



International Centre for
Trade Transparency
& Monitoring

White Paper

The Role of Supply Chain Transparency in Risk
Management and Resilience

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Introduction

Supply chain transparency has gained prominence within modern business landscape. It refers to the degree of visibility and accessibility a company enjoys into their supply chains of suppliers, intermediaries, and logistic partners. Supply chain transparency strives to establish greater accountability and responsibility across the supply chain for environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues. Since recent natural disasters, political unrest, and pandemics have increased dramatically worldwide, companies must effectively manage and mitigate supply chain risks to remain viable and resilient. In this white paper we investigate how transparency within supply chains helps enhance risk mitigation while strengthening resilience; particularly its influence on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) risks.

Definition of supply chain transparency

Supply chain transparency refers to our ability to access and interpret information regarding operational activities and relationships within a supply chain. Integration involves communicating data to all relevant parties along the supply chain suppliers, customers, and regulators alike. Organizations can leverage supply chain data for comprehensive assessment and mitigation of various production/distribution risks associated with products/services produced and distributed to their target audiences. Through improved supply chain transparency, companies can identify vulnerabilities and implement measures to limit disruptions that might otherwise have major negative consequences on consumer trust, credibility and brand perception ultimately leading to lower production costs and improved resource usage and less waste production.

Importance of supply chain transparency for risk mitigation and resilience building

One key advantage of supply chain transparency for organizations is helping them attain higher resilience levels and manage risks more efficiently. Organizations that maintain visibility into their supply chains can monitor suppliers closely, anticipate disruptions more effectively, plan redundancies or alternative routes as needed, and develop immediate crisis response plans. An adaptive supply chain ensures that, even during unexpected disruptions or events, companies can still continue operating by finding alternative suppliers or routes to market. Transparency allows organizations to improve their agility by adapting quickly to changes in the market or customers' demands, maintaining competitive edge and increasing profitability essential elements for business expansion and success. Without supply chain transparency, organizations cannot achieve sufficient responsiveness required by customers as needs evolve, nor effectively manage any potential risks or challenges which might emerge from doing business.

Purpose of White paper This white paper seeks to raise awareness of the significance of supply chain transparency as an asset in managing risk and resilience. Globalization and increased international trade have produced complex supply chains vulnerable to various risks and disruptions that must remain reliable over time. Recent natural disasters, political unrest and pandemics have revealed the fragility of global supply chains leading to massive financial losses, delayed deliveries and reputational harm. Supply chain transparency plays a pivotal role in identifying and mitigating risks with increased visibility, information sharing and collaboration among supply chain stakeholders. According to this white paper, supply chain transparency not only assists risk mitigation efforts but is essential in creating resilience against disruptions or uncertainties in future supply chains.

Transparency can play a vital role in mitigating risk and building resilience within an organization's supply chain. Implementation of sustainable and ethical practices within that supply chain not only increases transparency but can enhance their reputation as well. Organizations can effectively address potential risks by being transparent about suppliers, production processes and labor practices which in turn allows them to proactively recognize

and address potential dangers. By having this knowledge at their disposal, companies are better able to take preventive steps and build resilience against supply chain disruptions, as well as identify areas for potential improvement within their supply chains. Furthermore, transparency within supply chains may reveal new areas for enhancement. Supply chain transparency plays an essential role in improving risk management and overall organizational resilience.

Risks in the Supply Chain

Natural disasters or unexpected events pose another potential supply chain risk, with disruption reverberating throughout it and leading to costly delays and lost revenues. Supply chain transparency can assist companies in mitigating risks by quickly identifying areas of vulnerability and taking preventative steps against them. Transparency helps companies build more resilient supply chains by giving them greater insight into the activities of suppliers and other partners, giving them more of an idea about potential disruptions and developing contingency plans to address potential disruptions more effectively. It plays a crucial role in assuring long-term sustainability and viability for any business.

