



Gartner®

Battle Burnout from Supply Chain Transformation

Businesses have been on a transformation journey for a decade. Discover how to best tell your story to avoid change fatigue among your staff.

Introduction

While disruption can leave many CSCOs scrambling to manage immediate operational fires, history shows us that the most effective leaders are looking beyond the smoke-filled horizon. They are squinting through the fog and choosing a new direction that will lead their organization toward a more secure future and transform the supply chain.

Every CSCO who plans to lead the supply chain organization in a new direction — whether driven by digital business or other enterprise objectives — should begin their planning efforts by developing a clear, compelling transformation narrative. Otherwise, they risk staff burnout and change fatigue.

More robust than a vision statement that purely focuses on the ideal end result, **a transformation narrative includes an explanation of the catalyst for change.** It describes how the supply chain organization will evolve to support the enterprise vision and can inspire the supply chain team to change the way the supply chain works and what it's capable of.

This four-step guide is designed to help supply chain leaders develop a transformation narrative that describes the preferred future state of the supply chain organization and its long-term aspirations.

Step 1

Assemble a Steering Committee to Help You Craft the Transformation Narrative

First, assign key members of your extended supply chain team to a transformation narrative steering committee. Aim to include people who can represent the diverse perspectives of your global supply chain team.

Then, schedule a workshop for the steering committee to develop the transformation narrative. Prepare workshop participants to think more strategically — outside of supply chain and into the future — by sending out all relevant documentation (e.g., supply chain organization chart, supply chain strategy, market trends, etc.) ahead of the workshop as a pre-read. The documentation will prepare the steering committee to answer the following question: **What can we do differently for our customers, trading partners, shareholders or the world?**

Step 2

Build the Transformation Narrative Using a “From/To/Because” Model

Focus the transformation narrative workshop on articulating the current and the future state of the organization and why transformation is necessary. We call this the “From/To/Because” (FTB) model, and it’s a common technique leveraged when writing a transformation narrative. Not all transformation narratives have to use an FTB model, but it can help to ground the transformation in reality.

If you’re building your transformation narrative using the FTB model, start by defining the “Because” in order to create urgency and provide context for the transformation. Answer the following question: **What has changed both within and outside of our business that is forcing the supply chain organization to transform?**

Then articulate the “From” and the “To.” “From” is a description of the organization’s current state — the elements that need to change, as well as those that should remain intact. “To” is a description of the future state of the organization. It needs to strike a balance between being clear enough that employees can understand the future direction, and allowing flexibility in how the organization might arrive at the destination.

Step 3

Validate the Quality of Your Transformation Narrative

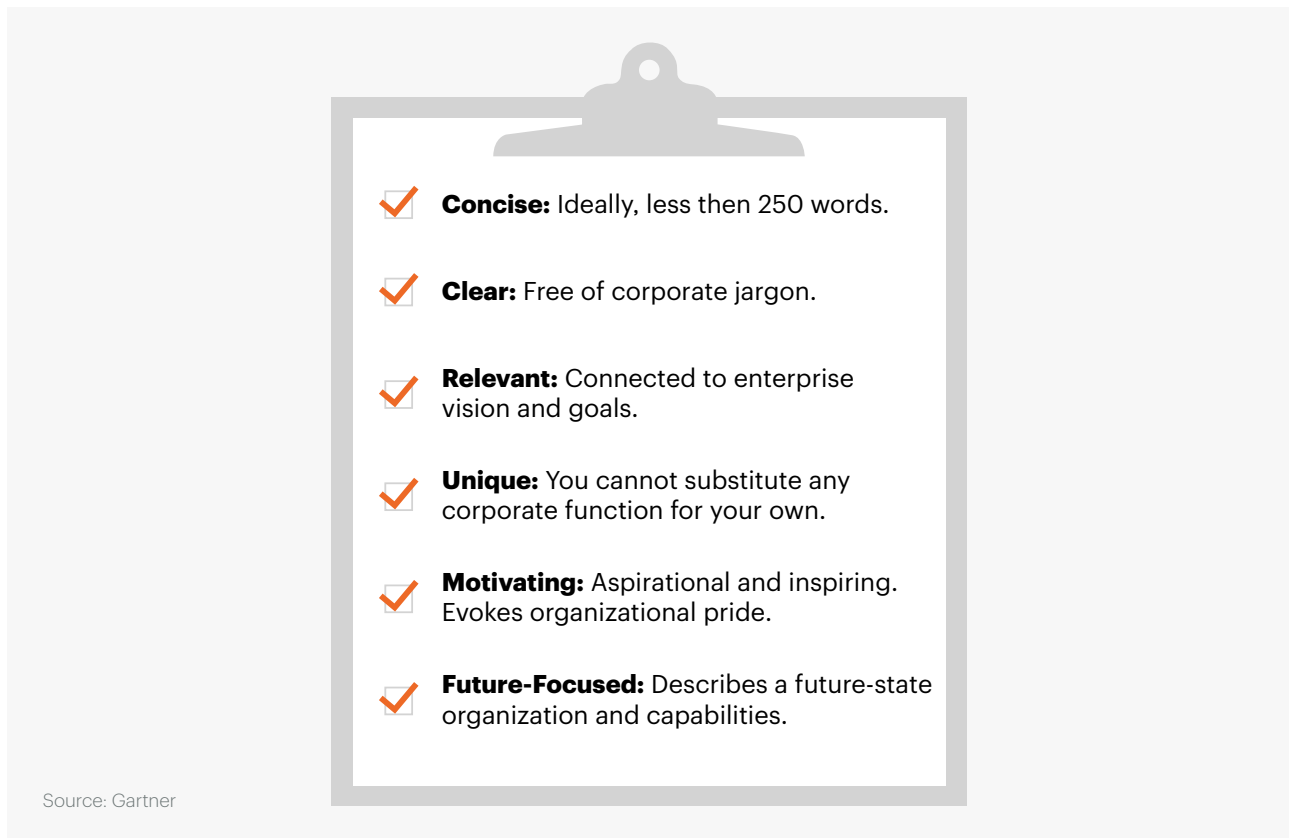
Let's assume at this point that you have articulated the reason for change (the "Because") and have settled on a "From/To" statement for your supply chain transformation. **How will you know that it's truly compelling?**

To test the quality of your transformation narrative, answer the following five questions:

1. Can you describe what your supply chain organization is transforming into and why?
2. In under two minutes?
3. Without using corporate jargon?
4. In a way that someone at the frontline would understand — and be motivated by?
5. Would your peers say roughly the same thing you've described?

Once you have your own transformation narrative in hand, use a simple checklist (Figure 1) to review its relevance, strengths and weaknesses.

Figure 1: "From/To" Transformation Narrative Checklist




Step 4

Communicate the Transformation Narrative and Reward-Aligned Behaviors

A transformation narrative has no value if it's not regularly used by the CSCO as a leadership and change management tool. Take a disciplined approach to communicating the narrative to your team and internal partners. A **stakeholder analysis and communication plan** will help you map out opportunities to share the transformation narrative and promote the behaviors you want to see — e.g., customer feedback.

Actionable, objective insight


Position your supply chain organization for success. Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools for supply chain leaders:



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