How to Achieve Smarter Supply Chains:

The Intersection of Technology, Human Interaction, and Customer Success

Provider Access | Logistics | Process Management

Minimize Administration | Maximize Resources

Enhance Relationships | Optimize Shipping Operations

Strengthen Customer Satisfaction

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CtrlChain

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The ongoing expansion of technology applications on supply chains is generating major industry buzz in the industry – amplified even more by the potential impact that artificial intelligence (AI) and automated tasks can have. This is a hot topic laden with both opportunities and concerns.

Giovanni Gubbels, CEO of CtrlChain

"Technology is the key piece in automating the daily tasks that exist for all businesses and their supply chains," according to Giovanni Gubbels, Founder and CEO of CtrlChain, a company that specializes in simplifying and automating logistics management with the goal to enhance profitability, visibility, service levels, and sustainability for shippers and carriers. In recent years, CtrlChain has partnered with NewCold, a rapidly growing global leader in advanced food logistics, to offer even more comprehensive services to food shippers.

According to the recent *Food Shipper Report: Supply Chain Digital Transformation* which surveyed 109 food shippers about their investment areas in technology, 75% are investing in shipment visibility, 72% are investing in transportation management, 44.5% are investing in decision intelligence, and 42% are investing in inventory and warehouse management (See Chart below for all investment areas).

"However, human interactions build relationships and allow us to seek alternate solutions to various problems that our customers might face," continues Gubbels. "This is especially apparent when and if there are escalations, as is common in the industry."
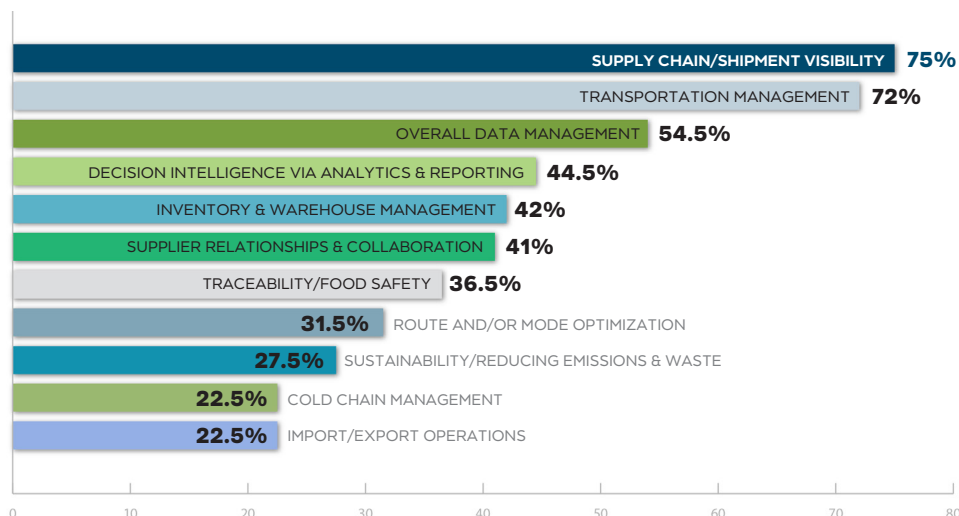
This is particularly important in the food chain, where it's critical to have productive human interaction in tandem with robust technology. This is because food shipments can be extremely time-sensitive, and there is little tolerance for error when it comes to setting and requesting precise temperatures in transit and the timely delivery of shipments. Shipment delays and a number of other issues can be catastrophic if they aren't immediately addressed.

In addition, food and beverage shipments also among the most widely targeted commodity targets for theft, and security and safety issues are of considerable concern for food shippers.

"With integrated technologies like CtrlChain, food shippers can take many more security measures to ensure their shipments are safe, such as enhanced track and trace, and authorized carrier lists," adds Gubbels.

Investment Areas in Digital Transformation

Investment Area	Percentage
SUPPLY CHAIN/SHIPMENT VISIBILITY	75%
TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT	72%
OVERALL DATA MANAGEMENT	54.5%
DECISION INTELLIGENCE VIA ANALYTICS & REPORTING	44.5%
INVENTORY & WAREHOUSE MANAGEMENT	42%
SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIPS & COLLABORATION	41%
TRACEABILITY/FOOD SAFETY	36.5%
ROUTE AND/OR MODE OPTIMIZATION	31.5%
SUSTAINABILITY/REDUCING EMISSIONS & WASTE	27.5%
COLD CHAIN MANAGEMENT	22.5%
IMPORT/EXPORT OPERATIONS	22.5%

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The Financial Impact of Tech + Human Interaction

In the era of growing omnichannel consumers, supply chain technology plays a crucial role in enhancing the customer experience, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. Technology in logistics and supply chain management continues to help meet customer expectations for product availability and ensures timely and complete shipments.

