Amber Road
POWERING GLOBAL TRADE®

Maximize Global Supply Chain Visibility

Reduce Compliance Risks and Improve Supply Chain Responsiveness with Amber Road

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Overview

A multitude of forces drive today's need for greater visibility into the supply chain. From an inbound perspective, global supply networks introduce distance, cultural and time-zone challenges. As more companies seek to grow revenues by accessing maturing foreign markets, visibility of outbound shipments is also becoming increasingly important. Meanwhile, businesses are under constant pressure to cut supply chain costs while meeting customer expectations. An array of supply chain partners exchanging information and physical goods over great distances, across multiple touch points spells complexity and risk.

Such complexity makes it difficult to see what's happening in the supply chain from moment to moment. It can jeopardize a company's effectiveness in the management of critical activities with suppliers, and undermine the ability to meet customer demands and compete in the marketplace.

Gartner Research has recently completed a study focused on "Use Cases for Supply Chain Visibility". In this research, Gartner highlights a number of key findings and recommendations for companies considering the implementation of a supply chain visibility solution. Leveraging real-life stories, Gartner makes it possible for organizations to better understand how they can avoid common obstacles and achieve the business benefits delivered by supply chain visibility.

The following pages contain Gartner's "Use Cases for Supply Chain Visibility" research note. This newsletter also contains examples of how Amber Road's solutions provide multi-mode supply chain visibility functionality that connects importers and exporters with overseas suppliers, logistics providers, brokers, customers and carriers. With this visibility and connectivity across the supply chain, organizations can reduce cross-border trade risks while improving supply chain responsiveness.

Featuring research from
Gartner®

From the Gartner Files:

Use Cases for Supply Chain Visibility

Getting visibility into opportunities, threats and value network status to improve planning and operational execution is a key capability for supply chain success. Supply chain leaders should consider the use cases, challenges and benefits outlined here when implementing visibility solutions.

Key Findings

- Although a variety of supply chain visibility use cases exist, with some supported by technology applications and services, there are no packaged all-in-one collaboration platforms providing end-to-end supply chain visibility.
- Five layers or capabilities are necessary to gain full benefits of supply chain visibility: connectivity, technology collaboration, visibility, business collaboration and modeling.
- Most visibility initiatives are focused on one supply chain functional domain (such as deliver logistics traceability, or source purchase order management), and such initiatives do not have an end-to-end view and scope.
- A large number of organizations implement cross-functional or cross-enterprise solutions and/or services, enhancing visibility inside their four walls, but stop short of enhancing and expanding to an outside-in, multienterprise value network view.

Recommendations

Supply chain leaders:

- Define the scope of an end-to-end supply chain visibility vision, and then define the immediate initiative aligned with the work stream that needs a visibility solution.
- Redesign information architecture to include near-real-time, cloud-based shared process and information layers that sit above physical assets, supply chain and operational applications.
- Evaluate software and service offerings targeted for particular use cases and industries. Capabilities should include not only traceability, event management and basic functional collaboration, but also modeling and what-if scenarios that allow rapid trade-offs to profitably respond to network changes and events.

What You Need to Know

End-to-end (E2E) supply chain visibility (SCV) is gaining interest in today's global supply chains, because there is an increasing need for network collaboration to reduce business and partner risk, while maintaining efficiency and improving performance. Visibility solutions help to enhance multienterprise, multitier collaboration by providing near-real-time insights to transactions, content and relevant supply chain information.

Together with people and processes, technology and services enable this E2E view of the companies' extended value chains. These collaboration and/or visibility platforms connect the enterprise with its business partners, providing the following main capabilities/features:

- Near-real-time communication
- Cross-network collaboration
- Multisystem connectivity
- What-if scenario and modeling
- Multitenant, cloud-based architectural setup (case-dependent)

Although solution providers offer E2E visibility capabilities in mainly best-of-breed platforms, most end-user organizations are not yet mature enough to take advantage of the technology available. When implementing point visibility solutions, most companies take a more siloed implementation approach rather than execute on a road map of initiatives leading to an E2E view.

Analysis

As E2E visibility requires the collaboration of more than just a handful partners, technology can help improve visibility capabilities in companies' value chains.

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The potential for subsequent business improvement – integrating multiple parties and allowing them to view and share transactions, content and status information – is enormous.

In our recent survey, we challenged end-user organizations – not solution providers – on use cases and benefits of technology-enabled, E2E, multitier visibility (see Note 1).

