Optilogic

Navigating the Next Unknown:

A CSCO Playbook for a Disruption-Ready Supply Chain

Optilogic

Now Is the Time for Supply Chain Execs to Lead with Intention and Urgency

In a world where disruption is the new normal, today's supply chain executives are tasked with navigating not only cost and efficiency, but volatility, complexity, and geopolitical risk. Yet many are doing so without the cross-functional influence they need.

According to Gartner, only 43% of CxOs believe CSCOs are highly effective at working across departments to achieve organizational goals. By leveraging tools like Optilogic's design platform to enable agile, data-backed decisions, CSCOs can quickly elevate their influence and drive enterprise impact.

This playbook synthesizes insights from supply chain industry insiders:

Maria Villablanca
CEO and Co-founder of Future Insights Network

Max Mascarenhas
VP, Strategic Accounts, Optilogic

Gavin Schwarzenbach
Managing Director, Supply Chain Transformation Ltd;
former Global Head of Supply Chain, Nestlé Waters

Here you'll find practical frameworks and strategic imperatives for executives looking to make their supply chains resilient and high-performing under pressure.

7 Ways CSCOs Can Create a Disruption-Ready Supply Chain

1. Don't Just React to Disruption—Design for It

Many organizations still handle disruptive events reactively. Tariff policies, like other forms of geopolitical upheaval, are too often seen as externalities rather than design inputs.

"Tariff policy is now just another wild card in an already complex operating landscape… and yet for many companies, this remains a blind spot," said Villablanca.

Executive Implication: Designing for volatility must become a leadership priority. The traditional operating model of optimizing for cost and efficiency is giving way to models that balance:

- Cost-efficiency

- Agility and speed-to-decision

- Risk mitigation

- Scenario-driven decision-making

What You Can Do: Start by treating disruption as a supply chain design input, not a one-off reaction. Establish supply chain design processes that allow you to simulate a variety of geopolitical, demand, or cost shocks. Use this insight to adjust sourcing strategies, shift manufacturing capacity, or realign inventory buffers before you're forced to.

Create an environment where design and planning teams are aligned on risk tolerance and strategic objectives. Ensure that decisions reflect not only cost but also resilience, customer impact, and time-to-recovery.

What Is Supply Chain Design and Why Is It a Critical Capability?

Supply chain design is the practice of building virtual models of your end-to-end supply chain—so you can test changes, evaluate trade-offs, and simulate "what-if" scenarios before making real-world decisions.

Unlike planning, which typically operates on short-term horizons using fixed assumptions, design enables long-term and tactical decision-making future supply chains. It answers critical questions such as:

- Where should we manufacture, source, or hold inventory?

- How do tariffs, costs, and constraints impact our margin or service?

- What's the best way to adapt when demand spikes, lanes shut down, or cost structures shift?

Modern supply chain design platforms simulate both day-to-day and disruptive events—from cost shocks to geopolitical volatility—so you can respond with speed, precision, and confidence.

Bottom line: Design lets you move from reactive firefighting to proactive advantage. It gives supply chain leaders a way to align operational decisions with business strategy—even in an unpredictable world.

2. Elevate Supply Chain to a Strategic Seat at the Table

Executives often underestimate the supply chain's role in risk strategy.

"Supply chain should be leading this... taking it to the business with the scenarios, the opportunities, and the risks. It's not just risks—you can turn challenges into opportunities by doing things differently," emphasized Schwarzenbach.

Executive Implication: Supply chain leaders must reframe their function not just as operational, but as strategic risk managers who bring forward financial and business continuity strategies.

What You Can Do: Empower your supply chain function to present not just performance metrics, but risk-adjusted business plans. Encourage them to own scenario modeling that includes financial risk, customer impact, and mitigation costs.

Create formal pathways for the supply chain organization to shape strategic planning, working together with finance, commercial, and executive leadership to co-own outcomes.

3. Visibility Isn't the End Game--Insight Is.

Too many companies are drowning in data but starving for insight.

"There's more visibility than we've ever had... but knowing what is critical out of that visibility is a major challenge," said Schwarzenbach.

Executive Implication: It's not just about tracking shipments or inventory. It's about understanding which disruptions matter most to your business outcomes—and how fast you can act on them.

