

What Will the Supply Chain Team of 2030 Actually Do?

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Executive summary

In September 2026, Moddule brought senior supply chain leaders together at the Royal Automobile Club in London for a closed-door dinner and one question: what will the supply chain team of 2030 actually do?



The room agreed on two things early. Disruption is now permanent, and AI will reshape supply chain roles more than any change in the last 30 years. Much of the debate was about how fast to move, how much to trust AI, and what happens to the people whose jobs are built on the work AI will take over.

The supply chain team they described for 2030 is measured on the value it creates for the business. It treats disruption as a stream of signals to act on early, and it works alongside AI that recommends and challenges while people keep the final decision. It also connects the commercial, planning, and operations teams that often work in silos today.

> **We will be the change makers of this industry, more so than any other supply chain team in the last 30 years.**

About the forum



The Global Supply Chain Forum is a closed-door dinner hosted by Moddule for senior supply chain leaders. The first one took place on September 30, 2026, at the Royal Automobile Club on Pall Mall, London, with an independent facilitator leading the discussion.

The evening ran under the Chatham House Rule, so guests could speak openly about what is and isn't working inside their own organizations. Nothing in this report identifies a participant or their company, and quotes from attendees are shared without attribution.

Who was in the room

Guests came from drinks and FMCG, retail, e-commerce and fashion, consumer health, materials and manufacturing, consulting, and academia, with headquarters across the UK, Ireland, France, Belgium, Sweden, and the US.

25
senior supply chain leaders

£700B+
combined annual revenue

400+
years of combined supply chain experience

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Supply chain as a competitive weapon

Leaders want a bigger seat at the table. Many still run a function their business treats as a cost center, and they want that to change by 2030.

What the leaders said

- Many organizations still see supply chain as a cost center that simply has to work. That leaves little room to experiment, and in fashion in particular, leaders said the investment isn’t there.
- Interest in supply chain rose sharply during recent global disruption, then fell away again. With growth back on the agenda in 2026, attention is shifting back.
- Technology has often been bought only when a problem was already on the table, rather than as a long-term investment.
- A business exists to generate money, and supply chain should help drive that, not only cut costs. Investment in supply chain is investment in competitiveness.
- Some KPIs have been in place for 50 years. A new operating model needs new KPIs and the right culture behind them, and AI layered on top of bad data or bad KPIs won’t help.
- Decisions should rest on data and forecasting, not hunches. The strongest teams are often built on mathematical and financial expertise, and in calculation-heavy planning, AI will outperform people.

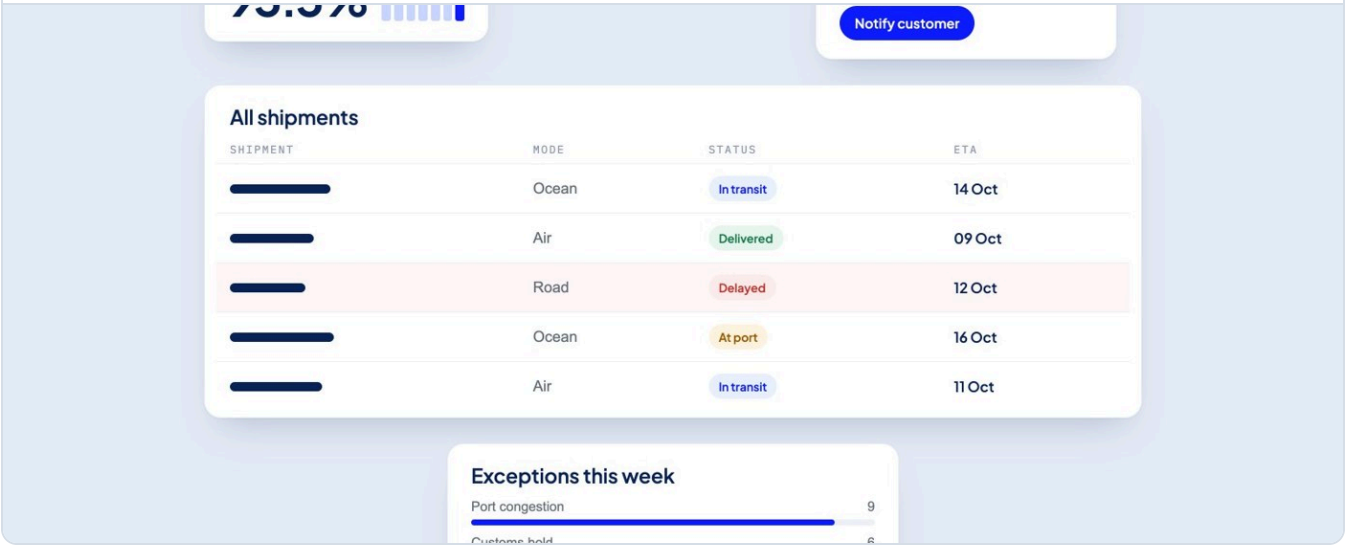
> Supply chain can be your engine for growth. Your competitors won't wait.

