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CHNOLOGY

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The state of IoT adoption in consumer packaged goods industries

Research report

Executive summarization - innovation with IoT in CPG industry

CPG organizations have learned to consistently innovate and deploy new ideas rapidly through optimizing supply channels, identifying consumer trends, and utilizing various marketing and product positioning strategies at retail locations.

This responsive approach to the market has helped to increase market share, consumer traction, and profitability across brands and products.

In today's market with expanding direct to consumer channels, disintermediation in distribution, supply issues, and environmental impact importance, the same attention to rapid innovation and responsiveness is now required through the manufacturing and distribution processes to ensure and support product availability in the supply channels, minimize production disruption, lower costs, lower environmental impact, and optimize quality control for product safety requirements.

Consumer Packaged Goods companies now need to innovate with IoT technologies to optimize and implement processes with how they develop, make, move and market their products to meet consumer demand, disrupt perceptions of commoditization from private labels and keep market share against emerging regional and new product brands in the market.

Many consumers now prioritize convenience and availability over brand loyalty with roughly 45% of U.S. consumers switching brands or retailers due to lack of product availability. To handle future disruptions, CPG firms are building more efficient supply chains by optimizing every element of the process, from planning to forecasting to distribution.

- Companies need to drive cost efficiencies and economies of scale in their manufacturing process as 54% of consumers consider themselves to be more cost conscious than before the pandemic and 29% of shoppers surveyed reporting increased purchase of budget brands.
- Consumers are willing to pay a 20% premium on personalized products or services. Companies can improve the brand experience by helping consumers find or customize the right product for them and by creating engaging interactions with smart, connected devices or apps.

Many CPG companies are buying and configuring IoT cloud solutions to build great brands, increase organizational dynamic response to market opportunities, and drive operational efficiency with proven, industry-specific innovations and solutions.

This report provides additional information on strategic initiatives for IoT technologies from more than 300 CPG organizations, and provides insight into various segments and processes utilizing these components.

The state of IoT adoption in consumer packaged goods industries

The Internet of Things (IoT) is set to transform the CPG industry, unlocking exponential value for brands and helping them future-proof their business in a changing world. The benefits of IoT go far beyond just operational savings and cash flow too, with smarter operations unifying entire business ecosystems and creating environmentally-sound products that consumers love.

Adopting IoT technologies in supply chain, production and distribution is high on the priority list for CPG CIOs. Our survey aims to uncover the state of adoption right now, key priorities across these industries, and the level of investment from organizations across the globe.

Why IoT matters now

IoT helps CPGs reach their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals. There's never been a more important time to demonstrate environmental credentials, as consumer trends continue to focus on sustainability.

According to McKinsey research — looking specifically at the US — around half of consumers are concerned about what product packaging does to the environment. As a result, they are willing to pay more for the green promise, and knowing that the products they buy are sustainably packaged. Furthermore, they would be willing to continue shopping with that brand if a wider range of sustainably packaged products were available.

In the UK, approximately a third of shoppers have chosen a brand based on its environmental practices, and have stopped buying from a brand altogether because of poor environmental or ethical practices.

Smart factories not only ensure intelligent energy management, but can improve waste management and water management techniques to reduce pollution and save precious resources.

These concerns are understood and echoed by industry leaders too, with sustainability ranking in the top five most important leadership goals.

CIOs will face growing pressure to implement IoT and move towards greener processes, such as reducing energy consumption and exploring intelligent packaging solutions, bringing them closer to their sustainability targets.

IoT, productivity and efficiency

As our research will show, some of the biggest value areas of IoT technology are not just about environmental targets, but targets for efficiency and output. It's thought that operation optimization and human productivity could comprise over half (56%) of IoT economic value by 2030.

For manufacturing and CPG brands, this changes everything. From data-driven coolers for the intelligent management of beverage shipments to packaging loaded with sensors to track inventory and organize supply chains, the next few years will be a time of serious opportunity for businesses looking to improve their operations.

Just the <u>smart packaging market</u> alone is set to be worth \$61.91 billion (USD) in less than five years — that's a CAGR of 5.87% from 2021.

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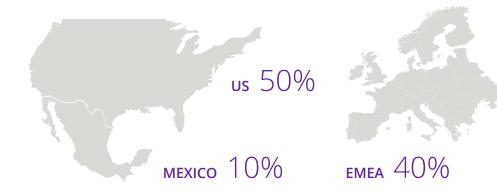
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Who we surveyed

Our sample set includes brands operating in the US (50%), Mexico (10%), and the EMEA (40%).

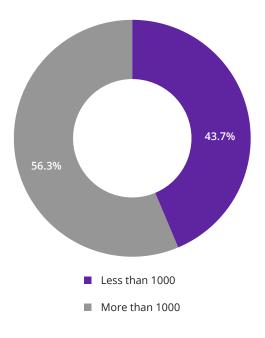
*EMEA countries include the UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland, Sweden and Denmark.



Company size

The survey respondents are from businesses of varying sizes, including SMEs and large enterprises. The largest group (33.7%) have 1,000-2,499 employees, followed by the second largest group (31.7%) with 500-999 employees. Very large corporations with over 5,000 workers make up 13% of the mix, while smaller companies (100-499 employees) make up 12%.

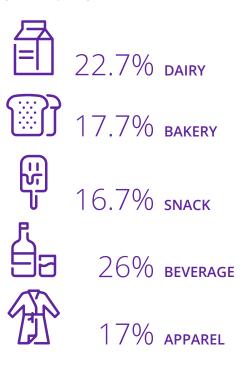
How many employees are there in your organization?



Industry

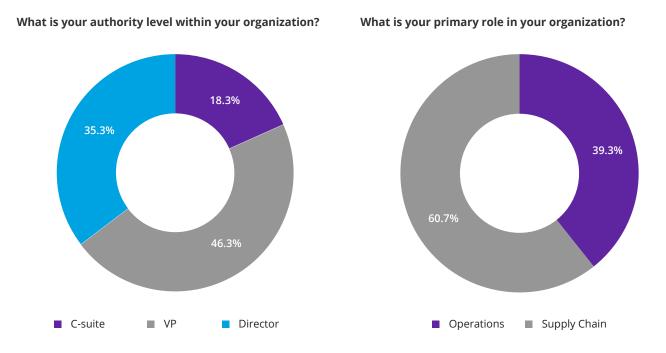
The split between the types of consumer packaged goods being manufactured by these companies is a relatively even mix. It includes Beverage (26%), Dairy (22.7%), Bakery (17.7%), Apparel (17%), and Snack (16.7%).

Which type of consumer packaged goods do you specialize in?



The decision-makers

The individual respondents we spoke to are senior level decision-makers, made up of VPs (46%), directors (35%), and c-suite executives (18%). In terms of their primary role, the majority (60%) are in supply chain, while the rest are in operations (40%).