Notably, there is a discrepancy between what is offered in the market (the "provider view") and what is actually implemented at end-user organizations, providing visibility to their extended value chain (the "user view"). Furthermore, in contrast to established business applications like ERP or CRM, there are no existing, comprehensive suites with a variety of functionalities for multiple visibility domains: plan/demand management, source, make and deliver. They are more best-of-breed offerings where brand owner companies might need multiple different solutions in order to get the required E2E visibility view. With regard to the survey findings:

- Companies agree with the terminology of visibility, its attributes and its needs, but when undertaking actual initiative visibility, it is mainly siloed within one domain, and not E2E. We see a gap between understanding and execution.
- Most initiatives are about logistics visibility, which is often solved by older technology (such as electronic data exchange [EDI]), and typically not with emerging cross-functional applications and services that enable multienterprise collaboration.
- A large number of organizations implement cross-enterprise solutions with an initial focus on enhancing visibility only inside their four walls.

Table 1. Summary of Key Findings

Criteria	Finding
Degree of adoption	Significant gap between vendor offerings and actual client adoption
Scope of offerings	No comprehensive suite offerings; more best-of-breed solutions
Understanding of terms	Companies recognizing terminology, but implementing lag
Architectural layers	Four layers: connectivity, collaboration, visibility, modeling
Scope of implementations	Mainly logistics focus; definitely siloed and not E2E
Breadth of initiatives	Often within company borders; limited outside-in collaboration
Selection of tool	Often trying to solve with ERP or in-house developments
Information gathering	Focus on established application vendors, limited on emerging ones

Source: Gartner (October 2013)

- Many organizations try to enable visibility to drive value with their current ERP applications. However, ERP only provides limited visibility that is mainly inside, with outside typically limited to upstream, Tier 1 supplier portals.
- As companies' supply chains mature, they are evaluating, or at least gathering, information from smaller/emerging technology and service providers (besides the major SCM players like SAP, Oracle and JDA) that are offering collaboration and multienterprise visibility solutions.

Technology Description

E2E SCV technology connects internal and external business partners in the networkwide value chain, allowing integration and collaboration among all of the players. It requires capabilities that are beyond the established ones found in business applications, such as enterprise resource planning (ERP) or supply chain management (SCM). Basically, it is the architectural transformation from simple, traditional point-to-point data exchange to a multienterprise collaboration platform.

There are five layers or capabilities necessary to gain the full benefits of SCV, in ascending order (see Figure 1):

- Connectivity – Connects and integrates the company with its many business partners and systems in their network – the architectural setup, so to speak. This could be single (such as EDI) or multichannel (such as portal, EDI, Web and mail).
- Technology collaboration – Defines the relevant data objects and transactions, together with data integration, and sets the stage for business partner interactions along rules, events and workflows.
- Visibility – Presents all the information gathered. This concludes the "sense" activity.

- Business collaboration – Allows the multidirectional communication, process collaboration and interchange among business partners. This layer is where business value begins to be created based on the visibility – this can include the "shape" capability (as in shaping demand and enabling response).

- Modeling – Allows the simulation of different scenarios with trade-offs, finding the best-fitting response to any network event or disruption (referring to the "respond" activity).

Many enterprises still do not take advantage of all five capabilities, and vendors often do not provide all in their solution offerings. The lower three layers are referred to as the foundation, the collaboration hub as a platform that allows data sensing. The top layers enable demand sensing and tailored response based on simulation and optimization, generating value for the company, and even for the network community.

Then, there are three basic styles when talking about multienterprise processes and applications:

- **Internal or limited multienterprise** – Supported by traditional enterprise applications and B2B point-to-point application integration. The focus is on the enterprise. *Example:*

  - Automating purchase orders, advanced shipping notification and invoice exchange through a traditional VAN; to be used when data is well-structured and there is a large number of interactions.

- **Dominant partner** – Enabled by extended enterprise applications with the exposure of some data and process logic to business partners. The focus is on the extended enterprise. *Example:*

  - Sharing orders and forecasts through a supplier portal that is an extension of an ERP suite; used when the buyer is powerful enough to demand data formats and processes tailored to its business.

