

eBook

Creating the Global Supply Chain Control Tower

Beyond Simple Visibility





Technology solutions have come a long way in the past decade, and companies that seek to stay on the forefront are embracing advances that give them an edge over the competition. In today's global supply chains, complete end-to-end visibility is often thought of as the "Holy Grail". But is it? There are many definitions of supply chain visibility. Tracking a container from origin to destination is one. But what value does that really provide? Do you know what is in the container? To whom its contents are allocated? What import regulations apply? Which purchase order does it correlate with?





True global supply chain visibility is so much more.

It begins from product concept and extends to receipt of payment.

It requires comprehensive technology that embraces company-wide transparency.

To put it simply, it is the disruption of the information silos that are historically inherent in supply chain management. To be clear, it is not solely tracking a container. It is the correlation of all the data describing what is in the container – the design, sourcing, manufacturer, classification, order, shipment, regulation, cost, and so much more – and presenting that information in a consolidated platform. This kind of information enables true global supply chain visibility. But it does not end there.

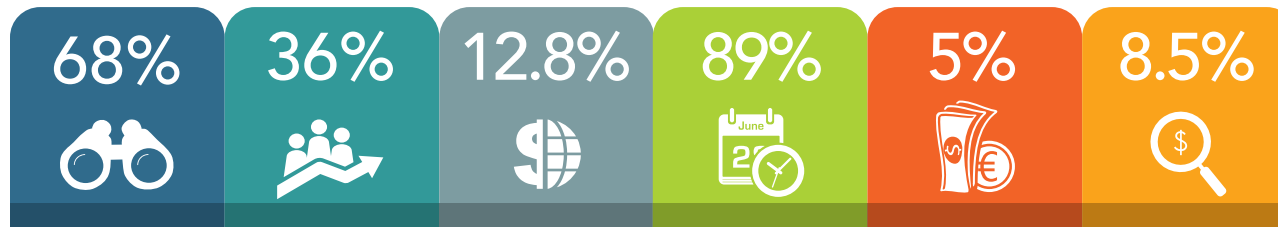




Digital Transformation

Deploying a digital model of the global supply chain provides the opportunity to drive value throughout the entire business.

In its realized state, a digital supply chain will enable you to create efficiency, minimize risk, and improve agility. It provides complete visibility to all aspects of your cross-border business. More importantly, it provides the ability to manage these processes. A control tower is not simply a “read only” solution, but rather provides for collaboration, automation, and analytics. Which in turn enable process-by-exception, supply chain synchronization, and better decision making. Creating a digital supply chain that functions as a true control tower—where every step along the way is both **visible** and **managed**—is the next frontier for global companies that want to succeed.



BEST-IN-CLASS COMPANIES



¹ “Supply Chain Visibility: Know Sooner, Act Now”, Aberdeen Group, October 2016

² “Supplier Relationship Management (SRM): Redefining the value of strategic supplier collaboration”, Deloitte, June 2015

³ “Source-to-Settle: Realizing the Value Beyond Hard Savings”, Aberdeen Group, October 2016

⁴ “Supply Chain Visibility: A Critical Strategy to Optimize Cost and Service” Aberdeen Group, May 2013

⁵ “The Cost of Compliance”, KPMG, May 2013

⁶ “Strategic Manufacturing Sourcing Outlook”, Alix Partners, 2015





Control Tower Digitization Creates True Visibility

As companies embrace digitization, one of the biggest benefits of digitally transforming supply chain functions is increased visibility. But what does this really mean?

A decade ago, supply chain visibility was truly only available at the container or shipment level. Today, visibility encompasses a complete view of the international supply chain. Full control tower visibility gives insight into each step of the product lifecycle. Visibility through digitization brings design, sourcing, manufacturing, compliance and shipping to one central location, enhancing communication both internally and externally and taking the guesswork out of global trade management (GTM). It provides one version of the truth, the whole truth – for all departments and external partners to benefit.





