

Future-proof business

Lean and green supply chains





Introduction

In today's global economy, businesses face growing uncertainty about their futures.

They are operating in a pressure cooker of spiralling costs, ongoing supply chain disruptions, geopolitical risks, consumer demand for greener business, and increased trade regulations. For example, the long-term impact of Brexit has resulted in greater costs and administrative burdens for UK exporters.¹

Even more recently, the instability caused by the US trade tariffs has led business consultancies, such as KPMG, to recommend reviews of supply chain strategy.²

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Brexit has transformed the UK's trade relationship with its largest trading partner, the EU. Customs checks, rules of origin requirements, and regulatory differences have raised costs and administrative burdens for UK exporters, reducing trade volumes.”¹

Looking forward, these complex and challenging conditions are unlikely to change. Therefore, businesses must respond in a way that allows them to thrive, not just survive. Seeking ways to remain competitive and cost-efficient is imperative; forward-thinking business leaders need to look to automation.

This whitepaper explores how the digital transformation of the supply chain empowers organisations to cut costs, boost agility, and drive sustainability. Drawing on insights from industry research and our own client case studies, it outlines practical strategies to navigate current challenges and build supply chains that are not only leaner but also greener.

Contents

Introduction	2
Key Takeaways	4
Digitised greener processes	5
Localisation and stock traceability	8
Agile cost control and data visibility	10
Conclusion	13
References	14

Key Takeaways

This report outlines three key areas that businesses should focus their attention on to improve their supply chain efficiency and responsiveness:

1. Digitised greener processes

Digital transformation supports circularity, lowers emissions, and boosts efficiency. And it ultimately leads to undeniable savings in paper and printer consumables. Aligning with our clients' sustainability objectives, Transalis works with its technology partners to:

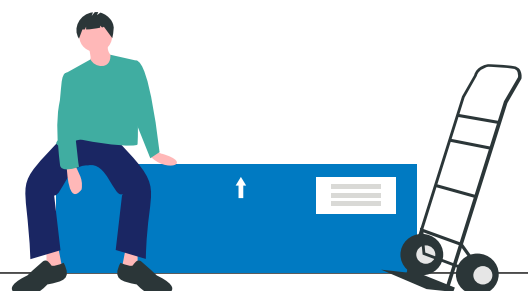
- Optimise the energy efficiency of our infrastructure
- Reduce physical hardware through server virtualisation
- Support our clients' Corporate Social Responsibility

2. Localisation and stock traceability

Following a green supply chain strategy with a digital-first approach, localising stock availability with micro-manufacturers and/or responsive warehousing is a natural next step. This section explores how global brands are shifting their approach to stock management. Within the current context of high trade tariffs, the innovative use of stock traceability data, as well as the outsourcing of warehouse management and logistics, helps keep products available to the market without disruptions.

3. Agile cost control and data visibility

Understanding consumer demand and being responsive to market opportunities is key to longevity. As forward-thinking businesses outsource their 3PL (Third Party Logistics) services, having complete data visibility enables an agile and cost-efficient supply chain. This is especially pertinent when embarking on a localised product distribution strategy, due to an increase in channel streams. Integrating the multitude of data sources into a singular 'source of truth' empowers businesses to identify challenges or trends and respond rapidly to their competitive advantage.



Digitised greener processes

In today’s world, the imperative for businesses to digitise their supply chain processes has intensified. Digital transformation is no longer a choice but a necessity for organisations aiming to enhance efficiency, reduce emissions, and meet evolving stakeholder expectations.

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58% of European consumers prefer to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations”³

Forrester

Sunsetting paper processes

It may be expected that, in this digital age of rapid technological development, paper is almost obsolete. So it is surprising to learn that, for many businesses, paper processes still take centre stage in daily tasks.

Paper processing is costly, time-consuming and error-prone. Research published by Adobe⁴ found that each employee prints approximately 450 pages per week on average.

This equates to:

Pages printed	Reams of paper	Boxes of paper	Cost
23,400	47	5	£200

Figure 1. Average annual printed paper consumption per employee.