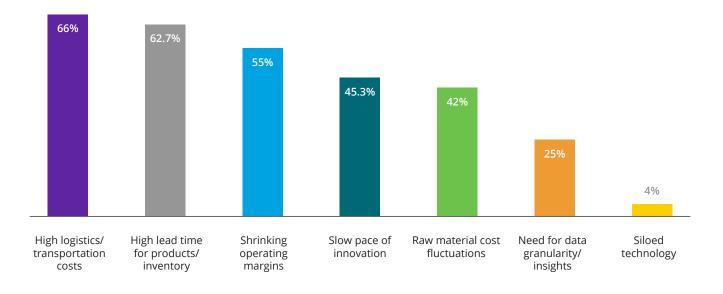


Current challenges

With increasing pressure for transformation, it's important to look at the main challenges that need to be addressed. We asked survey participants about the various supply chain, production and distribution difficulties being faced right now.

Supply chain

Within the supply chain, the main struggles are rising costs of transportation and logistics (with two thirds reporting this), high lead time for products (62.7%), and shrinking operating margins (55%). Other issues mentioned were the slow pace of innovation holding businesses back and fluctuating costs for raw materials, as well as the need for detailed data that can lead to actionable insights.



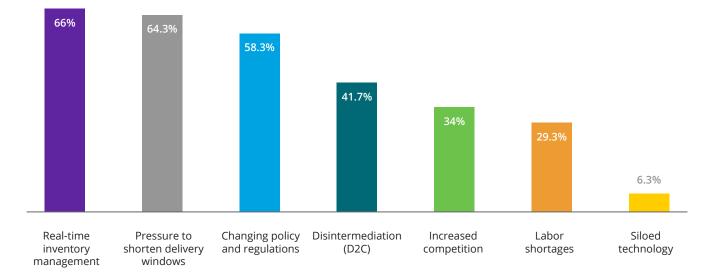
What are the top three business challenges facing your supply chain?



Distribution

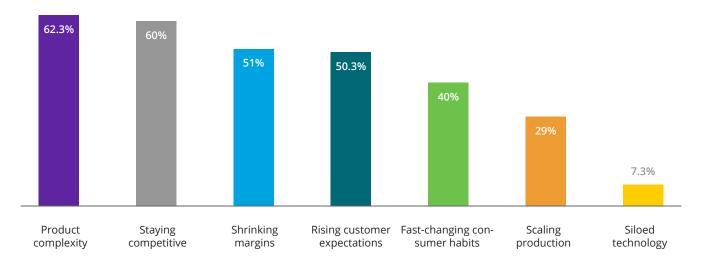
In distribution, almost two thirds (66%) of leaders agreed that real-time inventory management is a problem, while 64.3% reported on pressure to shorten delivery times. Over half (58.3%) also talked about changing regulations and the need for better compliance across the board. Other concerns for production teams include the shift to a Direct-2-Consumer model, as well as growing competition and labor shortages.

What are the top three business challenges facing your distribution?



Production

According to our respondents, the main challenges for production are complex products, and being able to stay competitive in an evolving market. More than half (51%) also reported on shrinking margins, and 50.3% highlighted how customer expectations are causing brands to change the way they are doing things.



What are the top three business challenges facing your production?

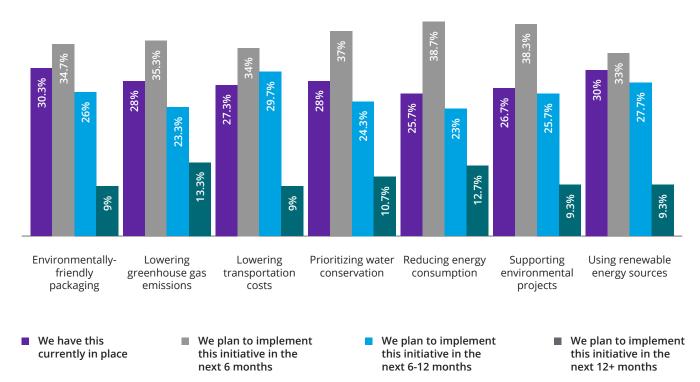
Reducing environmental impact

One of the biggest pressures facing the CPG industry is consumer desire for sustainability. Not only are consumers willing to pay more for sustainable products and services, but willingness to do so is ranked highest for <u>consumer goods at 38%</u> (compared to just 31% for energy/utilities).

What are the key priorities?

Initiatives that organizations already have in place range from eco-friendly packing, using renewable energy and reducing energy consumption to supporting environmental projects, lowering emissions, and transport costs, and conserving water.

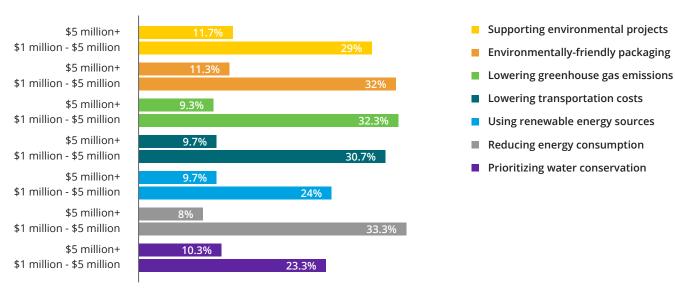
In terms of what businesses are prioritizing for the next six months, the largest group (38.7%) intend to focus on reducing energy consumption. This is followed closely by environmental projects (38.3%), and lowering water consumption (37%). With shrinking operating margins and rising cost of logistics reported as major challenges in CPG industries, it makes sense for brands to find ways to reduce energy usage. According to research, IoT solutions are able to reduce electricity consumption by <u>more than 1.6 petawatt-hours</u> (PWh), saving businesses eight times more energy than standard solutions.



Do you plan to implement any of the following initiatives to reduce your environmental impact?

What's the level of investment?

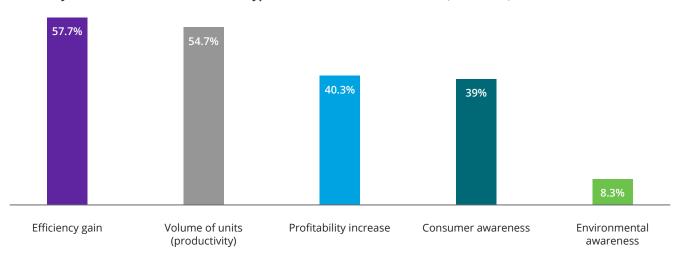
The areas seeing the highest amount of investment are environmental projects and eco-friendly packaging, both with over 11% of companies spending over \$5 million (USD) in rolling out initiatives. Projects with around a third of companies investing over \$1 million (USD) include lowering greenhouse gas emissions (32.3%), eco-friendly packaging (32%), and reducing energy consumption (33.3%).



How much do you plan to invest in the following environmental initiatives?

