



Supply Chain Jobs Report

2024





Executive Summary

In the fall of 2024, Cleo analyzed publicly available supply chain-related job openings. The findings highlight a significant discrepancy between business goals and the software technology needed to accomplish them.

Beyond grappling with worker strikes, labor shortages, and geopolitical tensions, the supply chain industry is also navigating the hype cycle of emerging technology. Despite the promise of transformative solutions, such as generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), our latest research results reveal that the industry may be missing an opportunity due to lack of planned adoption.

Cleo's analysis of publicly available supply chain job openings across the United States yields a comprehensive view of the responsibilities, technologies, and software prioritized by employers.

Examining the roles and responsibilities outlined in these openings uncovers the capabilities in demand and highlights the specific skills supply chain organizations expect from new hires.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through examining close to 1,000 jobs by leading companies across the United States, our analysis reveals which software technology today's organizations believe will best help them reach their business goals. This effort presents the central questions of this report:

To what degree is advanced software technology being adopted within supply chains and what specific knowledge is expected of new job candidates?

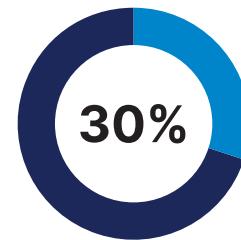
Our analysis addresses this question by examining alignment of supply chain job requirements with stated industry goals for digitalization, automation, integration, and artificial intelligence (AI). Our analysis also provides insights into the hype cycle of emerging technology, by debunking which solutions supply chain roles are requiring.

While there are bold predictions about the “great transformation” of emerging technologies, our findings suggest that the industry must first align its foundational software capabilities before it can fully benefit from new, developing technologies.





Automation and Artificial Intelligence Ahead of Their Time



According to PwC, 30% of operations and supply chain officers report “increasing digitalization, automation and analytics” as a priority over the next 12-18 months.

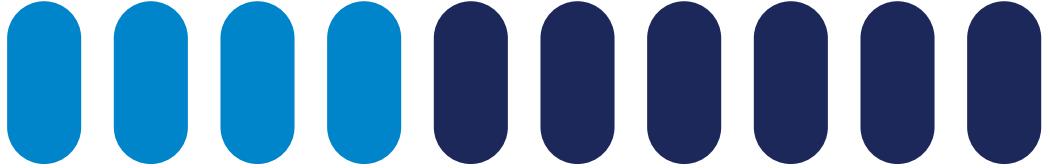
This report and other industry trends point to an increased desire to streamline and orchestrate supply chain operations through digitalization and automation.

Interestingly, in our analysis, only 7% of job descriptions included the term “automation.”

This begs the question: How can organizations expect to automate processes if their staff are not required to understand automation? This discrepancy suggests a potential disconnect between company goals and the actual responsibilities expected of employees. Without prioritizing automation knowledge, companies may be missing an opportunity to fully digitalize end-to-end supply chain processes.

AUTOMATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AHEAD OF THEIR TIME

If automation expertise is lacking, organizations may be overlooking a critical step in transforming operational efficiency.



This pattern extends to other emerging technologies, such as GenAI, with EY reporting that 40% of supply chain businesses are investing in the technology.

However, despite the general excitement and speculation surrounding AI, our analysis found it was mentioned in only 2% of job descriptions.

This wide gap illustrates that enthusiasm for GenAI may be significantly outpacing the practical, immediate expectations and responsibilities set for the current workforce.

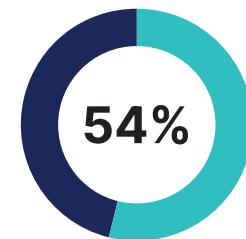
Overall, while advanced technologies like AI and automation are heralded as transformative, our findings reveal that the industry may still be in the early stages of adopting these capabilities.



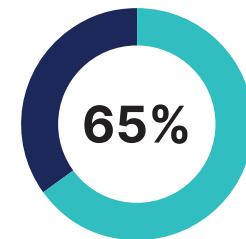


Software Knowledge in Supply Chain Positions

Our research indicates that supply chain-driven companies appear to be caught between their aspirations for technological transformation and the foundational skills currently prioritized in job openings.



