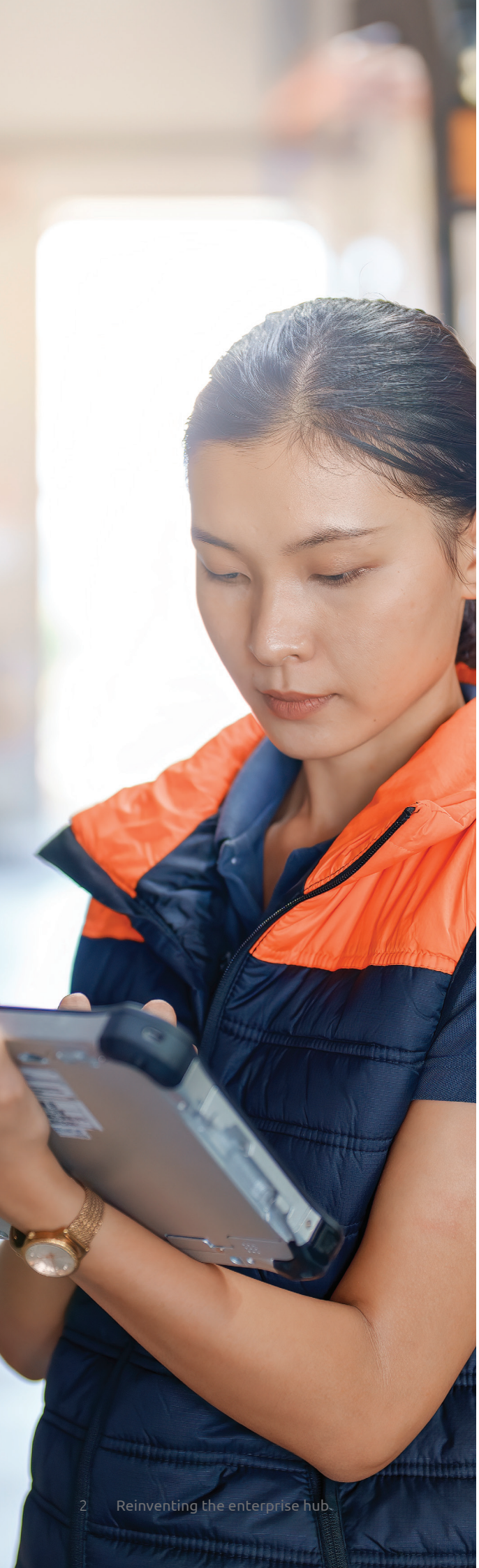
# Reinventing the enterprise hub

Transforming hubs from operational centers to strategic growth drivers through AI, automation, and data-driven insights

Capgemini



# The making of an advanced intelligent supply chain

Call it a hub. Operations center. Center of excellence. Or global business services. It goes by many names, but it has one goal: to unlock productivity gains and cost savings by simplifying, standardizing and centralizing processes across multiple markets or business units.

For years, enterprise organizations have looked to hubs to streamline administrative and back-office tasks. While these first-gen capabilities offered valuable benefits, they remained somewhat siloed and fragmented in their operation, with each hub providing limited input into broader decision-making and organizational operations.

Now, with the support of advanced technologies, including AI, generative AI and agentic AI, as well as robust data and analytics capabilities, hubs have the potential to move beyond transactional functions and take on a more strategic role in the business. By identifying challenges in real-time, providing actionable insights, and executing proactive, data-driven actions, next-gen hubs are helping brands achieve outcomes like never before.

We call this new capability the **hub of the future.**

# Defining the hub of the future

The hub of the future is a transformative concept and underlying ideology—not always a physical entity.

Unlike traditional hubs, which focus on bottom-line metrics, hubs of the future embrace advanced digital technologies to influence both bottom-line metrics and top-line growth through improved decision-making, enhanced agility, and informed innovation. Next-gen hubs also have the ability to integrate processes and data from different functions, including the supply chain, sales, marketing, finance and other supporting business units, driving seamless operations, data-driven decisions and business outcomes.

A fully standardized hub of the future offers valuable opportunities for efficiency gains by enabling a "build once, deploy everywhere" approach. By centralizing through the hub, as opposed to individual markets, and standardizing processes across different geographies this virtual unit acts as both an accelerator and an amplifier, compounding the gains of their first-gen counterparts.

For consumer brands, a hub of the future is one way to help manage the mounting pressure to reduce the cost of goods sold, improve margins, and differentiate in a hyper-competitive market. They enable rapid adaptation to market volatility, landscape dynamics, and shifting consumer behaviors while also offering a vehicle for consistent, reliable execution.

