

Success story - automotive

# Supply chain gold: leveraging data and technology for optimal performance



## Customer: Adient

- > Global leader in automotive seating
- > Operates across 29 countries worldwide
- > Manages approximately €120 million (\$141 million) in freight spend annually

## Project scope

4PL collaboration with 4flow to leverage data and technology for optimal performance

# Supply chain gold: leveraging data and technology for optimal performance

## Adient and 4flow's ongoing collaborative 4PL partnership

Gold has long symbolized excellence, rarity and lasting value, holding its worth even in uncertain times. Like gold, supply chain management is not just about resilience but transformation – refining processes, optimizing operations and driving innovation to create long-term value.

In the automotive industry, companies strive to reach the “gold standard” by building agile, efficient and future-proof supply chains that can adapt to constant change.

### Automotive supply chain: a treasure chest

Think of the automotive supply chain as a treasure expedition, with companies navigating disruptions, political shifts, regulations and supply shortages. The ultimate goal: a seamless, resilient and intelligent supply chain that drives efficiency, sustainability and profitability.

However, challenges like electrification, autonomous vehicles, digitization and AI call for continuous adaptation. To reach supply chain gold, companies need to be agile, strategic and ready for change.

This success story charts Adient's supply chain transformation over the past eight years and its strategy to maximize supply chain gold.

### The Adient-4flow partnership: setting sail

Adient, a global leader in automotive seating, partnered with 4flow in 2017 to unlock the potential of a 4PL collaboration. What began as a tactical initiative soon evolved into a long-term partnership.

### The journey was guided by four key pillars:

**Digital integration**, ensuring seamless data flow between Adient and 4flow's systems while integrating all EU plants into 4flow iTMS.

**Supply chain visibility**, providing real-time insights and proactive control over the network.

To enhance adaptability, the partnership prioritized **resilient agility**, equipping the supply chain to handle disruptions effectively.

Lastly, **innovation management** played a crucial role in driving continuous improvement by embracing new technologies.

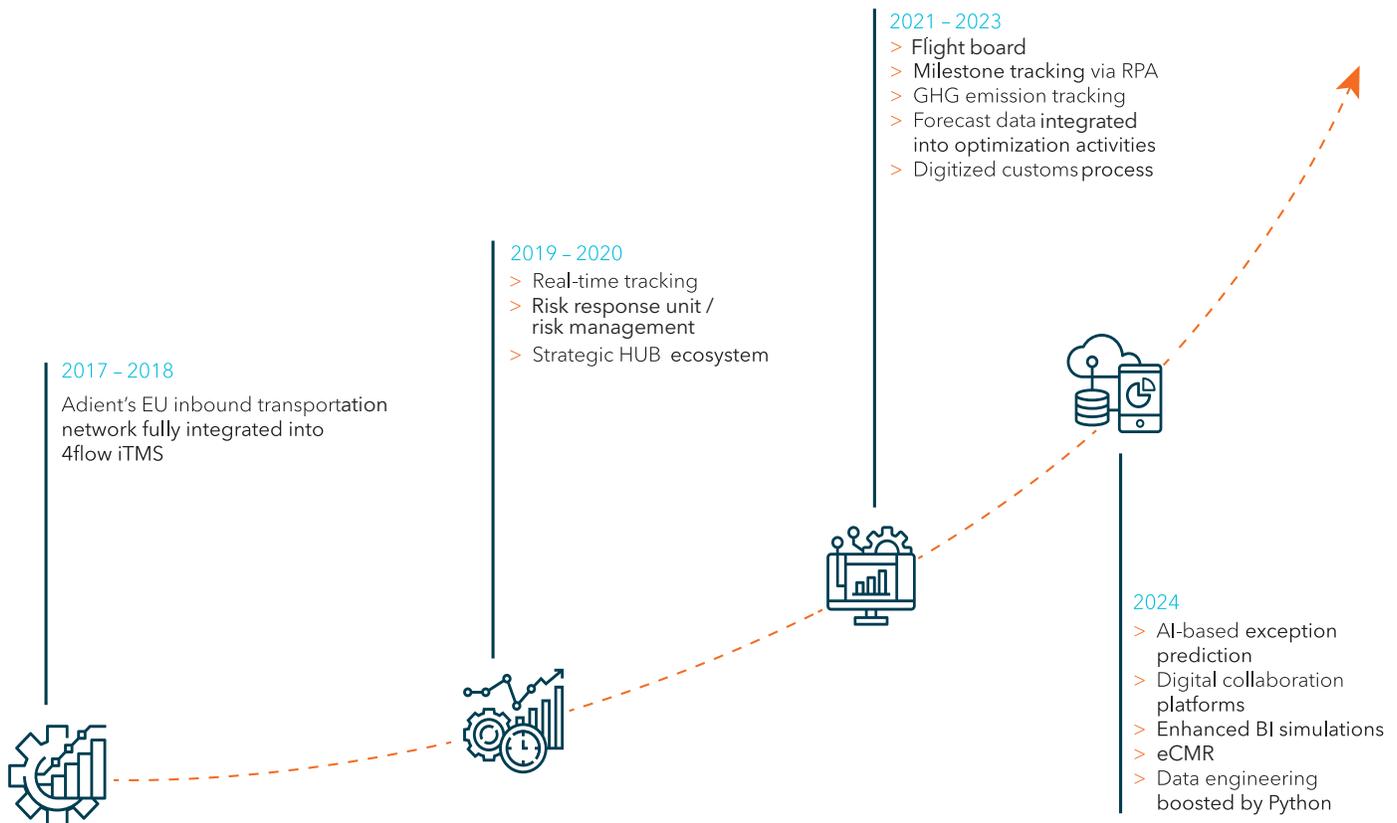
These pillars established a smarter, more agile supply chain and marked the start of a successful partnership that continues to achieve key milestones to this day.