Results show that only about half (54%) of the evaluated positions require some form of software knowledge, despite the perception of a growing push for automation and data intelligence in the industry.



For example, although “quality” was listed as a responsibility in 65% of supply chain related positions, less than 1% of job descriptions included knowledge of a Quality Management System (QMS) as a requirement.

Similarly, proficiency in back-office systems and applications, were often cited in only a fraction of roles:

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

21%

Supply Chain Management (SCM)

18%

Warehouse Management System (WMS)

4%

Customer Relationship Manager (CRM)

4%

These systems, widely considered the backbone of the supply chain industry, were only present in about a quarter of the job postings. Could this low percentage of software knowledge indicate that most supply chain rolls are still dependent on pragmatic, manual tasks? Or could these results indicate that organizations are not prioritizing software knowledge enough?

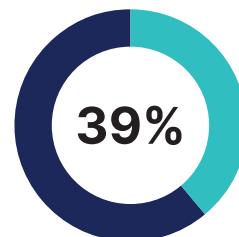




SOFTWARE KNOWLEDGE IN SUPPLY CHAIN POSITIONS

This trend might hint at a persistent reliance on traditional, hands-on processes, rather than a shift toward digital transformation that many companies claim as a strategic goal. Furthermore, the lack of emphasis on critical software skills could indicate a missed opportunity for aligning workforce capabilities with business objectives, ultimately slowing progress toward a fully integrated, automated supply chain.

These results also align with greater industry trends related to workforce skills that correlate with digitizing operations.



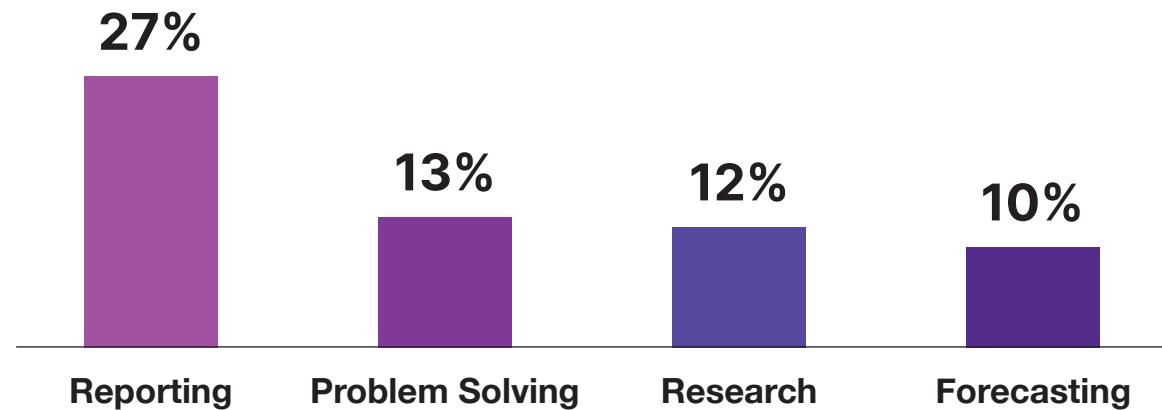
According to PwC, 39% of operations and supply chain officers claim that a lack of skilled digital talent is their biggest challenge to digitalizing operations.

The apparent gap between technology investments and workforce skills could suggest that companies are investing in tools and software without simultaneously developing the expertise needed to effectively implement and leverage points to a critical issue: Without embedding digital skills into hiring criteria, companies will struggle to realize the full potential of their technology investments.



Retroactive Thinking; Lack of Proactive Actions

As supply chains become increasingly complex, analytical skills have gained prominence as a core requirement for supply chain roles. Cleo's report analyzed these skill requirements, revealing the priority employers place on specific competencies within the analytical thinking category.



“Reporting” ranked highest in job postings, followed by “problem solving” and “research”. Interestingly, in a field that requires significant forethought, “forecasting” was only mentioned in 10% of job postings.

