

boom!

Voice of the Profession Survey 2024

THE RESULTS

AI

The Supply Chain Profession's Perspective

www.boomglobalnetwork.com

Introduction

Since 2020, our annual survey has explored critical supply chain topics that shape the industry's future and the lives of its professionals. In 2024, AI dominated discussions, emerging as the defining theme due to its transformative potential—both positive and disruptive.

This year's survey sought to uncover AI's perceived impact on supply chains and identify where leaders must focus today. The insights represent the collective voice of the profession and serve as a call to action for prioritisation and leadership.

Conducted online in October/November 2024, the survey was enriched by interviews with participants, whose perspectives add depth to the findings. Instead of a lengthy report, we've let the survey results speak for themselves, supplemented by expert commentary available in two webinar replays and quotes from the interviews that provide a representative global perspective.

We extend our gratitude to everyone who contributed to this study. We hope the insights inspire you to craft AI strategies that balance technological advancement with building high-performing, impactful teams.

The key question remains: How can you develop AI-driven digital strategies that empower teams and deliver lasting value for all?

Authors



Beth Morgan
Founder & Chief Executive

Beth's career as a supply chain advisor has spanned over 25 years. Prior to launching boom! she was Research Vice President at Gartner, where she advised global Chief Supply Chain Officers and their teams on sustainability and talent management best practices. Passionate about developing high performing teams that thrive.



Melanie Salter
Director Supply Chain Research

Melanie has worked in supply chain for over twenty years, living and working in Europe, Africa, and North America. Her role at boom! combines her passion for supply chain management and for gender equality, researching strategies to improve diversity in the sector and working to support boom! members around the world.

Note to readers

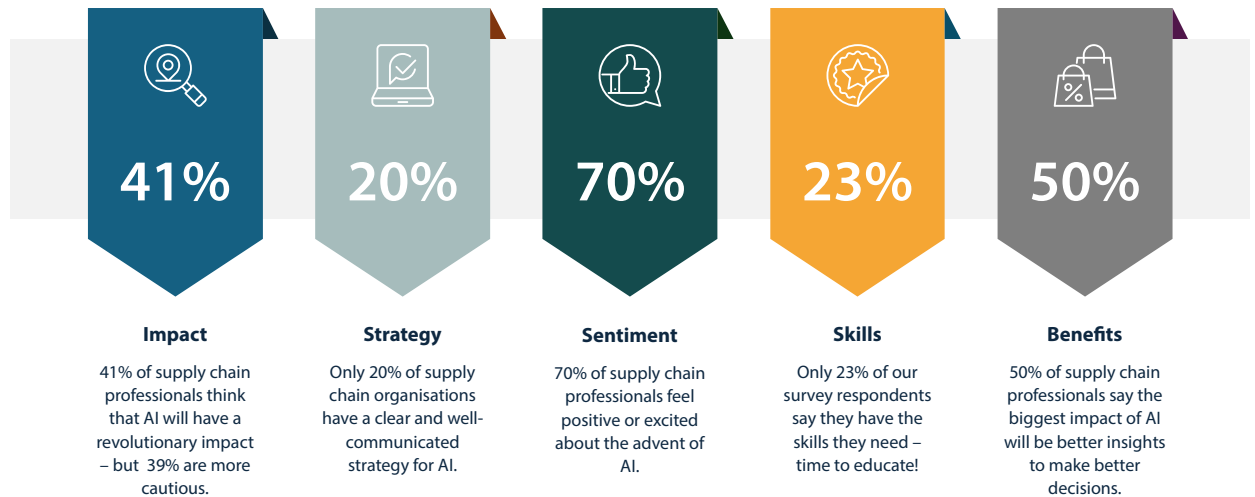
Throughout this report you will see quotes like the one you see to the right. Drawn from supplemental interviews with survey respondents and other contributors, they truly represent the "voice of the profession". We thank everyone who took the time to share their thoughts and experiences, which serve to add more depth to the overall picture reflected in the survey data.

"Risk became a big topic after COVID. We realised that we have to leverage technology because a risk is going to happen no matter what. You cannot prevent risks from happening. You cannot predict all your risks. The only thing you can do is to manage them better, which means faster information, faster time to react, which only technology can help us do. Two years in, we now have a lot of cases where we could use AI. I wouldn't say Gen AI yet though. Generative AI is too advanced for manufacturing companies like us, where data is still quite a bit of a challenge."

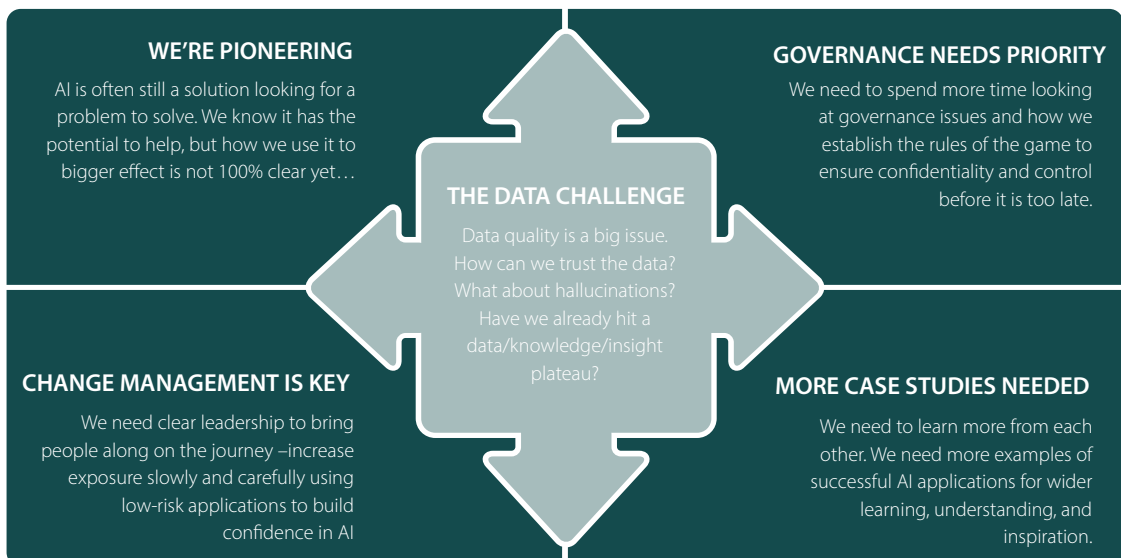
Director Global Supply Chain (India)

