

The 6 **untapped** opportunities in your supply chain



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In a world of continuous supply chain disruption – from geopolitical incidents causing shipping delays, to increased raw material costs, labour shortages and shifting post-Brexit regulations – it can be easy to overlook the positives.

Supply chains can be sources of huge business growth, and here are just some of the ways you can leverage the opportunity in your supply chain... from first to last mile.



Overcome *disruption* with 'nearshoring'

In the face of ongoing uncertainty, lots of businesses are exploring where and how they source goods, materials and manufacturing.

This is called 're-shoring' if it involves bringing operations back to the UK, and 40% of UK manufacturers re-shored suppliers in 2022-23, with a similar number planning to do so in 2024.¹ And many businesses are turning to 'friend-shoring' or 'nearshoring': creating trade and manufacturing links with geographically close countries – or countries that have "friendlier" trade relationships with the UK – where the supply of goods will likely be more secure.

Not only do both re-shoring and nearshoring offer greater supply chain certainty, they also provide other benefits.



In fact, 90% of manufacturers engaged in the reshoring process report successful outcomes.²

These benefits include lower transit costs due to goods and materials moving shorter distances; decreased transit time which can support a quicker speed to market; improves agility when products need to be updated at pace; and even fewer language and cultural barriers.

If implementing nearshoring in the near-future isn't possible, it's still good to develop detailed contingency plans for which alternative suppliers you will swap to in case of disruption, and what impact that change will have on your costs and operations.

Put **green** on the agenda



**31% of
businesses
now see a
“strong” positive
impact on their
revenue and profits
through improving their
sustainability credentials.⁵**

If you haven't already begun to prioritise a more sustainable supply chain, now is a good time to act to capitalise on the growing opportunity – whether you operate B2C or B2B.

In 2023, 40% of UK consumers chose brands with sustainable values and practices,³ and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations top the list of reasons for companies to seek a new B2B partner.⁴

The commercial benefits are significant: 31% of businesses now see a “strong” positive impact on their revenue and profits through improving their sustainability credentials.⁵

And sustainable supply chain practices could also save you money in the long run. Optimising routes to reduce fuel expenditure, reducing waste or implementing energy-saving processes in warehouses could all contribute towards lower operating expenses.

To truly become more sustainable, businesses can collaborate with green suppliers for manufacturing, warehousing, logistics and last mile delivery. They can promote transparency by being clear about the emissions associated with their products and be open about the ways this can be improved. They can invest in new technologies: from trucks that operate on alternative fuels to an emission monitoring dashboard.

You don't have to strive for perfection or attempt to hit net zero in 5 years: just consider the next meaningful step in your sustainability journey and find partners who are prepared to move along that journey with you.

Consider the need for speed

Expectations around fast delivery times are so significant that it now has its own name: qCommerce – short for “quick commerce.”

And though this typically refers to the delivery of goods (usually groceries) in less than a few hours, its very existence is indicative of online shoppers' changing demands around speed.

The average global consumer expects to wait 2.15 days for their online orders to arrive; in 2022 this was 2.36 days.⁶