These findings suggest that organizations may be focusing on historical and current challenges, while neglecting forthcoming or predictive analysis.

Moving from a reactive to a proactive approach in addressing supply chain challenges has long suggested to better anticipate key trends and mitigate disruptions.

Including more analytical skills in job responsibilities could lead to more forward-looking supply chains and encourage staff to change their postures from reactive to proactive.





Data Management a Manual Task

Data is frequently heralded as a crucial asset in supply chain management, offering the potential to enhance decision-making, optimize operations, and drive strategic growth. However, the inclusion of data management skills in job descriptions appears limited, suggesting that many supply chain roles may not be as data-driven as expected.

5%

Despite the inclusion of “reporting” as a descriptor for about a quarter of job responsibilities, broad data management was only included in 5% of job descriptions.

2%

This also aligns with results related to software skills. Only 2% of job descriptions included electronic data interchange (EDI) as a requirement.

1%

Less than 1% of job descriptions included application program interfaces (API) knowledge.

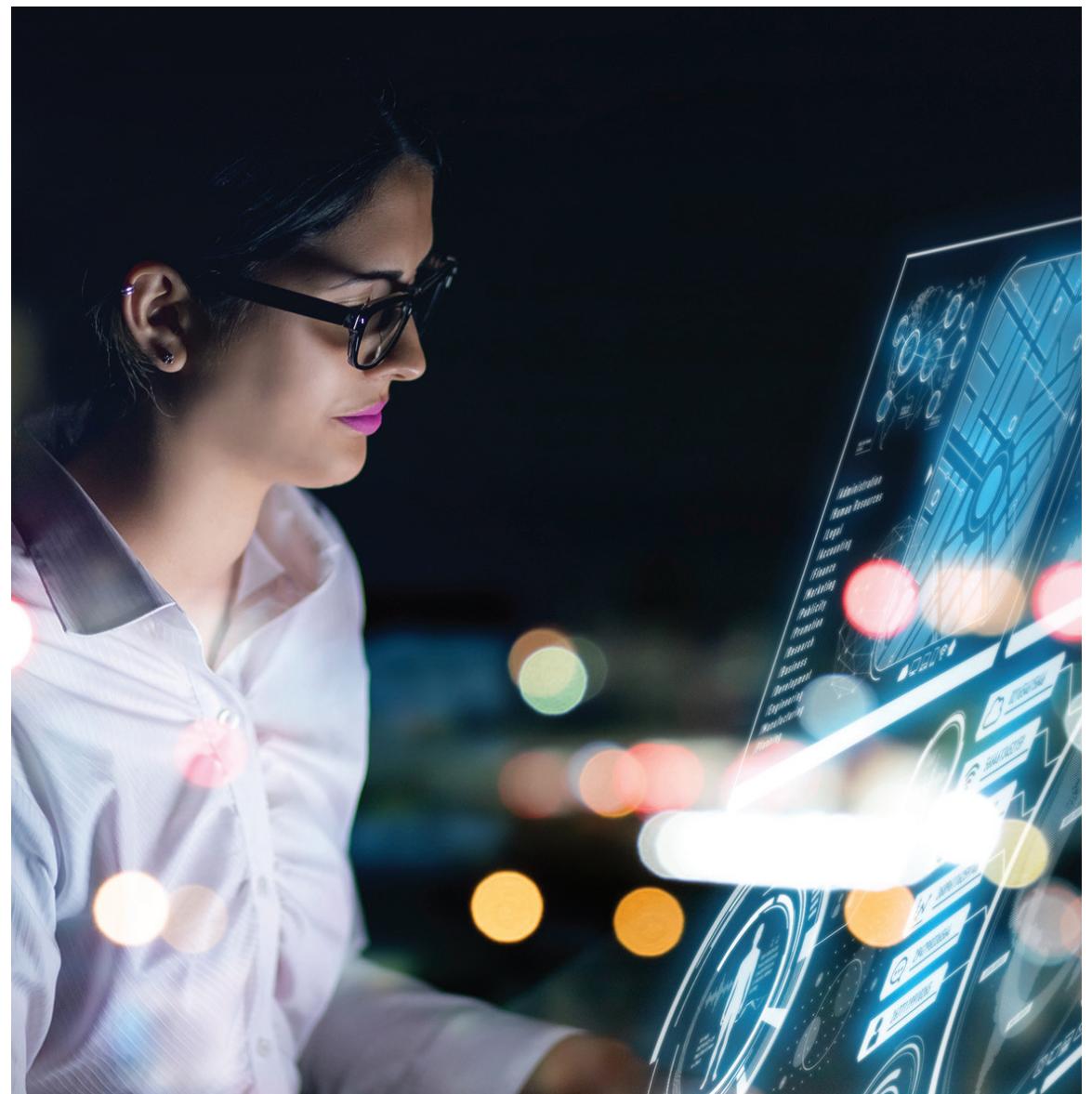
This leads us to assume that some data integration or reconciliation may be performed manually. This may take away valuable time reserved for strategic thinking. This begs the question: How are organizations managing, consolidating, and integrating data if it is not an explicit requirement in a majority of positions? If these skills are not explicitly required, it may suggest a lag in the adoption of digital tools that could enable more strategic, data-driven decision-making.