In a nutshell

Five key takeaways from the supply chain profession



What our research interviewees told us: the highlights...



Results & analysis discussion replays

We discussed the headline survey results in two live webinars, timed to meet the needs of a global audience. The content discussed is the same in both, though not surprisingly, the live analysis is different due to the unique perspectives of the four industry experts and commentators. We are deeply grateful to all of them for their time and input.

We include a small selection of quotes from the speakers in this document. A replay of each webinar is available to watch in full via the boom! website (no registration needed). See reference 1 at the end of this document for links.



Anne Robinson
Mentor
Former Chief Strategy Officer


Beth Morgan
Founder & Chief Executive


Jake Dean
Director, Grainger Center for Supply Chain Management




Maria Villablanca
Advisor
Podcast host
Co-founder & CEO

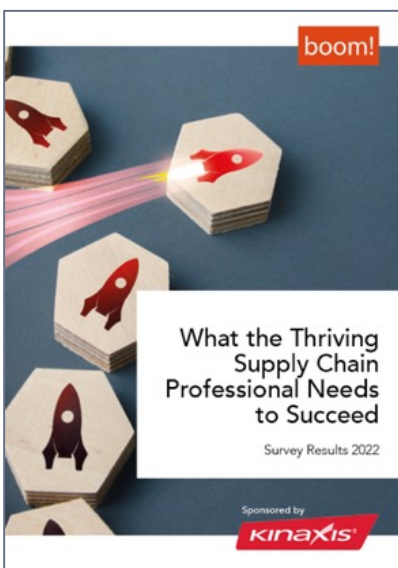
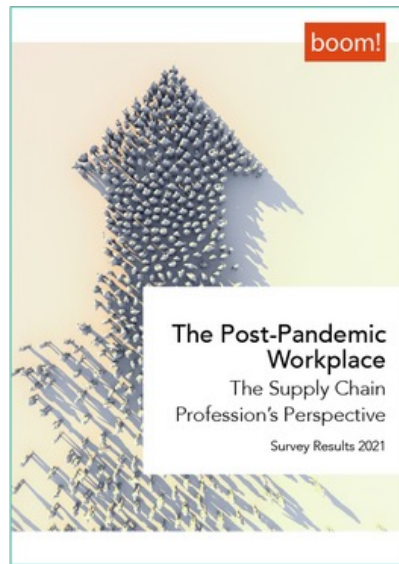
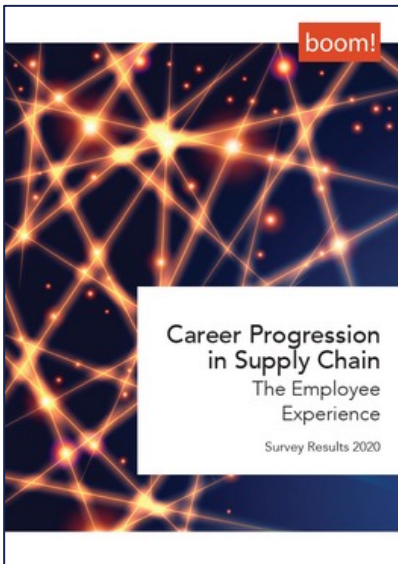

Melanie Salter
Director Supply Chain Research


Martijn Lofvers
Founder & Chief Trendwatcher


boom! Voice of the Profession reports

For the last five years, boom! has fielded an annual global survey of the supply chain profession. These “Voice of the Profession” research studies aim to reflect current experiences, views, and opinions from the perspective of those who dedicate their working lives to roles across the supply chain function. By representing the collective view of the profession, we aim to support leaders in shaping the strategies required to enable supply chain professionals to deliver optimal results by performing to the very best of their abilities.

Each year the topic in focus is selected as the result of a wide-ranging consultation process with numerous stakeholders, ensuring that this effort is as timely and relevant as possible. We thank all those who contribute to this process, with gratitude to the boom! Executive Advisory Board and our global community members. The results of all previous surveys can be viewed on our website at www.boomglobalnetwork.com. To find out about sponsoring a future study, contact us at hello@boomglobalnetwork.com.



The AI phenomenon

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is not a new or unproven technology. However, with its ability to create new content by being “trained” using a wide range of data inputs, Generative AI (or Gen AI) is a more recent phenomenon that is already having a much faster, deeper, and potentially game-changing impact.

Gen AI’s potential to disrupt is not in question. The real question is whether it will do that positively or negatively. AI is already saving lives and helping protect fragile environments, yet at the same time, futurists and even those leading the AI charge are advising caution. In the examples shown here, job losses appear to be one of the least pessimistic outcomes, with the future extinction of humanity a more alarming possibility.

