

Cleo 2026 GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN EXECUTIVE REPORT

Beneath the Paradigm Shift

Why Supply Chain Orchestration is the Next Frontier

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary & Key Findings

PART I.

A World In Flux

Why Supply Chains Have Become
the Front Line of Disruption

PART II.

The Performance Paradox

Why “Working As Designed” Still Fails

PART III.

The Orchestration Gap

Automation Without Coordination

PART IV.

AI as the Catalyst

From Process Automation to Intelligent Orchestration

CONCLUSION

What This All Means

Why Supply Chain Orchestration is the Next Frontier

INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary & Key Findings

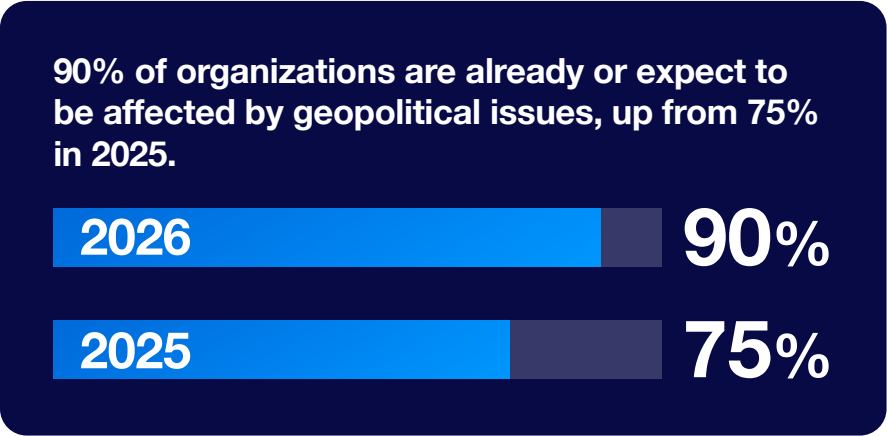


About This Report

The Cleo Global Supply Chain Executive Report presents research findings from business and supply chain technology executives around the world. In early 2026, these executives were asked detailed questions about key challenges they were facing as they entered 2026 and the strategies they are employing to manage them.

Executive Summary

Supply chains have become the primary shock absorber for geopolitical, regulatory, and economic volatility. This year’s research, commissioned by Cleo through Dimensional Research®, shows that:



Companies are responding operationally, with partner diversification and domestic partner expansion emerging as the top mitigation strategies.

These findings make clear that supply chain agility is no longer just an operational concern. It is central to how businesses protect business and relationship continuity, preserve margins, and adapt to external disruption.

Yet the data reveals a striking contradiction.

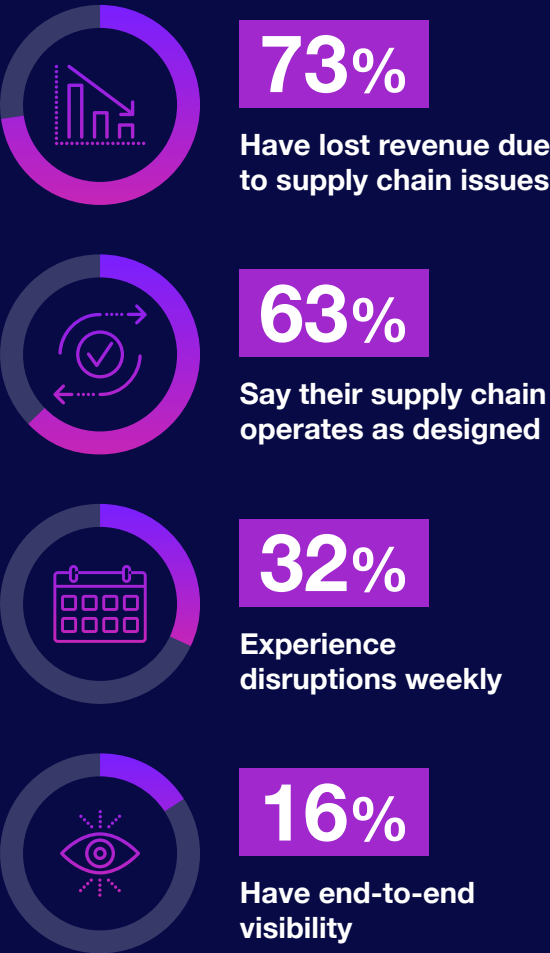
While 63% say their supply chain operates as intended, 73% report revenue loss and 32% face weekly software issues. Over half attribute those losses to technology — pointing not to external disruption, but ongoing fragility in execution. In other words, many companies believe the design and performance of their supply chain is sound, even as day-to-day breakdowns persist.

That fragility is rooted in fundamentals. Integration, security, data formatting, and visibility remain widespread challenges, and only 16% of companies have end-to-end real-time visibility. Meanwhile, 88% say automation use is increasing, yet 55% say automation is also increasing operational complexity. The research suggests that automation adoption is growing, but managing the change is a challenge.

