DIGITAL REPORT

REDEFINING TOYOTA NORTH AMERICA'S STRATEGIC SUPPLY CHAIN

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Group Vice President, Toyota Purchasing Supplier Development

Chris Nielsen
Executive VP, Chief Supply Chain Officer & Chief Quality Officer

Kevin Austin
Group VP of Supply Chain Strategy & Operations

Toyota Motor North America is revolutionising customer and supplier service by combining AI, data and human talent in a single supply chain

Take a large dollop of the famed Texas "think big" attitude, add more than a dash of Japanese innovation and top it off with vision and courage. That is the recipe for something remarkable that is taking shape at Toyota Motor North America's (TMNA) headquarters at Plano, Texas.

It started with a problem: for decades, the automotive industry viewed the supply chain as a series of back-office levers to move parts from point A to point B. However, as data and AI force themselves onto the stage, this attitude is a potential barrier to growth and competitiveness.

At TMNA, leaders decided to ditch the old model and design something better. By dismantling legacy silos and merging two distinct supply chains into a unified, data-driven ecosystem, the organisation is staying at the cutting edge – and making procurement and logistics the ultimate drivers of business resilience and customer satisfaction.

Speaking to Procurement Magazine, three senior TMNA executives explain how a strategic orchestration of talent, culture and digital intelligence is helping the business navigate a volatile global landscape and innovate at pace – supercharged by the digital age.

Two supply chains, one vision: unification

The history of Toyota in North America is a study in adaptation. Beginning in 1956 with a failed attempt to import Japanese vehicles that could not handle American highway speeds, the company spent the next 30 years building a robust distribution and dealer network. When the move to "build where we sell" occurred in the mid-1980s, it necessitated the birth of a second, entirely separate supply chain for manufacturing.

As Chris Nielsen, Executive VP, Chief Supply Chain Officer & Chief Quality Officer, TMNA, explains: "For a long period of time, we had two separate companies, one headquartered in the West Coast, one in the Midwest, one a sales and service organisation, one a manufacturing and engineering organisation.

"So we had two supply chains operating. Even in many cases, we had the same supplier. We were interfacing with them differently and parts were flowing quite differently."

The decision to unify these affiliates in 2014 was the catalyst for the current transformation. By bringing the organisations together in Plano, Texas, Chris and his team began to realise that unification offered more than just administrative efficiency; it offered the opportunity to serve the "ultimate customer" – the consumer – through a single, cohesive vision.

He says: "The old systems certainly had their strengths in terms of being very focused on the customers they were serving, yet I don't think they really served the ultimate customer, the consumer, as best they could.