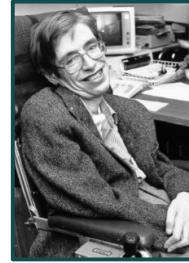


“AI is the new electricity. Just as electricity transformed almost everything 100 years ago, today I actually have a hard time thinking of an industry that I don’t think AI will transform..”

Andrew Ng
AI Pioneer & Educator

“The rise of AI could be the best or worst thing for humanity. But if properly managed, it could lead to a new era of technological and economic prosperity.”

Stephen Hawking
Theoretical Physicist



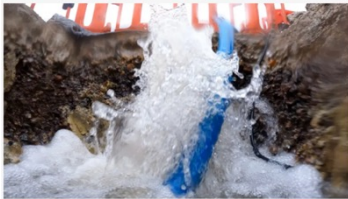
Ref 2

Artificial intelligence 'spotted' my breast cancer



HEALTH NORTON
Sheila Tooth was given the all clear before AI software found her breast cancer

Artificial intelligence helps reduce water leaks



LEAKS ARE FOUND AND FIXED 'BEFORE CUSTOMERS EVEN NOTICE', SAYS SES WATER



Ref 3

Ref 4

The workers already replaced by artificial intelligence



DEAN MEADOWSWOORTH
Dean Meadowsweet never thought that AI would replace him

Artificial intelligence could lead to extinction, experts warn



SAM
Sam Altman testified before a US Senate Committee about the potential of artificial intelligence - and its risks



Ref 5

Ref 6

accenture

For Chief Supply Chain Officers (CSCOs), generative AI's promise **extends all the way across supply chain network operations, from designing and planning through to aftersales and service.** Accenture's analysis indicates that, in total, a massive 58 percent of the 122 supply chain processes analyzed, can be reimagined.³

50+% of working hours in 7 out of 15 supply chain occupations are set to be impacted by generative AI

Supply chain networks in the age of generative AI:
Turning promise into performance

Ref 7

Our AI-enabled freezers are revolutionising ice cream sales

unilever • Follow
Original audio

unilever AI in 100,000 of our smart ice cream freezers is helping ensure our retailers never run out of their bestselling ice creams. Now we're working to put those insights to use, to shape new products and campaigns in the future. Tap the link in bio to find out more. #UnileverInnovation Edited - 9w

puraspaleas very cool!
1w · 1 like · Reply

256 likes
September 24

Ref 8

Decking the aisles with data: How Walmart's AI-powered inventory system brightens the holidays

Parvez Musani
Sr. Vice President, E2E Fulfillment
Oct 25, 2023 · 4 min read

P&G Leans Into AI for Dynamic Routing and Sourcing Optimization

Lisa Johnston · 1/23/2024

Procter & Gamble is optimistic on the expected cost savings from its use of AI in the supply chain as it accelerates productivity levels to pre-COVID levels. The CPG's global Supply Chain 3.0 initiative, which seeks to build supply chain resilience through automation and data analytics, is increasing visibility into savings opportunities, said P&G CEO Jon Moeller in an earnings call with investors.

CGT CONSUMER GOODS TECHNOLOGY

Ref 9

SHIPPINGWATCH

CARRIERS SUPPLIERS OFFSHORE PORTS **LOGISTICS** REGULATION PEOPLE

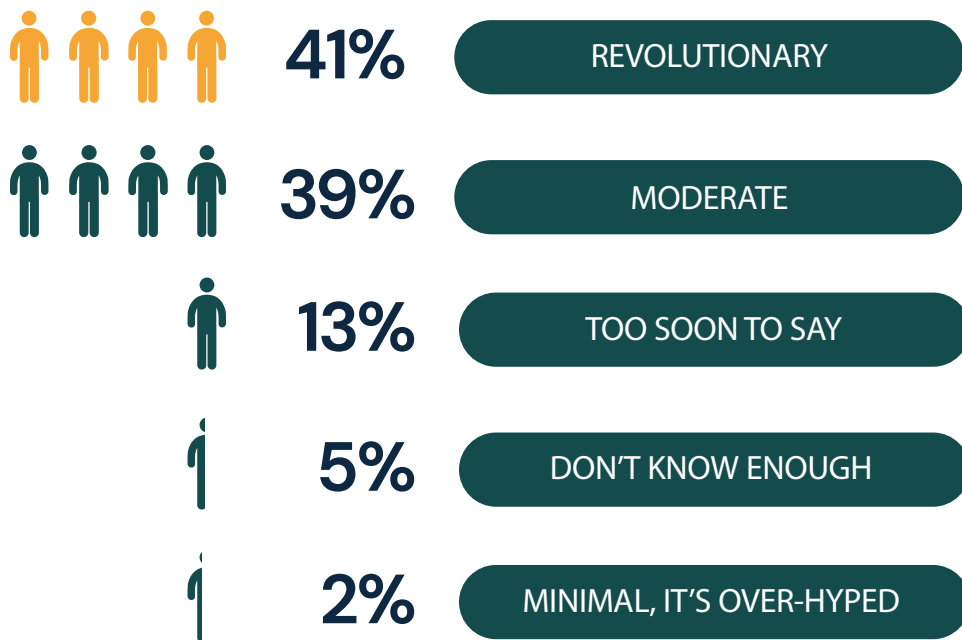
LOGISTICS

Maersk aims to handle all cargo by means of artificial intelligence

Over the next five to seven years, the group will work to reduce the human footprint on supply chains and replace it with artificial intelligence.

Ref 10

What impact will AI have on supply chains in next three years?