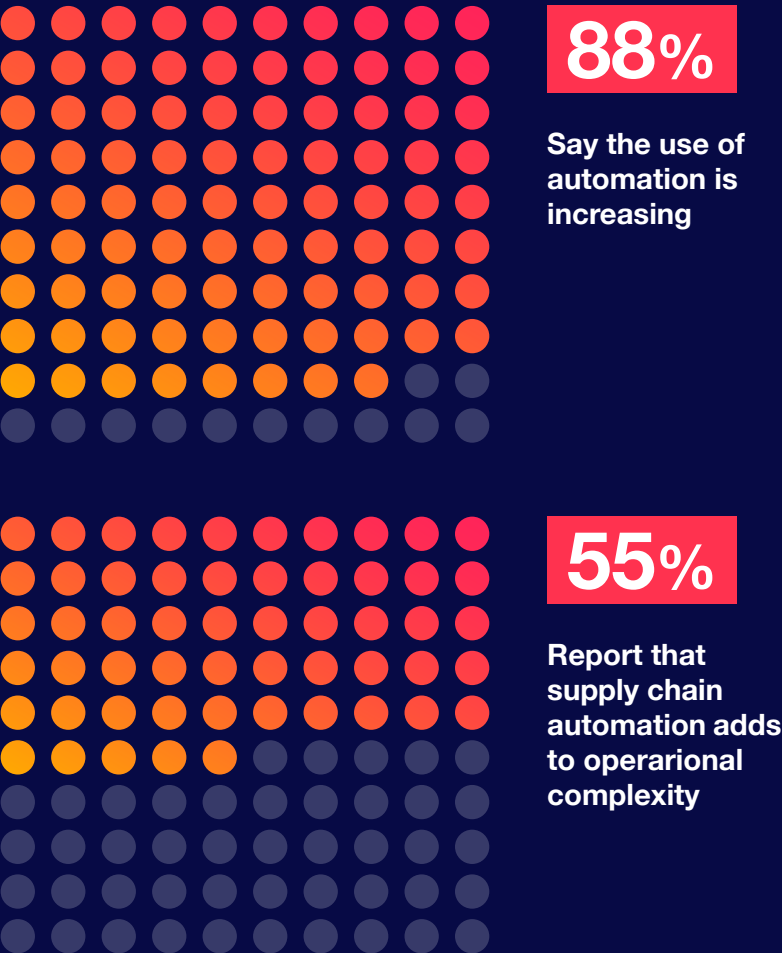
These findings point to orchestration as the next frontier of supply chain transformation. With 97% now comfortable with AI-based recommendations, 82% seeing value in AI-driven order-level decisioning, and 87% saying AI can standardize data for other AI tasks, companies are signaling strong demand for systems that do more than automate tasks. They want systems that connect data, decisions, and execution in real-time.

Key Findings

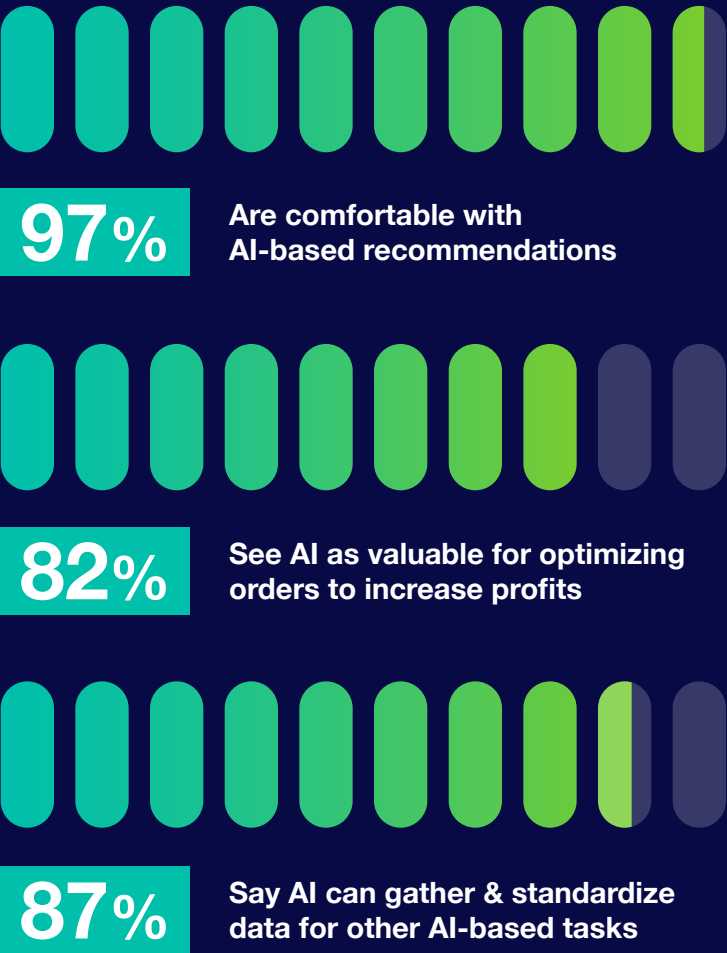
The Performance Paradox



More Automation, More Complexity



AI as the Accelerator



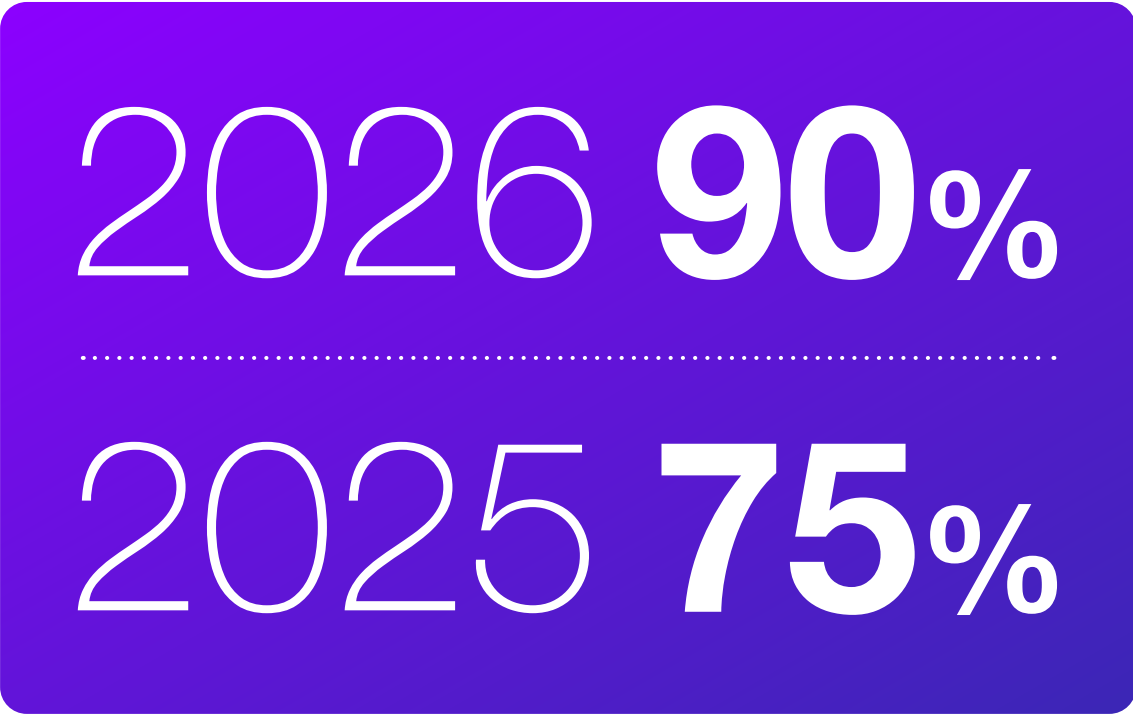
PART I.