If the mandate of a traditional hub was "Align, Unify and Adopt", the motto of the future would be "Scale, Automate and Amplify."

## Supply chain ecosystem: The evolution of hubs

| Traditional hub | Hub of the future |
|---|---|
| Organizing principles:<br>Standardize, simplify and centralize | Organizing principles:<br>Autonomous operations, integrated and intelligent decisioning, and strategic innovation |
| Deploy process and tech to market | Deploy process and tech to hub |
| Unlock value from centralization and standardization (process, data, workflows) | Unlock value by simplifying decision-making and digitizing at scale |
| Focus on bottom-line business metrics and productivity | Focus on top-line growth and innovation; amplify bottom-line metrics |
| Mechanism to connect with partners | Mechanism to connect the partner ecosystem |

# Enabling the hub of the future: 3 sequential pillars to activate an intelligent supply chain

While hubs of the future leverage new practices and technologies to offer organizations more advanced capabilities, they build upon the foundation of their first-gen counterparts. At the core of any hub are three sequential pillars: people, processes, and technology.

### 1. People

Traditionally, hubs have focused on back-office functions that lack direct customer interaction. This might include order management, financial operations, expense approvals, or invoice processing.

While valuable, the modern landscape requires centralization of more complex, value-driven processes. Advanced technologies, such as gen AI, are enabling this shift, allowing organizations to automate many recurring tasks, even those that require advanced logic and reasoning. This evolution enables hubs to address binary, back-office tasks as well as more nuanced, intelligence-driven processes such as demand planning, inventory management, and lead time optimization.

The evolution of AI into agentic AI will only amplify the ability of the hub to automate processes and decisions at scale. It will also enable digital components within the hub to manage more complex situations, autonomously, than ever before.

In some ways, this shift to tech-enabled operations is, in and of itself, fueling the need for talent diversification and centralization. The skills needed to leverage next-generation solutions are increasingly specialized, making it impractical to source talent in every market. By shifting to a location-agnostic model, brands have a wider pool of talent to draw from; they can also optimize costs across multiple markets.

This is especially important because hubs of the future are also disrupting the types of roles that companies need to hire. For example, as we deploy this concept with some clients, we are proposing the creation of new and unique positions such as a **Disruption Director**, who would oversee and manage the team responding to unplanned events and bottlenecks, or a **Chief of Packaging Possibilities**, who would lead the implementation and rollout of reduced, reusable, recycled, or reimagined packaging.

Finally, brands need to take steps to ensure people working within hubs are empowered. The model will only deliver its full potential if teams have autonomy to make decisions to adapt to market dynamics, reset goals, or improve performance.

For example, if a hub identifies a process improvement opportunity, whether through technology, redesign, or automation, the system must enable swift action without bureaucratic processes. This applies to both captive hubs, which are those owned and operated by the brand, or a partner hub that is operated by a third-party on behalf of the brand. Regardless of the operating model, these hubs should foster a culture of autonomy, where people feel empowered to make decisions based on insights provided by the hub. This approach ensures that companies maximize the potential of their investment and create a foundation for continuous improvement.

### 2. Processes

The hub of the future draws much of its value from digital technologies like gen AI and agentic AI. However, to make full use of those technologies, organizations need to first standardize processes so that they can be automated by intelligent solutions.

Hubs of the future can serve as an effective way to unite cross-functional, end-to-end workflows that span different business units, including sales, marketing, supply chain, R&D, and others. By integrating functional workflows with supporting teams, these hubs can drive stronger alignment around shared metrics and goals across business units. This not only enhances coordination and efficiency but also unlocks new capabilities that elevate the customer experience.

For example, a growth-focused sales team is always developing new offers and promotions to hit their numbers. But, in a traditional hub model, their goals do not necessarily consider other aspects of the business, such as supply chain capacity, partner availability, or manufacturing volume. By taking a narrow focus on one team's goals, the overall approach can be disjointed and results can be compromised.

The hub of the future solves this issue by enabling an end-to-end view of the value chain. It integrates various inputs from across the business and maps interconnected processes to help teams make decisions based on overarching organizational goals and outcomes, such as growth, improved customer experiences, or operational efficiencies.

### 3. Technology

Hubs are more than just an operations management tool. They are the platform from which organizations can quickly adopt and scale emerging and advancing technologies, such as generative and agentic AI.

However, it's important to note that in a hub of the future, technology is not a one-time investment—it is an ongoing commitment. Establishing this capability demands ruthless digitization and standardization; operating one calls for continuous innovation and a relentless focus on improvement. This iterative approach ensures the hub remains at the forefront of innovation and performance excellence.