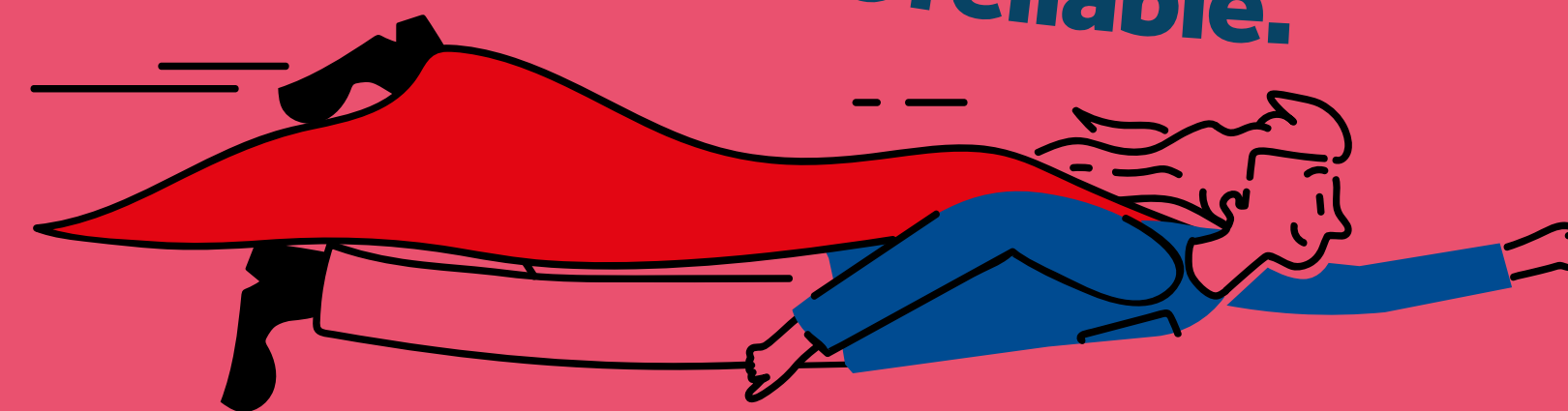
Many businesses have already identified the rising importance of pace. In 2023, 67% of organisations considered meeting customer expectations for speed of

delivery as a critical force impacting the structure and flow of their supply chains over the next 12-18 months.⁷

When reviewing where time-savings can potentially be made, there are a few stages in the supply chain to examine. From your network of distribution and micro-fulfilment centre locations, and how near they are to your spread of customers, to how unified your omnichannel experience is – and whether your front-end e-commerce systems and back-end inventory management systems interact seamlessly.

But that final mile is where many of the speed losses and gains can be made. Are you using partners that can provide you with the fast delivery times your customers demand?

83% of online shoppers agree next-day delivery is quick enough for most purchases⁸ – but it has to be reliable.



Add in some AI



The benefits of strong and seamless tech in a supply chain range from better visibility to increased cost-savings, which is perhaps why 6 in 10 businesses plan to invest in digital technology to bolster their supply chain processes.⁹

But while 46% of manufacturers are combating volatility through supply chain dashboards and analytics, only 14% are using more advanced capabilities – like real-time sensors, automation, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning.¹⁰

If you're planning on investing in tech this year, why not consider supply chain-focused AI? You'd be in good company: 75% of UK businesses will be investing larger amounts in AI over the next year: notably higher than the global average.¹¹

Investment could be directed towards analytical AI that can improve supply chain planning; automate warehouse and operational tasks; optimise processes using your historical data; and gather better end-to-end supply chain analytics to enhance visibility.

And Generative AI (also known as GenAI, which can generate its own data and other content) is particularly useful for risk and demand forecasting; problem-solving and solution mapping; and inventory management – potentially meaning you need to hold less inventory: a significant cost-saver.

Expand your markets

By exporting overseas, you can reach significantly more consumers than is possible domestically; spread the risk in case of a trade dip in one nation; and even make the most of currency exchange benefits if the pound weakens.

Some businesses are understandably reluctant to begin trading overseas due to the perceived time investment and logistical challenges. But the opportunities are significant: the UK exported £383.7 billion of goods in the 12 months ending April 2024.¹² And UK businesses trading internationally are performing better than those limited to domestic trade.¹³

Where to begin? In 2023, the UK's largest export market for goods was the United States (15.6% of goods exports), followed by Germany (8.6%) and the Netherlands (7.8%).¹⁴ And despite post-Brexit challenges, 53% of surveyed businesses cite the EU as the leading region for growth opportunities.¹⁵

If you're already trading internationally, you may wish to get a first-movers' advantage by expanding into an emerging market (and these economies have held up better than their developed economy peers!).¹⁶

To do so, you don't have to look far from home: Europe itself has a number of emerging markets ripe for the picking, including the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland and Turkey.

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Enhance your final mile

So your stock has left your hands... but it's not all over yet! The final mile can be a great source of supply chain opportunity.

Customers really care about their deliveries, and 39% of consumers would choose one retailer over another when shopping online if it had excellent customer service.¹⁷ So when a recipient has concerns or queries about their delivery, the great support that you and your carrier of choice are able to provide is integral to protecting their loyalty.

