About Pain in the Chain

UPS has been surveying the healthcare and life sciences industry about supply chain issues since 2008. We started with a simple intention: understanding our customers’ needs so we could serve them better. Over the years, the survey has become a popular barometer of supply chain issues for the healthcare industry.

The eighth UPS Pain in the Chain survey was conducted by TNS between April and June 2015. A total of 421 interviews of healthcare logistics executives were carried out in 16 countries. Fifteen separate, qualitative interviews were conducted in North America to gain further insights into trends, challenges, and opportunities impacting healthcare logistics. Look for upcoming UPS position papers that will highlight key takeaways from respondents and offer new approaches to turning “pains in the chain” into “gains in the chain.”
Key findings

**Strong pulse: areas of success**

Healthcare and life sciences logistics decision makers are seeing success addressing **product security**. Their reported success rate in this area saw a 20 percentage point jump over 2014 findings. IT-based solutions, such as bar coding and serialization, and cooperation with law enforcement, are likely to have contributed to improved product security from a visibility and criminal issues standpoint.

Healthcare companies are becoming more successful with **regulatory compliance**. This is particularly welcome, because the industry can expect only more scrutiny, regulations, and compliance burdens moving forward. From the European Union’s Good Distribution Practices (GDP) to Brazil’s strict serialization law, new regulations can be difficult to navigate, but healthcare companies are adapting well to change, with success in addressing regulatory compliance showing a 13 percentage point increase from 2014.

Healthcare companies have achieved success using **logistics and distribution partnerships** as a strategy to address supply chain challenges associated with regulatory compliance, product damage and spoilage, and cost management.

**Stable pulse: areas of progress**

**Product damage and spoilage** remains a concern as products become more complex and in-transit monitoring and intervention options are underutilized. Companies are seeing success through partnerships with higher-quality shipping companies and the use of faster shipping service levels with 63 percent reporting success in addressing product damage and spoilage issues, but opportunities for further improvement remain.

**Weak pulse: areas needing attention**

**Cost management** is still a substantial supply chain issue, even though the level of concern is declining year-over-year. Healthcare logistics decision makers report rapid business growth, fluctuations in fuel and raw materials costs, increasing regulations, and new market expansion as the biggest challenges to managing supply chain costs.

**Contingency planning** is an area healthcare and life sciences companies may find hard to justify investments in, based on the limited and unpredictable impact of disruptions to the supply chain. Unplanned events have impacted healthcare supply chains in the last 3-5 years, but a large percentage of supply chain decision makers still do not consider the subject important.
Success addressing pains in the chain

Healthcare logistics decision makers have improved their success levels in addressing issues across the supply chain in the past year. They continue to struggle with managing logistics, warehousing, and transportation costs.

When it comes to growing our business, I’d say the most important development in the last five years has been the meshing of supply chain and finance. Now, we can say who owns the product at any point, define its value for customs purposes, and understand which jurisdiction applies at every point.

Manufacturer, Pharmaceuticals

Success with core supply chain issues (by region)
Cost management challenges, success strategies, and opportunities

Multiple factors impact cost management, ranging from rapid business growth to fluctuating fuel and raw materials costs to increasing regulatory requirements. For the first time, this year’s survey asked about specific areas of opportunity to drive costs out of the supply chain. Optimizing transportation costs, gaining better inventory visibility, and consolidating the total number of transportation providers were the top three opportunities (shown on page 6).

**Challenges in managing overall supply chain costs** (global)

- Rapid business growth: 56%
- Fluctuating fuel cost: 55%
- Fluctuating raw materials costs: 49%
- Increasing regulatory requirements: 47%
- New market expansion: 45%
- Investments in technology: 42%
- Aging IT systems: 38%
- Lack of visibility in systems to improve cost management: 38%

Q. When thinking about managing your overall supply chain costs (defined as logistics, warehousing, and transportation), what are your biggest challenges?

**Challenges in managing select supply chain costs** (by region)

Q. When thinking about managing your overall supply chain costs (defined as logistics, warehousing, and transportation), what are your biggest challenges?

**Strategies for success in cost management** (global)

- Logistics and distribution partnerships: 57%
- Pursuing vested logistics and distribution partnerships: 52%
- Leveraging a supply chain optimization analysis: 55%
- IT investment: 51%

Q. You indicated that you’ve been successful at addressing “managing costs;” what are the strategies you’ve employed that have made you successful?
Areas of opportunity for driving costs out of the supply chain (global)

Q. When thinking about these same challenges you face, what is the biggest area of opportunity you see to drive cost out of your supply chain?