A World In Flux

Why Supply Chains Have Become
the Front Line of Disruption

Geopolitical Exposure Is Nearly Universal

90% of companies say they are already affected by geopolitical issues or expect to be, up from 75% last year.

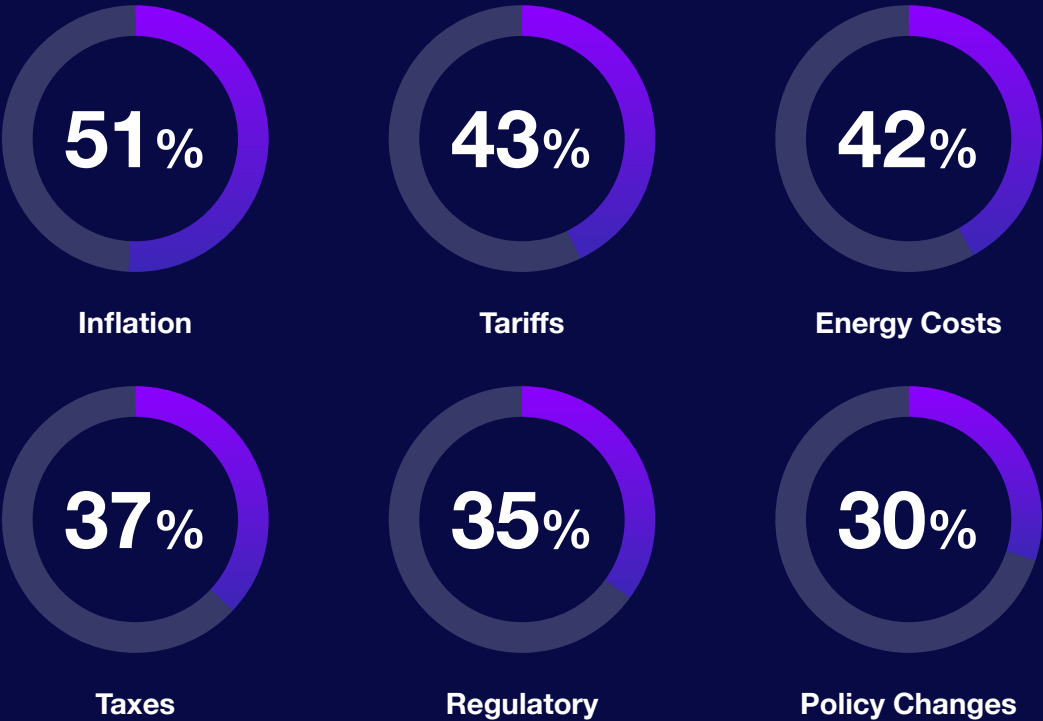


Geopolitical disruption has moved into the mainstream, making supply chain agility essential to business resilience.

Economic Pressure Is Increasingly Policy-Driven

Policy-related pressures now rank among the top macroeconomic concerns for supply chain leaders.