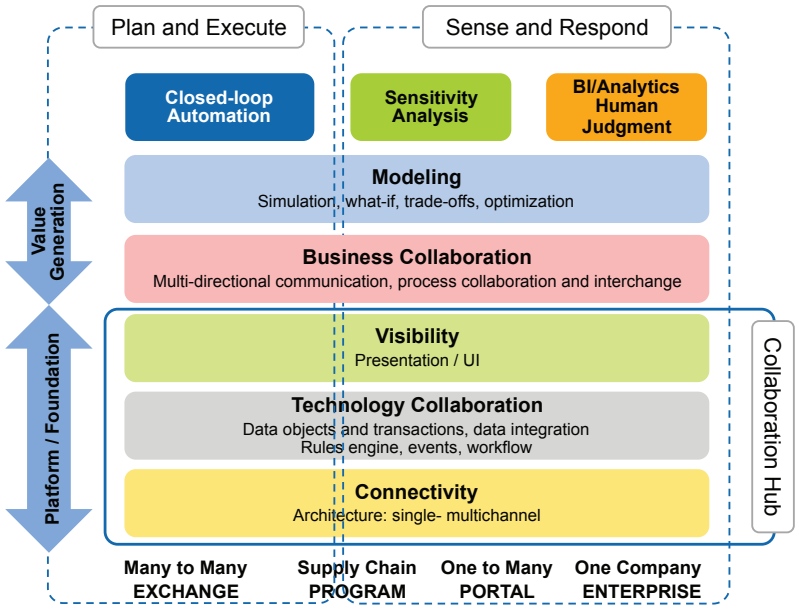
- **Shared multienterprise** – Enabled by multienterprise applications with a common or shared data and process model. The focus is on the E2E community, including multiple tiers of demand channel partners and of upstream suppliers. *Example:*

  - Many-to-many spare-parts catalog management application; used when interaction volumes are lower and suppliers need a scalable way to support many buyers.

Many packaged solutions combine all these interaction styles, to support the various processes and the varying levels of technical sophistication of the community members. The importance of understanding the different process styles is that each has its own special strengths and weaknesses.

In Table 2, we introduce attributes, key terms and concepts relevant for the more advanced implementation styles that are core for visibility solution offerings. End-user organizations should use these attributes when developing RFIs/RFPs, and when evaluating visibility solutions during a vendor-selection process.

FIGURE 1
Visibility Layers



Source: Gartner (October 2013)

Table 2. Attributes for Multienterprise Applications

Attribute	Description
Degree of shared processes	Substantially to fully shared
Data model	Common model, substantially to fully shared
Architecture setup	Multienterprise, multitenant (single, shared code page)
Application operation	Central posting and central processing; embedded rule engine
Authority model	Predominantly owned by third party (shared)
Mode of synchronization	Real time
Integration	Single (as in EDI) vs. multichannel (as in portal plus EDI plus Web plus XML)
Scalability	Scalable for all participants
Type of implementation	Mainly hosted or cloud-delivered SaaS
Community management	Provided by technology vendor vs. doing yourself
Geographical focus	Presence in particular regions (with partners already onboard)
Source: Gartner (October 2013)	

Although companies' mindsets are shifting from internal orientation to a shared multienterprise one, the actual adoption of shared, multienterprise processes is limited. Until 2016, the dominant partner style will be the most utilized one, where leading companies expose some of their business processes and data to partners. The focus will be not just to connect and automate, but to differentiate themselves through process visibility, business collaboration and agility. The deployment of E2E SCV solutions will increase up to 50% by 2018, with the multienterprise implementation style being the predominant one.

The attributes listed above only apply selectively, as the focus is not yet on multienterprise. Selectively shared processes, and selectively shared data models, are not really scalable for high volume.

Uses

Drivers for Visibility

Here we recap the drivers for SCV, with E2E SCV being one of the enablers providing value via the ability to sense, shape and respond to changes in a timely manner, enabling near-real-time trade-off decisions. The result of these decisions can be:

- Higher perfect-order fulfillment rates/ improved service levels
- Higher profitability and increased revenue growth
- Increased operational efficiency
- Increased competitiveness
- Reduced risk

In our recent study, companies also indicated the following challenges with and drivers for visibility:

- **Application complexity** – The difficulty of obtaining visibility information out of a complex and diversified landscape of multiple ERP/SCM applications with nonstandardized processes.
- **Supply chain setup** – Tighter collaboration/increased relationship with outsourcing/manufacturing partners due to the more and more complex setup of their supply chains (moving production from in-house to outside).
- **Financial advancements** – The gaining P&L impact; the freeing up of working capital and cash, which could be achieved through reduced inventory levels and increased sales activities.
- **Market pressure** – The pressure from the market to better collaborate with the brand owner for better service.
- **Sustainability** – Sustainability as it relates to the environment; the ability to report on footprint parameters with increased regularity requirements.
- **Data quality** – The enhancement of data quality as a basis for fewer manual interventions.

