



## RESOURCES

**Home**  
**Resources**  
**Resource Center**

# How Your Business Can Benefit from the Internet of Supply Chains



Ever-lengthening and complex global supply chains have been put to the test in recent years. From material shortages to demand volatility, manufacturers and their upstream supply chain partners have struggled to deal with unprecedented supply chain disruption.

Many businesses have turned to technological innovation to solve these problems. But they've had limited success in meaningfully taming disruption because they have not addressed the core underlying issue: the inability to share information at scale, with all supply chain partners. This is the crucial element that powers shared business processes.

While enterprise systems and solutions enable all the individual links in the supply chain to run successfully on their own, they've effectively become digital islands with limited ability to support multi-company collaboration. The interactions that have been digitalized often rely on custom-built point-to-point integrations to each and every supply chain partner, which are costly, time-consuming, and difficult to create and maintain in an evolving regulatory environment.

These system integration woes lead to visibility gaps as data gets stuck in individual silos. In turn, these visibility gaps hamper the execution and

improvement of critical supply chain processes, resulting in supply chain disruption.

## **The Internet of Supply Chains: A Powerful Tool for Seamless Integration**

The Internet of Supply Chains (IoSC) is a logical and powerful extension of current efforts to digitally transform and simplify data exchange between supply chain partners.

The IoSC brings all of your supply chain partners together on a digital network of networks, enabling everyone to intelligently execute interoperable processes using shared workflows and a common data model.

Instead of following the conventional hub-and-spoke architectural model, the IoSC is built on a single network platform that allows companies with a diverse set of ERPs and other enterprise systems (e.g., QMS, MRP, WMS, Inventory, etc.) to seamlessly communicate within common business processes. It frees organizations, their suppliers, and other partners from the enormous task of integrating disparate systems through a traditional point-to-point model that consumes time and money. Companies only need to integrate to the IoSC once for a given transaction and they will be connected to all other partners on the network, immediately ready to share business data.

The creation of a robust infrastructure to support partner-to-partner communication, network creation and management, and the orchestration of critical business processes is a true evolution of supplier interoperability. The IoSC brings all of your supply chain partners together on a digital network of networks, enabling everyone to intelligently execute interoperable processes using shared workflows and a common data model.

By linking together all of these digital islands into a cohesive ecosystem, organizations, their suppliers, and their suppliers' suppliers, gain visibility into the

flow of materials and processes. Because they are connected by interoperable networks that link companies, people, processes, and systems around common business purposes, supply chain communication, collaboration, and orchestration of shared workflows across multiple enterprises becomes seamless.

The end result? Greater supply chain visibility, agility, and resilience—and far fewer disruptions. Supply chain business processes can be fully digitalized on the IoSC, leading directly to an improvement in key performance indicators such as on-time, in-full delivery performance, cash-to-cash cycle times, order cycle times, and schedule attainment.

### **From Vision to Reality with TraceLink**

The IoSC is not just a vision—it's at the foundation of the TraceLink OPUS platform. The OPUS platform has been used in the Healthcare and Life Sciences industry for years to support track-and-trace solutions and is currently connecting 290,000+ network members and enabling them to meet industry regulatory requirements.

OPUS is at the heart of Supply Chain Work Management, a powerful solution from TraceLink that links people, processes, systems, and enterprises into a collective information network for intelligent business execution. Supply Chain Work Management enables customers to create digital networks with partners so they can easily exchange business process information and manage shared tasks through secure, configurable links.

With OPUS and Supply Chain Work Management, manufacturers and their trading partners can connect in real time to collaborate and manage tasks associated with all critical supply chain activities. Some examples include:

- Tech transfer
- PO collaboration
- Product quality review
- New product launches

- New supplier selection and onboarding

With Supply Chain Work Management, all partners interact as if they were a single team operating under one roof. In an era of unpredictable disruptions, this level of real-time collaboration and connectivity is required to reduce supply risk and increase supply chain agility.

Deploying the IoSC is the first step to truly digitalizing modern global supply chains, and Supply Chain Work Management is the fastest and easiest path to value through this transformation. If you'd like to see how the IoSC and Supply Chain Work Management can work for your business, get in touch with us today.

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Supply Chain Management Review analyzes three foundational components of the Internet of Supply Chains.

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# Management for Direct Supply

## Integrate Once, Interoperate with All Suppliers and CMOs

### Purchase Order Orchestration

For procurement, supply chain, and external manufacturing leaders looking to reduce supply chain risk and improve chain visibility and execution, integrating and interoperating with suppliers and contract manufacturers remains one of the greatest challenges. The need for more comprehensive exchange and real-time communication is critical as supply chain volatility has driven more variability in orders, date changes, cancellations, and material shortages. Limited integration and inadequate, ad hoc communication today's "as-is" procurement processes is one of the causes of inaccurate plans that lead to longer order fulfillment and reduced on-time, in-full performance. To address these challenges, new capabilities that link people, processes, and enterprises with suppliers are required to improve procurement with faster and better decision making.

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## Integrate with all Suppliers with a Single Link

TraceLink Supply Chain Work Management for Direct Supply is a revolutionary new way to integrate, interoperate, and execute work processes with all suppliers and contract manufacturers. Each company deploys and controls Supply Chain Work Management for Direct Supply within a network of digital supply networks. This is the true power of the Internet of Supply Chains (IoSC). Procurement professionals can engage suppliers to exchange purchase orders, execute changes, monitor status, and resolve material shortages and other issues quickly to keep customer shipments on time.

The diagram illustrates the integration of a company's internal processes with its suppliers and contract manufacturers (CMOs) through a central 'Purchase Order Exchange'. On the left, 'Your Company' is shown with a network of icons representing Procurement, Supply, Logistics, and Manufacturing. On the right, 'Your Suppliers/CMOs' is shown with a similar network including Supply Chain, Inventory, Customer Service, and Manufacturing. The central 'Purchase Order Exchange' acts as the hub, facilitating the flow of information and goods between the two sides. The exchange includes the following functions:

- Purchase Order Acknowledgment
- Production Status
- Inventory Balances & Adjustments
- Shipment Notification
- Tasks Management
- Exception and Issue Management
- Change Requests
- Batch Record Review

Supply Chain Work Management for Direct Supply is built and hosted on TraceLink Opus, the Platform for the Internet of Supply Chains (IoSC). Opus links people, processes, systems, and enterprises into a collective information network for intelligent business execution. Supply Chain Work Management enables customers to create digital networks with partners to exchange business process information.

## Supply Chain Work Management for Direct Supply

For supply chain leaders looking to improve visibility and execution, integrating and interoperating with suppliers and contract manufacturers is a top priority.

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