Top Macroeconomic Concerns



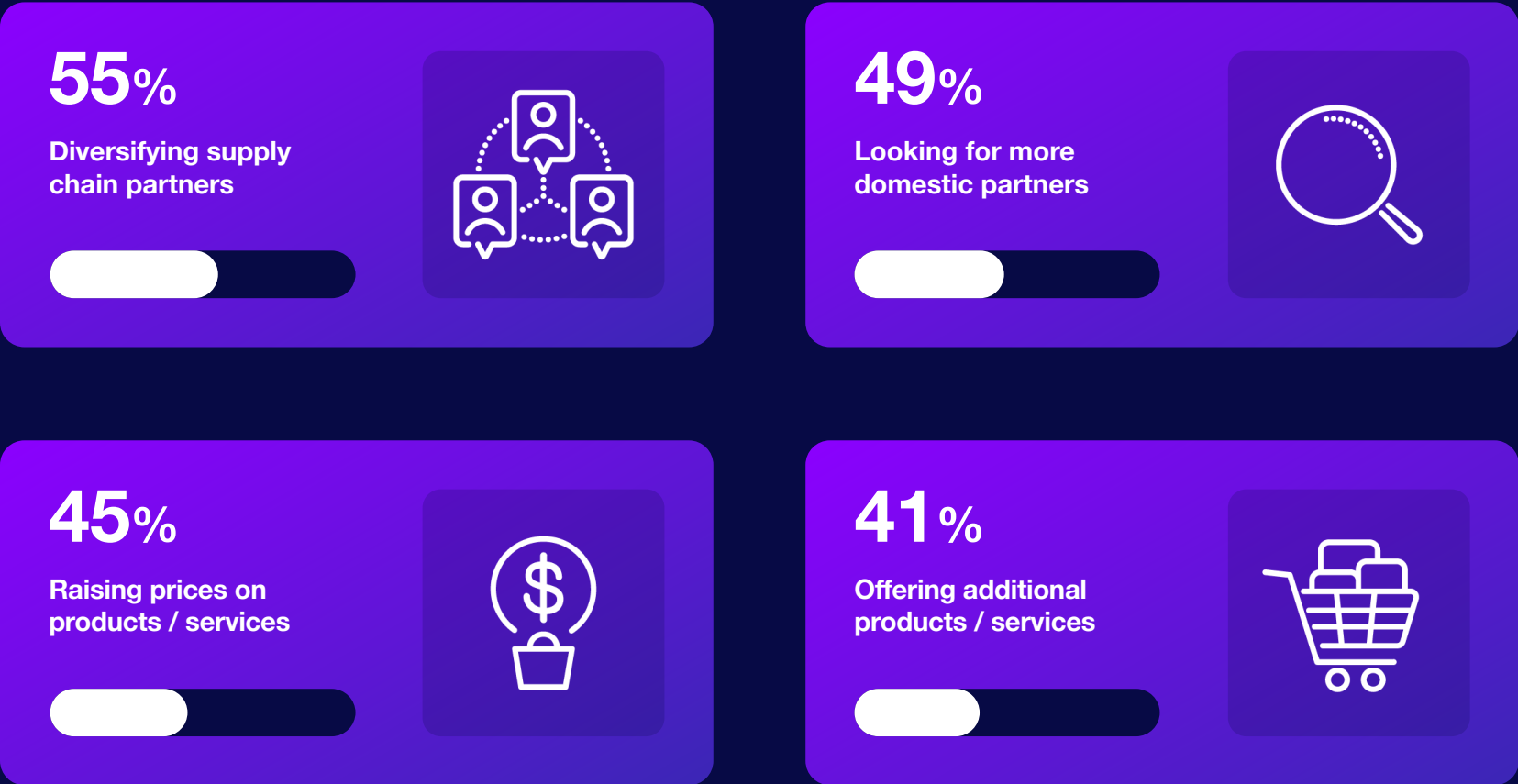
Companies Are Responding Operationally

Businesses are responding to geopolitical disruption by reconfiguring their supply chains, signaling that resilience increasingly depends on how quickly networks can adapt.



Businesses are managing geopolitical risk by investing in supply chain agility, not through political engagement.

Top Strategies For Mitigating Geopolitical Disruption



PART II.

The Performance Paradox

Why “Working As Designed” Still Fails

Perceived Stability vs. Operational Reality

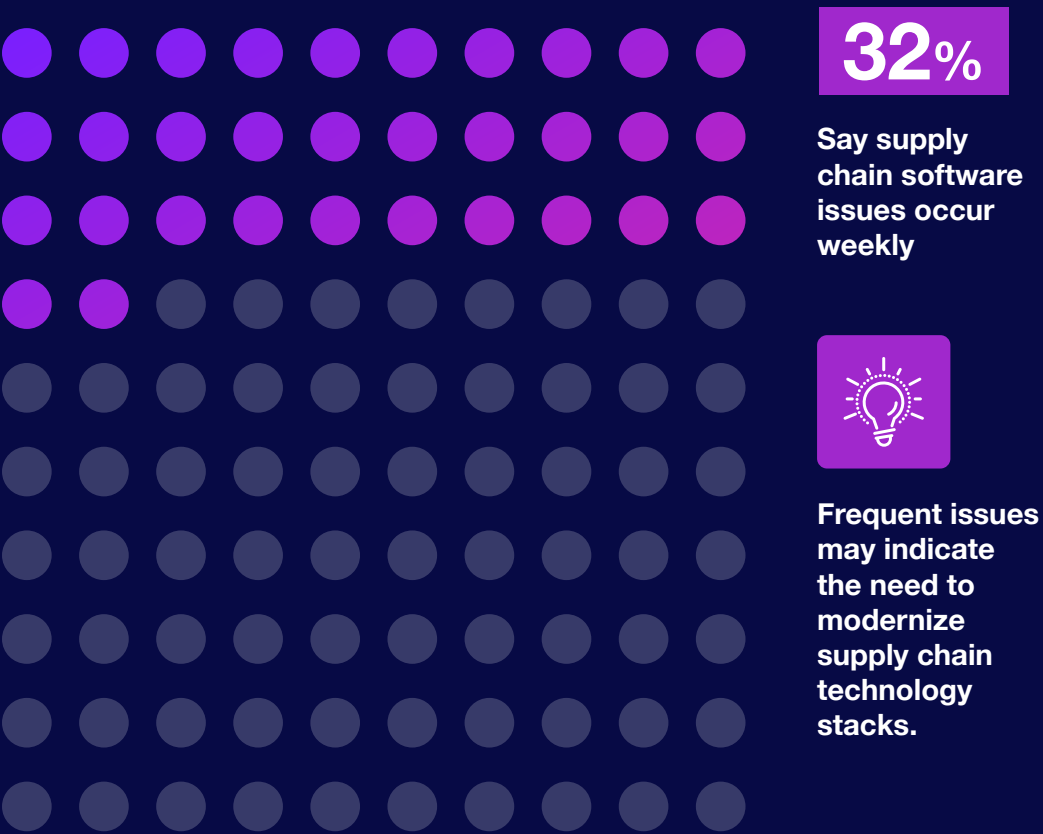
Many organizations believe their supply chain is operating as intended, but the business impact tells a different story.



Confidence in supply chain design does not always translate to execution performance.

Issues Are Occurring Frequently

For many companies, supply chain software issues are not isolated events. They are recurring operational challenges.