Economic Risks

Supply chain transparency can play an essential part in mitigating economic risks as well as those on environmental and social fronts. Global supply chain disruptions can result in substantial financial losses for companies, as these interruptions to production, transportation or distribution result in lost sales revenue and sales opportunities. Industry sectors where there is high product customization or seasonality for example fashion or consumer electronics particularly benefit from such measures. Companies with insufficient supply chain resilience face the potential risk of increased financing costs from lenders who view them as riskier and thus charge higher interest rates. To reduce such economic risks, companies should prioritize transparency throughout their supply chains while investing in resilience strategies to mitigate any economic risks that might occur.

Unforeseen price hikes

An unexpected price increase could wreak havoc with both financial performance and reputation of an organization, leaving lasting damage in their wake. Not only can cost overruns lead to increased expenses, they may also cause customers to question your organization's ability to deliver quality products or services at reasonable rates. Supply

chain transparency can reduce the risk of unexpected price rises by early identification of fluctuation and devising plans to manage them. To do this effectively requires effective collaboration among all members in the supply chain--suppliers to customers alike. By providing visibility into pricing structures and market trends, transparency enables organizations to make informed decisions while mitigating disruptions proactively, increasing resilience and long-term success in turn.

Unwanted Supply and Demand Interference

Supply and demand disturbances have long been an ongoing problem within supply chain management, often having serious ramifications on businesses' operations. Such disturbances may arise from various causes including natural disasters, economic downturns or political unrest. As demand increases but supply cannot keep pace, shortages develop that lead to price spikes, rationing or black markets or sudden decreases leading businesses to reduce prices or sell at losses. Such disturbances can have major ramifications on supply chains, leading to increased costs, delays, and revenue losses. A transparent supply chain helps businesses identify potential risks early and prepare for disturbances before they occur.

Environmental Risks

Environmental risks have increasingly become a top priority for businesses as climate change intensifies, increasing exposure to extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and other forms of disruptions to business operations. These risks can have devastating repercussions for supply chain operations, as disruptions may lead to delays, increase costs or lead to the complete shutdown of an operation. To manage them effectively and safeguard supply chains effectively against failure, companies should incorporate environmental considerations into their risk management strategies and incorporate strategies for their mitigation into risk mitigation plans. Environmental risk evaluation requires the identification and assessment of environmental hazards, with contingency plans created in case they materialise. Companies should evaluate their supply chain

partners' environmental practices in line with their sustainability goals and risk management strategies to ensure alignment with sustainability targets and mitigation efforts. By adopting a proactive approach to managing environmental risk, businesses can help their supply chains remain resilient even during times of environmental disruption.

Natural Disasters

Natural disasters pose a formidable risk to business operations globally. Unpredictable events of this sort have the capacity to cause irreparable harm, disrupt supply chains and lead to unexpected costs that must be covered immediately by businesses. Climate change has amplified natural disasters, necessitating businesses to plan accordingly for them. Resilient supply chains that can withstand such events are of vital importance. An effective risk management strategy and contingency plan require collaboration among businesses, suppliers, and customers; greater supply chain transparency can assist this effort by offering real-time information regarding supplier locations and potential risks. By prioritizing supply chain transparency companies can more efficiently mitigate natural disaster impacts while cutting costs while guaranteeing timely deliveries of goods and services.

Global Warming

One of the greatest environmental challenges today is global warming, caused by rising carbon emissions that increase global temperatures dramatically and cause irreparable harm to Earth's ecology. These effects include increased and frequent natural disasters like hurricanes and wildfires, rising sea levels due to melting glaciers and ice caps, more intense droughts and heatwaves as well as more frequent severe droughts and heatwaves. Human activities generating greenhouse gases through combustion of fossil fuels and deforestation is one of the primary contributors to climate change. As climate action becomes an increasing priority among businesses, more efforts must be undertaken by companies to reduce their carbon footprint through initiatives like renewable energy usage, carbon offsets and sustainable supply chains. Supply chain transparency plays a crucial role in helping organizations identify and address climate risks throughout their operations.