What it means for 2030

Supply chain will be judged on the value it creates for the business, with KPIs that reflect it.

Where Moddule fits

It all starts with visibility: Being judged on value starts with data everyone trusts. The Visibility Platform brings milestones from every carrier and tracking provider into one carrier-agnostic view. It gives commercial, planning, and logistics teams a common language and a reliable baseline for the KPIs that will matter in 2030.



> Chaos is not going away. That's why you'll always need a human being.

Disruption is permanent

Disruption is no longer a series of one-off events. Leaders described it as an always-on state, and the question has moved from how to recover to how to keep adapting.

What the leaders said

- Every day brings disruption, and the noise from outside supply chain has grown sharply. Deciding what needs attention first is now a core skill.
- Agility is a competitive advantage. The supply chains that adapted fastest during recent global disruption were the ones not tied to legacy systems.
- More connections across a network can improve outcomes, but they also bring more complexity and more risk.
- Resilience strategies aren't new. For now, resilience still rests on experienced people, and the number of peak seasons someone has worked through still counts.
- Getting the right product to the right place at the right time remains the job, but service levels can and must improve across the business.

What it means for 2030

Teams will need to build for constant change and keep the agility to adapt, instead of planning for a return to normal.

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From firefighting to managing signals

Supply chain professionals are natural problem solvers. The challenge for 2030 is pointing that energy at prevention instead of reaction.

What the leaders said

- Firefighting is how many teams cope today, because the rulebook doesn't survive daily disruption. Leaders were candid that this is how the work gets done.
- Sales and Operations Execution (S&OE) can now be run in 30 minutes, with issues treated as signals rather than emergencies.
- Time to decision needs to improve. The customer cares about service level, the business cares about profitability, and supply chain has to balance both quickly.
- Planning came up as the capability that will matter most by 2030. One leader described the goal as winning in planning before problems appear.
- Some felt prediction is still mostly human today, built on experience rather than predictive technology.
- Disruption is largely external, but portfolio complexity is a choice. Different product lines, such as luxury and value ranges, may need different supply chains.

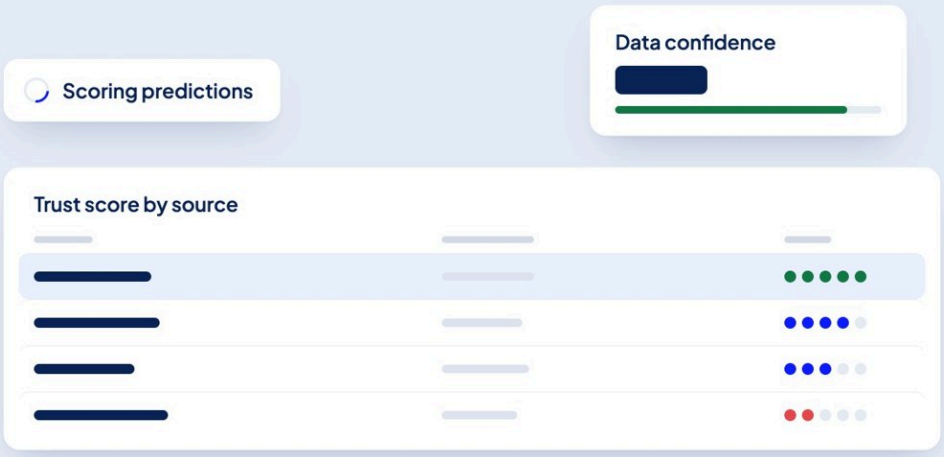
> Every day is a disruption. We cannot follow the rule because it doesn't work. This is how we deal with it, by firefighting.

What it means for 2030

The strongest teams will spend less time reacting and more time preventing, using early signals to act while there's still time.

Where Moddule fits

Data intelligence: Treating disruption as signals depends on predictions you can rely on. ETA IQ scores the confidence of data across multiple providers and carriers, and shows which shipments need attention while there's still time to act, before costs hit.



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AI will recommend and challenge, but people will decide

None of the supply chain leaders dismissed AI. The debate was about what it has to prove before teams let it act, what it really costs, and how much of the decision leaders are prepared to hand over.