From the data, it's clear that sustainable packaging is a big priority for organizations, with a need to answer consumer wants and needs for better alternatives to single-use plastics. With IoT revolutionizing packaging, there's never been a more critical time to invest.

When it comes to ROI or value focus though, the biggest incentives for deploying IoT solutions and other transformative technologies are operational efficiency and output. Some use cases for improving efficiencies include real-time fleet status and monitoring, predictive maintenance on machinery, and the adoption of smart shelves to limit out-of-stock scenarios.



Where is your ROI or value focus for these types of environmental initiatives? (Select two)

The State of IoT Adoption in Consumer Packaged Goods Industries

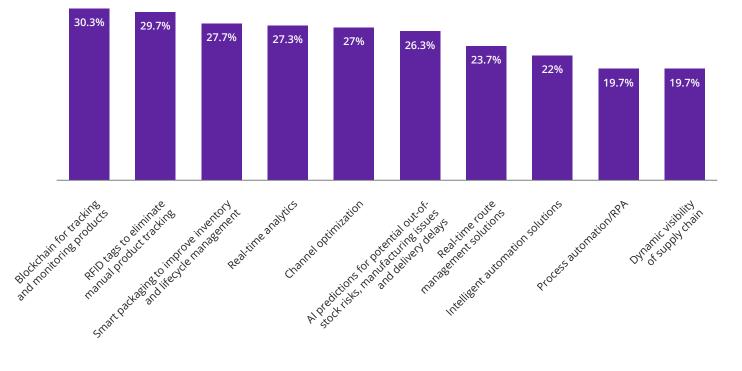
Distribution process

As we examine the different processes within distribution, some technology transformations are further along than others. Here's a look at what brands are doing right now, what they plan on doing in the next 12 months and beyond, and what they are willing to invest.

What's already in place?

Two solutions that are used by brands are blockchain tracking technology and radio-frequency identification (RFID). Almost a third of companies (30.3%) have already adopted the blockchain method for product monitoring, and 29.7% are relying on RFID tags to eliminate manual tracking.

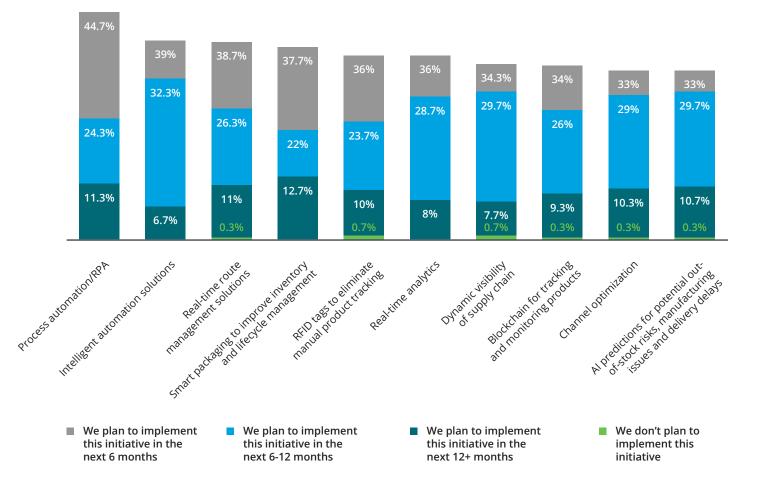
Over a quarter of companies also have smart packaging (27.7%), real-time analytics (27.3%), channel optimization (27%) and AI stock prediction (26.3%) solutions in place.



We currently have these distribution initiatives in place

What are the future priorities?

More than 44% of survey respondents agreed that process automation is a major focus over the next six months. Over a third (39%) also consider intelligent automation an urgent area to invest in across the coming months. Some of the longer term goals (over 12+ months) include smart packaging, real-time route management, Al predictions for out-of-stock risks, and channel optimization.



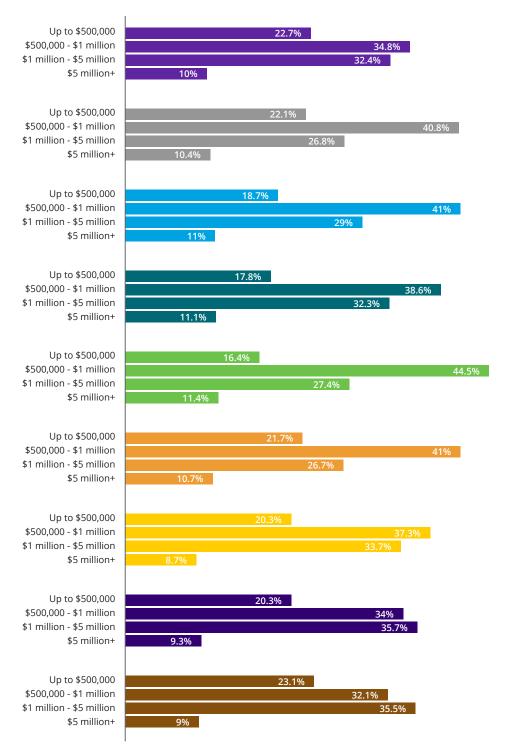
Do you plan to implement any of the following initiatives to improve your distribution process?

What's interesting to note, above all, is that there are only a few initiatives that leaders are not looking to implement. And of those that were mentioned, they related to less than 1% of the survey group. This indicates that most technologies and solutions have scope in both the short- and long-term, and CIOs are not ruling any of these technologies out.

How much are companies spending?

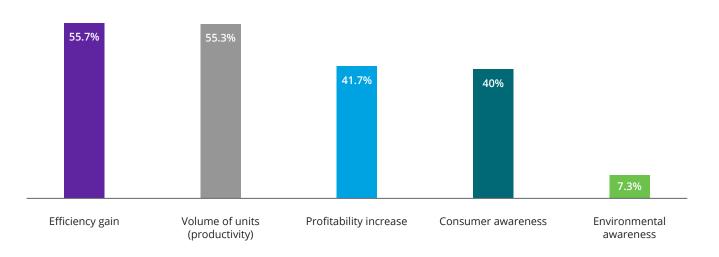
Al prediction, dynamic visibility of supply chain and process automation are the three areas with the largest percentage of investments over \$5 million (USD), at 11.4%, 11.1% and 11% respectively. This is followed very closely by smart packaging (10.7%), channel optimization (10.4%), and realtime route management (10%). Intelligent automation, blockchain and real-time analytics all have over a third of companies pumping in more than \$1 million (USD).

How much do you plan to invest in the following distribution initiatives?



- Real-time route management solutions
- Channel optimization
- Process automation/RPA
- Dynamic visibility of supply chain
- Al predictions for potential out-of-stock risks, manufacturing issues and delivery delays
- Smart packaging to improve inventory and lifecycle management
- Real-time analytics
- Intelligent automation solutions
- Blockchain for tracking and monitoring products

It's also important to look at why companies are investing in these technologies, and what they expect to gain from their investment. The main ROI focuses for respondents include productivity (based on volume of units) and operational efficiency.