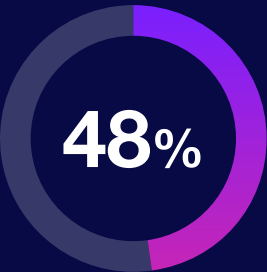


Technology Issues Drive Revenue Loss

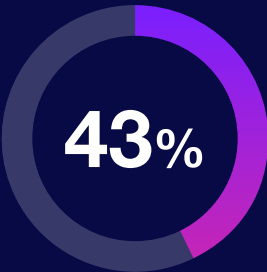


Say technology-related issues are a major source of supply chain performance gaps, directly impacting customers, partners, and revenue.

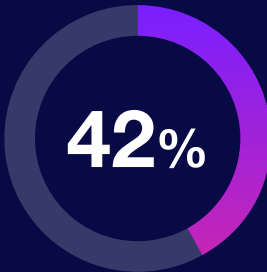
Top Supply Chain Technology Issues



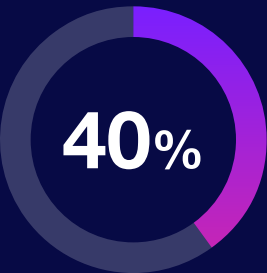
Integration



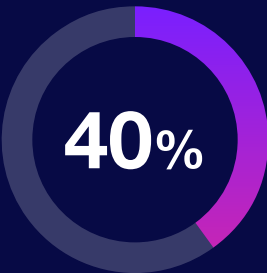
Security



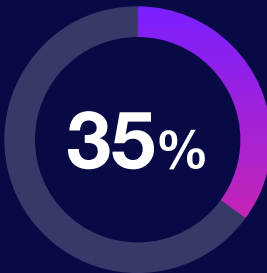
Data Formatting



Visibility



Connectivity



Orchestration

Types of Revenue Loss from Technology Issues

These losses are often tied to foundational technology issues that continue to disrupt day-to-day execution.



Revenue loss is often rooted in internal execution-layer technology problems, not just external disruption.

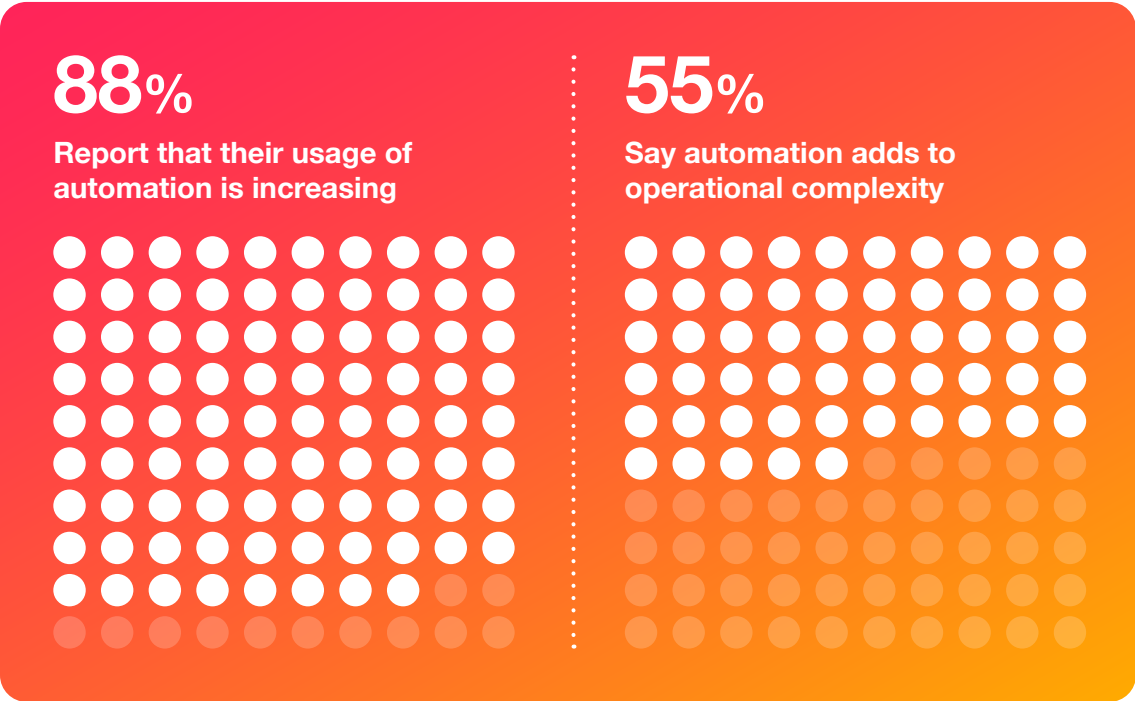
PART III.

The Orchestration Gap

Automation Without Coordination

Automation Is Increasing, But So Is Complexity

Automation adoption continues to rise across supply chain operations, but many organizations say it is also making processes more difficult to manage.



While the use of automation is scaling activity, it's also making execution harder to manage.

End-to-End Visibility Remains Limited

Even as automation adoption increases, only a small share of organizations report having real-time visibility across the full supply chain lifecycle.



Although automation adoption continues to grow, it has not yet closed the visibility gap.

Issues Are Still Not Automatically Resolved

Many organizations can detect supply chain issues, but fewer can identify root causes, determine the right fix, and resolve problems automatically.



Automation can surface issues, but resolution still requires significant manual coordination.

