



WHY END-TO-END VISIBILITY IS A

Supply Chain Imperative

(And How To Get It)

Featuring research from

Gartner

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WHY END-TO-END VISIBILITY IS A Supply Chain Imperative (And How To Get It)

A mobile supply chain that includes serialization capabilities offers the end-to-end visibility that helps you not only protect your product and customers, but also maintain your competitive advantage in an increasingly crowded marketplace.

As you dive into this report, you're probably not far from your mobile device—you may even be reading on it. Take just a second to think about that portable yet powerful gadget and all that it enables you to do. One example? Visibility. Thanks to your smartphone or tablet, you can instantly see email, app alerts, work tasks, meeting notes and more.

Individual smartphone use is just one piece of the puzzle when it comes to implementing an enterprise mobility strategy, but the analogy translates from an individual use case to a larger company-wide business process. Just as mobile devices give users heightened visibility into the information they need, an enterprise mobility implementation creates the framework that gives companies real-time insight into what's happening at every stage of their supply chain. With a network of mobility-enabling tools, including devices, apps, sensors and RFID tags, among others, businesses can capture, access and store the data generated throughout each stage of the supply chain. And as companies continue to keep pace with changing technology and evolving customer expectations that center on immediacy, this sort of supply chain mobilization is becoming an increasingly critical business imperative.

As supply chains continue to grow in size and scope, companies face an increased risk of production-related problems that could result in inventory inefficiencies and miscounts, product recalls and, in worst-case scenarios, consumer injury and/or death. A mobile supply chain that includes serialization capabilities offers the end-to-end visibility that helps you not only protect your product and customers, but also maintain your competitive advantage in an increasingly crowded marketplace.

We'll tell you more about a mobile supply chain, then show you why supply chain visibility (and, by extension, serialization) is so important and how you can get it.

WHAT IS A MOBILE SUPPLY CHAIN?

A mobile supply chain provides end-to-end visibility and execution across the extended supply chain. As a result, you'll have not only an agile, efficient way to meet customer expectations, but also the mobile-optimized processes to fulfill industry-specific business requirements such as protecting against counterfeits, ensuring the authenticity of materials used to manufacture products and enhancing consumer confidence in product quality.

People who interact with your supply chain—suppliers, manufacturers, distribution, retail, sales, service and the back office—can and should benefit from mobile access. Mobility grants real-time access to data, transactions and processes to all stakeholders within your supply chain, whether employees, contractors, business partners or end customers. The result: elevated visibility for all users, an increasingly imperative benefit for all companies.

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WHY SUPPLY CHAIN VISIBILITY MATTERS

Businesses face a critical challenge: find a better way to collect, track and trace the products and information that move through their supply chains. This challenge becomes even more important when you're dealing with a supply chain that spans multiple facilities, cities and countries. Yet it's a conundrum in that the larger the supply chain, the more difficult it is to truly grasp the processes, inventory and data that continuously move throughout the cycle.

This is where serialization becomes a business imperative. By using serialization-enabling tools like barcodes or RFID tags combined with mobile-optimized supply chain capabilities like task- and role-specific apps that seamlessly integrate into your enterprise software, you can uniquely identify and track products at an individual item level throughout your supply chain. As a result, you'll not only enable end-to-end visibility—you can also zero in on a potential problem area, like a defective product, and proactively implement a solution that helps guard against inventory inefficiencies and consumer harm.

For example, a leading supplier of products for the global aesthetic medicine market faced an uphill battle when using manual business processes to meet stringent FDA regulatory requirements. As part of these regulations, the company must document the movement of each product through a complex consignment sales process all the way to the doctor who uses that particular product.

Rather than continuing to rely on slow, burdensome and error-prone manual processes, the company used RFID and barcode technology, along with a mobile app that generates unique, non-repeating serial numbers for required product classes. Using that serial number, the company can quickly access the product's entire history and, because that information is linked to data in the enterprise software, the company can see a number of variables including sterilization date, lot number and consignment history, among others.

Stories like the one above illustrate the power of serialization-enabled visibility. It's not an optional add-on, but rather an increasingly vital attribute of the supply chain in any industry. A recent Gartner research report, "Use Serialization Deployments to Enhance Your End-to-End Supply Chain Visibility," paints a compelling picture when it comes to this particular business challenge.

"In general, visibility across the end-to-end supply chain is being seen as a top priority for companies to focus on over the next few years," according to Andrew Stevens and Christian Titze, the report's authors.

WHY END-TO-END VISIBILITY IS A Supply Chain Imperative (And How To Get It)

Tracking and tracing products and processes using serialization-enabled visibility not only boosts efficiency and quality—it's also the key to preventing product recalls and avoiding lawsuits and debilitating fines, among other permanently damaging outcomes.

