability, that embed risk awareness into their supply chains. They will be the winners in this rapidly evolving world.

**Richard:** That's a great summary. Thank you very much Jagjeet for a great conversation. It's been really interesting.

**Jagjeet:** Thank you, Richard. Thank you for having me.

**Richard:** No problem. You welcome back Anytime. I'd like to thank everyone for listening as well. Please mark us as a favorite you. You can get regular updates and information about future episodes, but until next time, from [00:26:00] Jagjeet and I, thanks for discussing the future of supply chain.