**How Coronavirus is Accelerating Supply Chain Digitalization**

The recent coronavirus pandemic has forced many businesses to transform their business models and digitize their operations to cope up with restricted mobility, office closures and disturbance in supply chain. With sudden unexpected outcomes, many industries are unstable, and businesses have no other choice but to change their operational strategies and adapt to changed consumer behavior. For some organizations, it means shifting their physical workspaces to work-from-home setups with conference calls and virtual streaming, or bringing their in-store products to ecommerce platforms for convenient buying and selling. Though digitalization of products and services has always been on the roadmap of many companies, it is only now that they are actually implementing it in its true potential. People have now found more productive ways to perform the same tasks, hence making major impact in the digital world.

With no choice left but to welcome digitalization of processes and remote working, businesses are more flexible and trying new approaches. One cannot help but wonder if the coronavirus has proved as a catalyst in this accelerated digital transformation.

**Coronavirus and the Supply Chain Digitalization**

In this unpredictable and fast-paced environment, for supply chain management, it’s immensely important to gather accurate data in real-time. With reduced workforce and access to goods, the optimal way to trace and track them is through a digitized system; which can find their location and track how goods are selling. Barcodes are now being replaced by [Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)](http://www.cardzgroup.com/SmartTokenBands.html) tags to avoid manual scanning and account to social distancing procedures by getting data from a sensor’s proximity. Without requiring any input from humans, the RFID and IoT technology can together help track merchandise, shipment condition, and securely enter it into a database which schedules the invoices, goods replenishment and reporting.

In a recent 2020 [survey](https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2020/03/25/with-the-right-approach-rfid-can-be-enabling-not-disruptive-for-business/#56e103772f2b) by Zebra Technologies in which 950 firms participated, about 52% of them from 9 countries are already using RFID technology while 34% plan on implementing it in the years to come.

Moreover, business intelligence has made it a lot more convenient to collect and organize data instantly without any hassles, such as operational compliance, freight volume or staff levels.

**Key Advantages of Supply Chain Digitalization**

Let us look at some ways the digitalization of supply chain management is helping merchants and consumers.

**Better Supply Strain Management**

In normal circumstances, when there is an unpredictable demand of goods, businesses usually negotiate with suppliers or utilize a backup resource. But in a global pandemic like coronavirus, these manual actions cannot effectively manage the supply chain.

This is where digitization helps. Having information about your stock is everything. How much product you can buy, stock and need? How can we help a struggling supplier by suggesting a product mix or giving a large order in advance for our future shortages? These statistics can only be learned if you have accurate data about your present shipment.

**Overcoming Difficulties in Goods Transportation**

Businesses today are facing many difficulties due to close borders and international transport restrictions with no knowledge of when their goods will arrive. Businesses that can locate the whereabouts of their supplies and know how much time the shipment will take to arrive have a better advantage in terms of flexibility over their competitors.

You can also find a logistics partner who can help you navigate your shipment disruption and provides you updates in real-time about supply chains and transit options. Years ago, it would take weeks to discover and locate disruption, but now its all thanks to our advanced technology that it has reduced to only few minutes.

**Transporting Stagnant Stock**

Should your stock begin to pile up, you will get warnings from your digital tracking system to do something about it. What other time could be best than this to create your own ecommerce website and start selling stagnant stock through your online presence? Investing in an online presence can open an entirely new world of global opportunities by boosting sales and allowing customers to shop from home.

**New Means of Communicating**

Since organizations have lost their face-to-face contacts, it’s hard to create a personal connection between the business and the client. Sales teams are now restricted at homes and there is a serious need to rethink a customer call center model. To bring about the same feeling of personal contact, businesses need to manage and train employees for customer support services, for instance, Chatbots and LiveChat. These tools allow employees to not only provide good experience to customers but also support your sales process with an efficient, new acquisition method.

LiveChat implementation can help reduce the strain on companies to run call centers. Remote work facilitation along with forwarding all queries to live chat allows you to maintain your customer service operation without any office setup.

**The Way Forward…**

The coronavirus crisis has a big role to play in creating unique opportunities for digital professionals to innovate and apply their knowledge beyond the comfort of their workplaces, particularly the ones which are prone to risk and change. This opportunity may never come again to do things without any fear or failure. Now, the supply chain technology is very powerful and accessible like never before. Business that realize this potential and make use of it can survive through the pandemic. As we move past the after-effects of a sudden global disruption, both logistics partners and companies will realize that by investing in data automation, they can get a stronghold and power to make agile, smart decisions.