When you consider the functionality and benefits enabled by complete visibility, it's no wonder that this attribute has jumped to the top of supply chain management priority lists.

And although supply chain visibility is important for any industry, it becomes even more critical for carefully regulated industries like life sciences, as illustrated by the previous customer example. These companies must fulfill a complicated layer of procedures and requirements that demands a transparent, auditable supply chain at every step. Visibility enables companies to monitor the entire life cycle of a product, functionality that's often required by various federal and international regulations. And in today's increasingly connected world, the information must also be available to the end consumer and throughout the supply chain.

To say that this level of traceability is beneficial to a business is a glaring understatement. Tracking and tracing products and processes using serialization-enabled visibility not only boosts efficiency and quality—it's also the key to preventing product recalls and avoiding lawsuits and debilitating fines, among other permanently damaging outcomes. And for those in the life sciences industry, visibility into every step of the product cycle strengthens the global supply chain against counterfeit drugs, guarantees compliance with local and international regulations and ultimately protects the health of the public—and your business.

Those benefits aren't just confined to the life sciences industry. From capturing data in the field (regardless of location or connectivity) and eliminating costly, error-prone manual processes to tracking a product's life cycle from start to finish and improving inventory accuracy, businesses of all types benefit from increased visibility into the supply chain and across related processes.

HOW TO ENABLE YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN'S VISIBILITY

Depending on your specific industry requirements and business workflow, you have multiple options when it comes to selecting the tools that enable complete visibility.

At DSI®, we've channeled our extensive supply chain and technology expertise into creating a mobile platform and easily tailored solution accelerators that completely mobilize a company's supply chain, thereby introducing the agile technological framework that allows for end-to-end visibility.

One example? A multi-billion dollar leader in the healthcare market implemented an automated storage and retrieval system (AS/RS) that uses DSI's mobile supply chain solutions to provide the critical integration points between the new software and machinery.

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DSI's mobile platform and easily tailored solution accelerators can completely mobilize your supply chain, thereby introducing the agile technological framework that enables end-to-end visibility.

Warehouse workers now use mobile applications and automated data capture solutions that leverage the DSI platform to interact with and update both systems for accurate high-speed receiving, putaway and picking. And because workers can simultaneously update the enterprise software and AS/RS, the company can automatically track inventory movement in and out of the distribution center. The solution was further tailored to provide lot control, serial number tracking, lot/serial number picking and quality control, all of which help the company meet crucial compliance regulations while helping to ensure product quality and safety.

When considering a complete supply chain shift to enable end-to-end visibility, additional strategies include layering functionality like serialization into a larger mobility implementation, much like the approach highlighted in the aforementioned customer example. The accompanying Gartner report, "Use Serialization Deployments to Enhance Your End-to-End Supply Chain Visibility," takes a closer look at serialization and how it not only offers short-term benefits, but also establishes the functionality needed to facilitate wide-reaching improvements.

According to Stevens and Titze, "The potential for visibility enablement can operate not only across companies' end-to-end supply chains but also across the extended value networks, supporting trading partners and across to governmental agencies."

Once you've taken a look at the research, feel free to reach out to info@dsiglobal.com with any questions you might have about supply chain visibility solutions. We'd love to learn more about your business and help create a strategy that will drive results while simultaneously giving you the agile framework to meet your business needs now and in the future.

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About DSI®

If you're ready to increase visibility across your supply chain and enable the track and trace capabilities that help safeguard your processes and products, we can make these capabilities a reality. A mobile supply chain, which provides end-to-end visibility and execution across the extended supply chain, will give you the agile framework to support critical attributes like serialization.

A mobile supply chain is now a vital part of your success. And it's what we do best. As the Mobile Supply Chain Company™, DSI® provides companies with the tools to meet the needs of the digital economy and the demands of their specific industries. DSI's enterprise-grade mobile platform provides the foundation of a scalable, repeatable application development practice so that you have a single platform with which to build a full range of mobile experiences. And with our comprehensive solution accelerators, you'll have complete componentized applications that can immediately be deployed to any device, anytime or can be tailored to fit your specific business processes. As a result, companies have the robust technological tools and foundation to enable the collaboration, visibility, responsiveness and fact-based decision-making required to change the way they do business, all while leveraging existing enterprise software for a maximum return on investment while preserving data and process integrity across existing systems of record.

Our mobility solutions can be easily tailored to fit your business and industry requirements. And because our platform supports rapid development and deployment, you can efficiently assemble mobile supply chain solutions and easily adapt them to accommodate evolving business needs—all without the need for specialized developer skills.

Learn more: www.dsiglobal.com