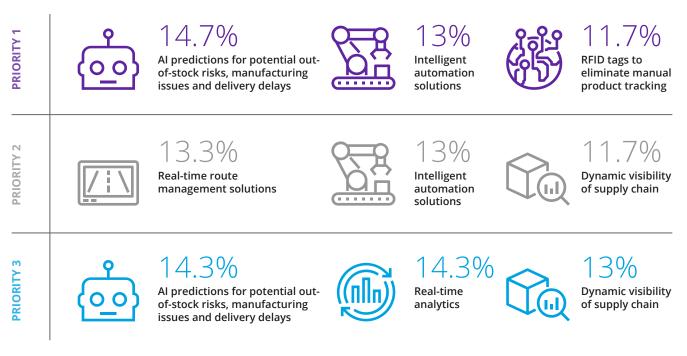


Where is your ROI or value focus for these types of quality control initiatives? (Select two)

Key priorities

When asked about the main focuses moving forward, the largest groups named AI predictions and intelligent automation as their first priority. Real-time route management and intelligent automation got the most votes as a second priority. The pattern continues for the final priority, with AI and real-time route management being named again.

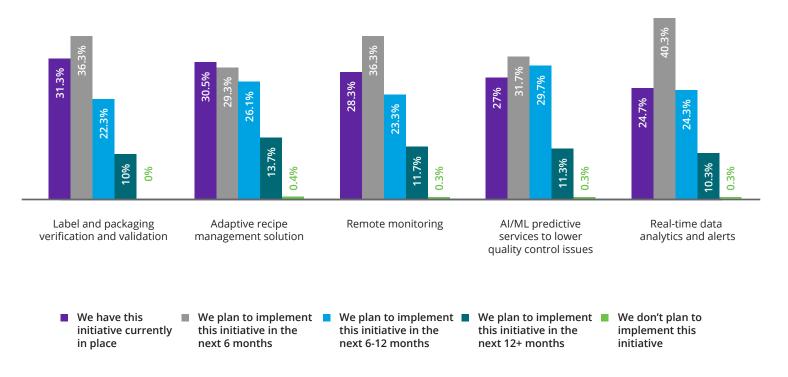
Which of these distribution initiatives do you consider to be the most important? (Please rank your top three)



Quality control

Within quality control, only a quarter of respondents (24.7%) have real-time data analytics and alerts in place, compared to 31.3% with label/packaging verification and validation, and 30.5% with adaptive recipe solution management.

However, real-time analytics has been planned for the next six months for a huge 40.3% of businesses — or in the next 12 months for 24.3% of organizations. Other longer term initiatives include Al/ML predictive services, remote monitoring, and continued focus on label/ packaging verification and adaptive recipe solutions.

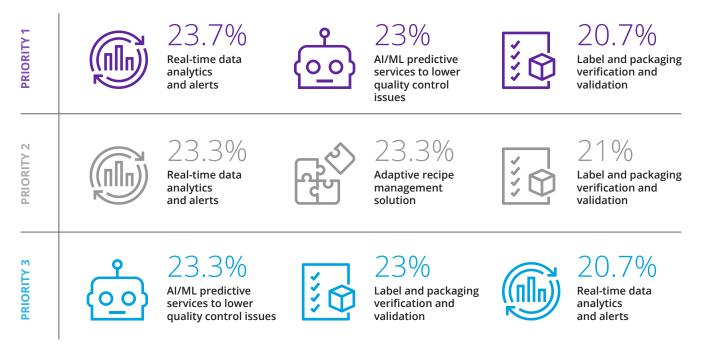


Do you plan to implement any of the following initiatives to improve your distribution process?

What are the core priorities for quality control?

When asked about which initiatives are the most important, our respondents consistently named real-time data in their top three priorities. Almost a quarter (23.7%) agreed that it was their number one priority moving forward, while a similar percentage (23.3%) named it as their second priority.

AI/ML services followed closely with 23% as the number one focus for businesses, while 20.7% of respondents named label and packaging verification as their main priority.



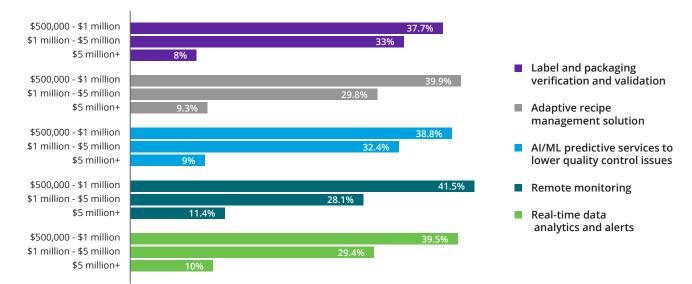
Which of these quality control initiatives do you consider to be the most important? (Please rank your top three)

How much is being invested in these initiatives?

A third of organizations are pumping between \$1 million and \$5 million (USD) on label and package verification, while a similar number (32.4%) are budgeting in this range for AI/ML services.

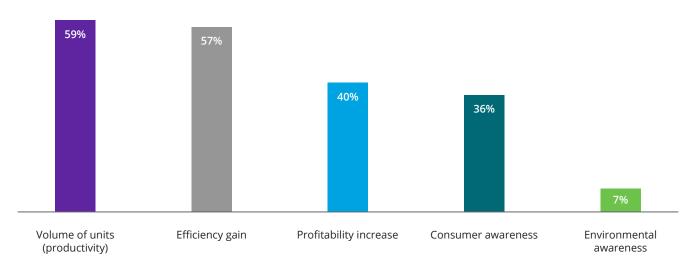
Remote monitoring and data analytics are the two areas with 10% or over spending in excess of \$5 million (USD). But the largest groups across all technologies/solutions is in the \$500,000 and \$1 million (USD) range.

How much do you plan to invest in the following distribution initiatives?



What are the expected ROI benefits?

According to our survey respondents, the main ROI initiative gains for quality control are productivity and efficiency. 59% agreed that investing in solutions will increase volume of units, and a similar number (57%) agreed that these solutions could make their processes more efficient.



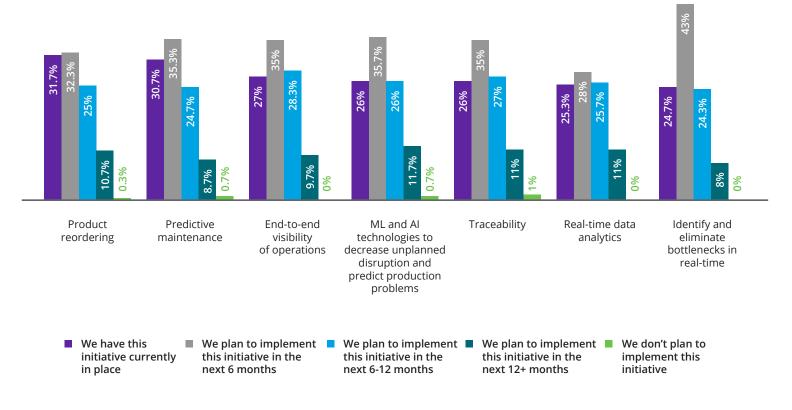
Where is your ROI or value focus for these types of distribution initiatives? (Select two)

Production efficiency

Looking at the production efficiency process, over 30% of organizations already have product reordering capabilities and predictive maintenance in place. Around 36% of organizations intend to implement predictive maintenance in the next six months — and over 32% will do the same for product reordering.