With this backdrop in the marketplace, what impact does integrating technology, human interaction, and customer success strategy have on the financial performance of a company?

First, integrating technology with the human aspect (i.e., having comprehensive customer success managers and teams to help with onboarding) relieves significant pressure surrounding operational efficiencies, which is a major financial pain point for companies.

"When people aren't spending as much time in the weeds of day-to-day operations processes, using lots of different platforms and making sure data is accurate across those platforms, it saves money and time," according to Gubbels. "Technology can also help improve forecasting by analyzing historical data and market trends to anticipate customer demand more accurately. This helps improve clients' financial performance by reducing overproduction and optimizing inventory levels."


Technology's Impact on Talent Management and Productivity

By leveraging automation and real-time data analytics, food manufacturers, retailers, and distributors can streamline their supply chain operations, reduce human errors, and optimize inventory management and control.

In addition, technologies used in supply chain management ultimately can lead to cost savings through reduced operational expenses and improved resource allocation.

As a result of the increased use of technologies in food chains, some emerging roles include data analysts, digital supply chain managers, and artificial intelligence (AI) specialists. Such roles require a smart blend of traditional supply chain knowledge and expertise in data analytics, AI, and blockchain technologies. Other skill sets that are becoming increasingly important in the supply chain profession include IoT proficiency and continuous learning and development.

"The integration of tech and comprehensive customer success processes improves our clients' experience exponentially," says Gubbels. "It also helps improve the quality of our customer success team's work and their experiences. When the product is easy to teach and use on the customer end, it also creates fewer manual processes on our side."
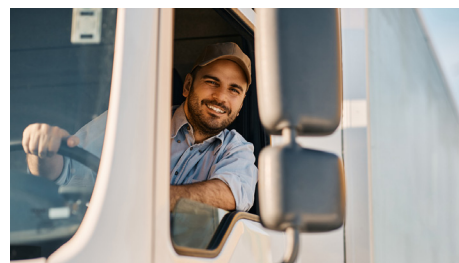
Technology's Impact on Supply Chain Operations

Technology has had a significant impact on supply chain operations through improved efficiency and accuracy, faster and more informed decision-making, and higher velocity. There are several examples of technology creating these benefits. For example, AI helps food companies to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and increase profitability. Automation and robotics perform repetitive tasks such as packing, sorting, and loading quickly and accurately, which can improve warehouse efficiency and keep the supply chain moving smoothly. 3D printing, also known as "additive manufacturing," enables on-demand production of parts and products to ultimately reduce the need for large-scale manufacturing and inventory management. Cloud computing can help businesses in logistics grow by providing numerous advantages when used with a solid cloud adoption strategy. Enriched data and analytics can help food companies automate demand forecasting – which can help them respond to market fluctuations and streamline stock levels.

"With one of our key partners, we've been able to meticulously implement a pre-work checklist that involves checking and selecting secure parking lots, the preselection of reliable carriers through our authorized carrier lists, and the implementation of geofencing around warehouses to ensure proper delivery features." Gubbels continues,

> "When people aren't spending as much time in the weeds of day-to-day operations processes, using lots of different platforms and making sure data is accurate across those platforms, it saves money and time. " - Giovanni Gubbels

"The technology that CtrlChain has implemented has helped another one of our partners reduce the time it took to compete their daily administrative tasks from up to 30 hours a day across the company to only 30 minutes in total."

Gubbels also highlights the importance of tech integration in helping to create more sustainable logistics practices. "We've partnered with JustDiggit to offset 100% of the emissions of the shippers and carriers we work with, and we're seeing more and more that our customers are focusing on sustainability and innovation within that space, so using our technology to help them achieve the sustainable practices they want is important."

Barriers to Successful Technology Integration

Here are a few of the most commonly faced barriers food companies face in successfully integrating technology into their supply chain:

- Lack of knowledge or access to technology
- Cost of integration
- Lack of information sharing across the enterprise and with partners

"A big obstacle many companies face, food companies included, when trying to integrate innovative technology into their business is the upfront cost – both in cash and in time spent learning a new platform," adds Gubbels. "Companies spend an exorbitant amount of money and time onboarding employees into their new systems. When these systems aren't comprehensive, they will need to learn other ones as well. This creates a lot of wasted time and reduces efficiency."

Conclusion

Whether you're looking to maximize financial performance of your company, streamline operations in your supply chain, or enhance the customer experience, it's clear that integrating technology, human interaction and customer success is imperative.

Looking to learn more? Visit www.ctrlchain.com or call 312-646-3814.