Use Cases for Visibility

There are several use cases for SCV, with most supporting only one or two work streams or functions, and none currently supporting E2E SCV. However, as companies mature consistent with the Gartner five-stage maturity model, we expect work stream and functional integration that will drive E2E SCV use cases. Here, we summarize typical ones we see, based on our survey as well as on ongoing client interactions (see Figure 2):

- **Planning** – Demand management and supply replenishment:
  - Customer-facing (for example, forecasting, CPFR collaborative planning, forecasting and replenishment)
  - Supplier-facing (for example, supply replenishment, inventory management including VMI and SMI, capacity constraints and lead times)
- **Supply management/sourcing** – Spanning typical strategic supply management sourcing capabilities, such as:
  - Master data management
  - Supply base management, including supplier self-registration and onboarding
  - Master agreement and contract management
  - Supplier relationship management
  - Supplier evaluation and performance management
  - Supplier risk management
  - Upstream supply network inventory and multitier event management
  - Supplier intelligence and analytics
- **Supply management/procurement** – Covering typical transactional supply management procurement functions like:
  - Direct and indirect materials purchasing and invoicing
  - Goods and services
  - Auctions
  - Catalog management
  - Services outsourcing
  - Contract manufacturing
- **Manufacturing** – Manufacturing execution systems at the shop floor, virtual manufacturing and operational excellence.
- **Quality** – Allows suppliers to upload:
  - Lot quality and test data
  - Lot tracking information
- **Inbound logistics (deliver/execution upstream)** – Processes from brand owner to suppliers, including:
  - Business partners (such as carriers and 3PLs)
  - Global trade management (GTM)
  - Focus on orders, advance shipment notices (ASNs) and invoices
- **Outbound logistics (deliver/execution downstream)** – Processes from brand owner down to DCs and ultimate consumer, including:
  - Business partners (such as carriers, 3PLs and lead logistic service providers)
  - GTM
- **Returns/customer service** – Capabilities such as:
  - Return for repair or replacement (RMA)
  - Maintenance and repair
  - Warranty
- **New product introduction** – Product life cycle management, product cost management, and getting insight into product pipelines, including:
  - Collaborative innovation
  - Product portfolio management
- **Performance management** – Metrics, cross-functional metrics within the company, and multienterprise metrics such as supplier scorecards.
- **GRC/sustainability** – Governance, risk and compliance, including fraud visibility along the supply chain; sustainability with its three pillars: social, economic and environmental.

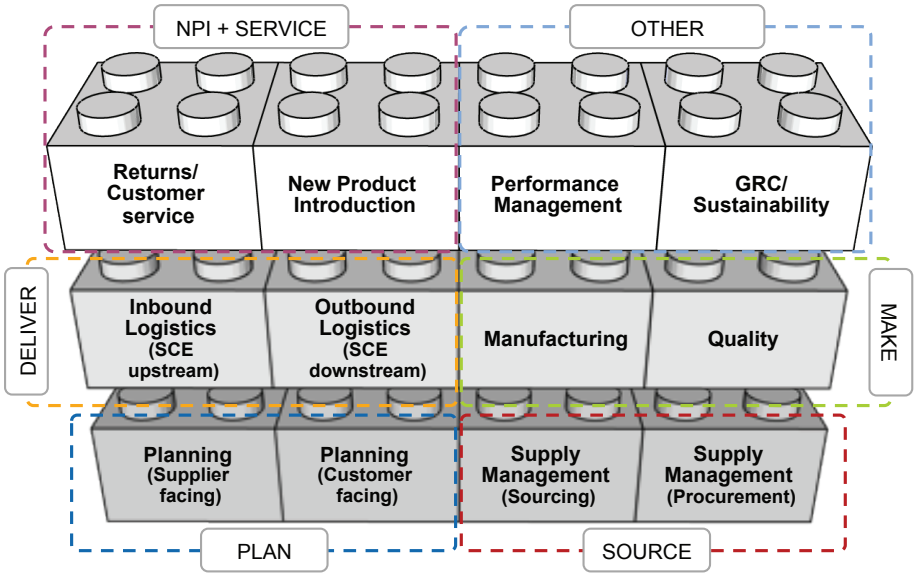
Benefits and Risks

Through the implementation of multienterprise applications offering collaboration and visibility capabilities, companies can gain a number of qualitative and quantitative benefits. A summary of company and partner benefits is provided in Table 3.