Source: boom! Global Network *Voice of the Profession* survey 2024, % of respondents (n=152)

"We've seen quite a lot of technology be over-hyped in our time. But there are two main differences [with AI]. The first one is the fact that adoption rates are quicker than anything else. The speed of change is going to be much bigger than we have ever seen. The second factor is the investment being made by large scale enterprises. If it works, it will improve profit margins. Led by these larger companies, others will be taken on a journey of automation, Generative AI, and modernisation. A third factor might be that some of us don't even know we're using Generative AI already!"



Maria Villablanca, Future Insights Network (UK)

"I don't know, what I don't know. It's a buzz word right now without understanding the capability and how to safeguard it."

Director, Customer Fulfilment (UK)

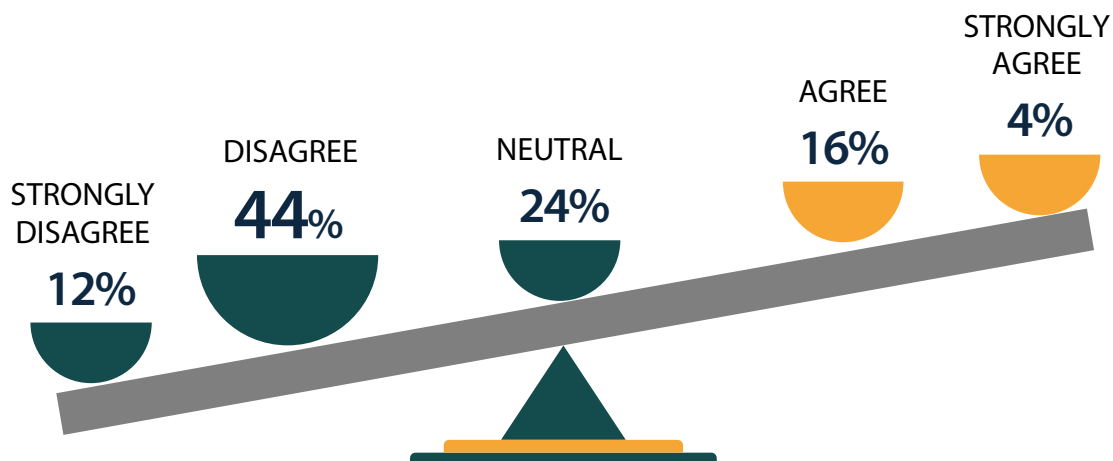
"It's still too early to ascertain how positive (or not) AI will be. I'm optimistic, as long as it's well regulated."

VP, Digital Supply Chain Strategy (UK)

"I'm excited for AI in supply chain. If done right, it would enable organisations to be proactive rather than reactive. Furthermore, it would enable effective use of resources, be able to focus on strategy rather than day to day operational task. Instead of seeing AI as a threat organisations could evolve their organisations."

Individual contributor, Digital Supply Chain Strategy (South Africa)

Does your supply chain org have a clear & well-communicated strategy for AI today?



Source: boom! Global Network *Voice of the Profession* survey 2024, % of respondents (n=130)

“Here’s an opportunity to be purposeful about how we’re going to use these things so that we are using them to bring benefit and so we don’t get ourselves into trouble. So of course, you want to sandbox an idea and try it out, but a well thought out plan with a direction and vision is going to lead to value much more quickly.”



Anne Robinson, Former Chief Strategy Officer (Canada)

“Our investment in AI has support from the supply chain executive board – we want to transform our processes. We also have some young talent on the team who have a lot of interest and bring such a hunger to develop things and to make us move forward. It is simply amazing what you can achieve if you allow them to focus on that.”

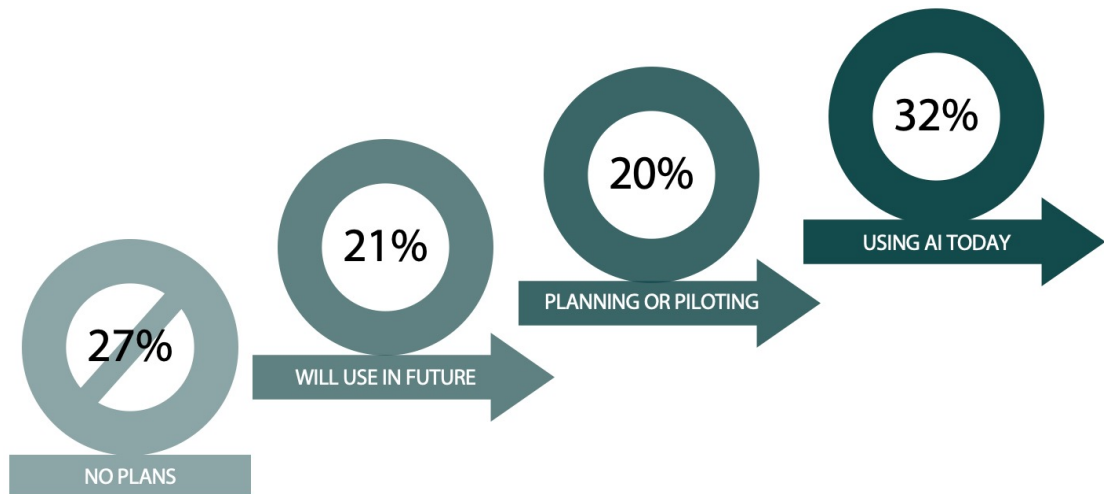
VP, Supply Chain Management (Germany)



“Our research shows that for 80% of companies, there is a misalignment between business strategy and supply chain strategy. So [the fact that few companies have a clear strategy for AI] is not surprising, because there is no supply chain strategy based on the business.”