We need visibility all the way, but our transportation partner isn’t optimized. They use another company to complete local deliveries, and so we lose traceability after our products have been handed off for the last mile. It’s not ideal.

Manufacturer, Medical Devices

CHART KEY

- 68% Optimizing transportation costs
- 60% Gaining better inventory visibility
- 60% Consolidating the total number of transportation providers
- 57% IT investment
- 55% Consolidating existing product supply chains

To a logistics provider, I’d say we will need to know what you see ahead, and where you are steering your ship, not just to better serve us, but also for your other healthcare clients all over the world.

Provider, Hospital Network

Strategies for success in cost management (by region)

Q. You indicated that you’ve been successful at addressing “managing costs;” what are the strategies you’ve employed that have made you successful?

To a logistics provider, I’d say we will need to know what you see ahead, and where you are steering your ship, not just to better serve us, but also for your other healthcare clients all over the world.

Provider, Hospital Network
Regulatory compliance remains an important focus in the healthcare industry and poses challenges from manufacturing, transportation, distribution, personnel, and IT perspectives. For the first time, this year’s survey asked about specific regulations around the world and their impacts on the supply chain.
Levels of pain and success dealing with regulations from different perspectives (global)

Complying with regulations is paramount. The product has to meet our own specs, and also the specs of the ministry of health in the destination country. It’s an everyday concern for us.

Manufacturer, Pharmaceuticals

Q. When thinking of how your company addresses regulations, please rate your level of pain on a scale of 1 to 7 (where “1” is not at all painful and “7” is extremely painful) in each of the following aspects:

Q. On a scale of 1 to 7 (where “1” is not at all successful and “7” is completely successful), how successful do you feel your company has been at addressing these aspects? Answers of 6 and 7 are illustrated.

International regulations that cause the most pain (global)

- European Union Good Distribution Practice: 39%
- Brazil Serialization: 24%
- China Medical Device Good Supply Practice: 19%
- U.S. Drug Supply Chain Security Act: 16%
- European Union Medical Devices Directives and Requirements: 16%
- Korea Medical Device and In Vitro Diagnostics Practice: 7%

Q. When thinking about regulatory compliance issues, what are the international regulations that cause you the most pain?

Regional perspectives

- In Western Europe, 71 percent have a GDP compliance agreement, and say they think that transportation practice reflects the agreement at least in part.
- Western Europe respondents ranked China, Russia, Brazil, and the U.S. as the most difficult countries in which to do business.
- Latin America respondents ranked China, Brazil, and the U.S. as the most difficult countries in which to do business.

Q. Do you have a GDP-compliant transportation quality agreement with your third party logistics provider, and is it being fully implemented?
Q. Which three countries are the most difficult for your company to do business with?
Product security challenges and successes

Healthcare logistics decision makers have made great strides in product security. Executives cite IT investments such as bar coding and serialization, and cooperation with law enforcement among the top reasons for success. The biggest remaining challenges with product security are physical protection from theft and poor supply chain visibility/too many supply chain hand-offs.

**Product security challenges (global)**

- Physical protection from theft: 46%
- Poor supply chain visibility and too many supply chain hand-offs: 40%
- Presence of parallel trade, i.e., ‘Gray Market’: 37%

**Product security challenges (by region)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Physical protection from theft</th>
<th>Poor supply chain visibility and too many supply chain hand-offs</th>
<th>Presence of parallel trade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Product security successes**

1. When thinking about product security, what are your biggest challenges?

- IT investment: bar coding, serialization, etc.: 67%
- Cooperation with law enforcement: 41%
- Visible authentication: visible holographs, security inks, etc.: 38%

**Manufacturer, Pharmaceuticals**

First of all, transparency has to be critical. We have to know at any given point in time where the product is and under what conditions it is currently, either stored or moving.
Product damage and spoilage

More healthcare companies are reporting success in addressing product damage and spoilage versus last year. Top reasons for success cited are partnering with higher-quality carriers, using faster shipping service levels, and using temperature-monitoring devices.

Latin America respondents in particular noted success due to faster shipping.

About two-thirds of respondents said they have internal initiatives to verify control room temperature requirements are met.

We have a sharper focus on monitoring our supply chain and actively managing suppliers, making sure they’re meeting temperature requirements and doing everything possible to protect the product.