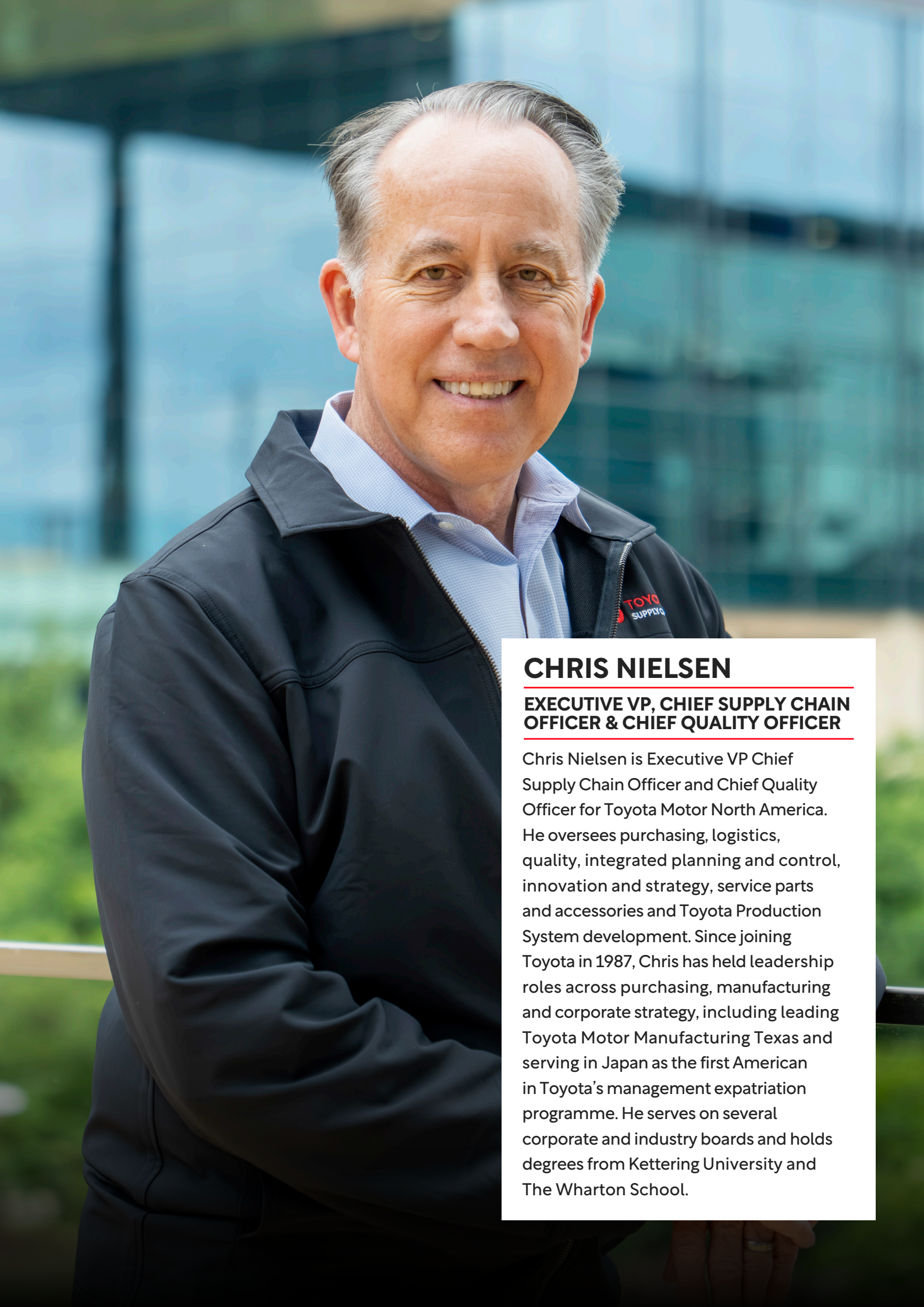
"So by coming together, I think it really allowed us to have one vision of what was really necessary to serve that ultimate customer."

Kevin Austin, GVP of Supply Chain Strategy & Operations, expands on the issue: "With any purchase, you want to be able to make this trade-off between the price, the choice and then when you can get it.

"So a customer wants to have the power to determine that trade-off themselves. To do that, that is really a supply chain answer. To present the consumer with that choice and be able to trade off, "I want this vehicle with this spec, I can get it here," requires such integration across the supply chain that we were not able to deliver when we had this fragmented world of two different supply chains."

"We made the important decision back in 2014... to really unify those two affiliates together. That's how we ended up where we are today in Plano, Texas at our headquarters"

Chris Nielsen
Executive VP, Chief Supply Chain Officer & Chief Quality Officer
Toyota Motor North America



CHRIS NIELSEN

EXECUTIVE VP, CHIEF SUPPLY CHAIN OFFICER & CHIEF QUALITY OFFICER

Chris Nielsen is Executive VP Chief Supply Chain Officer and Chief Quality Officer for Toyota Motor North America. He oversees purchasing, logistics, quality, integrated planning and control, innovation and strategy, service parts and accessories and Toyota Production System development. Since joining Toyota in 1987, Chris has held leadership roles across purchasing, manufacturing and corporate strategy, including leading Toyota Motor Manufacturing Texas and serving in Japan as the first American in Toyota's management expatriation programme. He serves on several corporate and industry boards and holds degrees from Kettering University and The Wharton School.

KEVIN AUSTIN

GROUP VP OF SUPPLY CHAIN STRATEGY & OPERATIONS

Kevin Austin is Group VP of Supply Chain Strategy & Operations and Deputy Chief Quality Officer for Toyota Motor North America. He leads North America's end-to-end vehicle and parts supply chain operations, including demand and supply management, strategy, new product introduction, service parts operations, logistics and digital transformation. Since joining Toyota in 1999, Kevin has held roles across production control, human resources, distribution operations, sales and supply chain leadership, including an international assignment in Japan. Originally from Montgomery, West Virginia, he holds a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering from West Virginia University.

