

Gartner®

Growing Your Influence to Deliver Strong Supply Chain Performance

Guidance for the chief supply chain officer

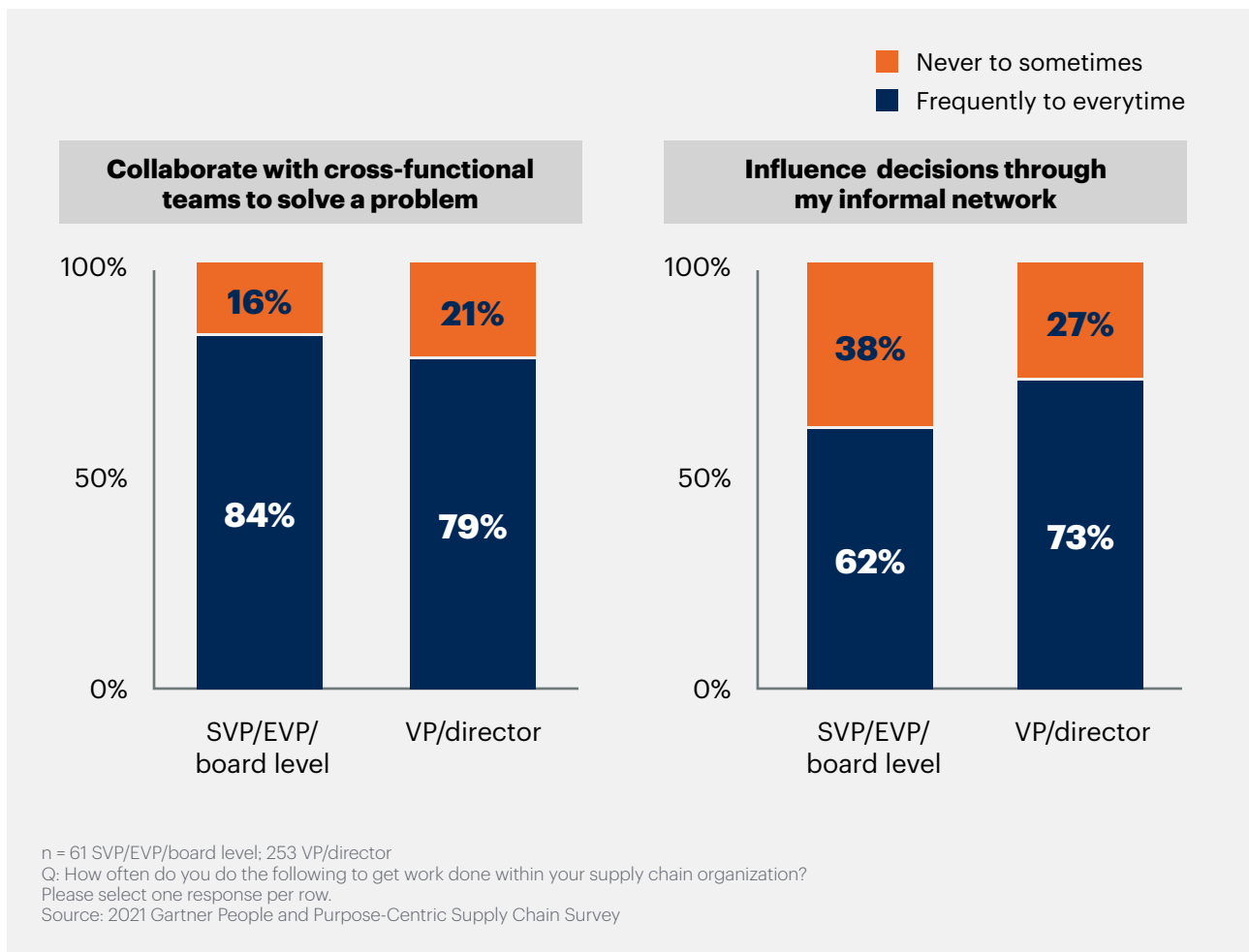


Introduction

Chief supply chain officers (CSCOs) tell Gartner they are increasingly feeling pressure to achieve strong business results. Knowing how to make the most of their influence — and how to collaborate with cross-functional teams — is key to achieving stellar supply chain results.