**Martijn Lofvers
Supply Chain Media (Netherlands)**

How pervasive is AI in supply chain today?



Source: boom! Global Network *Voice of the Profession* survey 2024, % of respondents (n=155)

"[Using] AI tools and solutions to improve productivity in supply chain is in my personal development plan for 2024. We are also discussing at a regional level all the business cases that we can develop."

Area Supply Chain Director (Singapore)

"AI is progress. It offers the possibility to refocus from routine daily tasks to strategic improvements. It's pointless to resist an idea whose time has come. It's better to put in all resources to define how to use it in a smart way."

Head of Manufacturing (Ukraine)

"We don't have an overarching platform to support AI, so we're not enabling people to play with it freely to figure out how they can use it. So instead, we have very specific applications where we have someone, or a team, who's willing to put the effort in and drive it."

Senior Manager, Supply Chain Quality (USA)

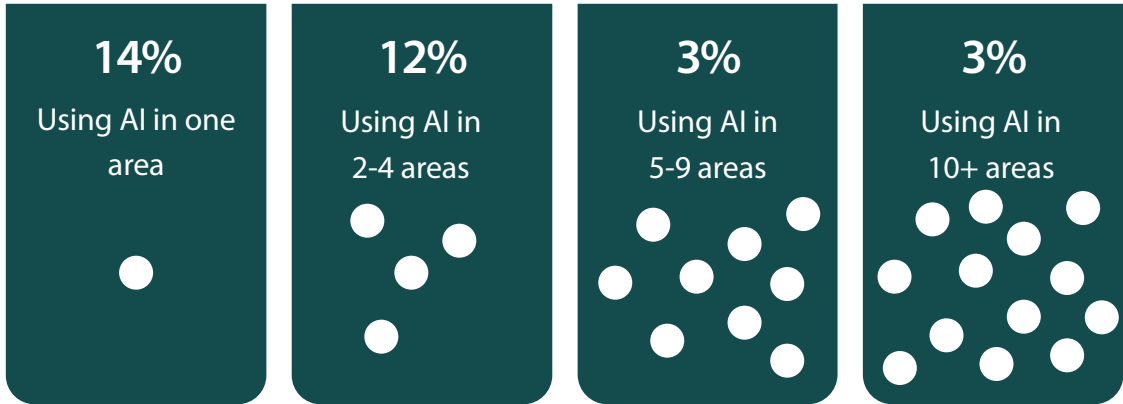
"We're operating in a business and economic environment that was set up 100 years ago. We're now at an inflection point where we're not just re-designing supply chains, we're redesigning the way that businesses operate. Younger generations will upend business models. In 20-30 years, it will be completely re-invented. What we know about management and leadership today will no longer apply. How do you manage and lead in a world where your colleagues are Generative AI?"



Maria Villablanca, Future Insights Network (UK)

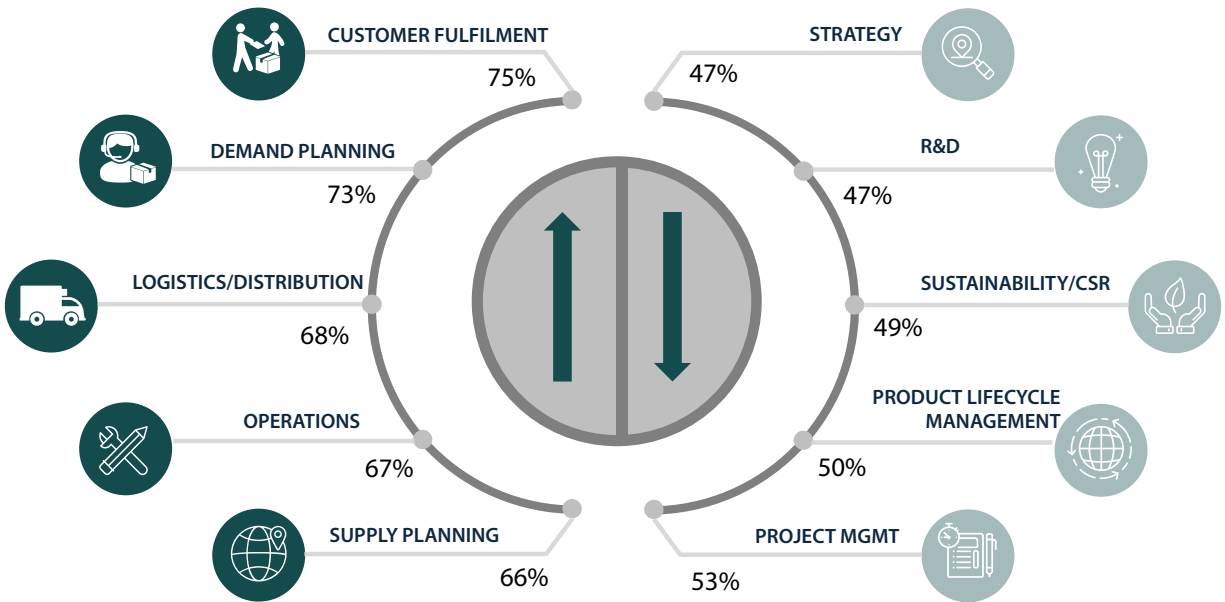
How widely is AI used in supply chain today?

