Miebach

Supply Chain Transformation
Is the New Normal

Executive Summary

A Miebach Study on Priorities, Pitfalls and the Drivers of Success

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Executive Summary

In today's volatile and fast-evolving business environment, supply chain transformation (SCT) is a strategic enabler not only to stay competitive, but also to continuously improve and grow. To better understand how organizations in the DACH region are navigating this challenge, Miebach conducted a comprehensive study. The results offer a clear and data-driven view into the types of transformations being pursued, what drives them, and what determines their success or failure.

Transformation is the new normal

The study confirms that transformation is not a one-off event but a continuous process. Surveyed organizations reported conducting an average of 5.7 supply chain transformation initiatives in the last five years. Over 80% of the surveyed organizations reported having conducted at least two SCTs in the past five years, with 25% reporting five or more.

The most common transformation types include:

·   Organizational restructuring (73%)
·   Introduction of new IT systems (67%)
·   Digitalization in logistics (66%)

The results show that transformations are multi-faceted, combining organizational, technological, and process changes.

Transformation is ongoing: over 80% of organizations have repeatedly restructured, upgraded IT and digitalized logistics.

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Network configuration changes (opening, closing, or consolidating facilities) were undertaken by roughly half of respondents.

Sales & Operations Planning (S&OP) has been a focus for 4 in 10 companies, indicating that many are striving to improve cross-functional integration between sales forecasts, production, and inventory planning.

Only about one-third of companies have started leveraging AI or advanced analytics in their supply chain (38%). Similarly, only one-third have significantly improved digital connectivity with external partners (e.g. via supplier portals or control tower dashboards).

What makes transformation successful?

The study identifies a clear formula for success:

- Strong support from top management (4.71)
- Clear transformation goals aligned with company strategy
  (4.55)
- Effective project and change management
  (4.46 each)
- Sufficient resources and continuous communication to all stakeholders (4.46 and 4.36)

These findings make it clear that transformation succeeds when leaders drive it with clarity and purpose. Structured project and change management provide the

Supply Chain Transformation wins with leadership, strategic goals and communication.

backbone for reliable execution. Open communication and realistic timelines build trust and foster lasting acceptance. Actively involving stakeholders and a focus on the end-customer and cross-functional involvement ensures the transformation yields meaningful benefits.

What gets in the way?

The most impactful barriers to transformation success partly mirror the absence of key success factors like lack of top management support (4.41) and unclear misaligned goals (4.29) but also involve other factors like:

· Underestimating risks and complexity (4.24)
· Late stakeholder involvement (4.21)

Interestingly, while external or technical solutions are helpful, they are not seen as decisive. The human and organizational dimensions matter most.

Without strong leadership, transformation goals often remain vague or misaligned with broader corporate strategy. Implementation suffers when risks are underestimated and project management lacks structure.

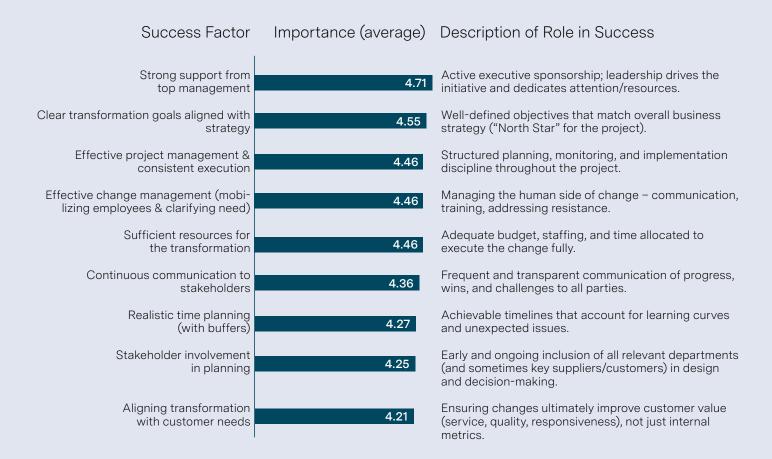Poor communication and insufficient stakeholder involvement create resistance and hinder progress. Unclear messaging and unrealistic timelines further fuel internal pushback and undermine change efforts.

Overcoming challenges relies on communication, stakeholder engagement, strong project management, and clear, persistent goals.

Success Factors and Barriers
in Transformation (Excerpt)

Top Success Factors for Supply Chain Transformation
(Importance 1–5)

Success Factor	Importance (average)	Description of Role in Success
Strong support from top management	4.71	Active executive sponsorship; leadership drives the initiative and dedicates attention/resources.
Clear transformation goals aligned with strategy	4.55	Well-defined objectives that match overall business strategy ("North Star" for the project).
Effective project management & consistent execution	4.46	Structured planning, monitoring, and implementation discipline throughout the project.
Effective change management (mobilizing employees & clarifying need)	4.46	Managing the human side of change – communication, training, addressing resistance.
Sufficient resources for the transformation	4.46	Adequate budget, staffing, and time allocated to execute the change fully.
Continuous communication to stakeholders	4.36	Frequent and transparent communication of progress, wins, and challenges to all parties.
Realistic time planning (with buffers)	4.27	Achievable timelines that account for learning curves and unexpected issues.
Stakeholder involvement in planning	4.25	Early and ongoing inclusion of all relevant departments (and sometimes key suppliers/customers) in design and decision-making.
Aligning transformation with customer needs	4.21	Ensuring changes ultimately improve customer value (service, quality, responsiveness), not just internal metrics.

Executive leadership is the top success factor – without active C-level support, even strong transformation initiatives struggle.

Conclusion and Key Take Aways

Key Recommendations and Takeaways for Supply Chain Managers

1. Secure Executive Sponsorship & Clear Vision

Ensure visible and continuous support from top management. Get leadership to clearly articulate why the transformation is needed and how it aligns with business strategy.

2. Define Measurable Goals & Track Progress

Establish specific, quantifiable targets that tie to strategic objectives. Use these KPIs to measure progress and reward success. Regularly review progress against milestones and adjust plans as needed.

3. Invest in Project & Change Management

Treat transformations as formal projects with dedicated teams and budgets. Don't understaff. Assign your best people and augment with external expertise if needed. Use robust project management practices. Deploy a structured change management plan.

4. Engage Stakeholders Early and Often

Identify all stakeholders who will be impacted. Involve them in design and decision-making from the start. This visibly builds buy-in and makes solutions stick.

5. Leverage External Partners, But Build Internal Capability

Use consultants or technology partners to accelerate progress and import expertise. Consider establishing an internal "Center of Excellence" for supply chain transformation to retain knowledge and manage continuous improvement.
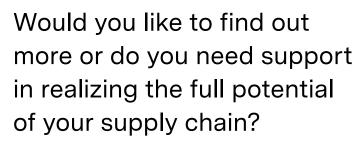
6. Align Technology with Process and People

Focus on technologies that directly address your pain points or enable your goals. Avoid shiny-object syndrome; every tech investment should have a business case. Before implementation, streamline the underlying process, then digitize. Involve end users to ensure employees adopt new tools effectively.

7. Maintain a Customer-Centric Perspective

Keep the end customer in mind when transforming. Transformations aligned to delivering more value to customers tend to gain stronger support internally and externally.

8. Sustain and Institutionalize Improvements

The job isn't over at go-live. Monitor the new process or system post-implementation to ensure it's producing the desired results and to make adjustments. Build a culture of continuous improvement: the organizations in the study averaging 5+ projects didn't view transformation as one-and-done, but as a continuous process.

Would you like to find out more or do you need support in realizing the full potential of your supply chain?
Please contact us!
We develop supply chain solutions that power your business forward.

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