## Charting the course: the digital transformation journey

From 2017-2018, Adient implemented a standardized, digitized control tower solution, enabling real-time data integration across European locations by connecting 4flow iTMS to Adient ERP. Over time, 54 active plants were integrated, managing approximately €120 (141 million USD) million in freight spend annually.

By 2019, real-time IT interfaces and tracking for road shipments were deployed. **Between 2020-2021**, Adient restructured its European hub network, optimizing utilization, reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and cutting costs while also establishing a joint risk response unit to mitigate disruptions.

The years 2022-2023 saw the development of business intelligence (BI) dashboards and simulation tools for data-driven decision-making, alongside big data-powered risk management tools for early delay detection. A stronger sustainability focus led to increased intermodal freight use and enhanced reporting. Additionally, forecast-based planning was initiated, and a six-year contract extension was secured.



# Navigating with a data-powered, agile supply chain

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## **Predictive analytics and automation**

Anticipating demand, optimizing delivery routes and enabling proactive decisions that reduce costs and ensure faster, smarter fulfillment.

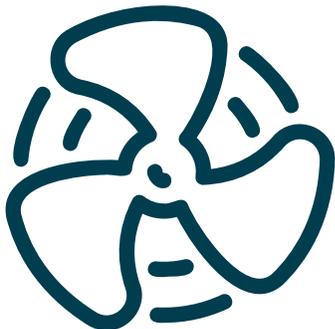
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## **Supply chain orchestration**

Enabling seamless collaboration, real-time visibility, risk management and execution excellence across the supply chain.

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## **Agility in motion**

Breaking boundaries, driving agility and fueling innovation for a sleepless chain.

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### **The golden compass: key transformation highlights**

Each successful outcome - whether measured in ROI or sustainability gains - reflects the commitment of a collaborative team. Perhaps what sets this digital transformation journey apart is its predictive, rather than reactive, approach.

A prime example is the risk response unit, which has been instrumental in managing disruptions stemming from Brexit, the Covid pandemic, semiconductor shortages and the Suez Canal crisis. Thanks to proactive risk mitigation, Adient maintained over 87% network utilization during these events - demonstrating the strength of foresight and planning.

Continuous optimization efforts have also yielded tangible results: a 10.4% reduction in carbon footprint since the program's inception. Meanwhile, enhanced real-time visibility empowers proactive decision-making, and BI-driven scenario simulations, supported by integrated market intelligence, have transformed freight purchasing into a strategic advantage.