Social Risks

Social risks refer to the effect of company activities on various societal elements like communities, labor practices, human rights or even society at large. Potential consequences may include consumer outrage or negative media attention or even loss of investor trust. Companies who neglect social risks when managing their supply chain could risk significant reputational and financial harm. With proper supply chain management in place, however, these risks can be managed and stakeholder trust enhanced. Effective supply chain transparency enables companies to identify and address social risks, implement corrective actions and communicate openly with all stakeholders. Companies may, for example, oversee labor practices within their supply chains to ensure workers receive fair wages and safe working conditions thereby mitigating social risks within their supply chains and minimizing social risks to them.

Working Conditions

To increase supply chain transparency, one effective approach to improve working conditions throughout is focusing on working conditions throughout the supply chain. Poor working conditions not only put employees in harm's way but can lead to higher employee turnover rates and reduced productivity as a whole. Adopting ethical working conditions standards such as fair wages, safe working environments and protection from discrimination will not only benefit workers but will also strengthen supply chains over time. Companies should collaborate with suppliers in assessing and addressing any working condition issues, while being transparent with regard to efforts and progress made towards this end. Adopting ethical working conditions helps mitigate supply chain risks while improving reputation and contributing to a healthier business environment overall.

Safety Concerns

To safeguard people, products, and the environment safely throughout their supply chains is one of the primary pillars of supply chain transparency. Companies have the responsibility of assuring that their suppliers adhere to safety regulations and standards, particularly within industries like pharmaceuticals and food. Companies must also manage

any safety risks created by their operations, including transportation of goods and management of dangerous materials. Transparent supply chains allow companies greater insight into potential safety risks and enable proactive measures to be taken against accidents and protect stakeholders. Successful risk management requires having an in-depth knowledge of all safety concerns throughout their supply chains as well as an emphasis on transparency, collaboration and mutuality with partner businesses.

Companies looking to maximize supply chain visibility and effectively mitigate risks should work collaboratively with suppliers and partners in their supply chains. Sharing of data across supply chain networks, creating clear communication channels and developing systems for tracking and monitoring supply chain activities are essential parts of effective supply chains. Additionally, companies must establish ethical and sustainable supply chain practices through standards and guidelines; ongoing monitoring and auditing to ensure compliance should take place. Companies can enhance visibility into their supply chains with cooperation and transparency, to make informed decisions to mitigate risks and strengthen resilience leading to enhanced trust from both customers and stakeholders alike.

Role of Supply Chain Transparency

Transparency of supply chain operations is of utmost importance in risk management and resilience. Supply chain risks may appear at any step from raw material sourcing through transportation and final delivery. Transparent communication and information exchange enable companies to proactively identify potential hazards early, thus decreasing supply chain disruption risks and supporting accountability and responsible behavior in supply chains. Consumers expect businesses to conduct themselves ethically and sustainably, making supply chain transparency key in meeting these expectations. Businesses who prioritize supply chain transparency also reap advantages such as improved efficiency, cost savings and enhanced reputational value; moreover, incorporating transparency strategies into risk management plans can build resilient supply chains capable of withstanding unexpected disruptions.

Enhancing Resilience

One effective method for increasing resilience is through advanced technologies like big data analytics, artificial intelligence, and machine learning. Organizations can utilize these technologies to predict disruptions, assess their consequences and devise quick responses quickly. Furthermore, stakeholders should incorporate redundancy and diversification strategies into their supply chains for extra peace of mind. By employing multiple suppliers and distribution channels, organizations can lower the effects of single points of failure. To enhance visibility, companies may form collaborative relationships with suppliers through supply chain mapping or joint risk assessment processes; to further bolster resilience improvement requires taking a holistic approach involving coordination among all stakeholders, understanding potential risks in depth and creating comprehensive strategies to manage potential impacts on resilience.

Increased Visibility

To enhance visibility throughout their supply chains, organizations should implement metrics for monitoring and managing supplier performance. Companies should create and utilize an in-depth set of performance indicators that measure aspects such as quality, on-time delivery, ethical practices and environmental sustainability. Companies must then assess suppliers against these metrics on an ongoing basis. This approach enables companies to not only identify areas for improvement, but it also serves as benchmarks against industry best practices. Furthermore, enhanced visibility requires focused communication throughout the supply chain this may involve sharing information between suppliers, subcontractors and sub-tier suppliers; sharing with customers; government bodies or nongovernmental organisations etc; sharing of documents between entities within an organisation etc; in short providing enhanced transparency of operations throughout a supply chain.

