

 e-bate

Supercharge your rebate management

Boosting Sustainability Through Digitisation

All you need to know

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Introduction

The last couple of years has unravelled dramatic realities upon humanity, particularly in the corporate sector. Isolation, absences, and supply chain issues are only a few examples of the things that have affected trade. The way that an industry or business accepted innovative digital transformation was a true reflection of its flexibility and ability to navigate these difficult times. The process of rebate management is no exception – changes in recent years have shown the previous reliance on manpower, and the pandemic has highlighted that a shift to digital operations has become a necessity for optimum efficiency.

While most people wondered about the incredulous adaptability of many industries, the angle of sustainable transition was also widely discussed. This was because there was a 0.5% increase in CO₂ emissions for every 1% escalation of the GDP.

So, why is it vital to adopt sustainable development?

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According to the UN 2030 Climate Report, the pace of progress for meeting climatic goals is relatively slow. It highlights the importance of climatic change and sustainable development by modifying the economy and business practices.

As per the Global Risks Report by the World Economic Forum, one of the top five risks for businesses in 2020 was environmental degradation. This includes ecological disasters and climatic action failure.

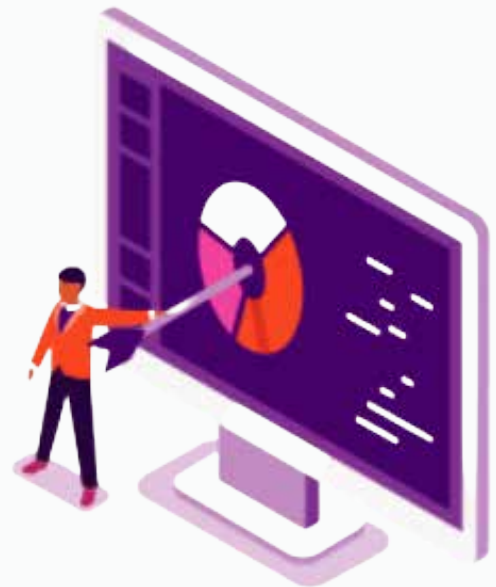
The growing environmental risks, natural disasters, and pressure on natural resources drive sustainability as the prime pillar of many organisations.

How do digital developments promote sustainability?

Digital technologies can enable organisations to achieve their sustainability goals. They do this by managing contracts, procurement process flow and SQL databases. These tools are enabling companies to overcome barriers like geographical distances, which of course in turn allows them to reduce travel to keep CO2 emissions down. When environmental concerns are constantly changing, the efforts to stay ahead of the curve are paramount for businesses.

Moreover, the World Economic Forum states that there is a possibility to decrease an estimated 26 billion metric tonnes of overall carbon emissions from three industries: electricity, logistics, and automotive, from 2016 to 2025. This requires finding the best opportunities to integrate digital methods and promote sustainability.

Apart from this, the Global e-Sustainability Initiative discovered that digital technologies could reverse the highly increasing carbon trend. It also reports that for every metric ton of carbon released by the ICT sector, users can save 10 tonnes.



Sustainability is the new core business

A recent study by IBM indicated that about 80% of consumers suggest that sustainability is important to them, and 60% of consumers are willing to alter their shopping behaviours if it reduces the environmental impact. Businesses are rapidly moving towards an environmental approach because of these public concerns, launching strategies which amongst other initiatives, includes digitisation of processes to reduce paper and fuel consumption, as well as saying goodbye to single use plastics. Brands are launching campaigns to help them gain attention and create a reputation as a sustainable company. Examples of campaigns can be anything from reducing waste, removing non-recyclables from production, or promising to be carbon-neutral by a predetermined date in the near future. By doing this, brand engagement and loyalty will increase, because consumers will view them in a more positive light. Nothing bad can happen from good press!