He adds: “So a lot of our story is really to be of service to the dealer, to be of service to the end customer. And the only way we can do that is by integration, end-to-end data connectivity and really operating as one team.”

From pilot purgatory to digital-first operations

In any large-scale manufacturing environment, the temptation to chase the “shiny object” of new technology is immense. Many organisations fall into a trap of fragmented digital experiments that fail to scale. Kevin refers to this as “pilot purgatory”.

“We were trying to do a lot of pilot initiatives, but we got stuck in this world of pilot purgatory and couldn’t get ourselves out,” Kevin admits.

To break free, TMNA shifted its focus from isolated tools to a holistic ecosystem.

The leadership team identified a “North Star” – a clear hypothesis of how data and AI could add value to three key stakeholders: the customers, the team members and the company’s bottom line.

The solution was the development of a central data integration layer – a platform that connects digital products and AI to real-world workflows. Starting with the planning arena, TMNA connected market needs with supply capabilities.

This data-driven approach has stripped out vast amounts of non-value-added work. By integrating end-to-end data connectivity, the company has minimised customer friction and translated digital efficiency into tangible revenue.

How AWS is Modernising Supply Chains With AI

Bill Foy, Director and APJ Automotive Sales Leader at AWS, explains how legacy systems are slowing down supply chains

According to Bill Foy, Director and APJ Automotive Sales Leader at AWS 94% of companies have been affected by supply chain disruptions – with legacy systems causing real-time visibility gaps.

"Whether it's a port strike, an earthquake or a natural disaster, most companies don't even know a problem exists until it's downstream," he says.

Managing this disconnected data can be particularly challenging for original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), Bill explains.

"OEMs struggle with data scattered across Excel spreadsheets, mainframes – all sorts of different systems," he says. "They don't communicate together, so there is no unified model."

To overcome this, Bill says that companies need to take a more unified and predictive approach to managing their supply chains.

"OEMs that are really moving forward are moving from a reactive, batch-driven operation to real-time AI-powered, customer-centric supply chains," he says.

Legacy systems slow AI adoption

"For almost all of the OEMs I work with, their data is trapped in legacy systems," Bill says. "They're running mission-critical supply chain operations in mainframes that are 30 to 45 years old."

Much of this software is written in COBOL – a software language very few people still operate in.

"There's no documentation," says Bill. "The reverse engineering alone can take hundreds of hours, just to understand what's in those systems."

Having these legacy systems in place can also make it harder for companies to adopt new systems.

Bill shares that, while 87% of manufactures see AI as an important tool, only 8% have researched the mature stage of implementation.

"One of the biggest challenges with data being trapped in legacy systems is that they weren't designed for real-time data exchange," he says. "This disconnected, siloed data remains one of the biggest barriers for AI adoption."

Modernising Toyota's manufacturing operations

However, leaving behind legacy systems and scaling AI out of an initial pilot phase can be done successfully – as seen in AWS's partnership with Toyota Motor North America.

"Toyota North America's legacy mainframe systems managed 90% of their supply chain operations," Bill says. "And a mainframe outage would basically halt car sales entirely."

To evolve this system, AWS deployed AWS Transform for Mainframe, using AI to analyse millions of lines of code. This, Bill says, was the first Agentic AI service designed to modernise mainframe workloads at scale.

"After validation from Toyota's own COBOL engineers, the teams produce complete, high-quality documentation in a single day. This is work that would have taken them months to do."

On the business side, this transformation helped shift Toyota from legacy build-to-stock push models to a modernised, customer-centric 'pull' model.

"This really allowed the seamless integration between sales and product manufacturing, fundamentally enhancing the customer experience and unlocking new profit opportunities," says Bill.

Building future-ready systems

"We're seeing a shift from AI as a tool to AI as an autonomous operating layer for manufacturing and supply chains," Bill says.

He suggests that future systems will autonomously orchestrate demand sensing, inventory positioning and logistics optimisation within defined guardrails – resolving supplier descriptions "before a human even sees the alert". However, he advises that manufacturing leaders first ensure they have a "unified data fabric" before they apply AI models.

"Manufacturing organisations' first priority should be connecting the manufacturing floor data to the ERP system, to supplier networks, to logistics platforms," Bill says. "AI is only as good as the data it can access in real time."