During our interviews and inquiries with end-user organizations, we asked about the benefits realized, supported by actual numbers where applicable:

- One industrial company stated that, through the implementation of the visibility/collaboration solution, it could realize inventory savings of 20% of value. For another project covering upstream visibility, it estimated a one-year return on investment (ROI).
- A global CPG leader mentioned that its downstream initiative resulted in an increased forecast accuracy of about 25%, including a significant decrease of returns. Furthermore, it internally improved its SLA to a consistent 98%, while dramatically reducing days on stock.

FIGURE 2
Visibility Use Cases



Source: Gartner (October 2013)

Table 3. Visibility Benefits

Company Benefits	Business Partner Benefits
Better on-time performance/increased SLA	Better on-time performance/increased SLA
Improved customer satisfaction	Improved partner relationships ("preferred")
Improved (reduced) inventory levels	Reduced lead times
Enhanced supplier/provider relationships	Faster time to market
Reduced variability in lead times	Better forecasts/demand signal reaction
Faster tracking of goods/shipments	Additional market opportunities
Quicker reaction to exceptions (via alerts)	Reduced administration
Better forecast accuracy	Performance clarity
Reduced supply risk	Sustainability footprint
Improved response planning/rapid replanning	Payment visibility
Optimized freight charges	Innovation contribution
Freed up working capital/financial improvements	
Reduced administration (including less FTE)	
Avoiding loss of sales, stock-out situations	
Improved internal collaboration and integration (department, system, process)	
Reduced unproductive cost and non-value-added activities	
Transparent performance management	
Better sustainability footprint	
Supplier innovation	
Source: Gartner (October 2013)	

- A chemical company reported that its upstream and downstream initiatives resulted in a solid double-digit percentage of inventory reduction, and an upper single-level percentage increase in service levels.

- An apparel and footwear manufacturer implemented collaboration and track-and-trace capabilities, resulting in a 3% better delivery performance, as well as freight charge reductions from 5% to 3.5% of volume.

- A food and beverage company was able to decrease its days of inventory on stock from just over 10 to below seven, together with a reduction in workforce by 10% due to the new model of consignment stock.

- A major electronics company is buying parts from component manufacturers and reselling the parts to the company's outsourced manufacturers. It is able to use visibility to support the buy-sell process, plus can more quickly onboard new component manufacturers, and manage upstream inventory and rebates.

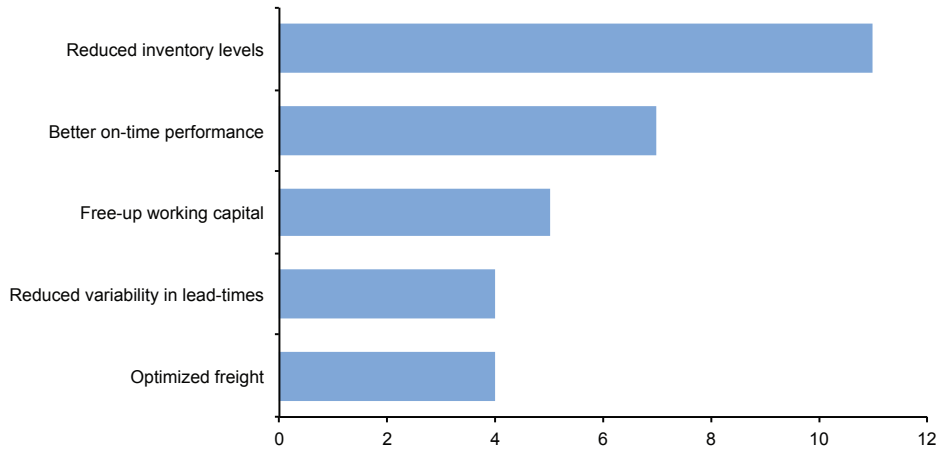
- A personal care company stated the benefits expected from enhanced supplier collaboration in the form of an equation:

  - Demand Driven + Visibility + E2E integration + Agility = Improved Service

- A communication infrastructure company that outsources most of its manufacturing indicated it will use visibility technology to help create a "collaborative and connected supply chain" hub as a centerpiece, enabling greater supplier innovation.