Several organisations have devised innovative strategies to cope with heightening environmental concerns. For instance, the Ford Motor Company has introduced a ten-part environmental policy, the initiatives of which will continue indefinitely, including the use of sustainable fabric in its vehicles. Plus, some of Ford's newer vehicles are recyclable. In addition, the paint fumes released at its plant in Michigan are recycled into fuel.

But when it comes to using digital strategies to create a sustainable environment, Microsoft tops the list. They aim to promote sustainable development and low-carbon business practices by integrating cloud-enabled technologies. As one of the largest purchasers of renewable energy, Microsoft's Puget Sound campus has been zero waste certified since 2016. With sustainability at the forefront of their objectives, Microsoft's cloud and AI services help companies reduce their physical footprint and cut energy consumption.

Simultaneously, for smaller business start-ups, investors are also changing their investments towards companies with higher Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance ratings (ESG). These changes are compelling companies to transform themselves and ensure long-term viability.

The importance of digitisation of supply chain management

One of the most important perks of shifting towards digital trends is swift supply chain management. Supply chain digital transformation involves converting analogue supply chain procedures into automated, digital processes by creating master data that collects information from the entire supply chain and the external sources.

This is achieved using software that focuses on business intelligence and automation, and could be developed and customised to fit your exact business needs, or it could be an off-the-shelf program, or, a hybrid model such as e-bate which a SaaS solution that includes certain customisations depending on customer requirements, for managing rebates throughout the supply chain.

Digitisation of the supply chain empowers sources, planning, and logistics experts. They collaborate and leverage the analytics to devise an action plan to benefit the whole organisation and achieve its objectives.

As per the study conducted by Zach Zacharia, the Director for the Center of Supply Chain Research at Lehigh University, 85% of the C-level executives anticipate digitisation to enhance cash flow and reduce Days Sales Outstanding (DSO).



Benefits of digital supply chain management

For many companies, the supply chain is the lifeblood of the entire organisation. It extends the vertical integration of all corporate functions to the horizontal dimension, knitting the core players through the network of sensors and social technology. When the supply chain is digitised, these are overseen by a central control hub and managed by an overarching data analytics engine.

Driving the transformation to a smart supply chain are two tightly intertwined trends – big data analytics and the cloud. This is because of the growing number of forward-thinking businesses that have adopted technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and online data storage. Consumers, employees, and business partners are pulling companies towards reliable and responsive supply chains.

Technologies like big data analytics, the Internet of Things (IoT), and the cloud are making their way into the market. And new expectations from consumers, employees, and business partners are pulling companies towards reliable and responsive supply chains.

The business goal of the digital supply chain is to deliver the right product to customers quickly and increase the efficiency of the overall process. They expect to cut costs through automation.

This goal cannot be achieved until the supply chain is automated and seamlessly connects the suppliers, logistics, warehousing, and manufacturing departments.

The digitisation of supply chain management brings massive benefits for companies. Some of which are as follows:

1. Cohesive and connected functions

If a company is still working manually and keeping piles of data for analysis, there is a high chance they will fail in the future. For example, in reference to processing rebates in a business, the immense time and effort spent on maintaining spreadsheets and entering data manually can demotivate employees. Plus, there are high chances of human error.

Digitisation creates an opportunity for connecting the periodic functions of the organisation, enabling communication across departments, and developing a central source of information for the entire organisation.



2. Enhanced automation

A connected digital platform ensures efficiency across a business. It eliminates manual entry issues and improves data accuracy. A company can increase its supply chain speed by decreasing the number of manual procedures and automating tasks that require human efforts.

For instance, they automate initial costing and generate automatic alerts when orders are delayed. Simultaneously, the task of recognising and qualifying products for free trade programs is also mechanical. The rule of thumb is that the digital supply chain workflows must rely on automated procedures.

Automation frees the workforce for more valuable tasks like seeking innovative solutions. And reduction in human error cannot be overstated, which means businesses gain back from the revenue lost from fixing those problems.