Enhancing communication

To boost supply chain transparency, effective communication is of utmost importance. Many companies have taken an innovative collaborative approach to supply chain management partnering with suppliers and other key players within their supply chains in order to gain greater insight. This includes sharing regular updates about inventory levels, production schedules and potential disruptions. Companies who build strong relationships with suppliers and use technology to facilitate communication are better prepared to address unforeseeable events that threaten supply chains. Clear and consistent communication plays an integral part in building trust between parties, which in turn paves the way to more sustainable and resilient supply chains in the long term. Furthermore, effective communications allow stakeholders to quickly identify vulnerabilities within their supply chains which reduce disruption risks while providing for proactive risk management practices.

Mitigating Risk

Companies looking to lower risk should diversify their supplier base to help limit disruptions caused by single suppliers experiencing problems; having multiple vendors for identical goods and services ensures continuous service should any one experience an interruption in supply. Companies can also employ risk-sharing mechanisms wherein both parties involved share in both risks and benefits of any specific supply chain activity. Companies should include sustainability and environmental risk considerations when selecting suppliers to ensure that these vendors adhere to eco-friendly practices, mitigating risks while strengthening supply chain resilience essential elements in remaining competitive and meeting consumer demands.

Tracking Processes

An essential aspect of supply chain transparency, tracking processes is vital in providing better risk management and resilience against disruptions. Technology has played an invaluable role in improving tracking processes recently. Blockchain, for instance, allows parties to share data securely while tracking goods real time on a tamper-proof platform. Advanced analytics tools offer insight into supply chain operations, alerting for disruptions or bottleneck identification and providing end-to-end visibility so organizations can respond proactively.

Evaluating Suppliers

Evaluating suppliers is crucial to supply chain transparency, risk management and resilience. Companies should utilize tools and processes to evaluate potential vendors based on suitability and reliability criteria that adhere to ethical, environmental, social standards. Risk assessments require taking into account suppliers' performance, reputation, financial security and the potential disruptions and disruption risks they could potentially face. Maintaining clear communications, regular monitoring and close collaboration with suppliers to assess their compliance and manage any associated risks is of critical importance for successful operations. Evaluation is another key practice used by companies to identify opportunities for improvement within their supply chains and make

them more sustainable. Assessing suppliers is not a one-off task but must be evaluated frequently in order to maintain transparency, identify new risks and opportunities within supply chains and foster resilience within them.

Supply chain transparency has become an ever more vital aspect of risk mitigation and business resilience. Transparency allows companies to identify and address potential supply chain risks such as raw material origination, manufacturing processes and labor practices in order to identify bankruptcy of suppliers, compliance violations and reputational harm as they arise. Transparency helps businesses cultivate trust with customers and stakeholders who value social and environmental responsibility, but to be truly effective it requires cooperation from suppliers something which may prove difficult without incentives or regulatory pressure however companies that prioritize transparency within their supply chains not only reduce risks but also demonstrate leadership in sustainable practices in their industry.

Challenges Involved with Implementing Supply Chain Transparency

One of the main difficulties involved with supply chain transparency implementation is lack of standardization across industries and companies, creating difficulty when trying to establish one centralized system. Additionally, companies may be unwilling to share details regarding their supply chains if there are concerns related to intellectual property or competitive advantages; making it harder than necessary to gather the necessary data needed for analysis. Implementing supply chain transparency may incur considerable expenses. Implementation will necessitate significant investments in technology, training and personnel which may not yield immediate return; nonetheless its advantages have become increasingly clear with time; businesses failing to embrace supply chain transparency could experience competitive disadvantage.