In Figure 3, we present the top benefits derived from E2E SCV, which include inventory, performance, lead times and financial advancements.

FIGURE 3
Top Benefits



Two answers per company initiative, out of a list of 20+ benefits

Source: Gartner (October 2013)

In order to achieve the above benefits, common obstacles and hurdles have to be overcome. These hurdles are universal and valid for all network partners:

- Internally focused culture, neglecting the need of external collaboration

- Siloed organizations with a single company mindset

- Poor data quality and management of data

- Disparate systems, mainly ERP shortcomings, driven internally but also through M&A or joint ventures

- Multiple EDI standards used

- Lack of synchronization across multiple dimensions (such as data and processes)

- A misalignment in metrics and incentives not only within the company, but also among business partners, including differences in strategic goals

Selection Guidelines

Refer to the application attributes in Table 2, which summarize suggested evaluation criteria. Note that, for visibility technology, the primary delivery model is not on-premises (with capital investments, licensing and maintenance), but is often delivered in the cloud through subscriptions, as an operational expense. Additionally, there are different aspects to be considered, such as the effort and type of connectivity, and the effort of onboarding new business partners, plus the whole authority/governance model and underlying security.

Technology Providers

There are a multitude of provider offerings in the space of SCV, spanning a broad range of visibility capabilities within a platform down to specific niche tools. These are the providers most frequently mentioned by our survey participants and through inquiries:

- Amber Road (www.amberroad.com) – "Powering global trade"; offering a comprehensive trade automation solution including software, network, content and

platform capabilities. The GTM software allows companies to efficiently manage the flow of goods across international borders.

- E2open (www.e2open.com) – "Managing demand you can't predict, and supply you don't control"; offering a SaaS collaboration business network platform with capabilities of connectivity, process management, response planning, simulation and modeling, and analytics.

- GT Nexus (www.gtnexus.com) – "One global community, one platform, connected"; providing a cloud-based collaboration platform to automate a variety of supply chain processes on a global scale, across entire trade communities.

- Kinaxis (www.kinaxis.com) – "Know sooner, act faster"; planning, monitoring and response functionalities in one product, supporting key SCM and sales and operations planning (S&OP) processes, as well as other associated business functions.

- One Network (www.onenetwork.com) – "The real-time value network"; a cloud-based service offering that enables companies to run a collaborative, optimized and responsive supply chain.

- Oracle (www.oracle.com) – "Transforming supply chains to a competitive advantage"; a unique, information-driven value chain management approach with a variety of solutions that help transform operations across the demand, supply and product pillars to deliver operational and innovation excellence.

- SAP (www.sap.com) – "Solutions for responsive planning, improved collaboration and seamless execution"; a variety of product offerings including collaborative response management, track and trace, or event management to support collaborative and visibility aspects in the extended supply chain.

- Tracelink (www.tracelink.com) – "The life sciences cloud"; providing a collaboration platform to share real-time production and supply chain information with all supply network participants.

Note 1

Visibility Survey

Gartner conducted interviews in 2013 with end-user organizations regarding their adoption of visibility solutions. The profiles of these companies were:

- Sample size – 15
- Multiple industries – industrial, chemical, apparel and footwear, CPG, food and beverage, and life science
- Different regions – mainly global setups with headquarters in either Europe or the U.S.
- Different sizes and maturity levels

The topics explored were:

1. The understanding of the term "visibility," especially on E2E visibility (with its multiple existing definitions, SCV/E2E SCV/MTSCV/control tower, as well as with the different views and angles)
2. The coverage and scope of initiatives along SCV, together with insight into the initiatives themselves (such as ownership, funding and time frame)
3. The background and drivers for these initiatives' business case
4. The qualitative and quantitative impacts and benefits realized
5. The technology used
6. Key lessons and the overall perception of the visibility initiatives

Source: Gartner Research, G00257501, Christian Titze, Ray Barger, 16 October 2013

Improve Supply Chain Responsiveness

Proactively manage and intelligently respond

For organizations seeking to improve connectivity with supply chain partners and make the transition to a more responsive supply chain, Amber Road offers a comprehensive supply chain visibility solution provided via an on-demand platform. The ability to quickly leverage or build connectivity across the supply chain network allows for smarter supply chain decisions and improved cycle times associated with cross-border shipments. Handling supply chain issues before they cascade means increased confidence in inventory plans and better outbound fill rates along with improved productivity.

