

# 7 Logistics Trends for 2021



Shipping freight in the modern world was already difficult — then COVID-19 hit.

But logistics professionals persevered to keep global supply chains running.

How did the trials of the last year change shipping trends for the future?

PRE-PANDEMIC

POST-PANDEMIC



In 2019, we asked hundreds of supply chain leaders how they balance technology & people in their operations.

In 2021, we asked them again.

Here are the top logistics trends for 2021, according to over 850 global supply chain leaders:

## 1. YOU CAN'T AUTOMATE EVERYTHING.

Though the pandemic forced digital transformation in a way we never thought possible, supply chain leaders actually shifted their ideal balance towards more human expertise (3%, to be exact).

When the going got tough, it was people — not automation — that made the difference.

What is the ideal balance between technology & people in your supply chain operations?



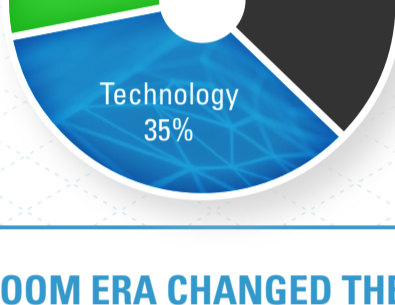
## 2. SUPPLY CHAIN LEADERS AGREE TO DISAGREE.

When asked whether they think people, technology or a combination produce the best results across 16 logistics tasks, supply chain leaders were split.

There was no clear consensus on the single best approach — the closest task to a majority opinion was *communicating with customers*, with 45% of respondents preferring people.

Which produces optimal results in your supply chain?

(average across 16 tasks)

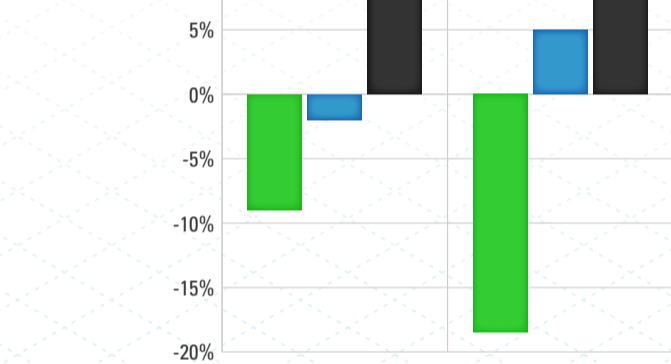


## 3. THE ZOOM ERA CHANGED THE WAY SUPPLY CHAINS COMMUNICATE.

In 2019, supply chain leaders showed a strong preference for people in communications tasks.

In 2021, they are much more comfortable with relying on a combination of people and technology.

For communication tasks, which produces the best results: people, technology or both?



## 4. SUPPLY CHAINS ARE DROWNING IN DATA.

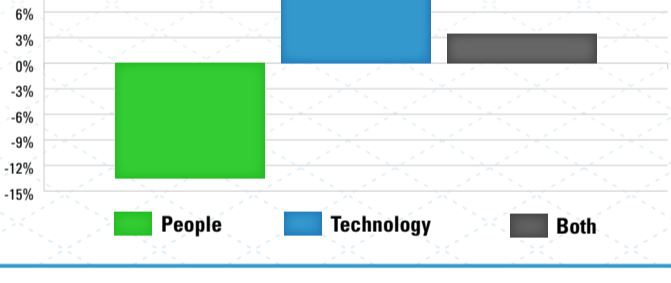
Supply chains have never been more connected, but they are creating more data than people can make sense of.

When it comes to technology, what is your top challenge?

**#1 ANALYZING DATA TO GET MEANINGFUL INSIGHTS**

To get help, supply chain leaders are turning to more technology.

For data analysis, which produces the best results — people, technology or both?

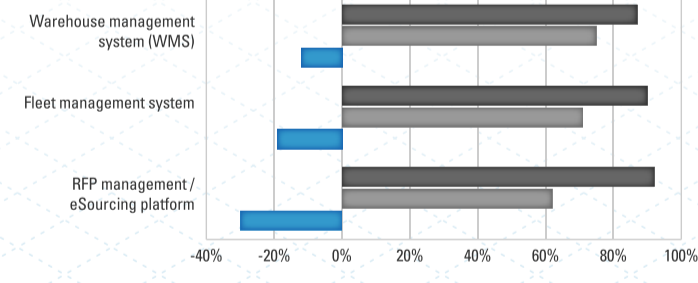


## 5. BUSINESSES ARE GOING DIGITAL ON A BUDGET.

While many businesses have invested in core supply chain technology platforms, many have not.

In fact, businesses are 20% more likely, on average, to rely on manual or homegrown solutions than two years ago.

Do you use the following supply chain technology platforms?



## 6. FREE SHIPPING ISN'T FREE.

Free, two-day shipping has become an industry standard.

Though it may be great for consumers, it puts extreme pressure on supply chains everywhere, extending far beyond e-commerce companies.

What are your top challenges?

**#1 KEEPING COSTS UNDER CONTROL**

**#2 KEEPING UP WITH INDUSTRY / CUSTOMER DEMANDS (BETTER, FASTER, CHEAPER)**

## 7. IT'S OK TO ASK FOR HELP.

With the rate of change getting faster and faster, supply chain leaders are looking outside their organizations for help.

On average, businesses are **outsourcing** **16%** of supply chain tasks to 3rd parties.

Shippers with over \$199 million in revenue are **37%** more likely to outsource than their smaller counterparts.

**Technology & People — it's all about balance.**

One thing was clear for supply chain leaders in all regions, business sizes and industries: they don't want automation or people — they want **both**.

Which produces the best results — people, technology or both?

Most likely choice, average across 16 logistics tasks

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