Supply chains become complex due to many different influences, including globalization, outsourcing, technological innovations, and consumer preferences. Because such an interlinked system makes risk prediction and mitigation hard to do effectively. One supplier may rely on multiple subcontractors, so any disruption of one can have far reaching effects throughout the supply chain. Furthermore, countries have different labor regulations which further complicate it. However, due to these complex circumstances, businesses should prioritize transparency as a key way of better recognizing potential risks and vulnerabilities. By being open about suppliers and operations, businesses can assess risks more accurately before mitigating them more successfully ultimately increasing resilience against disruptions.

Costs

Implementing supply chain transparency involves several costs that should be carefully considered, from increased transparency leading to better risk management and resilience, but also investments in information systems, data analysis services and personnel training programs. Implementation and management of supply chain transparency can be costly for businesses of any size; small enterprises in particular often bear this cost heavily. Furthermore, increased transparency may cause additional sourcing expenses as suppliers pass them along to buyers. Some businesses have discovered that adopting transparency measures has helped them cut costs over the long-run by identifying inefficiency within their supply chains and improving processes. Companies must carefully consider all costs and benefits related to supply chain transparency when developing a strategy which fits within their overall goals and develop a plan accordingly.

Legal Considerations

Businesses increasingly bear responsibility for the actions and practices of their suppliers in terms of human rights and environmental regulations. Litigation and stakeholder pressure from consumers and investors has forced businesses to face both significant financial and reputational risks. US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, UK Modern Slavery Act and California Transparency in Supply Chains Act are just three laws which serve to hold companies responsible for actions of their suppliers. Legal requirements regarding transparency in supply chains continue to evolve, creating additional challenges for companies trying to comply with an increasing list of regulations. Understanding and complying with these legal requirements are vitally important if companies wish to mitigate risk in their supply chains while strengthening resilience.

Supply chain transparency plays an essential role in risk management and resilience by helping organizations recognize potential disruptions before they occur. Transparency helps organizations develop contingency plans, strengthen supplier relations, and maintain transparency throughout their supply chains. Businesses that invest in supply chain

transparency are better prepared to respond swiftly to supply chain disruption, ensure customer satisfaction, and cut the associated costs of this disruption. Implementing supply chain transparency may be challenging, yet its importance in building resilient supply chains that can withstand unexpected disruptions is immense. Supply chain transparency represents an investment for future success and stability of any organization.

Benefits of Supply Chain Transparency

Transparency also plays an integral role in improving a company's image; consumers now expect companies to practice sustainable and ethical business practices and transparency is one way of fulfilling those demands. By making their supply chain information freely accessible to the public, companies can demonstrate their dedication to responsible practices while being willing to be held accountable.

Customers seeking companies aligning with their values may also become loyal and attract more new ones as a result. Transparency also plays an integral part in protecting companies against costly incidents like factory collapses or environmental disasters that threaten both their reputation and bottom line.

Supply chain transparency not only benefits companies directly but can contribute towards creating a more responsible, eco-friendly global economy as a whole.

Customer Loyalty Development Initiative

Supply chain transparency can also foster greater customer loyalty. When customers understand and appreciate a company's ethical and sustainable practices, they're more likely to trust and remain with it over time. According to research by Label Insight, 94% of consumers are loyal to brands that demonstrate transparency. Transparency increases customer satisfaction by providing them with tools to track delivery of their goods, obtain real-time updates on product availability and source, as well as obtain more details regarding its source and origin. As a result, this can lead to increased sales, improved reputation, and stronger customer relationships ultimately benefitting a company's bottom line and long-term sustainability. Thus, supply chain transparency has become a critical element in risk management strategies, essential in creating more resilient businesses.

Competitive Advantage

Organizations need a competitive advantage in their industries in order to remain sustainable, which means using all resources and capabilities available within them in the marketplace to outperform rival businesses in terms of performance. Focusing on supply chain transparency allows companies to achieve competitive edge; it enables them to identify potential risks, take precautionary measures as required and act swiftly when responding. Clear and open supply chains also promote customer trust in organizations, leading to greater brand loyalty and market share gains. Therefore, companies need to prioritize supply chain transparency as a strategic advantage in their respective industries.