Explore AWS AI for Automotive

The digital evolution of the Toyota Production System (TPS)

The Toyota Production System (TPS) is one of the best-known management philosophies in manufacturing history. Traditionally associated with the factory floor and the elimination of waste, TPS is being redefined for the digital age. Rather than being seen as a rigid set of manual tools, it is now viewed as a system for empowering people to solve problems at digital speeds.

Chris describes the translation as seamless: "Digitalisation in a lot of ways adds speed, right? It allows us to diagnose problems, analyse, collect the data that would be needed to analyse a process to identify where are the weak points, where are the things we need to improve?

"So we feel like, as we're beginning to digitalise TPS tools, for example, it's allowing us to move even faster than we have in the past."

"On a typical vehicle, 75% of the content is outsourced... the integration with the suppliers and their buy-in to come along on this is absolutely critical"

Ryan Grimm
Group Vice President, Toyota Purchasing Supplier Development
Toyota Motor North America

This digital version of TPS maintains a human-centric core. Kevin says that, while it is easy to see physical flow in a warehouse, observing a business process that spans months and multiple geographies is harder.

Digital capabilities bring "observability" to these invisible workflows. By creating feedback loops – such as using consumer search data to refine forecasts rather than relying on historical sales – Toyota can see "true demand" and adjust the entire supply chain accordingly.

Building two-way connectivity with suppliers

On a typical vehicle, 75% of the content is outsourced, and there are over 1,000 locations just within North America that receive demand signals.

Ryan Grimm, Group Vice President, Toyota Purchasing Supplier Development, says: "So the integration with the suppliers and their ability or buy-in to come along on this and support this is absolutely critical."

Ryan emphasises that partnerships are foundational to Toyota's success. The organisation has moved beyond "demand signals" toward what it calls "two-way supplier connectivity".

Historically, a manufacturer might send a demand signal and hope for the best. Today, the TMNA platform allows for real-time integration. Kevin provides a compelling example involving an interior trim supplier. The system flagged a demand spike eight weeks before it became a crisis.

RYAN GRIMM

GROUP VP, TOYOTA PURCHASING SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT

Ryan Grimm is Group Vice President of Purchasing Supplier Development at Toyota Motor North America, based in York Township, Michigan. He oversees procurement for vehicle parts, materials, accessories, service parts, logistics, packaging and manufacturing indirect, while also leading supplier production preparation, development and supply continuity across Toyota's North American operations. Ryan joined Toyota in 1998 and has held leadership roles in purchasing, supply chain operations and technology, including assignments in Kentucky, Michigan, Texas and an international assignment in Japan. He serves on several corporate and industry boards and holds degrees from Centre College and Xavier University.

How IBM is Helping Toyota Reimagine Supply Chain Visibility

Clay Sheriff, Senior Partner at IBM, on transforming Toyota's supply chain visibility, forecasting and demand sensing

Partner with IBM to transform your supply chain

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The automotive industry is navigating one of its most turbulent periods in recent history. A decade of disruption — from parts shortages and geopolitical instability to escalating tariff regimes — has exposed fragility and inefficiency across global supply chains.

It is against this backdrop that forward-thinking manufacturers are turning to strategic partnerships, data and technology to future-proof their operations. One such partner is IBM, a global technology and consulting firm.

Clay Sheriff, Senior Partner at IBM, leads the Toyota account for IBM Consulting.

Clay has been working with Toyota over the past five years, helping the automotive manufacturer to transform its supply chain in North America.

Toyota's North American supply chain systems have supported the business remarkably well for decades," Clay explains. But the level of volatility over the past five to 10 years has changed what the business needs from data, visibility and decision-making.

We have been working with Toyota to reimagine how supply and demand data come together, so Toyota can improve visibility, forecasting and demand sensing to ultimately get the right vehicle to the right customer at the right time.

What to do when 'exceptions' become the norm?

No business today is immune to disruption. So what do you do when 'exceptions' become the norm? Clay explains that to tackle this challenge at Toyota, IBM has helped unlock data that supports real-time decision-making, enabling Toyota to better serve dealers and end customers.