32% already using AI today

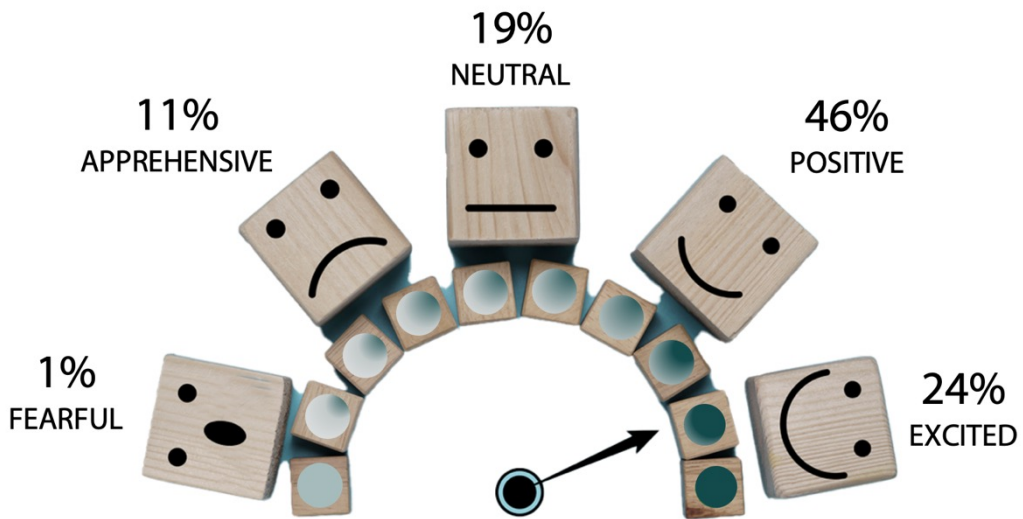


Source: boom! Global Network *Voice of the Profession* survey 2024, % of respondents (n=155)

Priority areas where AI is being used or piloted today, or with plans to use in future



Source: boom! Global Network *Voice of the Profession* survey 2024, % of respondents (n=155)



Source: boom! Global Network *Voice of the Profession* survey 2024, % of respondents (n=123)

“Understanding the science of how humans react to change is going to be your biggest help in implementing AI and other big disruptions. But guess what? The expectations of the supply chain have changed so much that you have to be a change agent to help all your partner organisations accomplish and move forward for the better. Never underestimate the power of change management in being able to be successful in this new era.”



Anne Robinson, Former Chief Strategy Officer (Canada)

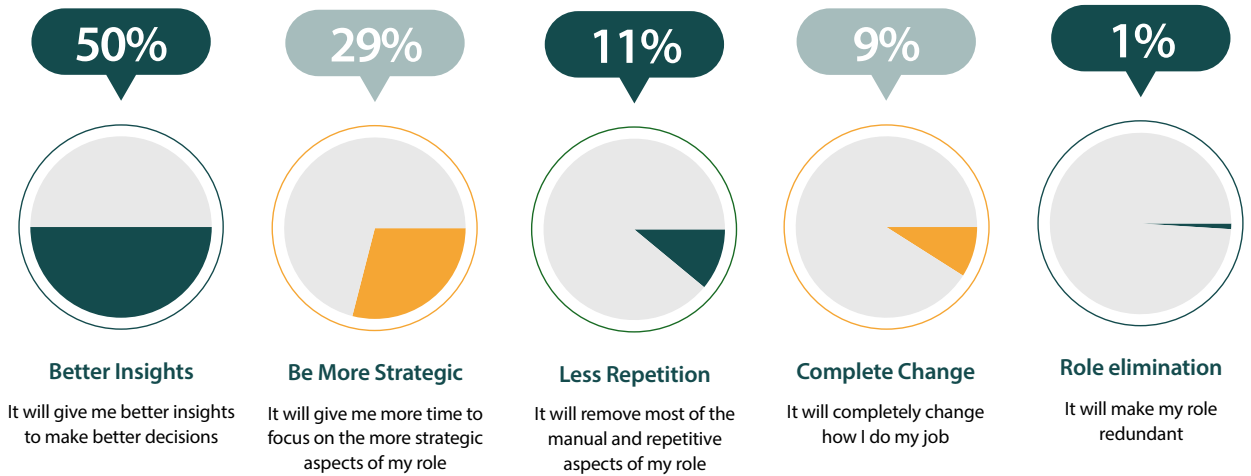
“I’m apprehensive, because instead of being a tool to help us make educated decisions, it can turn to be a substitute for [human] planners. It will be seen as a cost reduction, increasing profits and causing unemployment for many.”

**Manager, Supply Planning
(USA)**

“As the company lays off many people doing planning work, I think there will be a lack of manpower to reflect the rapidly increased or decreased demand with insight, and I still do not believe that they will be able to explain the background and retail situation well.”

**Manager, Demand Planning
(Republic of Korea)**

What is the biggest impact AI will have on your role?



Source: boom! Global Network *Voice of the Profession* survey 2024, % of respondents (n=123)

"It will free up my time to talk with and coach my people."

Supervisor, Manufacturing (Belgium)

"I'm looking forward to non-value tedious tasks to be done by AI, making the execution faster and leaving time for my role to concentrate on entrepreneurial thinking and ideas."

VP Supply Chain Strategy (UK)

"One of the biggest issues with AI is confidentiality. How is the data used? The other challenge is that AI can be super consuming. It takes a lot of time and energy to learn what AI is and how and when to use it, and how to write prompts. Sometimes all you need to do is Google something, rather than use AI. We need to create rules around this and train people. I've just prepared some training for all our regional supply chain directors on this."