Most supply chain leaders are aware of the necessity of informal relationships to achieve strong results, according to our 2021 Gartner People and Purpose-Centric Supply Chain Survey. This revealed 84% of executive leaders (at the senior vice president, executive vice president and board levels) and 79% of vice presidents and directors collaborate with cross-functional teams to solve a problem most of the time. We also found 73% of vice presidents and directors and 62% of executive leaders influence decisions through their informal networks most of the time (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Supply Chain Leaders' Collaboration and Influence



These findings underscore the importance of cross-functional collaboration to solve problems — and the importance of influence in decision making. Not all executive leaders wield the same influence. This is why it's important for CSCOs to grow or maintain their influence if they are to compete in this high-stakes landscape.

But just how to go about increasing your influence as a CSCO? One challenge is that building influence is a big, nebulous goal that might prompt thoughts of where to start, how to go about it and what success might look like. This report tackles the topic of CSCO influence in a variety of contexts, including strategies to influence executive peers, practical ways to influence teams and new leadership disciplines to consider.

Influence executive peers to navigate uncertainty

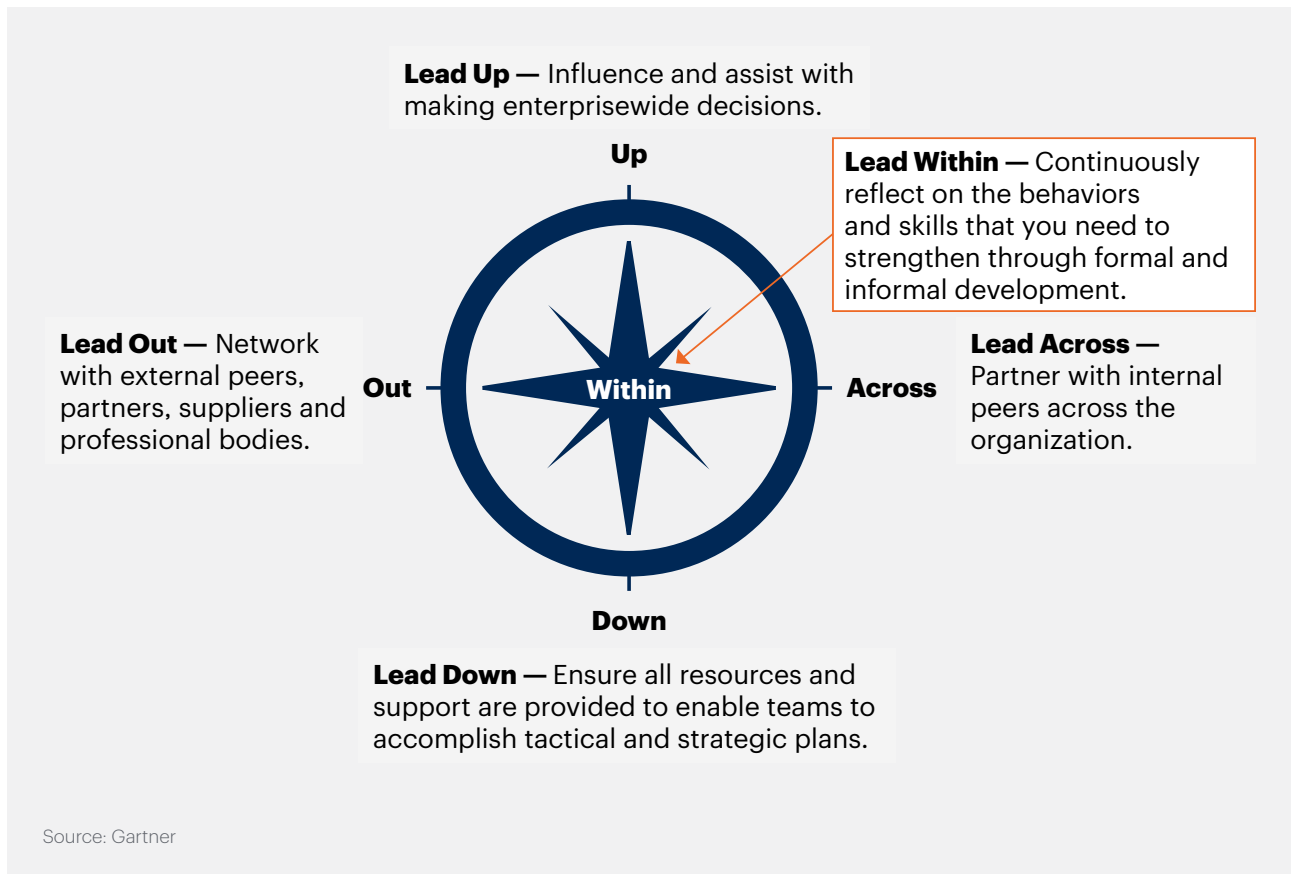


To lead in a more complex business world, CSCOs must hone their leadership skills and capabilities across five dimensions:

