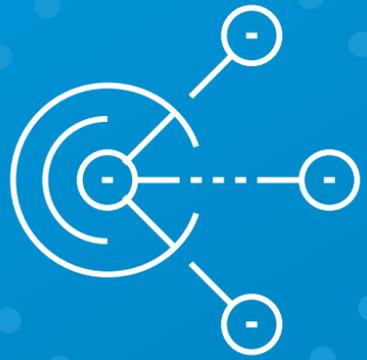


Success factors and setting expectations

Your success will be influenced by how well you integrate your tools to work in tandem and deliver the most value. Indeed, digitizing your supply chain requires a thoughtful blueprint that ideally dovetails with your company's broader digital transformation goals coupled with realistic expectations about what's currently possible.



Do you have an integration strategy?

No matter the size of your budget, a key digitization success factor is a sound integration strategy that folds multiple tools into a single platform to provide an end-to-end view of your value chain. By way of example, Flex Pulse stitches together many point solutions and plugs into hundreds of data sources. Depending on the complexity of your supply chain, however, yours will unlikely need to be as extensive.



Keep your objectives in sight

Be clear about what you're trying to achieve by going digital. As the dizzying array of tools and deployment options can challenge even the most seasoned technologist, make sure your investments provide a clear path to moving the needle.



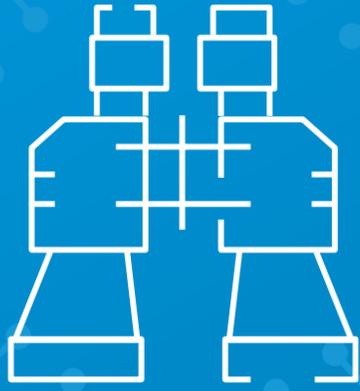
Third-party tools are a must

You'll want to allocate budget to third-party tools and data sources. Without that, there's no meaningful transparency into your supply base. That said, even if you have visibility into tier-one suppliers only, it is a great starting point since it will take a certain level of investment to gain visibility into tier two and beyond.



Is supply chain digitization part of your digital transformation strategy?

As businesses are now digitizing their operations holistically as part of a broader digital transformation agenda, be sure to coordinate with other teams. You may find opportunities to piggyback on earmarked investments.



Be aware of blind spots

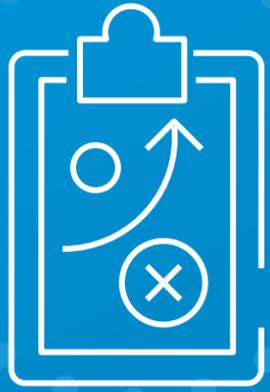
Accept that you won't see everything. Even as you subscribe to many data sources to cover all the domains that matter to you, blind spots will persist. You can certainly try to close them by supplementing additional sources; for example, rather than subscribe to one vendor to understand the financial health of your global partners, consider using multiple vendors that specialize in concentrated regions or countries. This can improve your coverage but realize there's no panacea for getting around imperfect information.



It's noisy out there

We feed our systems mind-boggling volumes of structured and unstructured data hoping to glean some insight to reduce risk exposures. The current reality, however, is that actionable intelligence isn't so easy to come by. If we can sniff out labor issues with a certain supplier via social media, for instance, getting a leg up on the veracity of self-reported incidents takes resources and time.

With all the rich data at our disposal, there's often a lot of noise to filter out just to surface a nugget of actionable intelligence. Connecting the dots in a noisy environment takes effort, so don't expect intelligence to land on your lap.



Build a roadmap

Supply chain digitization is an exercise that never ends. You'll need to develop strategies to advance your digital capabilities by leveraging new tools and processes.