Area Supply Chain Director (Singapore)

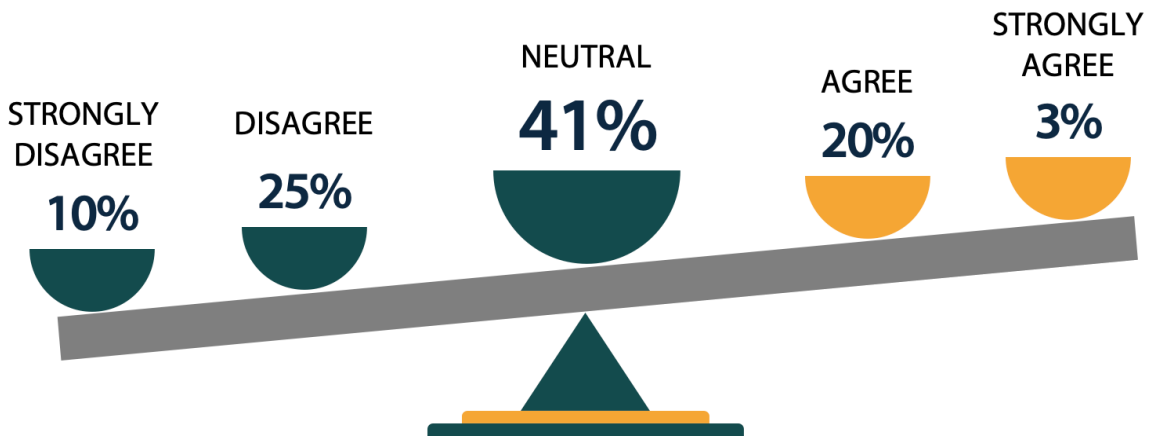
"AI, done properly, will help us make better decisions, faster. It will allow more time to focus on the really important items by automating relatively repetitive decisions."

Senior Vice President, Supply Chain (UK)

"We've been doing the same stuff for years. Now we have a real possibility to remove some of the crap and get the insights we need."

Senior Supply Chain Director (UK)

Do you have all the skills you need to embrace an AI-based future?



Source: boom! Global Network *Voice of the Profession* survey 2024, % of respondents (n=130)

“Increasingly hiring managers are looking for digital fluency as a core part of their requirements. However, there is still a skills gap within this ever-evolving market and businesses are not really doing enough to train on these new skills, preferring instead to try and ‘buy in’ the expertise. This proves challenging as the technologies are constantly developing and increasingly there are high expectations on what people should be able to deliver immediately in a new role. This digital agility and working knowledge of AI tools is certainly an area where there is a need for training investment. It’s also an opportunity for candidates to develop themselves in these areas and make themselves attractive to the market.”



**Caroline Crotty, Head of Global Manufacturing
& Technical Recruitment, Pod Talent (UK)**

“I’m very excited about using AI. I don’t know if I have all the skills I need for the future though. I can see new horizons already, but I don’t yet understand and see the full scope of what is possible yet beyond those horizons.”

VP, Supply Chain Management (Germany)



“It’s going to make us better teachers once we really figure out what this can do, and what this means of questions we can ask our students. We will figure out that we can get much better work product out of our students if we assume they’re just going to ask the Gen AI tools the basic questions. But they’re going to have to put it into context. Math teachers probably freaked out when calculators came along. But we’re still teaching math.”

**Jake Dean, Director, Grainger Center for Supply Chain Management,
Wisconsin School of Business**



Source: boom! survey 2024 | n=123 | Word cloud generated by ChatGPT

"Supply chain visibility is a huge problem. We need more insights to be able to do a better job."

Director, Manufacturing (USA)

"Some ML based techniques to support planning will hopefully take some emotion out of the process."

Director, Supply Chain Strategy (Luxembourg)

"I see AI as an enabler to better forecast. It will better equip demand planners but won't replace them. The job content will change."

Head of Demand Planning (France)

"People who are concerned about AI don't necessarily have the right mindset; they don't know whether it's right for AI to be making decisions and have AI in full control of things. What we're trying to do is create AI to be a tool to help people do their jobs better and the people who are resistant to that don't fully understand what that means. It's a change in the way their team works, and that creates uncertainty."

Senior Manager, Supply Chain Quality (USA)

"I feel that with the proper and correct use of AI we can achieve a lot, especially if people are prepared and some kind of change management program is carried out."

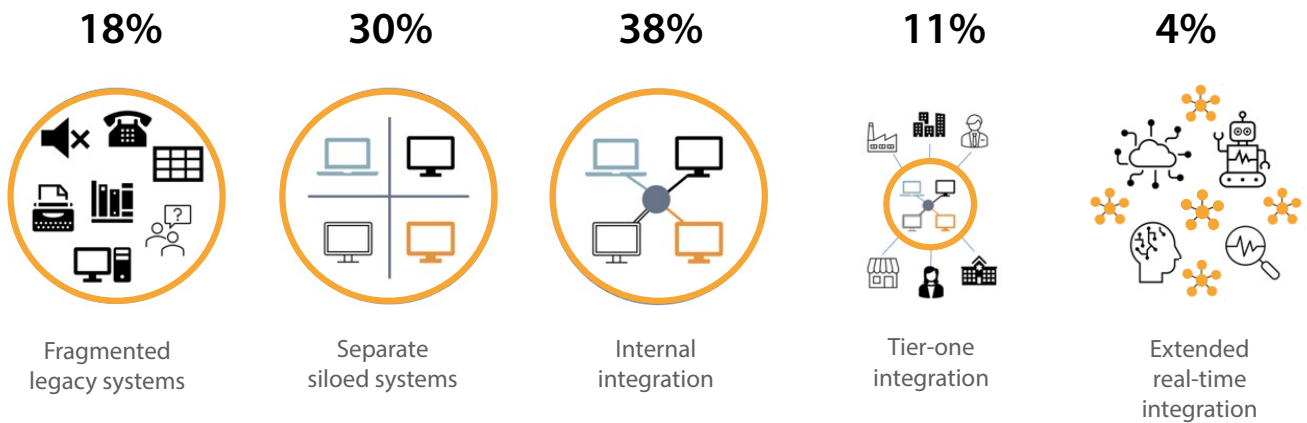
Individual contributor, Supply Chain Operations (Mexico)

Most organisations are still on the journey to digital transformation

In our 2022 survey we asked the question: if you could do, change, or be given one thing to boost your performance at work, what would it be?