Finally, by integrating advanced technologies, hubs can do more than just optimize operations; they can serve as a proving ground for generative AI, agentic AI and other cutting-edge tools, helping companies rapidly build expertise and maturity in critical areas. For example, hubs can be instrumental in establishing foundational elements such as data capabilities, governance models, and operational frameworks, which can then be scaled and applied across other parts of the business.

Finally, companies should recognize that these pillars, while distinct, often influence one another. For example, the rise of agentic AI could truly transform the way roles are perceived across organizations and in hubs, in particular. In fact, it is entirely possible that some of the new roles mentioned above, such as Disruption Director, can be orchestrated or performed by AI agents. This would enable a higher level of autonomous operations, wherein work is done primarily by machines and overseen by humans – continuing to maintain humans-on-the-loop.

## Intelligent supply chain at a glance: 3 core components for transitioning to a hub of the future

### Invest in people

- Acknowledge and embrace the cultural change that accompanies the transition to a hub of the future.
- Launch robust training programs to help staff develop new skills and advance existing capabilities.
- Create "roles of the future" that correspond with the needs of next-gen hubs and modern organizations.
- Foster a culture of autonomy, where people feel empowered to make decisions based on insights provided by the hub.

### Standardize processes

- Build upon best practices within first-gen hubs to "ruthlessly standardize" processes.
- Ensure that functional processes are integrated with related workflows on supporting teams to better align activity, metrics and goals.
- Ensure close integration between hubs, whether virtual or physical, to help teams consistently leverage best practices and unlock synergies to improve agility, resiliency, and continuity.

### Embrace technology

- Commit to continuous technology evolution.
- Prioritize the data core to ensure seamless operations and drive intelligent decision-making.
- Leverage hubs of the future as a proving ground for generative AI, agentic AI and other cutting-edge tools.

# Impact of the hub of the future

## 30-70%
potential productivity gains generated by next-gen hubs over the next 3-5 years

The hub of the future delivers transformative benefits, including enhanced productivity, accelerated business growth, and significant cost reductions, positioning organizations for long-term success in an increasingly competitive landscape.

While every organization's journey will be different, most hub strategies should aim to deliver the following core benefits:

1. **Enhanced productivity :** Hubs of the future have the potential to deliver productivity gains of 30–70% over the next three to five years. The speed and magnitude of these benefits depend on foundational elements such as data maturity, automation capabilities, human skills, and effective governance. The balance between team ownership and streamlined processes over bureaucracy will be a key factor in unlocking these gains.
2. **Top-line growth :** Beyond productivity, hubs of the future drive top-line growth by enabling superior decision-making through integrated data processes. Unlike siloed, operational approaches, hubs offer a holistic view, allowing brands to achieve better revenue gains and profitability. This integrated structure improves the quality and speed of decisions, outperforming traditional market-level operations.
3. **Reduced costs :** Additionally, hubs significantly reduce costs by providing end-to-end visibility of key business levers. With centralized processes, companies can identify alternative suppliers, optimize trade-offs, and make data-driven decisions that go beyond simple efficiency improvements.
4. **Increased resiliency and continuity:** If hubs are standardized effectively, they can be used interchangeably, acting as backups in disaster recovery scenarios. Because these hubs operate as a virtual unit, organizations also have more flexibility in terms of where talent is sourced and based.

# Case Study: Reinventing global business operations

## Challenge

Unilever is one of the world's largest consumer goods companies with a global footprint across 190 countries and an iconic portfolio of over 400 brands. It also runs one of the world's most complex supply chains. Unilever is constantly reinventing its global business operations to drive radical simplification, break down operational silos, drive digitisation with one focus – to delight the customer.

## Solution

We partnered with Unilever to launch Integrated Operations (iOps) — a bold, end-to-end transformation initiative aimed at creating a standardised, fully-integrated global operations model. iOps re-imagines the company's entire customer value chain, from demand planning to cash collection, by:


## Results

The impact of the iOps programme has been transformational. Many end-to-end processes have been successfully elevated into seven centralised global hubs. Unilever has streamlined operations, accelerated innovation, and improved service delivery. It can now rapidly scale pilots into full production, ensuring faster and more agile responses to market demands. With a strong digital foundation and optimised partner ecosystem, Unilever is well-positioned to drive growth, innovation, and resilience.

> One aspect that was remarkable when we partnered with Capgemini on iOps was augmenting human workflows with advanced AI capabilities and intelligent automation tools. With this we could unlock the full potential and promise of our people, enabling them to focus on innovation and high-impact work that delights our customers.
>
> **Juan Carlos Parada,**
> **Chief GBS Officer, Unilever**

# Hub of the future: Intelligent supply chain solutions from Capgemini

Capgemini is uniquely positioned to help consumer brands create, deploy and operate a connected **Hub of the Future** and accelerate their journey to an intelligent supply chain.