When these calculations are scaled up across the business, the cost implications are clear – and this is without also accounting for ink and hardware running costs. Gartner recognises that whilst YOY this spend is reducing, enterprise print spending is forecast at \$105.8 billion by 2027.⁵

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Businesses are setting bold ESG targets but often struggle with execution due to limited resources, weak supply chain visibility, and insufficient expertise. This misalignment between ambition and performance is highlighted by data showing 90% of organisations failing in key social responsibilities.”⁶

CIPS, 2025

It is time to sunset paper processing, not only to reduce environmental impact, but also for business efficiency.

Digital transformation supporting CSR

Digitisation and sustainability go hand in hand, leading to significant savings in paper consumption, other raw materials, and associated costs. Implementing automated supply chain solutions facilitates the electronic exchange of business documents, such as purchase orders and invoices, between trading partners, eliminating the need for printing.

Environmentally focused organisations can also move toward circular models, where data visibility supports reuse, remanufacturing, and the reduction of excess stock.

At Transalis, we recommend focusing on these three key objectives:

- Automating reporting for energy and waste tracking
- Enhancing visibility to cut unnecessary transport and storage
- Building partner ecosystems that support circularity and transparency

Our clients also benefit from additional sustainability initiatives to support their Corporate Social Responsibility objectives. For example, we collaborate with our technology partners to enhance energy efficiency and reduce physical hardware through server virtualisation.



Localisation and stock traceability

Amidst increasing trade tariffs, disrupted shipping lead times, consumer demand for availability, and corporate sustainability objectives, innovative organisations are reviewing their supply chains for more efficient models.

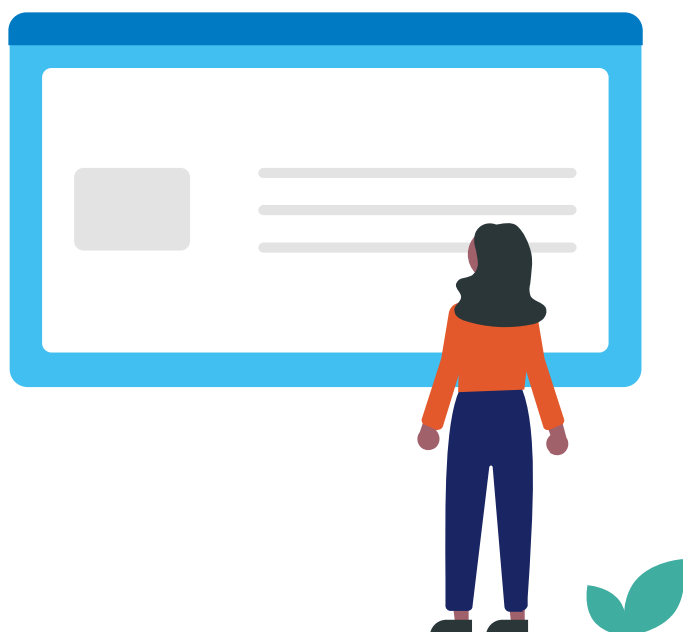
In light of the US tariff announcements, KPMG recommends that all affected businesses review and adapt their supply chains to increase visibility and diversify sourcing.²

This is where strategic localisation comes in - through micro-manufacturing and responsive warehousing, paired with digital product traceability. However, this approach brings its challenges. Scaling up manufacturing suppliers and integrating them to ensure the exchange of business-critical information can be complex and costly, as these suppliers will likely have differing competency levels to support data exchange.

Utilising a single digital transformation layer is a simple and effective approach. This type of solution can capture all data formats and standardise your organisation's supply chain information, without requiring trading partners to adjust their own processes.

This is especially pertinent when limiting the impact of tariffs. Businesses that follow this strategy can more readily track the origin of stock across their international networks of manufacturers. As tariffs are applied to products based on their country of manufacture, organisations can respond by shipping items manufactured in countries with a more favourable tariff agreement. Furthermore, operating the supply chain this way also reduces the distance between product and consumer, cutting the possibility of shipping delays while simultaneously reducing the environmental impact.

Automated stock traceability facilitates the precise monitoring of product movement and availability. It also facilitates just-in-time delivery models, reducing waste and storage costs (see chapter 3 for more detail).





In practice: client examples

Toy manufacturer

Facing Brexit-related shipping delays, our US-based client needed a responsive logistics solution. Their aim was to expand in Europe by establishing multiple product distribution hubs across the continent. Through integration, using a single digital transformation layer, both retailer and consumer orders were automatically routed to the nearest fulfilment centre with stock availability. This approach allowed the client to maintain product flow despite geopolitical challenges.

