

What the supply chain needs right now is women

January 13 2022, by Cristine Boyd



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The COVID pandemic has brought about significant disruptions in the supply chain such as dozens of ships from Asia remain sitting at docks in California and elsewhere, unable to unload their cargo, leading to a

variety of problems such as supply shortages and price inflation.

Now more than ever the U.S. needs collaborative supply chain professionals to solve the immense challenges the pandemic has caused. A recent research article by Siqi Ma, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Management at The University of Akron, suggests that the collaborative supply chain professionals we need right now to solve these issues are likely [women](#).

Ma and co-authors John Aloysius, Ph.D., professor and the Oren Harris chair in logistics at the University of Arkansas and Li Hao, Ph.D., senior economist at Amazon Web Services, penned a research study titled "Women are an Advantage in Supply Chain Collaboration and Efficiency."

Their research determined that:

- Women are more collaborative than men when making interfirm supply chain decisions. Collaborative behavior here means firm agents are working together to maximize joint gains.
- Both men and women are more collaborative when working with women because they expect their female supply chain partners to be more collaborative.
- Supply chain teams composed of all women achieve the best supply chain performance (highest supply chain efficiency) in comparison to mixed-gender teams and all-men teams.

When collaboration matters, the researchers recommend firms hire more women not just to fulfill a diversity requirement, but rather because it is good business. [Gartner, Inc.'s 2020 Women in Supply Chain Survey](#) shows that only 39 percent of general supply chain jobs are currently held by women (up from 35 percent in 2016) and only 17 percent of top supply chain positions are held by women (up from 9 percent in 2016).

Not only does the research show it a wise decision to hire women, but firms must consider providing benefits such as flexible work schedule, paid leave, childcare etc. to attract and retain more women working in the [supply chain](#) field.

More information: Siqi Ma et al, Women are an Advantage in Supply Chain Collaboration and Efficiency, *Production and Operations Management* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/poms.13329](https://doi.org/10.1111/poms.13329)

Provided by University of Akron

Citation: What the supply chain needs right now is women (2022, January 13) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-01-chain-women.html>

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