

## Reinventing supply chains in the post-pandemic world

The COVID pandemic has stress-tested supply chains beyond their breaking point - in India, [64% of CEOs have indicated the need to reinvent their supply chains](#), and almost [60% of enterprises have suffered pandemic-related disruptions](#) in their supply chains. In this new reality, monitoring inventory levels and building visibility of goods both inside and outside the enterprise has become critical to avoiding inventory-related losses and decline in productivity amidst a shortage of manpower. How should enterprises respond in such a situation, where supply chains seem to be failing business?

### *Supply chains in the new normal*

The pandemic has not only impacted the flow of goods beyond the enterprise walls, but also demonstrated the need for visibility into goods inside factories and warehouses. Here are five reasons why the lack of visibility is a key factor in supply chain disruptions:

1. Dynamically changing travel restrictions across regions calls for an in-transit approach to delivery planning.
2. High-value goods stranded in transit can pose a high-cost risk to suppliers - knowing the precise location of shipments and fleet is, therefore, a risk-mitigation measure in the new normal.
3. As supply and demand fluctuates, maintaining a lean inventory is becoming challenging without a precise view of warehouse inventory and moving components in factories.
4. With limited workforce availability, inventory audits and warehouse visits are no longer feasible for stakeholders.
5. In the new normal, business decisions call for a real-time view of the inventory with minimal human intervention.

Given reduced levels of digital maturity, how can India's manufacturing SMEs reinvent their supply chains during and after the pandemic?

### *Asset tracking: a key technology in future-proof supply chains for SMEs*

[According to a survey](#), India's manufacturing SMEs continue to rely heavily on in-person product assessments, inventory management, production, and logistics. However, the evolving telecom infrastructure, in addition to reducing the cost of sensors, has created the perfect opportunity for manufacturing SMEs to reinvent their supply chains with cost-conscious solutions that bring visibility to their assets in the extended enterprise ecosystem.

IoT solutions that leverage passive RFID technology, low energy bluetooth, GPS sensors, and indoor wifi networks can help enterprises manage their inventories and goods flow with high precision, and bring newfound resilience to withstand large-scale disruptions. While GPS technology is the pillar of fleet-management and tracking solutions, QR codes with a high fault tolerance win in demanding physical environments inside factories and warehouses.

### *Out-of-the-box benefits*

According to Forrester, 58-77% of companies consider tracking assets and personnel and loading containers, the top use cases of IoT solutions. By implementing these use cases, enterprises can pinpoint goods in the warehouse, monitor storage conditions, forecast product deliveries, and arrivals, and consequently improve demand planning and subsequent production cycles. With complete traceability of

enterprise resources and shipments, SMEs can also strengthen trust within the overall ecosystem, while optimizing the moving parts with unmatched accuracy.

### *A long-term reinvention strategy*

However, operational benefits are not all that traceability of goods brings to enterprises - the benefits extend downstream too. Track-and-trace solutions also help SMEs reduce the cost of insuring expensive goods in transit, keep customers updated on the whereabouts of their shipments, and boost satisfaction levels, while eliminating the hunt for information when shipments get delayed.

These technologies are already being seen in industry-leading digital supply chain solutions, and helping SMEs stay competitive in today's business ecosystem. To reinvent their supply chains, SMEs must focus on such solutions that deliver high impact out of the box, and generate ROI from day 1 - this will be the key to emerging as a winner in one of the world's hottest economies over the next decade.