While less than a quarter have solutions in place to help identify and eliminate bottlenecks in real-time, a huge 43% plan on adopting the right technologies to achieve this over the next six months. Other plans in this short time-frame include real-time analytics, ML and AI, and creating end-to-end visibility of operations.

Again, what's interesting to note is that almost all initiatives are scheduled in at some point in the next year or so. Only 1% of respondents don't have traceability in their strategy, and less than 1% don't have ML/AI and predictive maintenance planned.

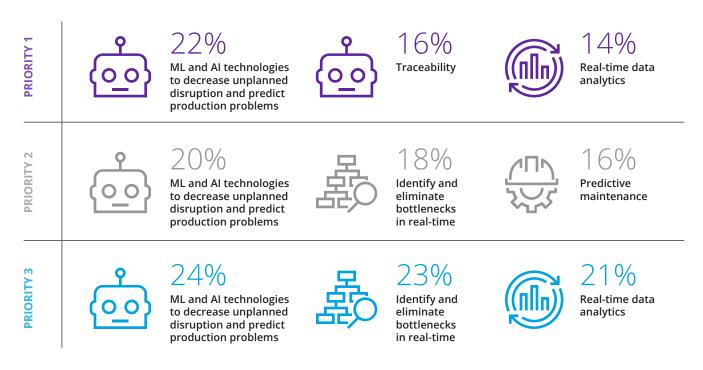


Do you plan to implement any of the following initiatives to improve your production efficiency?

What are the main priorities for efficiency?

When asked about which areas are the most important for production efficiency, ML/AI technologies stands out as a major focus for the large majority of businesses — with 22% naming it as their number one priority, 20% naming it as their second priority, and 17% considering it to be the third most important area of focus.

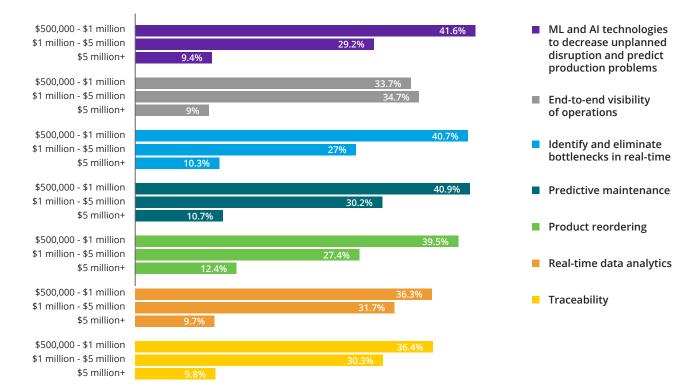
Which of these production efficiency initiatives are your top three priorities? (Please rank your top three)



What is the level of investment?

In terms of cost for each type of initiative, the largest groups are spending in the range of \$500,000 and \$1 million (USD) — apart from end-to-end visibility solutions, which has 34.7% of businesses investing \$1 million - \$5 million (USD). The initiative with the most people investing over \$5 million (USD) is product reordering, with 12.4% planning to spend this amount for roll-out.

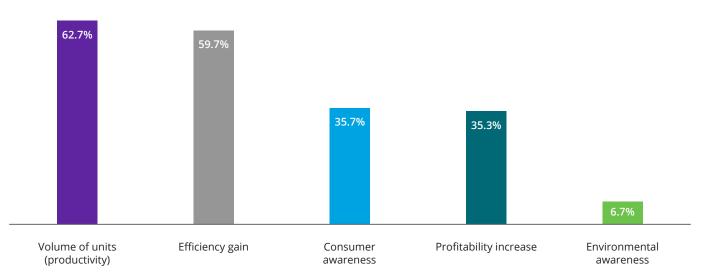
How much do you plan to invest in the following distribution initiatives?



What are the value focus areas?

The main ROI focus for production efficiency is getting a rise in productivity and improving operational efficiency. The biggest expected benefit — with 62.7% of votes — is increased volume of units.





Regional differences

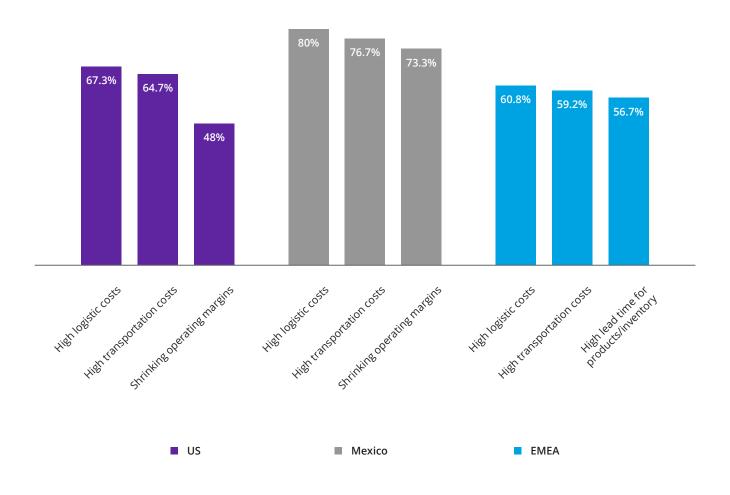
Our survey also took into account geographical differences when it came to key challenges, value focus areas, and spending. Here are the results:

The different challenges across the world

Among our Mexican respondents, high logistics/transportation costs, high lead time for products/inventory and shrinking operating margins are reported to be the main supply chain challenges, receiving majority votes — with 80%, 76.7% and 73.3% respectively.

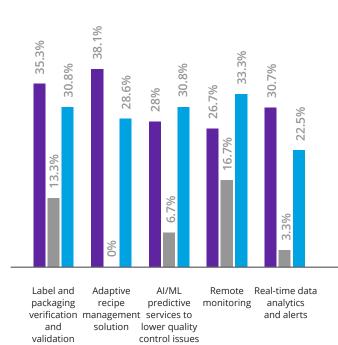
While high cost is the most common problem across all regions, this issue is especially problematic for businesses in Mexico.

Do you plan to implement any of the following initiatives to reduce your environmental impact?