Promoting Innovation

Supply chain transparency not only promotes risk mitigation but can also serve as an incubator of innovation. When organizations gain access to detailed information regarding their suppliers and operations, it allows them to identify inefficiencies or opportunities for enhancement more readily and pursue these avenues more readily. These data can inform the development of new products and services that meet changing customer demands, while transparency increases collaboration and information exchange among supply chain partners, leading to new ideas and business models. By harnessing transparency as an enabler of innovation, organizations can stay abreast of market trends and build sustainable competitive advantages. Supply chain transparency provides organizations with a key tool for driving this transformational growth and creating shared value among all participants in its supply chains.

Companies seeking to effectively manage supply chain risks and enhance resilience must prioritise supply chain transparency as part of their risk mitigation strategies, providing information between all the players along the supply chain suppliers, manufacturers, customers etc. Transparency allows companies to identify risks early and take proactive measures to prevent or minimize them, leading to better collaboration between parties, increasing efficiency and decreasing costs. Implementing transparency may prove

challenging due to a complex web of relationships and information sharing required. Companies must invest in appropriate technology and processes in order to maintain transparency throughout their supply chains; ultimately it plays an essential role in effectively mitigating risk while building resilient supply chains.

Conclusion

Supply chain transparency plays an essential part in mitigating risk and increasing resilience within supply chains networks. As global economies become ever-more interdependent, businesses must remain proactive in their identification and elimination of supply chain risks. Transparency provides companies with invaluable data for evaluating the commitment of supply chain partners to sustainability, labor practices and ethical conduct. Furthermore, transparency helps facilitate effective collaboration across upstream and downstream partners as well as quick responses in case of crisis situations. Supply chain transparency goes far beyond being just another compliance requirement; it should serve as an approach that builds trust, improves stakeholder engagement, and enhances overall supply chain performance.

Organizations who prioritize supply chain transparency are better-equipped to manage risks effectively while building resilience to remain competitive within their industries.

Summary of Main Points

This white paper's primary emphasis has been to highlight the relevance of supply chain transparency for risk management and resilience. Transparency within supply chains allows businesses to identify risks more readily and mitigate them more quickly, respond more rapidly to crises more efficiently, and build stronger relationships between themselves, customers, suppliers and other key players in their supply chains. Transparency can be accomplished in various ways, from technology and auditing collaboration. There can be various obstacles when it comes to attaining supply chain transparency such as cost and creating cultural change within organizations; but ultimately its benefits far outweigh these costs and efforts required of businesses that prioritize transparency as an essential means for managing risk and thriving during periods of uncertainty.

Implications on Future Performance

Supply chain transparency and risk management will only become increasingly significant over time, due to global supply chains' ever-increasing complexity and potential for disruptions. Businesses must prioritize building resilient supply chains. Consumers are becoming more educated on supply chain practices and require transparency from companies; as a result, companies must implement more sustainable and ethical business practices. Blockchain can increase transparency and traceability within supply chains. Due to the growth in circular economy models aimed at minimizing waste while optimizing resources, businesses will need to reevaluate their supply chain strategies in the face of increasing transparency requirements, adaptability constraints and sustainability standards. Overall, successful supply chain management in future will involve enhanced transparency, adaptability, and sustainability measures.

Call for Action

It has become abundantly clear from this discussion that supply chain transparency is indispensable to effective risk management and resilience. Supply chain transparency helps companies identify and mitigate any potential risks within their supply chains, build trust among stakeholders and enhance brand reputation. Companies must embrace supply chain transparency as part of their overall supply chain management strategies and incorporate it as part of the planning. Companies can increase transparency through adopting policies and practices that support it, investing in technologies designed to enable it, collaborating with suppliers and stakeholders on efforts that promote greater openness. Policymakers play an integral part in increasing supply chain transparency by passing laws and regulations which mandate companies to disclose information regarding their supply chains. By acting this way, organizations can increase resilience and sustainability of their business while at the same time increasing social responsibility and environmental stewardship.

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