Control Tower Digitization Improves Efficiency

The type of data available in top-tier technology solutions isn't just fun to look at – it enables both capability and real insight into each aspect of the global supply chain. A digital control tower provides a means to create efficiency and unlock real value in a variety of ways.

- A digital control tower enables **collaboration** with internal systems and external parties which creates opportunities for workforce efficiency, as well as improvements in supply chain speed and quality. Information is sent to and from the right parties and systems as fast as the speed of light will allow, eliminating the need to re-key the data, which results in acceleration, reduced work, and the eradication of costly errors.
- A digital control tower performs **automation**, which can reduce manual work and reduce third-party costs. Whether through the determination of a product's eligibility for a trade agreement or the creation of a digital version of the customs entry, automation eliminates costs.
- By creating a digital version of the global supply chain, including the historical record, **data analytics** can be used to identify new savings opportunities. Hard dollar savings in areas such as sourcing, duty/tax, and transportation can be found, while identification of process bottlenecks will result in continuous improvement.





Control Tower Digitization Mitigates Risk

Supply chains have become more complicated over the past few years, which can introduce more risk. Some examples include:

- Increased sourcing opportunities (Ex. proliferation of trade agreements & duty deferral programs)
- Increased government regulations and protectionism (Ex. China, Brexit, and Single Window)
- Increased supply chain complexity (Ex. more mode options, more transload options, e-commerce models, etc.)

Control tower visibility can mitigate these risks by providing quick and easy access to information for all of these areas, which is essential for day-to-day supply chain management. By identifying exceptions, enabling decision capture, and executing workflow automation, control tower visibility turns in to control tower action. A digitized control tower comes equipped with its own digital sentries who are constantly on the look-out for attacks against your global supply chain.





Control Tower Digitization Increases Agility

Perhaps the most important value created by a digital control tower is the ability to be agile. The keyword being control; the converse of which is not in control. Unfortunately, this is an appropriate descriptor for most of today's global supply chains; and not without good reason. These supply chains were born of necessity and at a time when there was no good digital option. Outsourced global supply chains or systems of silos, or a combination of both, were the only feasible options available.

Today's global supply chain solutions provide a new option for global companies. These software platforms have only recently arrived, and can bring value in so many different ways. Supply chain agility is synonymous with control, and now companies have a new choice with respect to their global supply chain destiny.





Choosing the Right Digital Platform

The term **global supply chain visibility** has many different definitions. However, with respect to our discussion about global supply chain control towers, there is only one, and it is both broad and robust. Clearly, there is value in this type of expansive capability, but as we mentioned, the value does not stop with just visibility. A robust control tower utilizes the extensive digital data in other ways, such as **collaboration**, **automation**, and **analytics**.

In order to create optimal value, a control tower solution must have a robust set of capabilities. The global supply chain is complex and dynamic, and not all GTM solutions are created equal. Amber Road has developed a comprehensive solution which provides the deepest and broadest functional footprint, the most extensive global regulatory content, the most expansive supply chain collaboration network, and the most flexible software architecture of any solution on the market.

Our GTM platform enables our customers to have a global supply chain control tower. To learn more about Amber Road's GTM solutions, visit our website and download some of the many customer value summaries on our Resource Library to learn how companies are [transforming their global supply chains](#).





About Amber Road

Amber Road's (NYSE: AMBR) mission is to dramatically transform the way companies conduct global trade. As a leading provider of cloud-based global trade management (GTM) software, trade content and training, we help companies all over the world create value through their global supply chain by improving margins, achieving greater agility and lowering risk. We do this by creating a digital model of the global supply chain that enables collaboration between buyers, sellers and logistics companies. We replace manual and outdated processes with comprehensive automation for global trade activities, including sourcing, supplier management, production tracking, transportation management, supply chain visibility, import and export compliance, and duty management. We provide rich data analytics to uncover areas for optimization and deliver a platform that is responsive and flexible to adapt to the ever-changing nature of global trade.

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