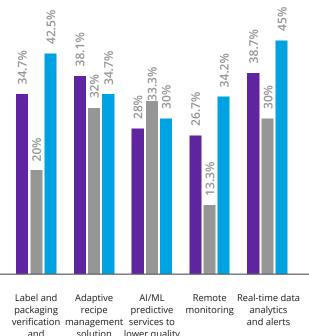


IoT and transformation maturity

The US and EMEA are also aligned when it comes to priorities. Both regions already have a high number of initiatives in place. Furthermore, over the next 6-12months+, only small numbers of companies plan to implement more. This suggests that these two regions are already quite mature in their transformation journey.



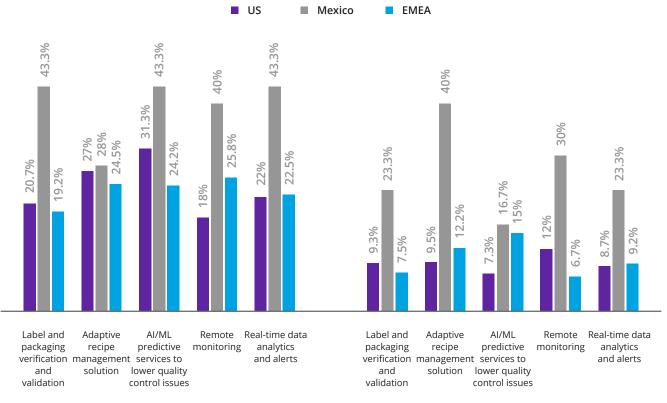
On the flipside, our data shows only a small percentage of initiatives in place for Mexico. However, there are significant plans to implement these in the next year and beyond to address environmental impact and improve production efficiency, quality control, and distribution processes.



and solution lower quality validation control issues

We have this initiative currently in place

We plan to implement this initiative in the next 6 months



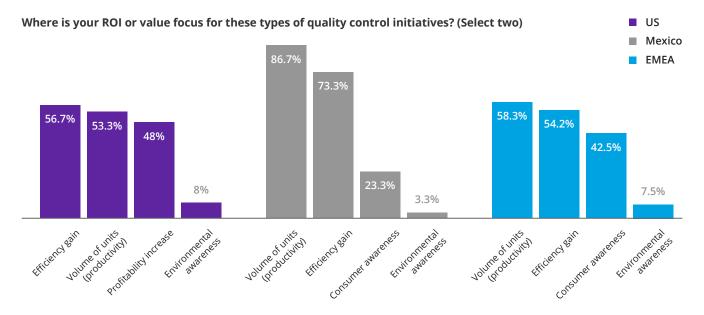
We plan to implement this initiative in the next 6-12 months

We plan to implement this initiative in the next 12+ months

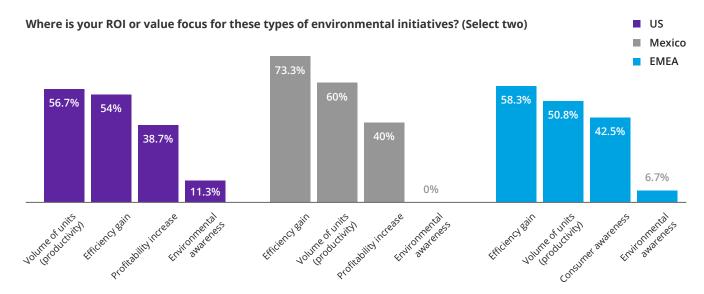
A look at ROI focus per region

When asked to select two main benefits that are expected from IoT investment, there was a clear difference between Mexico and the US and EMEA nations. Unsurprisingly, the focus for Mexico is in increasing volume of units (productivity) and efficiency gain — 86.7% and 73.3% respectively. Comparatively, there's little emphasis placed on consumer awareness or environmental awareness (23.3% and 3.3% respectively).

More advanced in their IoT development, the US and EMEA have a much broader approach and less obvious priorities.



For the value focus of environmental initiatives, none of the respondents from Mexico selected environmental awareness, compared to 11.3% in the US and 6.7% for EMEA countries. And interestingly, even the value focus of Mexico's environmental initiatives is driven by process optimization.



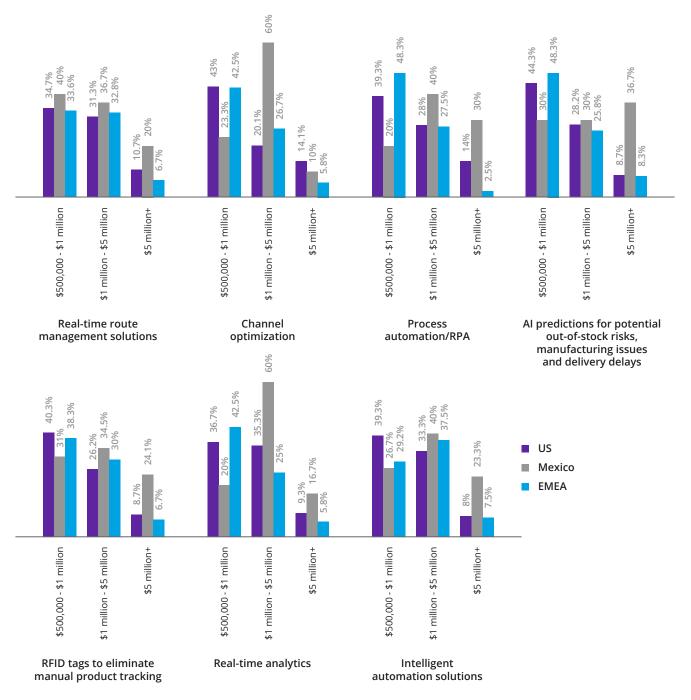
In terms of meeting consumer needs, reducing environmental impact should still be a longer term goal. While Mexican consumers express **below-average desire for recycling** compared to the US, they do have an above-average frequency of choosing environmentally friendly products.

To tackle their impact on the environment, our Mexican respondents are looking to use renewable energy sources, lower transportation costs and reducing energy consumption.

Investment level per region

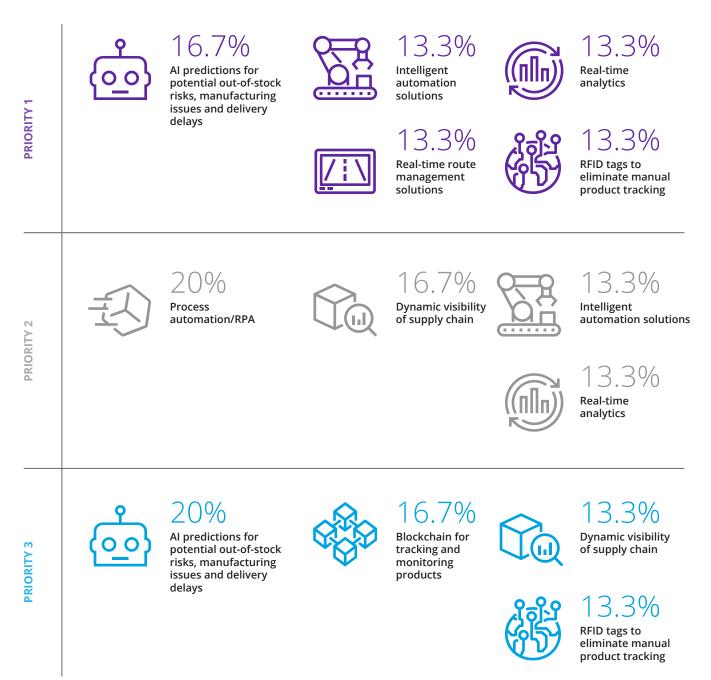
Based on the targeting of investments, our data also suggests that Mexican companies are looking to optimize processes across the board, with a big focus on real-time analytics and channel optimization — this is in line with the region's productivity and efficiency goals. The survey results also tell us that CPG brands in Mexico are significantly outspending their US and EMEA counterparts, with over 50% of them pumping \$5million+ into different initiatives.

