

# Putting Your Supply Chain Data to Work

How adopting Convergence to your supply chains can help you reduce inefficiencies, streamline operations, and better prepare for change both now and in the future



## Introduction

Over the last few decades supply chains have become increasingly complex and increasingly opaque. Unfortunately, the need to operate with greater transparency has never been more important. Supply chain stakeholders need to have a crystal clear view of their operations in order to overcome this challenge.

Standing in the way is constant change and a recent surge in spending in technologies such as IOT, the Cloud, Blockchain, etc. that have combined to create a data and information overload. This rapid change has created a more disconnected, unkept, and siloed infrastructure. To make matters worse, the core processes and workflows across the supply chain have also become increasingly fragmented.

What supply chain leaders need is convergence: the harmonious union of people, processes and information across the organization and throughout the supply chain. The promise of convergence is to create greater transparency which will help to improve supply chain resilience.



**Organizations that do not prioritize convergence will risk losing their competitive advantage and are more likely to face significant impacts from disruptions**

HARVARD BUSINESS. REVIEW, 2022

## Why Convergence?

The recent pandemic, ongoing political turmoil, inflation, and sustainability initiatives have wreaked havoc on today's supply chains and in many cases caught supply chain leadership completely off guard. To prevent this from happening again supply chain leaders need greater transparency across the entire supply chain and convergence offers this.

In a recent Gartner study, only 22% of companies say they have a very clear digital supply chain vision and strategy. This means that most organizations struggle with ill-planned, fragmented supply chains and have different units operating in silos as opposed to a collective, collaborative unit.

Beyond the issue of siloed data and systems lies the opportunity to streamline disconnected processes and workflows that proliferate along the supply chain. Enabling this will facilitate cross-functional collaboration between supply chain participants and across functions such as warehousing, shipping, and inventory management teams. Collectively, this effort will give supply chain leaders the visibility they need to react faster to external events and unforeseen changes.



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GARTNER, 2022



## Convergence vs. Integration

While integration involves connecting data or systems, convergence is about connecting and uniting on a grander scale that targets broader business outcomes. Think of converging sales, marketing, and other departments' functionality toward keeping pace with consumer demand.

While the main goal of integration is to bring elements together, convergence is more about finding and identifying interdependencies within that integrated information, whether through processes, workflows, or data streams. With integration, compiling information from various sources and processes into one place is the end goal. With convergence, you use the foundation laid by integration to streamline and govern your integrated elements in a user-oriented way.

Convergence involves choreographing integration efforts around people and processes vs. the other way around. Forcing people and processes at large to adapt to data or systems can disrupt operations processes even further. Choreographing with a convergence model helps create a more reflective and collaborative environment where operations can flow more naturally and employees can share information more intuitively and inclusively.

Disconnect occurs most often at 'linkage' points or moments when a task or decision gets handed off to another department or supplier, for example. By converging critical linkage points and creating an all-encompassing workflow, organizations can better collaborate and operate with more agility. Most importantly, they can better coordinate exception management activities and have better visibility into the issues that require immediate attention.



## The Business Impact of Convergence

The top two external challenges supply chain organizations will face over the next three years are growing supply chain complexity and labor shortages. Convergence alleviates these challenges by stimulating cross-functional collaboration and streamlining inefficient processes, thus bolstering productivity, especially amongst talent-constrained teams. In addition, when implemented correctly, convergence allows for a holistic 360-degree view of your organization, allowing for more excellent reliability and resilience amidst disruption.



### Increased Resilience

Convergence allows supply chain leaders to better understand blindspots, bottlenecks, and information gaps, allowing them to focus efforts on redesigning or automating critical processes that ensure resiliency is embedded at every turn.



### Improved Risk Management

Without transparency into the data contained throughout your supply chain, an organization will never understand the risk it holds. Converging critical information allows for impact analysis, helping you to understand the risks your supply chain faces and empowering you to prioritize the necessary actions.



### Accelerated Innovation

When more intelligent decision-making and actions occur more frequently and efficiently through improved collaboration channels, it lays the groundwork for innovation to emerge. Additionally, it accelerates the development and implementation of these innovations faster than previously possible.

# Building Convergent Solutions

Supply chain convergence solutions must be focused on people, process and data. Technology alone will not solve this problem. However, having a flexible, easy to use platform at the core of any convergence solution will accelerate the time to value. Ease of use is particularly important. Supply chain leaders and operational personnel often do not have strong technical or data processing skills. To make things worse, they are often forced to tap into IT resources that are increasingly in high demand. This forces supply chain participants to look toward non-supported solutions such as spreadsheets to fill the gaps. This overreliance on spreadsheets prohibits convergence because they further isolate data and decision making.



## Low-Code, No-Code

Low-code, no-code offerings essential for allowing stakeholders to quickly create integrated spreadsheet alternatives that require minimal IT resources or involvement

## Built-in, Self-Service Data & Analytics

Convergence efforts become even more impactful with built-in data analytics capabilities. These capabilities create the transparency and visibility needed to assess risk and navigate potential disruptions, so ensure your convergence solution of choice has robust and easy-to-use data & analytics capabilities available

## Integration & Automation

These technologies must enable the integration of data and systems and have the ability to automatically power complex webs of workflow and processes

## Feedback Mechanisms

The technology should allow for direct, bilateral user feedback into the system over being static or one-sided. User-friendly approaches to this feedback mechanism are also essential, as change agents and users won't have the technical fortitude to update complex platform code.

## Where to Converge

### Supplier Collaboration

Supplier collaboration is ripe for innovation, particularly in the area of business continuity. When disaster strikes (as the last couple years have proved commonplace) your organization needs to be able to communicate with your suppliers and receive real-time up-to-date contextualized information to make timely decisions.

### Product Incident Management

From a product incident perspective, it's critically important to have relevant data in place to ensure activities such as product recalls are as smooth as possible. Supply chain convergence creates visibility between notoriously siloed data streams, such as lot ids, batch ids, sku numbers, order numbers, and correlated customers. It also enables cross-functional teams, such as those typically involved in the product recall process (manufacturing, legal, quality assurance, marketing, various 3pls) to collaborate and share findings much more easily than doing so via spreadsheets and emails. This will allow your organization to have a cohesive task force and system in place to react quickly whenever a product incident occurs.

### New Product Development

New product development requires a huge uplift of collaboration across various departments to gather information like cost, product specifications, manufacturing feasibility, and regulatory compliance. This area is prone to spreadsheet abuse and broken processes. Convergence accelerates time to market for new products by creating a standardized, compiled environment where data is centralized and accessible across domains. By adding on workflows to this environment, decisions can be tracked and the appropriate teammate can be notified and assigned work accordingly.





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Process Tempo is a next-gen decision intelligence platform designed for the modern enterprise. It helps organizations overcome complexity by providing stakeholders the tools and insights they need to make clearer, smarter, data-driven decisions. The platform offers a comprehensive set of data science, data engineering, and data analytics features combined into a single platform that is easily configurable using a business-user friendly, drag and drop interface. The platform also empowers stakeholders with embedded forms and workflow capabilities, allowing them to take immediate action when a problem is discovered. When deployed, Process Tempo's combination of features help supply chain leaders to converge people, process and data across the entire supply chain. As a result, your organization will gain a comprehensive perspective and be better equipped to react to change.

