

# Improving supply chain efficiency with AI



## CONTRIBUTOR

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**Supply chains worldwide need to capitalise on the benefits of artificial intelligence to improve resilience and efficiency.**

**W**ith the significant challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and political fall-out from Brexit, we are in a new era of intuitive supply chains driven by data and digitisation. This innovative way of managing a supply chain is ultra-intelligent due to its natural ability to draw on and analyse significant quantities of data across business functions, suppliers and competitors through artificial intelligence (AI).

The key advantage of AI is that it intuitively reads all situations, from predicting the unpredictable to responding instantly to fluctuations in demand by understanding changing consumer behaviours and buying patterns. The intuitive supply chain can even react to weather and political conditions before they occur.

## Improving visibility

Super-intelligent capacity also supports end-to-end supply chain visibility, the lack of which has caused many challenges during the pandemic. In our experience, the operations of retailers and manufacturers are increasingly reliant on the delivery of insights at scale providing a deep understanding of multi-tiered supplier networks, the goods that pass through them and stock levels held at key points at warehouses, point of production or at the retail end. This enhanced visibility means that supply chain leaders can intuitively make contingency plans in response to unforeseen events whether they be internal (a fault on a production line) or external (delayed shipments).



### Benefits to the grocery sector

The intuitive supply chain also takes advantage of combining AI with the Internet of Things to extend the possibilities of best-practice logistics management in the grocery sector, such as monitoring the physical impact of goods in transit. Factors covered can include shock, tilt, humidity, light, temperature and pressure that alert the supply chain to potential spoilage, damages and goods tampering. This functionality takes customer experience to a whole new level and drastically reduces costs associated with damaged and spoilt goods. The future supply chain will be all about predicting and preventing rather than its predecessor, which focuses on track and trace.

This type of supply chain innovation is manifested in our Navisphere system, which works with machine learning algorithms to harness the power of more than two petabytes of data. It supports our customers' needs by informing strategic decision-making, to make their supply chain more efficient through full integration with customers own systems.

However, we recognise that no single technology company can have all the answers to continuous improvement. The next decade is likely to see unparalleled levels of partnership and collaboration not only horizontally in the logistics sector, but also vertically with technology companies – for instance, we have formed a partnership with technology giant Microsoft Corporation to integrate the Navisphere system with Microsoft's Azure cloud technologies.

Similar alliances across the logistics sector will enable it to tackle head on the issues facing fresh produce supply chains, including product traceability, end-to-end collaboration and improved supply chain responsiveness. With the complex challenges of moving goods around during a global pandemic and Brexit, we believe that this is the opportunity for innovators in our sector to demonstrate the value of emerging technologies. It is their time to help the economy recover, grow and thrive. ☹

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