This transformation underscores a powerful truth: Data is the golden compass. It not only guides through uncertainty but also helps uncover new opportunities. A connected, intelligent and data-driven supply chain is the foundation of a truly agile and resilient future.

### **Avoiding the shipwreck: navigating with a data-powered, agile supply chain**

Along its digital transformation journey, Adient needs to continuously check its compass to ensure alignment with a resilient and future-ready vision. Aside from "new normal" disruptions, factors including demand volatility, growing environmental, social and governance (ESG) pressures and geopolitical tensions have required the company to rechart its course.

For this reason, Adient is evolving toward an antifragile operational model - one that grows stronger through volatility. This shift centers on building greater flexibility, adaptability and resilience into the supply chain and is focused on three pillars:

#### **Pillar 1: predictive analytics and automation: smarter, faster fulfillment**

Through intelligent digital technologies - including AI, digital applications and automation - Adient is steadily transforming toward a touchless, fully automated supply base. By systematically refining tools and processes, the company can extract actionable insights from data, enabling smarter decisions and predictive capabilities.

#### **Pillar 2: supply chain orchestration**

Through end-to-end supply chain orchestration, the partnership aims for seamless collaboration, real-time visibility, proactive risk management and execution excellence. This marks a shift from traditional supply chain and sourcing management to a strategic value chain management approach.

#### **Pillar 3: agility in motion: building a sleepless supply chain**

To tackle supply chain inefficiencies - particularly those caused by demand volatility - Adient's goal is to perfect a sleepless supply chain. This sleepless chain is one that is always adjusting to minimize waste and inefficiencies, lower inventories, accelerate response times to disruptions and create a dynamic, cost-optimized supply network that adapts in real time.

Focused on agility in motion, the objective is to build an intelligent, highly responsive and cost-optimized supply chain that continuously adapts to market changes through innovative distribution strategies and flexible operating frameworks.

### The future: powered by data, driven by agility

To remain competitive, Adient is embracing real-time data, AI-driven strategies and digitally connected collaboration across all tiers of the supply chain. The vision is bold: break away from traditional models, continuously adapt and drive innovation to meet volatile demand while reducing costs.

Enhanced digital modeling, touchless sourcing and digital twins are transforming Adient's supply chain strategy where agility is key. Meanwhile, **pop-up hubs** enable dynamic movement of goods, optimizing flow, utilization and footprint adjustments in real time without disrupting demand.

In this journey, data is more than just a guide - it's the golden compass. By harnessing real-time insights and emerging technologies, the Adient-4flow partnership is navigating disruptions, seizing opportunities and unlocking the true

value of the supply chain.

At the core of this transformation is **collaboration** - seamless partnerships with suppliers, carriers and service providers are essential for unlocking hidden value. **Data is king**, from building data lakes to optimizing processes, the journey to a fully digital, intelligent supply chain is challenging, but the rewards are undeniable.

The result? A course set for resilience, efficiency and sustained success - steering clear of shipwrecks and heading straight toward industry gold.

## Results



Implemented a standardized, digitized **control tower solution**



Restructured European hub network, **optimized utilization and reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions**



Developed BI dashboards and simulation tools for data-driven **decision-making and big data-powered risk management**



**Enabled real-time data integration** across 54 plants in Europe

**“By integrating digital twins, touchless sourcing and advanced modeling, we are reshaping the way we manage our supply chain. Data is no longer just information – it has become our compass for resilience, agility and sustainable value creation.”**

**Wayne Winter**

Vice President EMEA Supply Chain & Procurement  
Adient

# About 4flow

4flow is a leading provider of supply chain consulting, software and fourth-party logistics (4PL) services. With more than 1500 team members, 4flow is a global partner for its customers at more than 25 locations in Europe, Asia, North America and South America. 4flow completes more than 300 projects a year in cooperation with customers on five continents, in more than 40 different countries and regions.

## 25+

offices in Europe, Asia, North America and South America

## 1500+

team members globally

## 400+

customers globally

## 300+

projects annually around the world

**4FLOW**



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