"This transformation has been underway for several years at Toyota, and we're using new AI capabilities to accelerate decision-making on top of a stronger data foundation, helping teams respond more quickly to

supply chain changes. Our role is to help Toyota build capabilities it can operate and continuously improve," says Clay. Working across Toyota's ecosystem of technology partners, IBM is helping integrate cloud, data and AI capabilities into practical supply chain workflows — connecting supply, demand, logistics and dealer-facing visibility in ways that support faster, better decisions.

"For us, it's stitching together the technology components to deliver outcomes for the business," says Clay.

He adds: "Making sure we're collaborating and integrating across Toyota partners to deliver that outcome for the business, so that there's a better experience for the end customers, dealers and employees."

Together, we have helped give Toyota much better visibility into data across the supply chain. It was historically difficult to understand the timing of when a vehicle would land at a dealer because of the many handoffs through logistics".

A visibility platform, effectively a control tower, now shows where vehicles are in the process, from manufacturing through delivery to the end customer. When supply disruptions hit the market, those ETAs become extremely important for dealers and customers."

A partnership built on co-creation

Looking to the future of IBM and its journey with Toyota, Clay reflects that "the partnership with Toyota has been fantastic. For us, this is about co-creating with Toyota. We're working with the digital innovations team and the supply chain business to deliver business outcomes."

"The opportunity now is to take the lessons from this programme — the data foundation, the operating model and the co-creation approach — and apply them across other areas of the business where better visibility and faster decision-making can create value."

US$50bn+

Toyota Motor North America's annual procurement spend

"The supplier notified through the system eight weeks before there was an actual problem and the beauty is what that eight weeks was able to buy us," Kevin says. "It bought us time and we were able to proactively countermeasure it.

"Without that, we would have been parking vehicles. We would have had to call customers and tell them, 'Hey, you can't get your car when we promised you'." This proactive approach is the difference between a reactive, painful supply chain and one that maintains flow through transparency.

Driving transformation through shared vision

From the very beginning, Toyota's founders understood that partnership was central to building something durable. That belief lives on today in the way Toyota engages with its suppliers and dealers, and in how the company has chosen to approach the transformation of its supply chain.

To deliver a transformation of this scale, Toyota knew it couldn't go it alone. The company deliberately partnered with others who brought specific domain expertise and outside -in perspective – and paired that with a sustained investment in building its own internal capability, because the muscles required to run a modern supply chain have to live inside Toyota.

The challenge TMNA set out to solve is not trivial. The company is operating on a foundation of legacy systems and mainframe applications that have served as the transactional backbone of the enterprise for decades. The mandate, therefore, has been a dual one: modernise that foundation while simultaneously reimagining the work itself through AI. Most companies attempt one or the other. Toyota is doing both, on purpose, at the same time – because separating them would have produced a faster answer and a far weaker one.

To push this forward, Toyota has collaborated with a wide ecosystem

of partners – hyperscalers, enterprise software providers, AI specialists and focused domain firms, including AWS, IBM and many others. The relationships are structured around a consistent principle: partners bring scale and specialty capability; Toyota owns the architecture, the domain intelligence and the outcomes. Partners have been engaged across every layer of the new stack and across the full product development lifecycle of each use case – so the work is genuinely co-created, but the accountability for what gets built, and what it delivers, stays with Toyota.

A clear example is Toyota's supply chain digital twin. Built on the foundations of the company's CUBE platform, the digital twin provides a live, end-to-end view of the network, from supplier capacity to plant build plans to logistics flows to dealer demand, and the ability to simulate decisions before they are made. It was developed in collaboration with multiple partners across the data, modelling and visualisation layers, but it is operated and extended by Toyota team members, against Toyota's standards, on Toyota's data. That is the model in microcosm: outside expertise, in-house ownership, durable capability.

The most consequential outcome is not any single use case. It is that Toyota has built platform capabilities, CUBE is the clearest example, that will continue to scale into new domains, drive the next wave of innovation and develop the workforce for the future. The company is not just delivering value today. It is building the operating system on which the next decade of Toyota's supply chain advantage will be built.

Rewriting Toyota's Supply Chain using micro-transformation approach

How Ascentt's focused AI bets became Toyota's global forecasting platform

Nilesh Vyas
Chief Executive Officer
Ascentt

Inside Toyota's micro-transformation: Journey from three independent use cases to a global AI platform

When Toyota Motor North America set out to modernise how it plans and forecasts demand across its global supply chain, the obvious play was a multi-year platform programme. Instead, the company went the other direction.