Golfing supplies brand

A long-standing Transalis client and global leader in golfing supplies sought a solution to mitigate the impact of Brexit and other trade barriers. To achieve this, they required accurate stock traceability to cost-effectively manage trade tariffs across their global supply chains. Transalis fulfilled this requirement by integrating real-time stock information from the manufacturer and 3PL networks with the client's internal WMS and ERP systems. Not only did this solution facilitate an innovative trade tariff management strategy, but it also allowed for the agile management of product supply & demand (see chapter 3 for more detail).

Agile cost control and data visibility

As established earlier in this report, businesses have urgently needed to pivot to a localised supply chain strategy, thereby mitigating the risk of delays and prohibitive tariffs, while shortening the distance between products and their intended markets. Consequently, stock management processes have had to become more agile and tactical in response to market changes.

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Businesses today must balance diversification and localisation to manage risks and optimise operations. Nearly 46% of businesses are diversifying to enter new markets and hedge against disruptions, while 42% are localising for reduced transportation costs and greater oversight. When it comes to choosing suppliers, 75% of businesses are spreading risk and increasing resilience across more partners.”⁷

Forbes

A key challenge is how to implement this new strategy in a way that yields the most Return On Investment (ROI). Gartner⁸ visualises the path to a future-ready supply chain, with a backdrop of the key drivers of change, a map of the core supply chain characteristics, rolling through to the capability requirements for success. In summary, a strong strategy is essential, supported by investments in technology, sustainability and talent.

Unsurprisingly, the main compromise of embarking on a micro-manufacturing strategy is the smaller individual capacity to supply. Therefore, coordinating the manufactured output/warehouse stock to match the forecasted market demand is critical. To achieve this, organisations will require enhanced visibility of production and stock reports, along with 3PL capabilities, combined with market and sales reports. Merging this data increases agility according to seasonality - through just-in-time shipping, and minimises warehousing budgets - thanks to scaled capacity based on need.



In practice: client examples

Golfing supplies brand – continued

The second element of this client's solution requirement related to leveraging their 3PL network. As a global brand, the client managed a complex international network of in-house warehouses, as well as outsourced 3PL warehousing. The objective was to switch from an existing Capital Expenditure (CapEx) model to an Operational Expenditure (OpEx) model.

This transition enabled the client to have greater control over warehousing and logistics costs and base product ordering on business needs (just-in-time stocking levels corresponding to forecasted sales). Transalis integrated data flows from 5 3PL providers across the UK and Europe into the WMS and ERP systems, including stock movements, orders, shipment information, and returns – which further reduced wastage. Ultimately, Transalis' technical support led to 7-figure savings annually for this client.



British coastal clothing brand

This client, with a 5+ year history with Transalis, also expanded their supply chain automation solution from a simple EDI setup to also include the routing and management of B2C channel and 3PL data. Upon expanding into mainland Europe and the US, the client established they needed 3PL presence in these territories to fulfil retailer demand for their seasonal clothing ranges.

Again, there were concerns regarding trade barriers and tariff regulations and how best to manage these challenges. Transalis facilitated this expansion with rapid mapping and testing of integrated data flows. The client was even able to outsource their return processing to their 3PLs, creating further cost efficiencies.



Other possibilities

Transalis' innovative technical team implement flexible and creative solutions even beyond the examples provided above. The below points demonstrate how we support our clients with supply chain agility and data visibility;

- 24-hour onboarding turnaround
- Elimination of errors and stock misplacement
- Facilitating lean warehousing strategies



Conclusion

Supply chains are no longer just operational systems — they're strategic assets. As this report has shown, businesses that embrace digital transformation are better positioned to cut costs, improve resilience, and reduce environmental impact.

The path to a future-proof business lies in automation, localisation, and transparency. Whether it's sunsetting legacy paper-based processes, enhancing traceability for smarter sourcing, or consolidating data for real-time insight, the right technology unlocks measurable ROI.

At Transalis, we bring these objectives to life through the digitisation and integration of key supply chain processes. Ultimately, empowering our clients with leaner, greener, and more responsive operations.

Now is the time to act

If your organisation is ready to take the next step towards supply chain transformation, our team is ready to help.

Speak to a specialist



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