How much do you plan to invest in the following distribution initiatives?



However, despite the patterns of spending, the main priorities highlighted by our Mexican respondents are artificial intelligence and process automation/RPA. This could suggest that despite recognizing the value and benefits of tech like AI and ML, there are bigger efficiency problems at play, and that these need to be tackled first and foremost.

Which of these initiatives do you consider to be the most important? [Please rank your top three](Mexico)



Delving further into industries

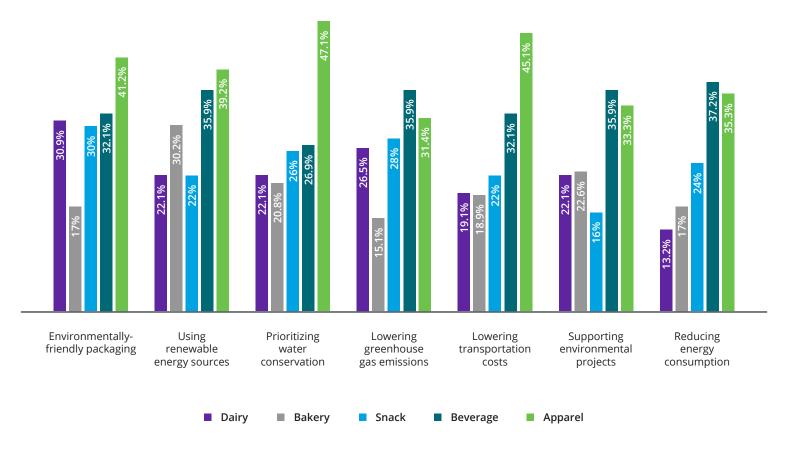
Our research also took a deep dive into the different CPG industries: Apparel, Bakery, Beverage, Dairy, and Snacks. Here are our findings:

Environmental vs distribution initiatives

Of all the industries, Apparel and Beverage companies have the most eco initiatives currently in place. Almost half of Apparel respondents (47.1%) are actively prioritizing water conservation – that's over twice as many as Bakery (20.8%) and Dairy (22.1%) companies.

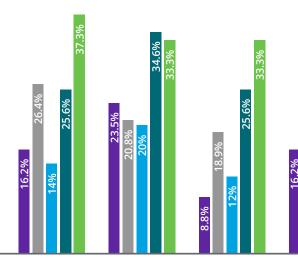
This suggests that Apparel is more advanced in meeting ESG targets. It could also indicate changing consumer demands, with **almost 70% of fashion consumers** taking environmental factors into account when making a purchasing decision.

We currently have these environmental initiatives in place

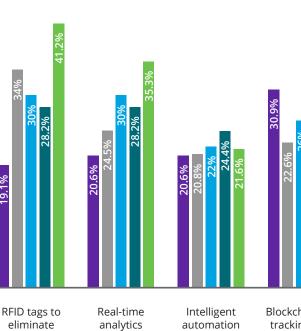


In terms of initiatives to improve distribution processes, Apparel stands out again as an industry that is ahead of the curve. Plans to implement intelligent automation solutions in the next 6 months is significantly higher compared to other CPG industries.

Do you plan to implement any of the following initiatives to improve your distribution processes?



ເບີ 19.1%



■ Dairy ■ Bakery ■ Snack ■ Beverage ■ Apparel

Real-time route management solutions

Channel Process optimization automation/RPA

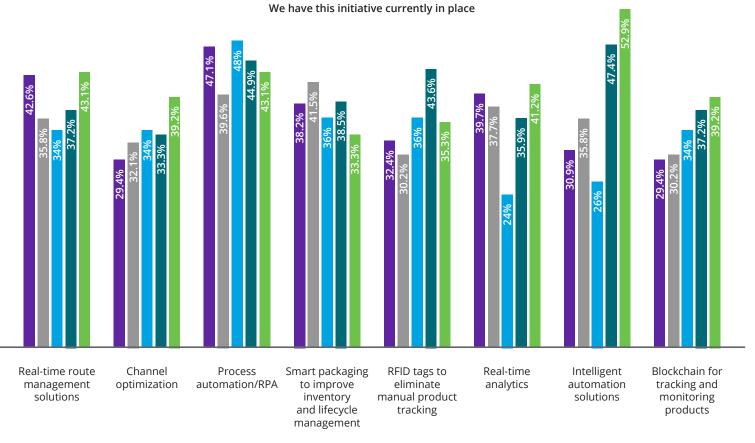
Smart packaging to improve inventory and lifecycle management

eliminate manual product tracking

analytics

solutions

Blockchain for tracking and monitoring products



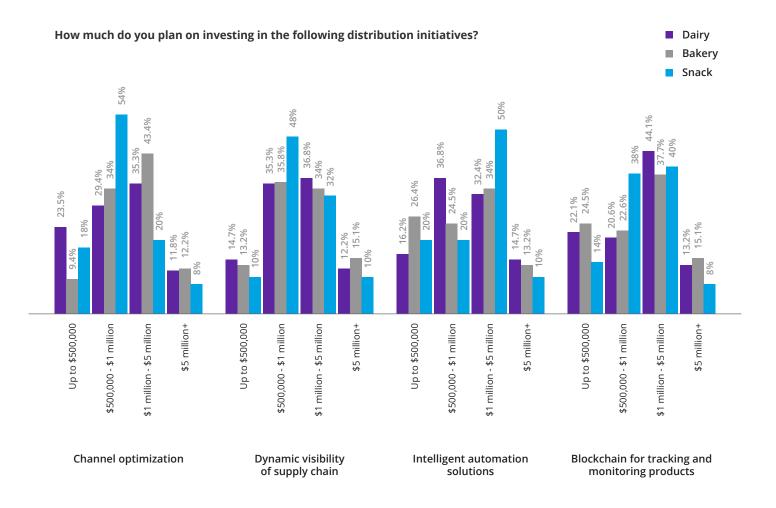
We plan to implement this initiative in the next 6 months

Level of investment based on industry

Apparel and Beverage are the biggest spenders when it comes to IoT technology, with them both spending the most in almost every bracket, while the Snack industry follows closely behind on some initiatives.