As the foremost leader in this field, we bring end-to-end services, industry expertise and advanced data and digital capabilities to enable organizations to use their hub as a platform for growth, innovation and productivity.

Flexible and dynamic, Capgemini partners with organizations at any stage of their journey, whether enhancing existing capabilities or building entirely new hubs from the ground up. Our tailored approach encompasses every aspect of hub creation, operation, and optimization, including:

- Strategy
- Development
- Integration
- Tech ecosystem coordination
- Deployment
- Operation
- Continuous innovation

## Embracing the hub of the future and intelligent supply chain ecosystems

The hub of the future represents a transformative evolution for enterprise organizations. By leveraging advanced technologies like AI, gen AI and agentic AI, along with robust data and analytics capabilities, these hubs transcend their traditional roles to provide end-to-end strategic support to modern organizations. With their ability to streamline operations, enhance performance, and support sustainability goals, hubs of the future are fast becoming an essential tool for navigating the complexities of today's landscape and securing long-term success.

**Isn't it time to start your transition?**

# Capgemini's three-pronged strategy to enable E2E supply chain transformation

## Operational expertise

### One Operations

Deliver data-driven, AI-augmented integrated operations to digitally transform the target operating model and drive strategic outcomes at speed and scale

### End-to-end process transformation

Re-design processes, decisions, metrics, technology, governance, and the organizational structure through operating model transformation

## Tech enablers

### Big tech + small tech

Leverage 'big tech' expertise to scale at pace, and utilize 'small tech' solutions to accelerate speed to value

### Digital Global Enterprise Model (D-GEM)

An AI-based, digital business transformation platform that combines the necessary tools and techniques needed to streamline and scale business processes to deliver increased efficiency, faster time to market, and an enhanced, customer-first user experience

### Hyper-automation

Incorporate advanced analytics, RPA, decision-making tools, AI/ML, gen AI, and other emerging and advanced technologies, such as agentic AI, to deliver higher productivity and improve the quality and speed of decision-making

## Data foundations

### Composable architecture

Enable an end-to-end, integrated, agile, customer-centric architecture, supported by cloud-based platforms

### Data-driven insights

Harness the potential of data by enabling an insights-driven supply chain ecosystem at scale

# Let our intelligent supply chain foundation enable your transformation

### E2E supply chain expertise

12,000+ supply chain experts, including experienced practitioners and 500+ strategists with in-depth knowledge of supply chain platforms

### Cloud capabilities

Strong strategic partnerships with all major cloud hyperscalers, plus 5000+ certifications across leading platforms, including Azure, AWS, and GCP

### Supply chain-as-a-service

Deep experience deploying, operating, and scaling SCaaS for 20+ global organizations, including oversight of strategic decisioning and operational outcomes

### Proven system integrator

500+ end-to-end supply chain ERP and integration projects successfully completed

### Data and AI masters

Global leaders in data, advanced analytics, and AI; established partnerships with Microsoft and Google to create innovative gen AI and AI/ML operations use cases

### Operations innovation

Platforms developed to support continuous innovation across E2E operations

*With unparalleled expertise and a proven track record in supply chain transformation, Capgemini is leading the way in enabling organizations to create, operate and innovate a hub of the future. To learn more about how we can help your organization fuel growth, improve agility and lower costs through an intelligent supply chain, please contact our authors.*

## Authors


**Mayank Sharma**
VP, Global Supply Chain,
Capgemini
*mayank.q.sharma@capgemini.com*

**James Tilley**
VP, Supply Chain,
Capgemini Invent UK
*james.tilley@capgemini.com*

**Gerardo Buxade**
VP, Global Customer Operations,
Capgemini
*gerardo.buxade@capgemini.com*


## About Capgemini

Capgemini is a global business and technology transformation partner, helping organizations to accelerate their dual transition to a digital and sustainable world, while creating tangible impact for enterprises and society. It is a responsible and diverse group of 340,000 team members in more than 50 countries. With its strong over 55-year heritage, Capgemini is trusted by its clients to unlock the value of technology to address the entire breadth of their business needs. It delivers end-to-end services and solutions leveraging strengths from strategy and design to engineering, all fueled by its market leading capabilities in AI, generative AI, cloud and data, combined with its deep industry expertise and partner ecosystem. The Group reported 2024 global revenues of €22.1 billion.

**Get the future you want | www.capgemini.com**

Capgemini