Where Issue Resolution Takes the Longest



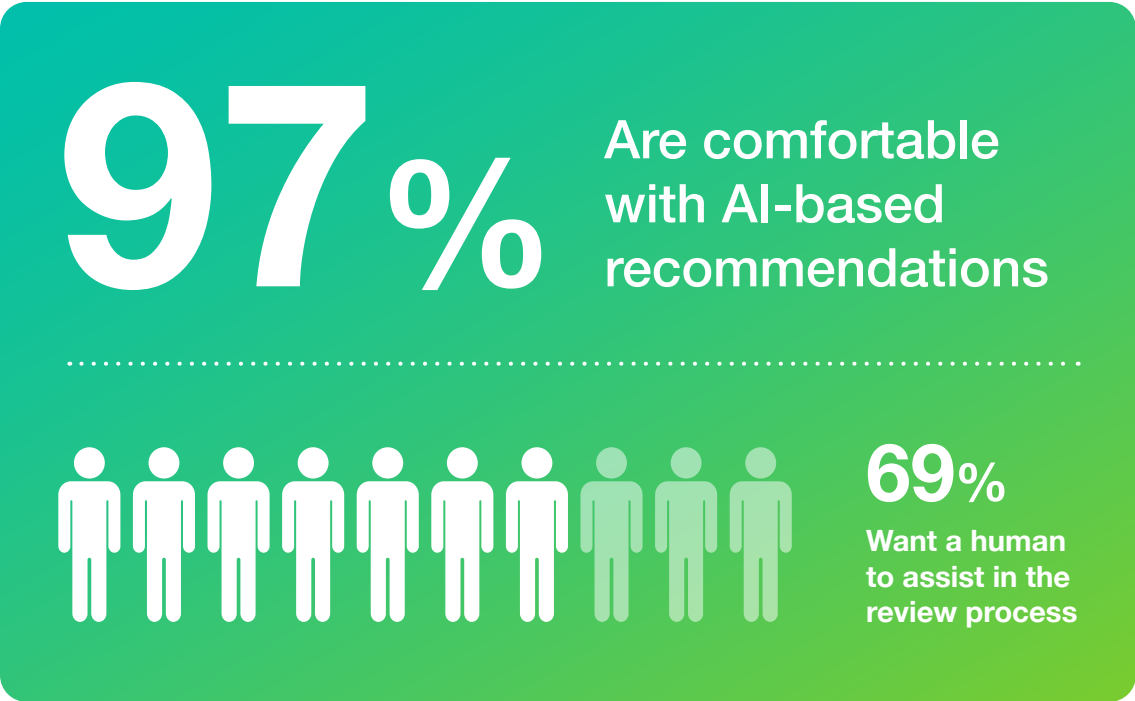
PART IV.

AI as the Catalyst

From Process Automation to Intelligent Orchestration

Trust in AI Recommendations Is Widespread

Trust barriers to AI appear to have largely fallen. Nearly all respondents say they are comfortable with AI-based recommendations, though many still prefer human review as part of the decision process.



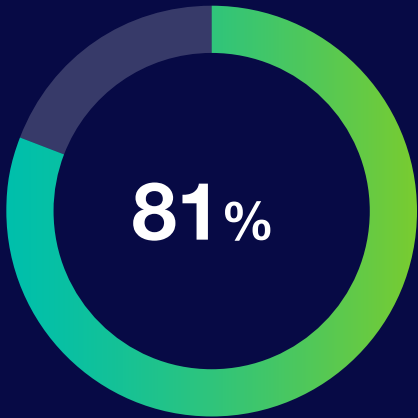
AI adoption continues to move forward with human oversight still built into the process.

AI Use Cases Now Extend Across the Entire Supply Chain Lifecycle

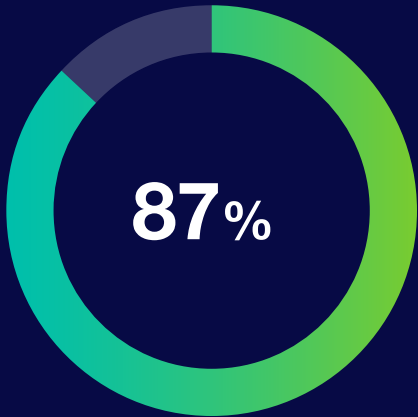
Companies are applying or considering AI across a wide range of supply chain tasks, suggesting AI is being viewed as more than a point solution. It is increasingly seen as a way to support analysis, decision-making, risk mitigation, and customer outcomes across the broader execution environment.



AI is increasingly being viewed as a way to save time, reduce manual effort, and support execution across the supply chain.