Looking closer at the Snack industry and what they intend to do, it's clear that improving efficiency is a driving factor. The data shows this sector embracing the latest IoT technology, with particular focus on channel optimization, dynamic supply chain visibility, and intelligent automation.

These investments also suggest that businesses are in the process of fully optimizing volume of productivity.

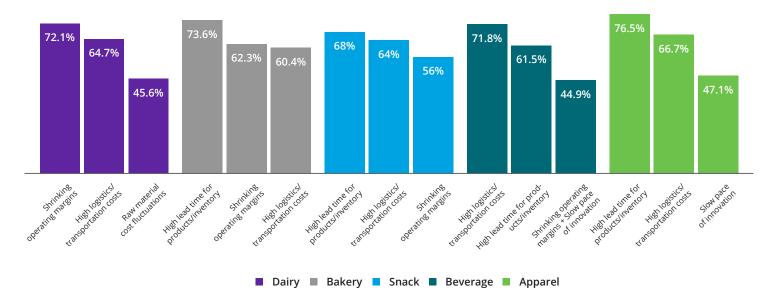


For both the Bakery and Dairy industry, the data shows significant investment in Blockchain in order to track and monitor products. This indicates that these industries are focused on optimizing processes before exploring avenues like process automation, RPA and intelligent automation.

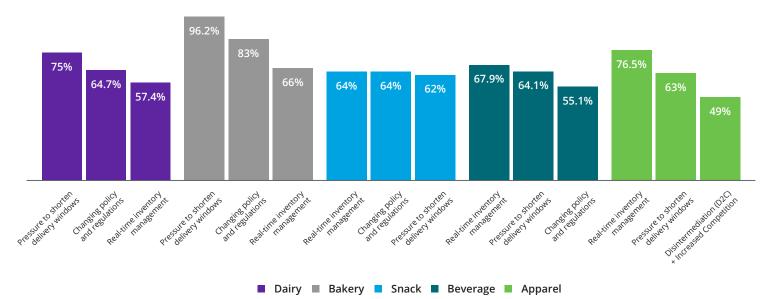
What are the challenges being faced?

The main supply chain challenge for Bakery, Snack, Beverage and Apparel industries is high logistics/transportation cost. The majority of Dairy companies (72.1%), on the other hand, reported shrinking operating margins as the main issue, which was ranked 2nd, 3rd, 3rd and 5th by the other industries respectively (Bakery, Snack, Beverage and Apparel).

What are the top three business challenges facing your supply chain?



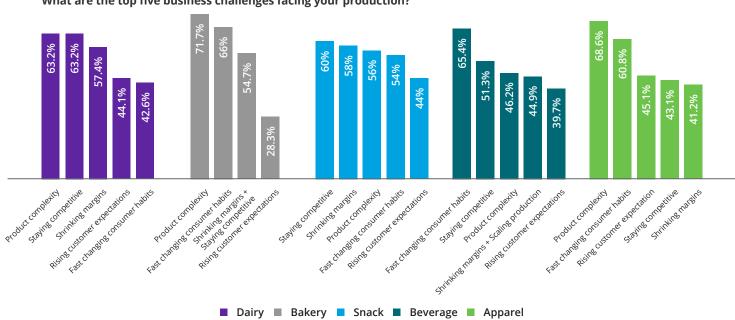
In Apparel, the main distribution challenge is real-time inventory management, with 76.5% of the votes. This is followed by pressure to shorten delivery windows (63%), and disintermediation (D2C) and increased competition coming in at joint-third, both with 49% of the votes. Pressure to shorten delivery windows, which came in second for Apparel was the number one issue for the overwhelming majority (96.2%) of respondents in Bakery. This is significantly more than any other industry.



What are the top three business challenges facing your distribution?

In terms of production, rising customer expectations has been highlighted by almost half of respondents in the Dairy, Snack, Beverage and Apparel industries as a significant production challenge. This has been echoed by **PwC in a** recent report about the future of consumer markets, stating that changing expectations and behaviors are forcing supply chains to be more responsive and transparent.

Once again, Bakeries are an outlier in this regard, with the increasing demands of customers only highlighted by just over a quarter (28%) of respondents in this industry. Instead, significant emphasis was placed on challenges like product complexity (71.7%).

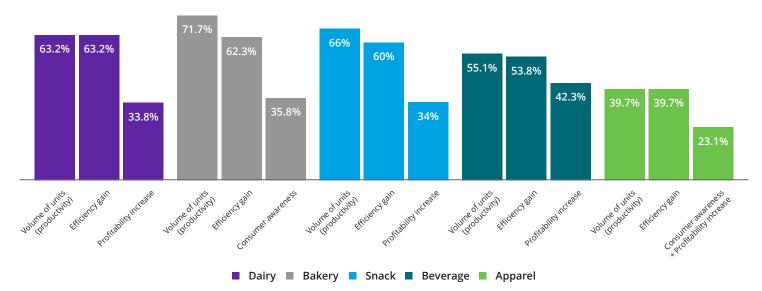


What are the top five business challenges facing your production?

What is the ROI focus for industries?

In terms of value focus, and what businesses are looking to gain from their investments, the differences that exist can be linked to how far along these industries are in digital transformation and IoT adoption.

For instance, there's big emphasis on productivity and efficiency from Bakery and Dairy. While the more advanced industries — Beverage and Apparel — indicate an even spread for ROI focus. This shows they're not burdened with efficiency and productivity issues, and are investing their efforts to succeed across all areas, including customer awareness, profitability, and environmental initiatives.



Where is your ROI or value focus for these types of production initiatives? (Select two)

Conclusion

There are some big priorities for businesses in the CPG industry, mainly goals for productivity and improved efficiency, but also a lot of focus on environmental initiatives.

As a general pattern, the further along in the transformation journey of an organization, the more likely they are to invest their efforts into reducing environmental impact. This is why we're seeing a disconnect between Mexico and the US and EMEA countries, with the latter two regions being more advanced in IoT adoption.

There's also evidence to suggest that consumers themselves have a major role to play in how they influence brands. For instance, Apparel and Beverage stand out as the two industries investing heavily in eco projects and environmentally-friendly processes.

The fashion industry has been under fire in recent years for its fast fashion mentality, and more consumers are looking to pay more for slow fashion, investing in quality over quantity. This has driven fashion giants to address their environmental impact to attract eco-conscious customers. In Beverages, there's been similar consumer pressure pushing brands to evolve their practices. From biodegradable straws to boxed water to eliminate single-use plastic, the growing press attention has launched brands into changing their materials and packaging.

While Apparel and Beverage are the two spearheads within the world of CPG, it won't be long before others follow suit, shifting to eco solutions that appeal to today's mindful consumer.



Report contributors



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