What the leaders said

- Supply chain needs to see AI proven before it scales. Other industries can experiment in a sandbox, but supply chain is core to how a business runs. Some felt fully agentic supply chains are still a long way off.
- AI is expensive and still makes mistakes. Several leaders expect prices to rise as businesses come to depend on it, and questioned whether the returns will follow. The aim, as one put it, is to make good things quicker, not bad things quicker.
- Losing track of why decisions are made is a major risk. Mistakes justified with “the AI told me to” will become more common unless organizations keep a record of every decision: why it was made, what was considered, and what was discounted.
- More automation brings the risk of supply chain “flash crashes,” where AI misreads a small data change, overcompensates, and triggers a large disruption.
- Leaders are comfortable with AI being involved, but want to approve its output. Some areas, such as safety, must always have a person in the loop.
- There was strong interest in AI that pushes back on the user, and in professionals who know how to challenge it.

> “We’re still going to need people to work the AI, even if it’s 1% to make the decision.

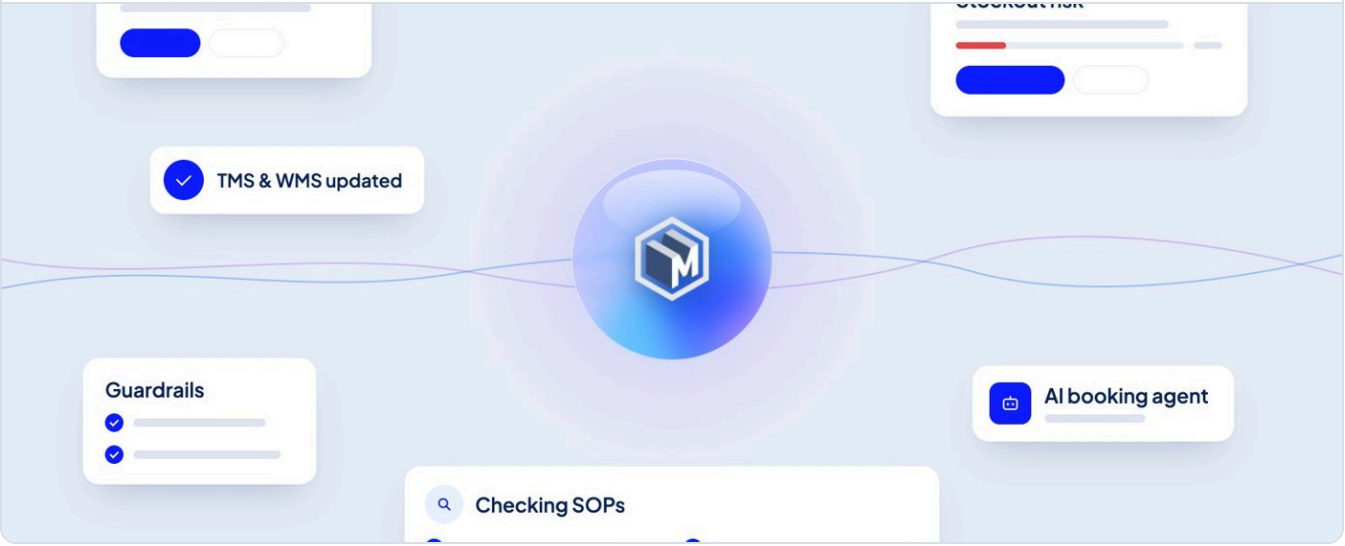
> We as supply chain professionals have to be smart about challenging AI and asking the right questions.

What it means for 2030

Trust in AI will depend on decision traceability, with people staying in the loop and owning the risk.

Where Moddule fits

Orchestration in action: Moddule Orchestration is built around the model leaders described. It gains autonomy in stages, from recommending to acting with your approval. Over time it can handle specific tasks on its own, such as updating systems, generating documents, or informing stakeholders, within the rules, thresholds, and SOPs your team sets. Every action and the reasoning behind it is logged, so people stay in charge of the decisions that matter.



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The talent question

AI will take over much of the execution work that supply chain teams do today. Leaders were optimistic about that, but uneasy about what it means for people and for the next generation.