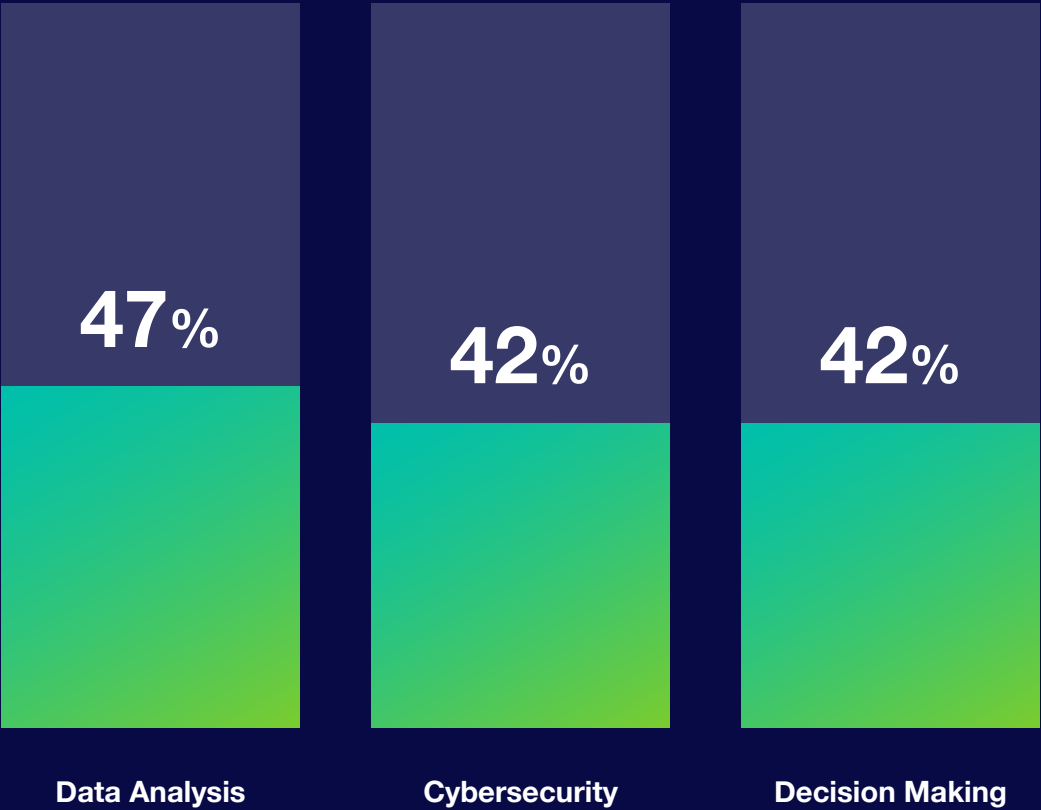


Are considering three or more AI-enabled supply chain tasks



Say AI can gather & standardize data for other AI-based tasks

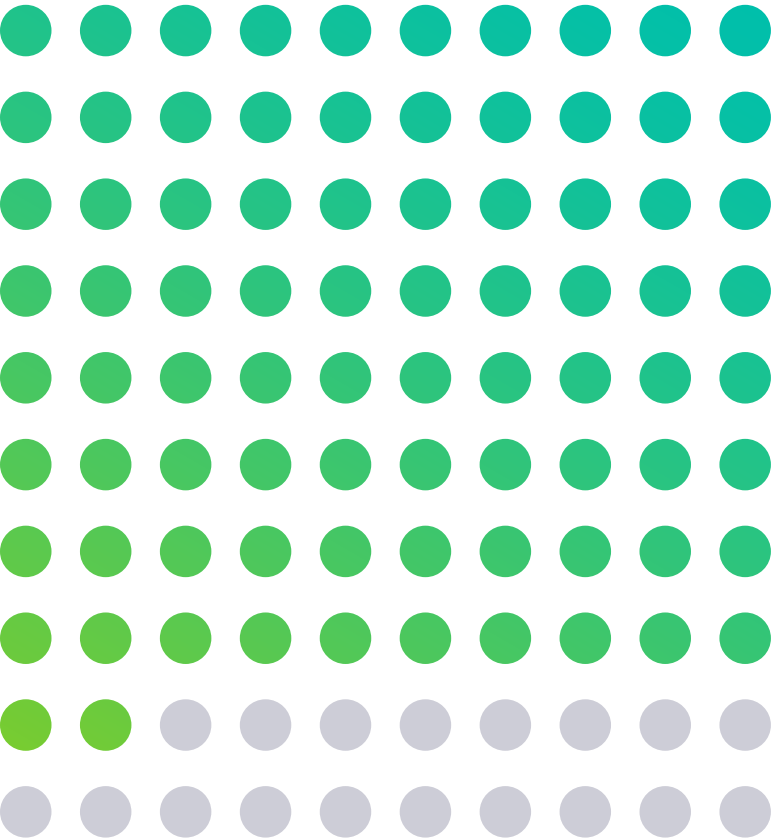
Top 3 Supply Chain Tasks Considered For AI Usage



AI's biggest value is not just automating tasks. It is helping guide execution decision-making in real-time.

AI Delivers the Most Value At the Order Level

Respondents report high value for AI that can evaluate real-time and historical business data to support order-level decision-making, including selecting vendors and optimizing execution.



82%

Say it would be very valuable for AI to help select the right vendors for each order based on past performance and business data

CONCLUSION

What This All Means

Why Supply Chain Orchestration is the Next Frontier

A Shift in How Supply Chains Must Operate

As geopolitical volatility, economic pressure, execution failures, and technology complexity converge, supply chains are no longer defined only by their ability to connect, integrate, and execute transactions efficiently between parties. They are increasingly defined by their ability to adapt, coordinate decisions, and respond in real time across a complex ecosystem of partners, systems, and processes.

This marks a transition from a traditional operating model built around linear execution to one centered on dynamic and centralized coordination, i.e., orchestration.