- **Within** — Create a thorough understanding of behavior, beliefs and values, and build key relational and creative skills.
- **Up** — Influence those above by enhancing political and influencing skills and capabilities to have a more active role in strategy formulation.
- **Down** — Support employees and direct reports by ensuring all resources and support are provided to enable teams to accomplish tactical and strategic plans.
- **Across** — Work more effectively across the organization with peers.
- **Out** — Maintain an external perspective through partner relationships across the supply-side ecosystems.

Many leaders have achieved their position by mastering functional skills that enable them to thrive in an operational role. While this gives leaders a solid foundation, the contemporary organization requires leadership to master this additional set of skills. Executive leaders' relational leadership and influencing skills will become increasingly important, going forward (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: The 5 Dimensions of Personal Leadership



Influence team to drive growth and productivity






CSCOs are increasingly being called on to support revenue growth in addition to mitigating escalating costs and increasing efficiencies. At the same time, supply chain productivity is declining, disruptions continue and organizing to succeed is becoming more challenging.

Yet key priorities are often not well-established, communicated and cascaded through the supply chain organization, which can lead to suboptimal performances in terms of customer service, cost and cash optimization.

Keeping informed on the progress of supply chain objectives can be challenging for CSCOs, creating surprises that may require last-minute workarounds when different work components aren't progressing as planned.

To align and focus across supply chain functions, it's critical for CSCOs to define supply chain objectives and key results (see Figure 3). Gartner recommends identifying three to five of the most critical objectives and key results to deliver. Track team contributions and report progress on a regular basis. Ensure you use a simple scoring criteria to evaluate progress on each objective and key result, and to help determine the next best actions.

Figure 3: Overview of OKR Elements and Best Practices

Elements of OKR	Best practices		
<p>O The objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is ambitious • Focuses on outcomes — What the business wants or needs to achieve 	<p>3-5 Objectives at any time</p>	<p>3 Key results per objectives</p>	
<p>KR The key results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly make the objective achievable • Focus on output — The actions or items that contribute to achieving an outcome 	<p> Set quarterly</p>	<p> Reviewed monthly or weekly</p>	<p> Public and visible to all employees</p>