What the leaders said

- Repetitive tasks can and should be automated, which means fewer spreadsheets and more time for strategic work.
- Roles are changing faster than anyone can plan for. One leader pointed out that prompt engineer was a vital role a year ago and has already disappeared. Several compared AI to the industrial revolution: it may create new jobs, but nobody can yet say which ones.
- Entry-level roles are being phased out, which raises a hard question. If young people no longer learn through hands-on execution, how will they build the experience to challenge an AI model?
- Capability has to shift with the technology. Analyzing data yourself and knowing how to interrogate AI will matter more. One leader suggested treating AI as a respected colleague, not an intern.
- The next generation may trust AI by default, while experienced practitioners keep asking questions. Leaders asked whether that divide is new or has always existed.
- New tools should bring more breathing room, but many expect more pressure to deliver instead. Setting boundaries will matter.

> **If it takes the monotony out of spreadsheets, fantastic, but if it adds more pressure to teams...**

What it means for 2030

Businesses will need a new way to build the judgment that today's leaders learned on the job.

Breaking down silos and sharing intelligence

Asked where the biggest opportunity lies, the room pointed less to any single tool and more to connecting the teams, data, and decisions that already exist.

What the leaders said

- The supply chain blueprint is open to a complete rethink. Operations, supply, procurement, and commercial teams should move from silos into fusion teams.
- Connecting teams is above all a human challenge. Technology can't help a business that isn't willing to change its processes.
- Many businesses have invested heavily in tools, but the result is often fragmented.
- AI could work as a system across an industry. Shared forecasting between suppliers could validate and improve predictions for everyone, and more efficient data sharing has knock-on benefits, including for sustainability.
- One suggestion was to start from what 2030 should look like and work backward to decide what to fix first.

> "Commercial and supply chain have to come together.

What it means for 2030

Faster, better decisions will come from connecting people and data across teams and suppliers.

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The reality gap

For all the talk of AI, leaders were open about how many supply chains still struggle with the basics. The gap between ambition and day-to-day reality came up again and again.

What the leaders said

- Basic process failures still happen. One example from the room involved a large volume of stock bought through a supplier with no contract in place, which forced the business to build new processes after the fact.
- Some businesses still produce to keep lines running and labor costs low, whatever demand is saying, and hope demand catches up. Scale and volume economics still drive many decisions.
- Many organizations are piloting and experimenting rather than scaling what works.
- Fixing the process comes first, with or without technology. The approach the room favored was to start with a plan, test in small areas, and expand from there.

Resilience when technology fails

The more automated a supply chain becomes, the more it needs a plan for when systems go down, whether through failure or cyber attack. Leaders asked whether their organizations still have the veterans who know how things worked before the technology. Disaster recovery and analog fallbacks, down to phones and paper, matter as much as the technology itself.

> **By 2030, the hope is that supply chains can use the info they already have.**

What it means for 2030

Automation will only pay off on top of sound processes and a clear plan for when the technology fails.

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Beyond the supply chain

Two bigger questions sat behind much of the evening: what it will take for businesses to invest in sustainability, and what automation could mean for the wider economy.

What the leaders said

- Sustainability became one of the biggest talking points of the night, and leaders expect it to matter more with each generation.
- The central question was what tips a business into investing in it, and how to show a return.
- Some saw sustainability as driven more by consumers than by supply chain or business priorities. With the economy under pressure, it competes with price, and there is no single consumer type.
- Returns came up as a practical example: sometimes handling a return costs more than writing the item off.
- Circular models, such as deposit return schemes for plastic packaging, were raised as examples worth learning from.
- Organizations are beginning to consider a second-order risk. If AI automation reduces employment across the economy, consumer demand for their own products could fall. As one leader put it, optimize too much and it comes back to bite you.

What it means for 2030

Supply chain decisions will increasingly be judged on their impact beyond the business, from carbon to the health of the wider economy.

Looking ahead to 2030

The leaders around the table came from different sectors and sizes of business, yet they described the same pressures and arrived at a similar picture of 2030.

Getting there depends on the basics: sound processes, the right KPIs, trust in AI built step by step, and a new way to develop the people who will run supply chains in five years' time.



> The return will be huge for those who get it right.

A note from our CEO



> We are from the industry ourselves, so we understand why [leaders] are cautious. Logistics is a proud industry, and before it's ready for change, it needs data it can rely on and technology that proves itself. It is on us, as the people building that technology, to provide that, so supply chain can become a competitive advantage.

Hans Elmegaard

CEO and Co-founder, Moddule

About Moddule

Moddule is the orchestration service for global supply chains. Sitting above the systems businesses already run, from TMS and WMS to ERP, it closes the gap between knowing what is happening and acting on it. Founded in 2022 by logistics practitioners, Moddule brings more than 180 years of combined founding-team experience in global logistics.

See orchestration in action

Book a demo to see how Moddule turns supply chain data into decisions.

Book a demo

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