



# New skills for a transforming industry

This is part of a series of information sheets based on research funded by Wayfinder industry sponsors\*.

The supply chain industry's growing reliance on technology is an employment disrupter, increasing efficiency and productivity in some areas, making other roles redundant, and transforming almost all work in some way. It means the industry is looking for a different and more complex set of capabilities.

The supply chain and logistics industry face a rising skills shortage, driven by the fast-evolving needs of a sector experiencing transformational change and shaped by the prevailing social trends of the COVID-19 pandemic, shifting geopolitical tensions, the rise in enabling technologies and increased attention to corporate social responsibility.

Today's supply chains are a series of globally interconnected operational nodes of real-time information, capable of end-to-end visibility and predictability into each component of the supply chain, from development to planning, to procurement, manufacturing and fulfillment.

## What skills is today's supply chain sector looking for?

Thanks to emerging technologies such as blockchain or IoT, previously siloed activities like logistics planning and freight payment can now be combined. Today's supply chain professionals require **knowledge of the organization across the breadth of the value chain, the skills to collaborate in cross-functional teams, and the ability to adapt in a dynamic environment**.

In addition to **operational expertise**, employees at all levels are increasingly expected to possess a range of 'soft skill' professional competencies such as **strategic thinking, innovation, and high-level analytic and technological capabilities and of course people management and leadership** – it's a combination of operational skills, trust of data, creativity and emotional intelligence that's proving difficult to find.

Even entry level roles require a level of **technical literacy and cross-functional understanding**. New roles are emerging that require a broader set of skills, cognitive abilities, and interpersonal characteristics as companies work to meet the technical, operational and social challenges of a fast-evolving industry.

In an industry responding to global stresses and transformational change, **resilience and the ability to manage constant change** have become imperative.

Resilience requires **the ability to recharge, not endure, and mental health is crucial to this**. Every business has a legal and moral responsibility to provide a safe and fair workplace and a mentally healthy workplace benefits both employees and the organisational bottom line.



\* McLean P., Perez-Franco R., and Jones J. (2020) FIAL *The under-representation of women in the supply chain workforce*.

Parsons H., Perez-Franco R., McLean P. and Jones J. (2021). CSCL. *A view from the top: Current Workforce Challenges in Supply chain and logistics*.

McLean P. and Jones J. (2022). iMOVE. *Barriers to Recruitment and progression in the transport industry*.