Working with Ascentt, its enterprise AI partner, Toyota started with narrowly scoped use cases and let the architecture take shape from there.

The first extended long-range forecasting went from a three-month cycle to a full 52-week view. The second, Customer Value Insights, improved forecast accuracy by five to 10%. The third, GAINS, surfaced demand planning bottlenecks that planners could not see across their existing tools. Each solved a specific operational pain, unlocked data that had been trapped, and showed Toyota where AI could compound at scale.

Together, they became the foundation for Global Demand Forecasting, or GDF, a platform now rolling out across Toyota regions and also seeding manufacturing transformation work beyond the supply chain.

How smaller bets scaled fast

Nilesh Vyas, CEO of Ascentt, calls the method micro-transformation, and it is the firm's signature way of working with global enterprises.

> *"It always starts the same way for us," Nilesh says. "A specific problem, not a grand vision. Find a decision that, made faster or better, compounds across the operations. Build for that. Measure. Then build the next one."*

The approach emerged from observing that the alternative took a long time to deliver ROI. "Enterprise after enterprise pouring tens of millions into sweeping programmes - big ambition, slow delivery, change fatigue long before any value shows up."

For Toyota, the choice is connected directly to Chris Nielsen's People, Platform, Performance framework. Micro-transformation honoured the "people" pillar by embedding into tools planners already used. It served "platform" by letting GDF emerge from real use cases rather than a blueprint. And it answered "performance" with metrics from week one - forecast accuracy, planning cycle time, throughput.

Learn more about the micro-transformation approach

What GDF actually does

GDF emerged from how demand signals move across regions - where local teams read the market better than a global model, and also where global models give better output than the local teams.The platform uses Agentic AI, including a Demand Allocation and Reapportion Agent that rebalances supply against shifting demand signals, and generative AI that explains complex forecast outputs to planners in plain language. Built from operational evidence rather than top-down design, GDF moved into other Toyota regions with far less friction than a conventional platform rollout would have.

A repeatable engine

What started as focused supply chain bets is becoming a reusable transformation engine. Manufacturing, quality, and supplier collaboration initiatives at Toyota are now drawing on the same architecture.

> *"The ambition is straightforward," Nilesh says. "Make micro-transformation the way Toyota deploys AI at a global scale. Not as a one-time programme, but as a repeatable operating capability. Start with the mission. Build for production scale. Measure. Move to the next one, while orchestrating all micro solutions to work together."*

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Resilience in global and regional headwinds

The current global environment is fraught with disruption, from trade friction and tariffs to geopolitical instability in the Middle East. For Ryan, resilience is built through information and trust. “Part of this whole journey, not only connecting, is also for us to continue to get more information from our suppliers,” he says.

TMNA is engaging in extensive mapping of its supply chains. While this began as a compliance exercise, it has evolved into a strategic risk management tool. By mapping the “supply chains of the suppliers”, Toyota can identify risks in raw materials or semiconductors long before they halt production.

Chris provides context on the regional footprint, saying: “In North America, about 80% of the vehicles that we sell are produced here... Everything we produce in Canada and Mexico is compliant with USMCA.”

Despite this heavy domestic presence, with domestic purchases north of US$50bn in parts annually, the company takes proactive steps to mitigate global shocks as well. The data-sharing ecosystem ensures that when a supplier struggles, Toyota can go in and support them, rooted in a foundation of “mutual trust and mutual benefit”.

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Case Study

Scaling Toyota's Digital Transformation

Seth Plunk from Two Roads Consulting explores how it is helping companies tackle complex technological challenges amid digitisation and rapid change

As the world turns more towards technology, it can feel daunting for companies to know where to begin their digital transformation.

To help ease this transition, organisations like Two Roads Consulting partner with businesses to define a clear path forward, guiding them through strategy and execution to deliver lasting transformation.

Managing Partner Seth Plunk co-founded Two Roads Consulting, which helps its clients with digital, technology and business transformations.