AMBER ROAD SUPPLY CHAIN VISIBILITY

Amber Road's global multi-mode Supply Chain Visibility (SCV) solution connects importers and exporters with their overseas suppliers, logistics providers, brokers and carriers. This connectivity enables parties to communicate critical purchase order, shipment and inventory information and support collaborative logistics processes. Supply Chain Visibility allows organizations to competitively bid orders, communicate efficiently and make accurate decisions related to diverting inventory or resolving bottlenecks.

The collaborative features of SCV make it possible for an organization to improve supply chain responsiveness and adapt more efficiently to supply chain variability. By tapping into a pre-established network of supply chain and logistics partners, Amber Road allows organizations to quickly connect with trading partners and customers. These connections help organizations proactively identify potential issues and speed the flow of commerce through shared information.

Supply Chain Visibility Benefits

- Identify operational bottlenecks and reduce cycle times
- Eliminate excess inventory
- Reduce supply variability and safety stock
- Minimize expedited shipments
- Improve customer service
- Reduce stock-outs and mark-downs

Supply Chain Visibility Features

Amber Road's Supply Chain Visibility solution has a proven track record with users in multiple countries and across many industries. Available on-demand, this functionally rich and highly scalable solution addresses all aspects of global supply chain management. Key features include:

Visibility for status events	• Monitor inbound and outbound movement of goods at the shipment, order, SKU and container level • Receive real-time updates from the Amber Road global trading network • Manage detention and demurrage issues with visibility into container locations and status
Alerts and exception management	• Proactively alert supply chain partners and stakeholders of key events and at-risk milestones • Manage critical supply chain issues and expedite resolution through automated notifications • Customize alerts according to specific events, data elements and tolerances based on planned milestones
Integrated service provider network	• Connect to internal and external supply chain partners and systems • Quickly define relationships and roles of participating organizations
Data quality management	• Validate all messages for completeness, timeliness, and accuracy • Ensure messages received from supply chain partners map precisely to your system's syntax and requirements
Performance management reporting	• Track performance of supply chain partners in real time • Report supply chain performance against pre-configured key performance indicators • Manage and report compliance issues with all supply chain partners
Document management	• Create, modify and preview the list of documents that will be sent for certain transaction types • Define document types in the system; indicate their lead times and whether they require notarization, signature or must be in official form • Display all documents associated with a particular transaction or shipment

Summary

Achieve Supply Chain Benefits with Improved Visibility

Gartner identifies several benefits that can result from achieving supply chain transformation throughout enhanced supply chain visibility:

- Higher perfect-order fulfillment rates/ improved service levels
- Higher profitability and increased revenue growth
- Increased operational efficiency
- Increased competitiveness
- Reduced risk

To fully realize these benefits, an organization must eliminate the barriers to effective business collaboration and enable secure process visibility across your end-to-end supply chain trading partner network. The Amber Road solution provides complete visibility over procurement, sales, fulfillment and logistics operations, and takes into account the unique challenges of moving goods across international borders.

Source: Amber Road

> **"With increased international scrutiny being placed on security, safety and compliance, we needed to enhance our existing import compliance program and establish a comprehensive track-and-trace system for real-time visibility to our import shipments in-transit."**
>
> Bunzl Distribution USA

About Amber Road

Amber Road provides a single, on-demand Global Trade Management (GTM) platform that automates and streamlines global trade for importers, exporters and logistics service providers.

Combining an expansive trading partner network, enterprise-class software, and specialized trade content resources, our solutions help organizations comply with country-specific trade regulations, as well as plan, execute and track global trade, enabling goods to flow unimpeded across international borders in the most efficient, compliant, and profitable way.

Our GTM suite includes products that manage transportation costs, optimize logistics, provide shipment tracking and visibility, ensure compliance with import and export regulations, and assist companies in the implementation and use of preferential and free-trade agreements.

Amber Road is powered by Global Knowledge®, the industry's most comprehensive database of trade compliance content and international business rules. Our team monitors and updates global trade regulations on a daily basis to ensure our customers have the data they need for the highest levels of import/export compliance and accurate landed cost calculations.

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