Manufacturer, Medical Devices

Reasons for success with product damage and spoilage (by region)

We understand the need for contingency planning, but we don’t treat it seriously. So you lose a container full of product off a ship in a storm. How can you model for that?

Manufacturer, Medical Supplies

Contingency planning and the healthcare supply chain

Only 60 percent of healthcare logistics decision makers rank contingency planning as important. Lower levels of concern are likely based on the limited and unpredictable impact of disruptions to the supply chain.

60% feel that contingency planning is important

6% of the supply chain has been affected by unplanned events in the last 3-5 years

Biopharma companies place significantly greater importance on contingencies than do medical device manufacturers.

We understand the need for contingency planning, but we don’t treat it seriously. So you lose a container full of product off a ship in a storm. How can you model for that?

Manufacturer, Medical Supplies
Findings from qualitative study

The qualitative study was carried out in North America only, and featured in-depth interviews with C-suite executives from the healthcare industry with particular understanding of supply chains.

Increasing complexities may bring change for greater efficiency

- Emerging supply chain complexities include more temperature-sensitive products, track-and-trace regulations, declining reimbursements, and faster delivery requirements while ensuring product quality and accuracy.
- Some clearly see the value in inventory management, e.g., IV fluids and implantable medical devices.
- Manufacturers and providers are looking to virtual inventories and just-in-time delivery for greater efficiency.

Data refers to North America only.

Automation is coming to our ordering systems. Inventory is now replenished automatically, as it is used up, so that product turns over and doesn’t age. We’re going to see more of this in the industry.

Provider, Hospital Network
The qualitative study provided an indicator of some trends affecting the North America healthcare industry, and also revealed many of the opportunities and threats facing healthcare companies.

### Trends influencing the industry in North America

**External Trends**
- Consolidation among big healthcare distributors
- Reusable packaging
- Business continuity
- Sales reps’ commission cuts: do more with less
- More scrutiny, regulations, compliance
- Impact of declining reimbursements on value delivered to patient

**Internal Trends**
- Measuring carbon footprint
- Learning from vendor partners
- Inventory management
- Reupgrading systems
- Managing logistics
- Transportation costs
- Track and trace
- Inventory management/ control

**External Trends**
- Upgrading systems
- Managing logistics
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**Internal Trends**
- Reupgrading systems
- Managing logistics
- Transportation costs
- Track and trace
- Inventory management/ control

### Opportunities and threats facing the industry in North America

**Opportunities**
- Convenience for patients
- Biotech advancements
- Reusable packaging
- Learning from vendor partners
- Personalized medicine
- Inventory management
- Outcome-based care
- Behavioral care
- Tech advancements

**Threats**
- Embellished disease threats
- Compliance
- Consolidation among big healthcare distributors
- Distribution hiccups in emerging markets
- Security
- Cost of transport/fuel
- ACA/Preventative care changing climate
- Declining reimbursements
- Competition (pricing, generics, bundling)

**Less Important**
- Consolidaion among big healthcare distributors
- Reusable packaging
- Business continuity
- Sales reps’ commission cuts: do more with less

**More Important**
- Measuring carbon footprint
- Learning from vendor partners
- Inventory management
- Reupgrading systems
- Managing logistics
- Transportation costs
- Track and trace
- Inventory management/ control

* Home care is a threat to some providers but an opportunity to others, depending on a provider's existing business model.
Conclusion

Healthcare and life sciences logistics decision makers are realizing considerable supply chain improvement in key areas such as product security and adapting to regulatory changes. More than half of executives who experienced success in these areas stated they leveraged third-party logistics providers and supply chain analysis to drive their accomplishments.

Products continue to become more complex and in many cases require special handling. Healthcare decision makers are recognizing the importance of selecting higher-quality carriers, faster shipping speed, and in-transit intervention capabilities needed to drive success in mitigating product damage and spoilage.

While healthcare supply chains have made gains, cost management is still a major pain point. In order to address this, healthcare logisticians see the most opportunity in optimizing their transportation costs and gaining better inventory visibility. Meanwhile, even as unplanned events have impacted healthcare supply chains over the past several years, a large percentage of supply chain decision makers still do not consider contingency planning important.

One constant remains: As more innovative, sophisticated products enter the global market, the stakes will only get higher for healthcare companies to ensure growing consumer demands are met with innovative, sophisticated supply chains.
For more information on UPS healthcare-dedicated logistics, go to ups.com/healthcare.