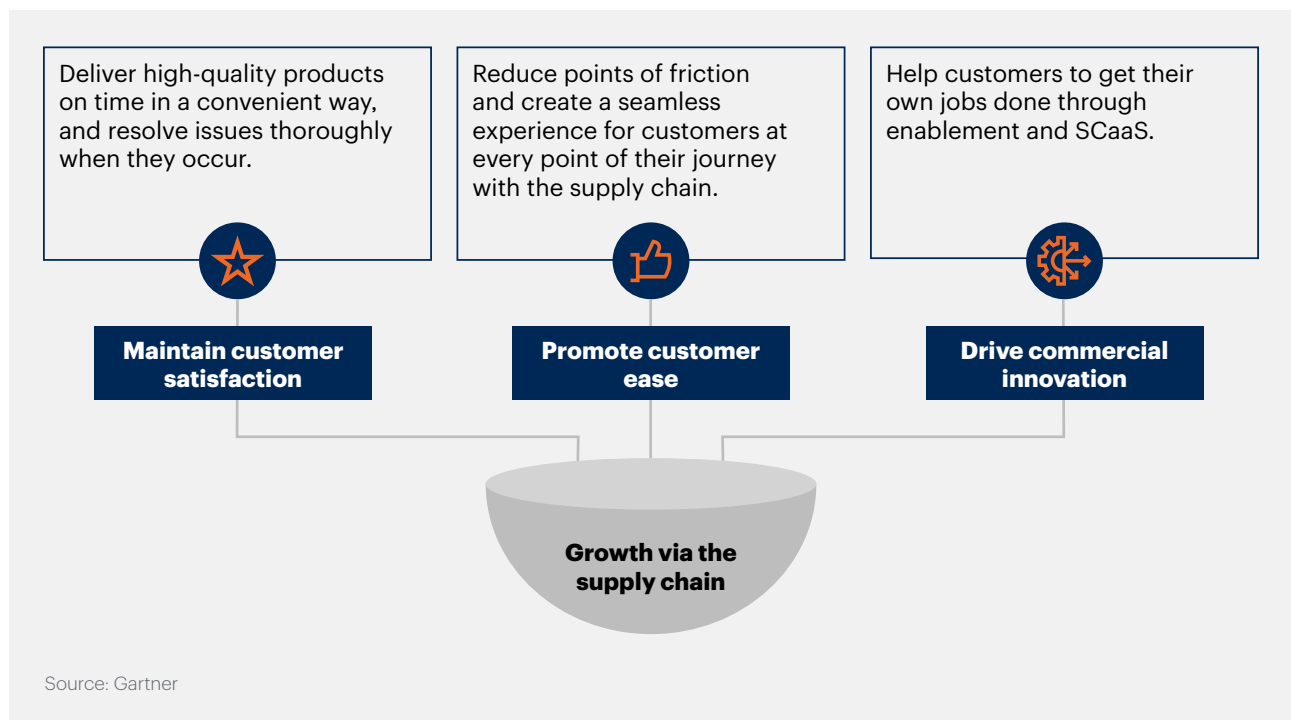
Source: Gartner

Furthermore, to improve the business's top line, CSCOs should:

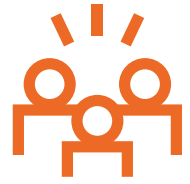
- Establish a foundation for consistently delivering execution excellence in service, quality, reliability, efficiency and issue resolution. This helps to maintain high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- Implement programs to reduce areas of friction and high customer effort.
- Determine what outcomes your customers are working to deliver, and design services/offerings that enable them to achieve their goals. Such commercial innovation has the potential to generate direct and indirect revenue.

We recommend a three-step approach for supply-chain-driven growth (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: 3-Step Approach to Driving Growth via the Supply Chain



Influence through leadership and personal branding



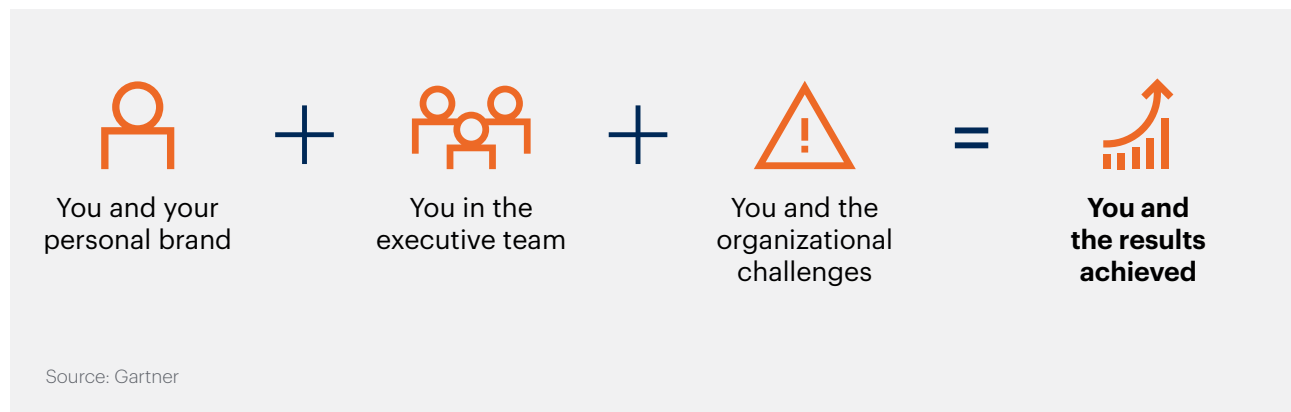
A key challenge that CSCOs and other executive leaders experience is overcoming internal resistance to respond to disruptions. Meeting and beating such resistance requires that executive leaders convince their peers of the facts and potential futures that challenge their current plans and commitments. In turn, gaining executive understanding and commitment to new courses of action requires that the executive leader has a significant and strong personal brand.

A personal brand is the context people use when making judgments about your messages, actions and requests. It's how they hear you and how you encourage them to take action. Executive leaders build a personal brand through the accumulated interactions they have with their teams and others.

Demonstrate supply chain leadership through building your personal brand by:

- Adopting a brand-conscious view of your actions and communications
- Gaining a broader view of leadership beyond supply chain activities
- Working effectively with peers based on their leadership styles and outlooks
- Identifying key challenges and understanding the responsibility of the supply chain organization (see Figure 5)

Figure 5: How Personal Brand Connects to Results



Actionable, objective insight

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



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