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CREATING A RECIPE FOR SUPPLY CHAIN SUCCESS

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InterSystems®
Creative data technology

The complexity of today's supply chains, coupled with constant disruptions and ever-present notion of an 'unconstrained' environment in which they work, demands food and beverage (F&B) repackaging businesses have a holistic real-time view of their end-to-end supply chain.

When it comes to the repackaging process, for instance, F&B companies need to send multiple varied finished product to repackaging facilities to produce finished retail ready multi-packed product. The use of traditional planning optimisation tools, which assume unlimited supply and several other unconstrained variables for example, labour, carrier capacity, production capacity, compound existing problems, creating inefficiencies across the supply chain whenever shortages occur and promote a very reactionary way of operating. Often, the lack of an optimised constrained plan considering the aforementioned variables result in businesses scrambling to move inventories in their supply network to optimise the production plans for the repackaging facilities.

Along with ineffective optimisation tools, many F&B organisations are still reliant on very manual processes, and even spreadsheets. The result? Low order fulfilment and poor end-of-life product freshness. Instead, organisations need to be able to optimise planning and leverage agility to proactively address any disruptions they may face.

At the heart of overcoming these challenges and achieving the smarter, more agile, and robust supply chains needed to predict and mitigate disruptions in real-time are five key ingredients: reliability, flexibility, transparency, connectivity, and data-driven decision-making.

However, for each of these vital pieces of the pie to come together, organisations must first look at how they can leverage their data.

Leveraging Data and AI

There is certainly no shortage of data, but to obtain real value from it, organisations must be able to access it, harmonise it, and gain real-time insights. This calls for the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML).

While many will acknowledge the potential of technologies like AI and ML within the supply chain, the race to AI-readiness can seem daunting.

By implementing connective tissue technology, built on a smart data fabric architecture, organisations can leverage AI capabilities to augment human decision-making, enabling disruption to be predicted and opportunities to be seized in real time to optimise their repackaging operations.

With AI and ML embedded, it is faster and easier to gain predictive and prescriptive actionable insights. This can help to optimise demand sensing and forecasting, streamline operations, enhance efficiency, and gain a competitive edge.

By adopting a connective tissue approach to data management and leveraging AI, organisations can then focus their attentions to ensuring their supply chain features these five essential ingredients:

Reliability

F&B organisations need supply chains they can rely on no matter what disruption may head their way. Access to real-time data and insights from across the supply chain will help decision-makers to see, understand, optimise, and act. With systems fed with clean, trusted data, businesses will be able to build out production plans based on true forecast and supply to maximise fill rate without resorting to manual methods.

Flexibility

Investing in data platform technology that leverages embedded advanced technologies like AI and ML and offers self-service access to analytics will help F&B organisations to obtain flexible, agile supply chains. It creates the opportunity to increase automation and gain intelligent insights to accelerate decision-making and drive efficiencies. This, in turn, will help them achieve rapid adaptation to any changes in demand, logistics disruptions, or business priorities, leading to increased customer satisfaction and higher revenue.

Transparency

Real-time end-to-end visibility of the supply chain across all inventory locations, labour availability, carrier capacities, demand and supply forecasting plans and geo/political disruptions are key to creating optimal supply chain plans. Such transparency can help optimise repackaging production plans to identify bottlenecks and inefficiencies so they can make informed decisions that have an immediate and positive impact and solve potential upheaval before it becomes a problem.

Connectivity

Many supply chain organisations struggle with disparate systems, making achieving that much-needed holistic view a major challenge. Through the use of connective tissue technology, F&B organisations can gain access to consistent trusted data that is harmonised and normalised from disparate sources. This will not only give them the desired connectivity, but will also help with the reliability, flexibility, and transparency of the supply chain, and move them closer to becoming data-driven.

Data-Driven Decision-Making

Access to real-time data and insights will empower organisations to make informed decisions, rather than relying on gut feeling. A data-driven approach to decision-making will help to ensure actions can be taken based on trusted evidence, leading to increased efficiency and optimisation in an unconstrained supply chain environment. Additionally, the use of self-service analytics can put those evidence-based decision-making capabilities into the hands of those on the frontline. Coming up with real-time accurate decisions, considering the myriad of supply chain constraints to the decision makers or back into enterprise systems or applications, is what business lack today and need.

Intelligent, Agile and Efficient Supply Chains

The journey to a successful supply chain in the Food & beverage industry is multifaceted, requiring a blend of reliability, flexibility, transparency, connectivity, and data-driven decision-making. The integration of advanced technologies like AI and ML, underpinned by connective tissue technology, is a practical necessity in today's rapidly evolving market. By embracing these technologies, organisations can transform their supply chains into dynamic, resilient systems capable of adapting to changing demands and unforeseen challenges.

Ultimately, the ability to effectively harness and analyse data will be the defining factor in the success of F&B for their repackaging operations. As organisations increasingly adopt AI and ML, they will find themselves better equipped to sense and respond to market changes. This adoption also enables them to optimise productivity and make sustainable decisions, for instance, helping to optimise material usage, reduce waste, and support the development of more eco-friendly packaging solutions.

This evolution towards more intelligent, agile, and efficient supply chains will not only enable organisations to navigate the complexities of today's market but also to thrive in the face of future challenges and opportunities.

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