Choice is important too: 23% would choose one retailer over another when shopping online if it offered a wide range of delivery options, rising to 48% for international purchases.¹⁸ These options could include quick delivery by the next working day, or even time-guaranteed choices that mean recipients don't have to wait indoors all day.

There are last mile service enhancements that can also add to the overall experience. Tracking, including being able to monitor the driver en-route, helps customers to feel that they're in control. The reassurance provided by a photo or signature on delivery can bolster recipients' peace of mind – and your own. And inflight options, which allow for a change of delivery date or location, can improve first-time delivery success and therefore customer satisfaction.



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if it offered a wide range of delivery options.¹⁸

Nobody delivers more for business than Parcelforce

Learn more about how Parcelforce can help your business grow at parcelforce.com/delivermore or by calling **0800 177 7048***

Sit back and relax, we've got it covered

One of Parcelforce's strongest attributes is the level of support we provide via our dedicated account management team and experienced customer service advisors. **We're on hand to support your business and your recipients whenever you need us.**

A host of delivery options

Offer more convenience with guaranteed timed deliveries (by 9am, 10am, pre-noon or afternoon), our expressSunday service, or great value delivery within one or two working days. Recipients can collect next day, or you can drop off to any of our depots or 11,500 Post Offices. Plus we offer generous size and weight limits of up to 30kg and 2.5m in length and 4m length and girth combined.

Advanced tracking and traceability

Our leading-edge tracking dashboard makes it easy to manage UK and international deliveries easy. With real-time updates, a live street map and one hour allocated time slot for domestic deliveries, and the ability for customers to track drivers en-route.

Easily grow your exports

We offer reliable delivery with expert market knowledge to more than 240 countries and territories, using a network of local delivery partners that really know your recipients' communities. Plus they can get extra peace of mind with Inflight delivery options, tracking, signature on delivery and compensation.

Let's reduce our emissions together

We're on a journey towards Net-Zero by 2040, and we're investing in our business to help make your supply chain more sustainable. We're working towards a 100% zero emission delivery fleet for the final mile by 2035. Plus our 100% recyclable courier bags are made from 84% recycled household plastics!

Drivers you can trust

Our employed and vetted drivers stay with us for a decade on average, upholding your great customer experience to the door and **boosting first time delivery success.**



*We're open Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm. Calls may be recorded and monitored for training and compliance purposes.

Footnotes

- ¹ 'No Weak Links: Building Supply Chain Resilience', Make UK / Infor (2023)
- ² 'UK manufacturers plan to increase reshoring to get better value and more security', Manufacturing & Logistics IT (2024)
- ³ 'Share of sustainable shopping behaviors among UK shoppers in 2022 and 2023', Statista (2024)
- ⁴ 'B2B Buying Guide 2022: The impact of ESG on the B2B buying process', FleishmanHillard UK (2022)
- ⁵ '2023 SAP Sustainability Report', SAP SE (2023)
- ⁶ 'The Future Shopper Report 2023', VML (2023)
- ⁷ 'The supply chain trends shaking up 2023', KPMG (2023)
- ⁸ 'Intel Online Retailing Consumer Report 2023', Intel (2023). Research conducted with Online Shoppers.
- ⁹ 'The supply chain trends shaking up 2023', KPMG (2023)
- ¹⁰ 'No Weak Links: Building Supply Chain Resilience', Make UK / Infor (2023)
- ¹¹ 'The State of Generative AI in the Enterprise: UK Perspective', Deloitte (2024)
- ¹² 'UK trade: April 2024', ONS (2024)
- ¹³ 'Santander Trade Barometer' November (2023)
- ¹⁴ 'UK trade: April 2024', ONS (2024)
- ¹⁵ 'Santander Trade Barometer' Santander (2023)
- ¹⁶ 'Emerging markets outlook', Deloitte (2023)
- ¹⁷ 'Intel Online Retailing Consumer Report 2023', Intel (2023). Research conducted with Online Shoppers.
- ¹⁸ 'Intel Online Retailing Consumer Report 2023', Intel (2023). Research conducted with Online Shoppers.



Get **MORE** from your deliveries

Learn how Parcelforce can deliver more for your business by visiting parcelforce.com/delivermore or by calling **0800 177 7048***

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