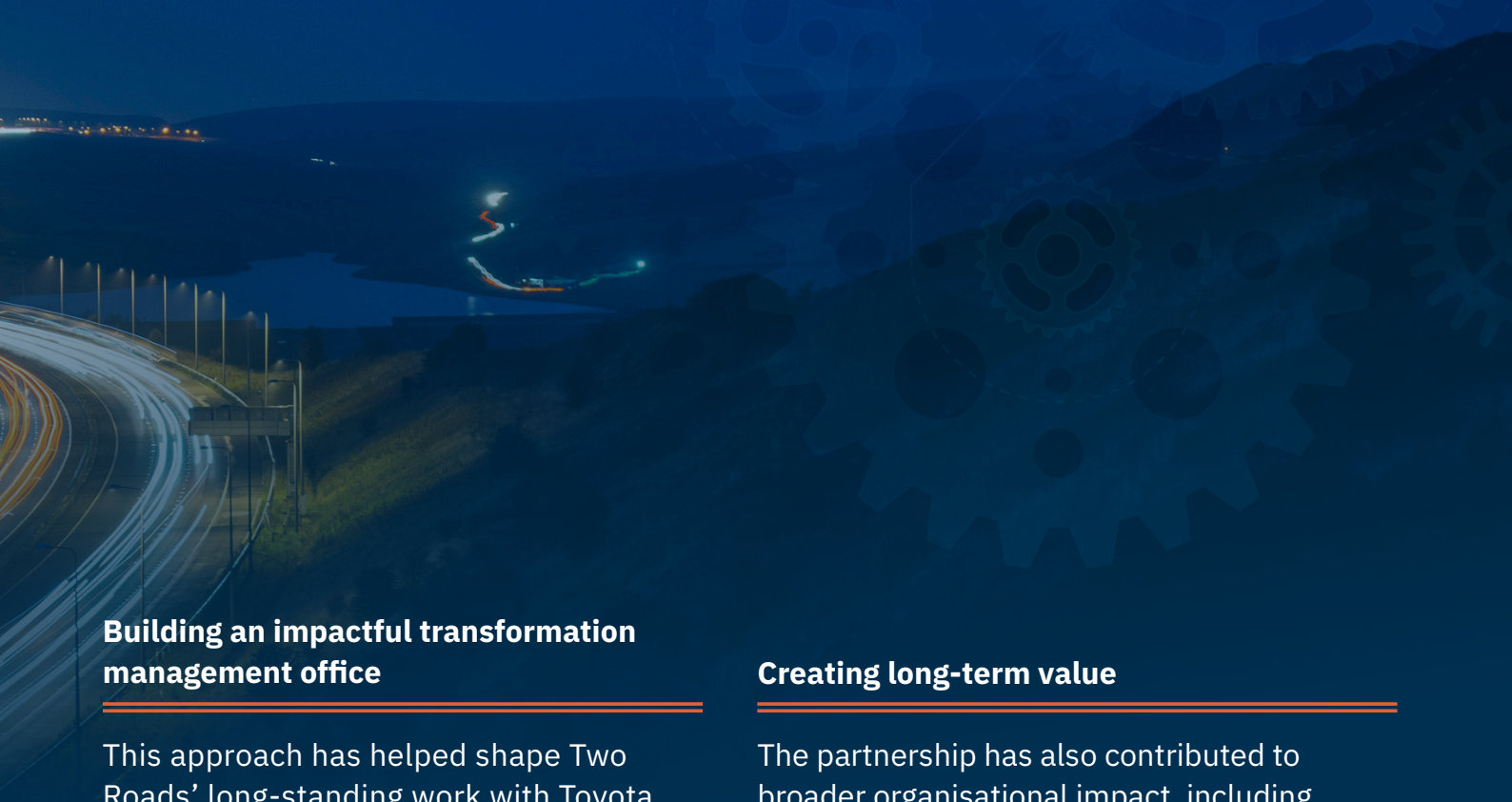
"We help companies define their strategic objectives through visioning and planning, then translate those objectives into actionable initiatives that drive transformation. From there, we design the operating model needed to align teams and execute successfully," Seth explains.

Driving enterprise transformation

Since Two Roads Consulting was founded in 2015, it has helped organisations tackle some of the most complex business and technology challenges.

"Over the years, we've partnered with Toyota North America on several large-scale transformation initiatives, helping deliver meaningful outcomes while keeping programs aligned to timelines, budgets and business goals," Seth says.

