

Supply Chain Mavens

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Supply Chain Tech Can Be So Cool

What's in development you should know about!

By Cynthia Kalini-Kaminsky

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I had the opportunity to meet with a high performing group of supply chain experts last week. During the meeting, when discussing advanced tech and its capability to [enable higher supply chain performance](#) (resulting in higher top line growth as customers choose your ability to meet their requirements), I asked the following question:

Has anyone worked with companies that are substituting sets of best-in-class cloud-based solutions that they then stack together to create customized, without the need for customization, ERP systems?

Fortunately for me, the group included Dr. Gopal Easwaran, Industrial Engineering Professor at St. Mary's University, and Wendy Serapiglia, SC faculty at Duquesne University. Dr. Easwaran related how, in a recent conference, he learned of the myriad of small tech business creating blockchain for supply chains and what they were doing differently. Ms. Serapiglia supported his comments relating supply chain-blockchain integration activity she was recently involved in with industry.

Meaning exactly what for you and your supply chain?

Cool possibilities

Let me explain:

When I think of blockchain, I visualize a vertical stack where blocks of digital transactions are hashed together and then added to the top of the blockchain stack (after all the required checks and verifications of course). So naturally, the apps used would send data transactions to be stored in the blockchain to be made available to all who had administrative permissions to access the information.

I admit, this part is probably nothing new to you.

Now, visualize that vertical stack of data blocks placed on its side.

Integrating into that sideways blockchain, which is positioned across your entire supply chain, are all the apps you've chosen. Still pretty much sounds the same as the above.

But, here's the thing...

... those apps are using the blockchain not just as a data repository, but as the supply chain interface across all app technologies.

Way cool

While still nascent, once developed and tested, you will be able to build an ERP system customized to the way your company-wide supply chain performance requires, without expensive customization,

Or

Customized to each specific supply chain's requirements using just apps. Meaning, you can pull out an app from your chosen set, then substitute in new app to provide customization for a second supply chain that supports different customers requirements. You now, sort of, have two ERP systems that can share data and that will help you monitor and drive performance to each supply chain's unique customer grouping.

Cost effectively, and of course, very carefully so you don't get unnecessary tech bloat, you can segment your technology choices to monitor performance in your supply chain segments (partner areas or different business units). The customization will help you better integrate and drive alignment among supply chain partners (3PLs, contract manufacturers, this supply chain's supply base...). This customization requires collaboration first. The data should be deposited directly into your supply chain (after you have the appropriate risk mitigation activity and plans in place).

Since supply chains must evolve, with this new scenario of apps using blockchain as the interface, you will be able to terminate and start app subscriptions as your supply chain needs change. Quick hint: remember to preserve the data.

- No more one size fits all.
- No more making-due with systems that almost match what you need to achieve.
- No more using systems that were once perfectly matched to your needs, but now cost too much to alter even though supply chain requirements have changed.

Which means you get data that constantly provides actionable information.

So now, the question becomes,

"What should you be measuring to make sure the apps you choose can deliver results you want?"

That answer lies in the framework of [SCOR \(the supply chain operations reference model\)](#).

Using standardized, industry accepted metrics, you can put together a metric stack (for requirements as well as for monitoring performance) that dictates the

capabilities required in the technology you will choose. You are building the exact performance you need ...

- ... to keep customers satisfied,
- ... to meet your strategic business plan,
- ... to meet regulatory requirements.

You keep and add customers because your metric stack is different than others in your industry. It is based on the specific goals, requirements, and business models your company chooses and your customers will reward you for,

- ... meaning the performance from your supply chains will be different than your competitors' performance due to the myriad of little alignment adjustments you continually make (embedded continuous improvement),
- ... and the way you make decisions about your supply chains going forward will continue to put an exclamation point on that difference. The difference you create to provide excellent customer experiences.

You are building in business differentiation – differentiation that lives in your supply chain processes and policies and is subject to continuous improvement and monitoring.

After all, you're already working to keep your supply chain at heightened performance even when economic or social or geopolitical elements change.

Wouldn't it be cool if you could segment your technologies to help you get even finer tuning?

The tech development I'm hearing about tells me you should be able to do just that, relatively soon.

#supplychainperformance #advancedtechnology #blockchain #ERP
#supplychaintechnology #supplychainmanagement #regulatoryrequirements
#strategicplan #customerexperience #supplychainmetrics #supplychainmavens
#ASCM #APICS

About the Author

[Dr. Cynthia Kalina-Kaminsky, author](#), helps companies of all sizes and provides public training to supply chain and business professionals on how to successfully transform supply chains, integrate digital technology solutions, and avoid risks that jeopardize [your strategic goals, regulatory requirements, and customer supply](#)

[chain performance](#). She uses SCOR as a foundation and works with you to build your strategically differentiated supply chain performance.

About Supply Chain Mavens

Supply Chain Mavens provides [customized training solutions](#) for your supply chain team.

[Supply Chain Mavens Inc.](#) consults and trains with small, medium and Fortune 500 size companies to provide an understanding of Industry Best Practices and to guide your team through the implementation process.

The Supply Chain Mavens Difference

We are not just trainers; we are your partners. We'll walk beside you through your teams' entire certification process.

- Supply Chain Mavens consists of experienced [supply chain professionals and instructors](#). We have been in your shoes and understand the complexities involved in supply chain planning and inventory management.
- No cookie cutters here! We will collaborate with you to develop tailored training solutions for your supply chain team.

We are proud to be an [ASCM](#) Premier Elite Training Partner and an ASCM Consultancy Partner. Dr. Kalina-Kaminsky is an ASCM certified supply chain consultant.