



## Post-Pandemic Sustainability: What lies ahead of the Supply Chain Industry

### This white paper covers:

- COVID-19: The World After
- Post-Pandemic Sustainability
- An All-new Supply Chain Industry
- The future of Last-Mile Lies in AI

### COVID-19: The World After

*'Past is Prologue' - William Shakespeare*

The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 as a pandemic on March 11, 2020, indicating a global health emergency. The pandemic is spreading like wildfire across continents, disrupting the biggest economies including the United States of America, Europe, and China. According to epidemiologist Marc Lipsitch, before it ends, about 60% of the world's adult population could become infected with the disease.

Scientists and researchers across the globe are constantly striving to devise a successful vaccine for the epidemic, but it could take at least another year; and even longer for it to reach every human on the planet. The world's immediate response to the pandemic was panic, followed by various pandemic-prevention strategies to combat the disease. After months of social distancing and lockdown, countries are now gradually reopening, almost coming to terms with the fact that until a vaccine is developed, we will have to co-live with the risks of COVID-19.

Plagues and pandemics leave deep and long-lasting impacts on mankind. COVID-19, the [global pandemic of 2020](#), is no different. The pandemic will gradually pack its bags and leave the earth, but it will be interesting to see how the world will look after all this.

The sudden and colossal outbreak of the disease has already caused deep economic downturns in many countries, and a sharp global recession is on the cards. Governments around the world have come to realize that looking out for their peoples' well-being, safety, and security is their first and foremost goal. Socially too, it has dramatically changed the way we live, work, and interact with each other, showing that humans can survive with essentials, with minimum travel and leisure.

But most of all, it has pushed countries to nurture a culture of preparedness, enabling communities and businesses to **build resilience against future** disasters like this.

## Post-Pandemic Sustainability

Nationwide lockdowns, restrictions on international as well as inter-state movement of people and goods have been effective towards mitigating the spread of Coronavirus.

However, these limitations have led to a slowdown of operations in some industries. Interestingly, there are some that are less affected, or have rather boomed during the pandemic. While industries such as airlines, insurance, sports, entertainment, travel, and tourism faced a massive blow due to the pandemic, online groceries, delivery services, [hyperlocal markets](#), buy-now-pay-later, and software-as-a-service businesses flourished like never before.

Although the nature of a business largely decides whether or not it will perform well during or after a crisis like this, businesses across industries must be well-prepared for such black swan events in the future.



A VUCA analysis of the ‘volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity’ of the pandemic situation can help businesses proactively prepare for a better future and build stronger business leadership in the days to come.

	Effects	Demands
<b>Volatility</b>	Risks Instability Flux	<b>Vision</b> Take action Probe changes
<b>Uncertainty</b>	Direction paralysis due to data overload	<b>Understanding</b> Wider understanding Different perspective
<b>Complexity</b>	Unproductive Dualities	<b>Clarity</b> Key focus Flexible
<b>Ambiguity</b>	Induce doubts and distrust Lapses in decision making Hurt innovations	<b>Agility</b> Decision making innovation

A clear understanding of marketplace fluctuations, customer buying preferences, shifts in consumer demands, and the trends coming up can go a long way in the post-pandemic world for businesses. This year has revealed essential strategies for businesses to aim for sustainability in the years to come.

### It's time to start thinking digital

Coronavirus is establishing a culture of social distancing and minimal human interaction, pushing businesses to think out of the box to improve end-user experiences. It's time for businesses to go big on tech adoption and implement mobile, cloud, Big Data, and social media in day-to-day operations. According to a Forbes report, 70% businesses in the US have a digital transformation strategy in place, and 27% companies think it will be a matter of survival in the days to come.

### Responsiveness to change

Agility is a critical element for success in the post-pandemic world, given the kind of dynamism in the business world. Companies that can act fast and flexibly in times of crisis can outperform competitors and build a strong market presence. Sadly, the ones that will struggle to quickly and effectively implement even small and simple changes may crumble before our eyes.

## Resilience and recovery

In future, the biggest survival and growth strategy for businesses will be to build organizations that are resilient to crises and can recover fast from downturns. Companies across industries will make significant changes to their objectives, processes, thinking, and measurement of value in the economy.