These results align with findings from PwC, which found that as organizations increase digital investments, they are also looking to reform their workforce.



PwC's report indicated that 87% of respondents are increasing training for employees on how to use digital skills.

Yet, without emphasizing data skills from the outset, organizations may miss the chance to bridge the gap between data potential and operational impact.





State of Software in Supply Chains

Based on our findings, it is clear that there exists a discrepancy between the desires of supply chain-driven companies to adopt advanced technology and digitalization and the reality of the responsibilities and expectations of their workforce.

There also appears to be a disconnect between which types of technologies and software allow organizations to achieve their goals.

The results of Cleo's research found that the salaries of these positions correlated with the amount of software knowledge potential candidates had.

For example, mid-range and high-tier salary bands for a majority of titles within the supply chain industry tended to have a greater number of software knowledge requirements.

This indicates that a greater knowledge of supply chain software is associated with mid-to-high salaries, as opposed to a lower knowledge of supply chain software, which is associated with low range salaries.

For job candidates this presents the question: Can increasing the amount of supply chain software you understand lead to higher salaries?

These findings suggest that, as companies place a premium on digital competencies, candidates with advanced software skills may have a distinct advantage in accessing higher-paying roles.

By investing in software training, job seekers may not only increase their earning potential but also position themselves as more competitive candidates in an industry that is gradually evolving toward digital proficiency.





Conclusion and Takeaways

The Cleo Supply Chain Jobs Report 2024 reveals a critical gap between the ambition to embrace advanced technologies and the actual skill requirements present in current job openings.

Despite widespread enthusiasm for digital transformation, supply chain-driven companies appear to be lagging in their readiness to adopt these technologies. The low percentage of job descriptions emphasizing software knowledge suggests that many roles still rely heavily on manual processes..

This disconnect raises concerns about whether supply chain-driven organizations are truly prepared to leverage the benefits of emerging technologies, or if they are prematurely engaging with innovations without the foundational systems and skills in place. Moreover, the report emphasizes the need to align company aspirations with technology and software investments, while ensuring the workforce possesses the necessary capabilities to achieve such goals.

Supply chain companies must prioritize the foundational building blocks of their technology stacks and employee expectations in order to reap the benefits of emerging technologies down the line.



Methodology

Cleo reviewed and scored requirements and responsibilities listed in 925 open U.S.-based supply chain tech and business operations jobs on LinkedIn, Indeed, ZipRecruiter, Glassdoor, Talent.com, and many other job search websites prior to October 1, 2024, at logistics companies with reported revenues between \$500 million and \$2 billion. These jobs excluded positions such as “truck driver” and “forklift operator” which may not require software knowledge.

Cleo[®]

... never stops[®]

www.cleo.com

Copyright © 2024 Cleo Communications LLC. All rights reserved. Cleo and the Cleo logo are registered trademarks of Cleo Communications LLC. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.