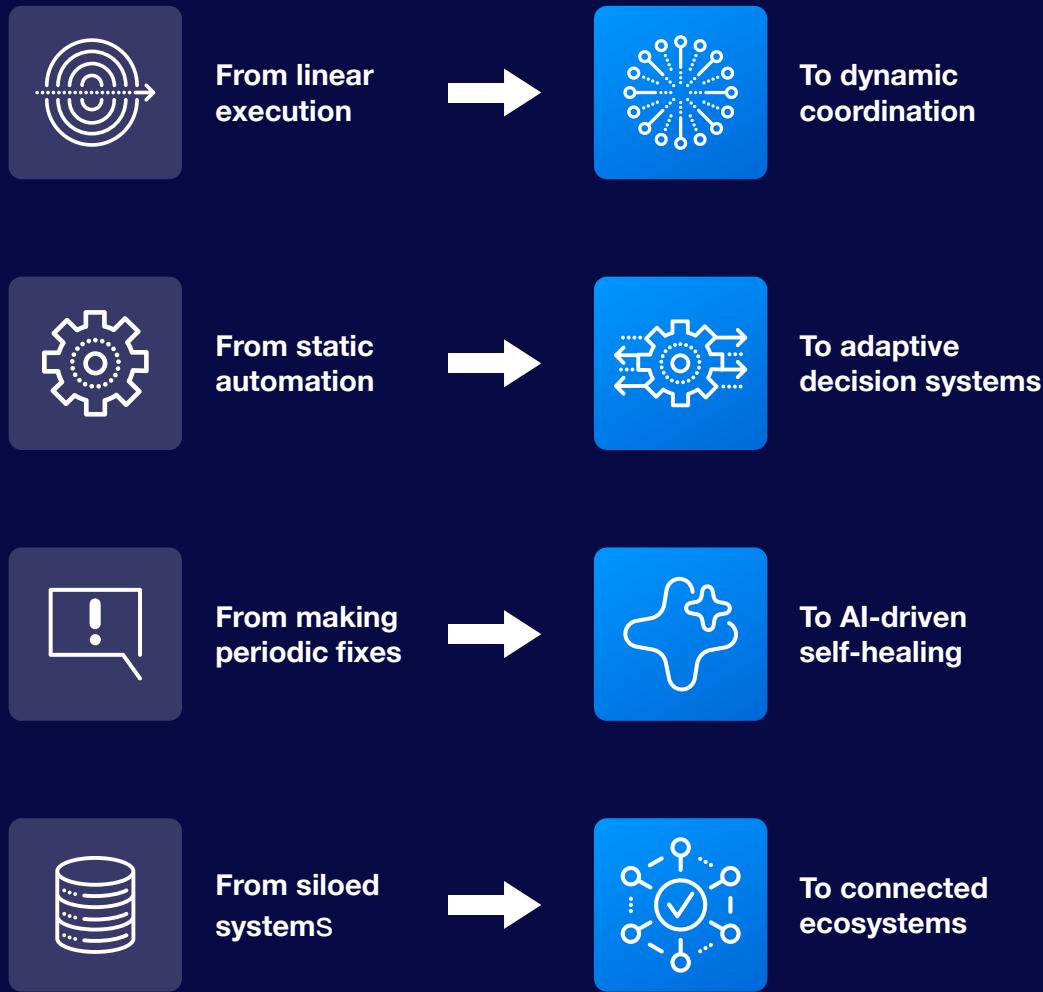
While automation and integration remain supply chain essentials, the data suggests they are no longer sufficient on their own. Organizations that continue to invest without improving coordination risk, greater complexity, slower response times, persistent performance gaps, and lost revenue.

Supply chain orchestration is emerging as the mechanism that turns disconnected systems and data into coordinated action. Combined with AI, supply chain orchestration enables more adaptive, real-time decision-making across the supply chain.



A true paradigm shift is underway as orchestration rapidly becomes the organizing principle of the modern supply chain in the years ahead.

The New Supply Chain Operating Model



Companies Represented

EMPLOYEES (BY PERCENT)

More than 2,000.....	32%
1,500-2,000	12%
1,000-1,500	39%
500-1,000	17%

SENIORITY

Executive (VP, GM, C-Level).....	49%
Director / Manager	45%
Team Member	6%

LOCATIONS REPRESENTED

United States & Canada.....	60%
Europe.....	40%

INDUSTRIES REPRESENTED

Technology Software.....	20%
Food & Beverage.....	16%
Manufacturing	14%
Retail & eCommerce	13%
Construction	5%
Transportation & Logistics	10%
Technology Hardware.....	8%
Wholesale & Distribution.....	6%

About This Research

The primary research goal was to understand key challenges business leaders are facing as they enter 2026, and the strategies they are employing to manage them. The survey was deployed in Q1 2026 and included questions covering geopolitical issues, customer expectations, inflation, taxes, tariffs, AI, and their supply chain. The research also focused on understanding the operation of their supply chain and how it was impacting revenue, current challenges, resiliency and if their supply chain can be used to help mitigate business and geopolitical issues.

Methodology

Executives and supply chain experts at small businesses to global enterprises were invited to participate in a survey on their business environment and supply chain operations. Some questions were repeated from the 2025 research survey to create Y/Y trend. The survey was administered electronically, and participants were offered a token compensation for their participation.

Participants

A total of 301 qualified participants completed the survey. All participants had direct supply chain responsibilities. Participants were from North America and Europe.

Dimensional Research

Dimensional Research® provides practical market research for technology companies. We partner with our clients to deliver actionable information that reduces risks, increases customer satisfaction, and grows the business. Our researchers are experts in the applications, devices, and infrastructure used by modern businesses and their customers. For more information, visit www.dimensionalsearch.com.

About Cleo Integration Cloud

Cleo Integration Cloud (CIC) is an AI-powered platform, purpose-built to design, build, operate, and optimize supply chain processes by bringing together API, MFT, EDI, non-EDI integrations, and managed services through modern supply chain solutions. Cleo’s solutions provide its customers strategic end-to-end visibility into and control over revenue-critical business flows occurring across their ecosystems of partners and customers, marketplaces, and internal cloud and on-premise applications. More than 4,000 middle-market and enterprise customers across transportation & logistics, wholesaling & distribution, and manufacturing industries rely on Cleo to rapidly onboard trading partners, enable integrations between applications, and streamline supply chain workflow through proactive insights.



★★★★★

G2 Leader for 4 consecutive years.



About Cleo

Cleo is a supply chain orchestration software and solutions company that helps businesses manage the movement and integration of B2B data across their digital ecosystem. By bringing together API, EDI, and file-based integration with visibility and automation capabilities, Cleo helps organizations unite data, planning, and execution across supply chain operations.

Cleo enables companies to connect suppliers, customers, logistics providers, marketplaces, and internal systems to improve agility, accelerate partner onboarding, and support critical business processes. Its platform provides business and technical users with greater visibility and control across multi-enterprise workflows, helping them more effectively prevent and respond to disruptions and improve ecosystem performance.

Through self-service, managed services, and blended service models, Cleo helps organizations reduce complexity, strengthen partner collaboration, and support more resilient supply chain operations.



Expect More From Your Integration Platform

- ✓ Real-time data visibility

✓ Flexible service options

✓ Business process automation
- ✓ Pre-built maps & templates

✓ Vast protocol support

✓ EDI & API connectivity



Request Live Demo

Cleo®

... never stops®

www.cleo.com

Copyright © 2026 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.