## ◉ An All-New Supply Chain Industry

### Emerging trends and long term impact of COVID-19

Supply chain enterprises worldwide are going through a phase of huge operational transition today. The shifts in consumer demands, the cross-border movement restrictions, and the limited availability of labor and supplies are all contributing factors to an upcoming all-new supply chain industry.

### Dual sourcing is gaining momentum

The [emerging trends in supply chain](#) are pushing companies to innovate and find new ways to be resourceful and accomplish objectives efficiently. At the beginning of 2020, as China suffered from the severity of the outbreak, the global manufacturing sector derailed. It caused major disruptions in the availability of goods sourced from China; both finished goods for sale and raw material used in factories in developed markets.

“With Covid-19 the biggest issues coming to the forefront is how much of a company's supply chains are reliant on India and China. These locations are now essentially points of failure in the supply chain.

What we will see more and more of is dual supply chains. Some companies may have a primary and secondary source of procurement within that new system, but the reliance on one supplier and one location will become a thing of the past,” says Ajmal Dar, Strategic Procurement Expert with over 20 years of experience and Founder of [MocassinGuru](#).

### Novel Consumer Demand Patterns are Emerging

As the coronavirus continued to spread to the rest of the world, demand dynamics changed dramatically. Lockdown policies caused widespread panic among consumers globally, leading to stockpiling of essentials, such as groceries, pet supplies, toilet paper, and cleaning supplies.

As countries went under uncertain lockdowns, online shopping of essentials became the

new norm, and visits to retail stores decreased significantly. The demand for convenience is forcing brick and mortar stores to go digital and embrace online storefronts, and online retailers to improve their customer experience. Omnichannel will be the next big thing in supply chain fulfillment.

### **Distribution Dynamics are Changing**

We're seeing a completely different era of supply chain distribution on the horizon. COVID-19 has not only given rise to trends like social distancing and [contactless doorstep deliveries of packages](#), but it has also introduced the world to newer and more efficient ways of supply distribution.

[Buy Online and Pick-Up In-Store](#) (BOPIS), curbside pickups, and [Pick Up-Drop Off points](#) are trending in the retail and groceries supply chain. At the same time, companies across industries are adopting smarter distribution methods such as [pop-up distribution centers](#) and cross-docking to save time and costs in distribution operations.

### **Last-Mile Logistics is the Key**

The most important part of the delivery process is how a package actually gets to a consumer, more so in COVID-19 times where the customer is highly concerned about the safety and quality of goods. The consumer's demand for fast and efficient deliveries, with complete transparency and visibility, has only increased with the pandemic. It's time for supply chains to ramp up this last leg of the delivery process.

"As online sales continue to skyrocket, so too does [consumer demand for same-day delivery](#). The days of 3-5 shipping are over. Late and missed packages will no longer be acceptable. Think about how easy it is to order an Uber.

Scheduling same-day deliveries should be just as easy, and brands should offer customers full visibility throughout the entire last mile. Free same-day delivery will become the standard in 2020," says Dan Eblagon, CMO of [Bond](#), a next-gen last-mile company that offers brands and their customers a fast, effective, and delightful experience.

## **The Future of Last-Mile Lies in Artificial Intelligence**

The world is changing for supply chain enterprises. As the speed and efficiency of last-mile operations takes the center stage in supply chain , businesses need to

strategically plan all the other activities that are either related to or lead to last-mile deliveries moving forward.

“The primary partner of logistics is transportation. So the best sustainable approach for businesses in future is to reduce multiple delivery trips for the carrier, plan routes smarter and minimize delivery costs,” says Jake Rheude, VP of Marketing at [Red Stag Fulfillment](#), a Cloud-based last-mile fulfillment center.

[Artificial intelligence will be a key enabler](#) of successful last-mile logistics in the supply chain, allowing enterprises to chalk out logistics smarter, and on-ground professionals to execute deliveries better. Cloud-driven SaaS services will enable supply chains to scale up operations, without spending a fortune on tech implementation.

Technology such as [dynamic route planning](#), [zone-based routing](#), [intelligent shipment sorting solutions](#), last-mile management applications, real-time supply chain visibility tools will be widely used by forward-thinking supply chain enterprises to improve performance and win over convenience-seeking customers of the COVID-free world.

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