What You Can Do: Move beyond dashboards. Invest in tools that help differentiate noise from true risk. Focus on systems that analyze dependencies, signal upstream supplier risk, and identify which materials or products are critical to service levels.

Combine data science with human judgment. Create cross-functional war rooms when a disruption looms and use scenario-based drills to identify where blind spots remain.

4. Democratize Design to Accelerate Agility

Digital transformation in supply chain design is not just about central centers of excellence. It's about enabling tactical decisions for operational staff on the front lines.

"Design was once done by a few people very much in a back office... today there are new features, new capabilities to empower teams," said Schwarzenbach.

Mascarenhas added, "The modeling team can no longer be a black box. Collaboration with business users is essential to build trust and speed."

Executive Implication: Agility stems from empowering business users with role-specific tools and the autonomy to run scenarios.

What You Can Do: Support your modeling teams by reducing their burden on basic "what-if" requests, freeing them to focus on more strategic, multi-scenario projects.

Deploy design tools that offer user-friendly interfaces such as Excel connectors or intuitive web apps that let business users model and test changes. Make scenario modeling part of weekly or monthly decision cycles.

5. Replace the Quest for Perfection with a Bias for Speed

One of the biggest barriers to faster scenario modeling is the organizational demand for data precision.

"Senior leaders demand too much precision to trust the results of a model... and so modelers spend a lot longer to get that precision," said Schwarzenbach.

Mascarenhas observed, "Even if the data was perfect, volatility would make it obsolete a week from now."

Executive Implication: The ROI on speed often outweighs the cost of imperfection. Directionally correct insights, delivered fast, can prevent larger losses.

What You Can Do: Adopt a test-and-learn mindset. Encourage teams to run scenarios early with "good enough" data. Prioritize directional insights that can help narrow down viable responses quickly.

Choose tools that support fast iteration. If a scenario takes weeks to run, it won't help you stay ahead of disruption. Cloud-native platforms that support real-time computation make it easier to adapt as new data emerges.

6. Build the Business Case for Resilience

Cost is always a factor. But failure to invest in agility can cost far more.

"If we cannot create compelling arguments to show the financial risk of inaction... then budget becomes the roadblock," said Schwarzenbach.

Optilogic empowers access the software at no cost to help them build the business case before investing.

Executive Implication: Resilience must be sold internally like any other strategic investment. The onus is on supply chain executives to frame disruptions in financial terms.

What You Can Do: Quantify the cost of inaction. Model worst-case scenarios where disruptions lead to lost sales, service failures, or expedited logistics. Contrast those with the cost of proactive investment in flexible supply, alternate sourcing, or digital design tools.

Use available design tools—especially free or trial access—to develop and present these cases internally. Leverage peer benchmarks and external validation to strengthen the argument.

7. Mindset Shifts Matter as Much as Technology

Transformation isn't just a tech deployment. It's a cultural reinvention.

"You need systems that rely on technology and people and processes that enable agility, adaptability, and intelligence," said Mascarenhas.

Villablanca concluded, "Supply chain leaders are essentially the operatives in charge of risk in an organization... but they need to feel empowered to have that conversation."

Executive Implication: Leadership must model and mandate the shift from cost-first to resilience-enabled decision-making.

What You Can Do: Establish cross-functional task forces focused on transformation initiatives. These teams should have license to pause lower-priority projects and focus on disruption-readiness.

Tie performance goals to agility metrics—not just cost. Recognize and reward leaders who take calculated risks and drive cross-functional change. Use tariffs or disruptions as burning platforms to justify the mindset shift you already know is needed.

Optilogic

Optilogic Enables Fast, Confident Decision-Making in the Face of Constant Change

The cloud-native Optilogic supply chain design platform empowers both analysts and business leaders to use virtual supply chain models to safely test changes across cost, service, risk, and sustainability before implementing them. Unlike siloed tools, Optilogic democratizes design by making powerful optimization, simulation, and AI capabilities accessible through intuitive Excel, Google, and web apps. The result: Faster answers, smarter decisions, and a direct line from supply chain design to business value.

Anyone can try Cosmic Frog with a free Personal account.

Let's Talk!

Schedule a 30-minute call with Optilogic

Request Meeting