Two Roads is often engaged on high-priority enterprise-wide initiatives where alignment, execution and adaptability are critical. The company's strategic guidance and operational execution support helps organisations manage complexity in delivery while staying focused on long-term business value.



Building an impactful transformation management office

This approach has helped shape Two Roads' long-standing work with Toyota, where the company has supported initiatives across IT, marketing, supply chain and finance. Working closely with Toyota leadership, Two Roads helped establish Toyota's Transformation Management Office (TMO), implementing governance models and best practices that continue to support enterprise transformation initiatives today.

"At Two Roads, we're intentionally vendor agnostic because we believe organisations should have the flexibility to choose the partners and solutions that best support their goals," Seth explains. "Our role is to help create the framework that allows those initiatives to succeed."

Rather than prescribing specific technologies or vendors, Two Roads focuses on helping clients build the operational foundation needed to support sustainable transformation over time. By pairing strategic thinking with practical execution support, the consultancy helps organisations move initiatives forward while building capabilities that continue to deliver value well beyond a single project.

Creating long-term value

The partnership has also contributed to broader organisational impact, including identifying new opportunities for revenue growth and helping position technology as a strategic driver of business value across the enterprise.

"What's been most rewarding is helping Toyota build capabilities that continue to benefit the organisation long after an initiative is complete," Seth adds.

"By defining and launching new technology-enabled products and services, we've helped position IT as a revenue-generating function and driver of enterprise growth."

"We care deeply about our clients' long-term success and work alongside them to help create lasting impact across the organisation. That continued investment and trust has led to opportunities to support some of their most strategic enterprise transformation efforts."

Discover how Two Roads Consulting helps organisations turn transformation ambitions into measurable business outcomes

Learn more

Cultural alignment: respect for people and continuous improvement

A supply chain transformation is only as strong as the people executing it. At Toyota, the cultural framework – the "Toyota Way" – is built on two pillars: respect for people and continuous improvement. In an industry known for volatility, TMNA's commitment to its workforce is singular; the company has famously never had a layoff in North America.

This builds an "incredible bank of trust," according to Chris. Team members feel secure enough to take risks and fail during the transformation. This culture has allowed employees who have been with the company for decades to transition from traditional roles into high-tech positions, such as digital product owners.

Ryan says that the leadership is intentional about giving people "time to think". The organisation actively debates how much time should be allocated for employees to pursue continuous improvement outside their daily tasks. "You've got your job to do, but at the same time, you should also have time available to think, to improve, right? That's fundamental to who we are and how we operate," he adds.

Bridging the mindset gap: leadership evolution

Perhaps the biggest barrier to supply chain transformation is not technology, but mindset. Kevin reflects on his evolution as a leader, admitting that he once viewed business strategy and technology strategy as two separate entities.

"I used to have this belief that business strategy and tech strategy were two different things... As the world has evolved and as technology's evolved, leadership is really requiring one to have a deep sense of both."

The challenge is to simultaneously maintain a deep connection to the legacy "Toyota Way" while approaching problems with a blank sheet of paper. By shifting from a "know-it-all" culture to a "learn-it-all" culture, TMNA is fostering a growth mindset across its 6,500-strong headquarters.

The forward-looking roadmap: 12–24 months

As TMNA looks toward the next two years, the focus remains on scaling the capabilities built in the planning arena across the rest of the value chain. This includes further integration into service parts, quality management and the dealer network.


TOYOTA
SUPPLY CHAIN

“One of the things that we found was that we were trying to do a lot of pilot initiatives, but we got stuck in this world of ‘pilot purgatory’ and couldn’t get ourselves out”

Kevin Austin
Group VP of Supply Chain
Strategy & Operations
Toyota Motor North America

The “Lighthouse” initiative – an innovation zone where dealers test new digital products in real-world sales environments – is a prime example of how these tools are being scaled nationwide.

The roadmap is clear: continue investing in AI and data integration to amplify human potential. By simplifying workflows and stripping out non-value-added steps, Toyota is not just building more efficient vehicles; it is creating joy in the workplace by giving team members the space to make a meaningful impact.

As Kevin concludes: “If you can make your culture and your team and even yourself as a leader recognise the power of change, but also the power of curiosity and learning, then candidly anything’s possible.”

The Toyota case study is a masterclass in how to turn a complex, fragmented operation into a seamless, strategic engine of the future.

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