The answer was loud and clear: Better, integrated digital tools.

But the reality of current digital capabilities shows that there is much work yet to be done regarding digital transformation and integration. How does AI fit into this?



Source: boom! Global Network Survey 2024, Percentage of respondents, n=130

“AI is not even a topic at our company at the moment. Some people might use ChatGPT to write emails, but I don’t think there’s a systematic approach to it. An internal group looking at it has led to a cohort of people who are familiar with AI proposing ideas, but there’s a huge long tail of people who aren’t accustomed to it and don’t know how it works. If you don’t train people properly, you run the risk of bad output scenarios. That’s the big challenge: how to train people, how to use prompts, and how to think about the innovation that can come out of the model.”

Director Global Transportation (Luxembourg)

“I don’t think people always understand the different levels of terminology [relating to AI]. That’s probably something that puts people off a little bit. Also, I don’t think there are many good use cases shared publicly, particularly in supply chain. People are talking about it a lot, but they’re not actually showing the good stuff that’s happening. If there is any way to publicise the tools that are out there, and not just talk about it, that would be really good for wider learning.”

Supply Chain Program Manager (UK)

Where to from here...?



Fei-Fei Li
AI Researcher & Educator

"AI is everywhere. It's not that big, scary thing in the future. AI is here today and changing the world for the better."



Yuval Noah Harari
Historian & Author

"We might create AI systems that take over the world and make decisions for us, not because they're evil, but because we've lost control."

What the supply chain profession says...

"We must understand the inputs to ensure the outputs are sound. If we blindly accept any results without being critical then we may make significant errors impacting service and cost."

Director, Customer Fulfilment (UK)

"AI is very unpredictable and can make erroneous (but confident assumptions). I worry parts of my organisation don't have the right level of commercial critical thinking to use AI at the moment."

Chief Supply Chain Officer (UK)

"Embrace and lead the change, or you will be left behind!"

VP Logistics (Canada)

"Digital savvy is rapidly becoming a critical trait for senior supply chain executives. With 41% of respondents anticipating AI's revolutionary impact within three years, the ability to navigate and lead digital transformation is no longer optional – it's essential. Yet, the gap is evident, as only 20% report having a clear strategy today. Senior leaders must combine visionary thinking with practical expertise in emerging technologies to bridge this divide, driving innovation and resilience in supply chains. A leader's skill in aligning technology with organizational goals will define competitive advantage in this era of rapid digital evolution."



Radu Palamariu, Group CEO, Alcott Global (Singapore)

About boom!

The boom! community was launched in 2019 with a vision to empower women in supply chain for the benefit of all. Our members represent all supply chain, manufacturing, and procurement functions and span multiple industries across 65 countries, bringing a rich diversity of experience, thinking and ambition.

Our goal is an equitable world where there is a level playing field for all those with a desire to flourish in their careers in balance with their personal lives. In that world there will be no need for boom! to exist. Until then it is our mission to help women seize the opportunities available to them and to provide guidance to supply chain leaders and their teams as they work to nurture female talent and create equity of opportunity for all to ensure that #EveryoneWins.

The boom! community is supported by supply chain leaders from companies such as adidas, Cargill, Coca-Cola Europacific Partners, The Estée Lauder Companies, HEINEKEN, HP, Illumina, Keurig Dr Pepper, Microsoft, MSD, PHINIA, Pernod Ricard, Specsavers, Unilever, University Chicago Medicine, and more. Thank you to our corporate members whose support made carrying out this research study possible.

For more information visit www.boomglobalnetwork.com or contact us at hello@boomglobalnetwork.com



Stay in touch with news and updates at
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/boom-global-network>

References

- 1 Survey analysis and discussion replays – www.boomglobalnetwork.com/survey2024-results.html
- 2 Artificial intelligence 'spotted' my breast cancer – www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd9ndpdy0q3o
- 3 Artificial intelligence helps reduce water leaks – www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4n5pwny536o
- 4 The workers already replaced by artificial intelligence – www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-65906521
- 5 Artificial intelligence could lead to extinction, experts warn – www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-65746524
- 6 Supply Chain networks in the age of generative AI – www.accenture.com/content/dam/accenture/final/accenture-com/document-2/Accenture-Supply-Chain-Networks-In-The-Age-Of-Generative-AI.pdf
- 7 How our AI-enabled freezers are revolutionising ice cream sales – www.unilever.com/news/news-search/2024/how-our-ai-enabled-freezers-are-revolutionising-ice-cream-sales/
- 8 Decking the aisles with data: How Walmart's AI-powered inventory system brightens the holidays – https://tech.walmart.com/content/walmart-global-tech/en_us/blog/post/walmarts-ai-powered-inventory-system-brightens-the-holidays.external.html
- 9 P&G Leans Into AI for Dynamic Routing and Sourcing Optimization – <https://consumergoods.com/pg-leans-ai-dynamic-routing-and-sourcing-optimization>
- 10 Maersk aims to handle all cargo by means of artificial intelligence – <https://shippingwatch.com/logistics/article16350667.ece>