3. Increased sustainability

Rebate management is becoming a central part of any business reliant on a supply chain and regular purchasing from vendors, or regular supply to multiple customers. Corporations need to stay ahead of the curve as advancements in this domain increase every year.

Automated rebate processing is also becoming a more popular business practice with every year that goes by. It's becoming increasingly popular among companies because it is a great way to save time and money. Automated rebates are processed in seconds, meaning paying and claiming rebates can now be done faster than ever.

As the awareness of the environmental impact of rebate programs increases, we anticipate many companies to reduce their carbon footprint through rebate-led initiatives. This may include steps like suppliers promoting paperless billing and encouraging energy-saving measures like reduced deliveries, as unnecessary paper and vehicle use is unsustainable and more damaging.



4. Leverage data for decision-making

Most departments in a business demand rapid decision-making. For example, transport and logistics must maintain agility to function at optimal levels. Finance needs live reports in order to advise the business on how to move forward and grow.

A digitised supply chain allows organisations to collect and evaluate massive volumes of data with less time and effort. Companies can use this knowledge to create strategies, conduct effective decision-making, and plan for the future.

Another perk of real-time visibility is that workers can more easily find, and fix problems across the supply chain, reducing the number of potential mistakes.

Using technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and innovative analytics such as those in the reporting within rebate management software such as e-bate can help organisations increase the accuracy of predictions. This provides Managers with useful insights to seek effective decisions to avoid catastrophic disruptions.



Potential challenges of digital supply chain management

It could be an arduous task for companies to transform their functions into digital realms. Creating a digitised supply chain is time-consuming and costly. Nonetheless, the benefits are well worth the initial investment.

Entrepreneurs and corporate leaders need to ensure effective management is present to lead this transformation. At the same time, they should increase awareness and flexibility amongst the employees who will be expected to change their work structures. There are high chances that employees' job descriptions will change. So, ensuring they are ready for the switch is a primary requirement.

Moreover, the risks of cyber-attacks are also increasing especially with the recent escalation of tensions across Europe, making supply chains susceptible to damage by malicious entities. Despite these challenges, companies shouldn't hesitate to move towards digitisation because it ensures staying afloat in the long term.

Devise a holistic approach

Businesses need to develop strategies to beat the threats accompanying digital supply chains. A digital supply chain streamlines and improves processes for all stakeholders, creating a place where employees feel proud to work and play their part in creating a better future. Apart from this, the new mandate for supply chain sustainability involves embedding sustainability into functionality, information, and the final use of technologies as they enter the mainstream.

Challenges of prioritising sustainability

Company authorities need to meet the business and sustainability objectives through innovative methods. This requires evaluating the current structure and finding out the avenues where they can embed digital tactics. For instance, they can use vendor software to manage contracts instead of seeking human experts for the task, which is cost-effective and less prone to error.

Cloud computing – the ultimate sustainability solution

Using cloud computing as a remote solution for data storage truly highlights that digitalising processes increases any organisations agility.

Cloud computing relies on using central, off-campus data centres. These centres handle everything in 'the cloud', from taking procurement process flows to rebate management and everything in between.

A centralised system reduces economies of scale by decreasing the cost of customer analysis. It also allows easy collaboration, rapid scaling, and improved user experience.



Simulation technology – Replacing production procedures with green options

Simulation technologies are another development to follow the lines of sustainability development. This involves production of a digital version of the project which can help experts to find flaws in their structure and devise methods to make improvements.

Let's take the example of the plastic production process. The plant engineer can test several simulations to find the best design practices. This will ensure that there are fewer real-world adversities and that the energy goals of organisations are also met. They can engineer the plant for process safety and check that the designs comply with industrial standards.

Predictive maintenance to enhance environmental safety objectives

Predictive maintenance is another area that helps organisations achieve their environmental and safety goals. This technology uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to aid businesses, as it indicates equipment breakdown or project failure that could lead to significant carbon emissions.

AI can find patterns by studying the data and comparing it against past information. It can also determine potential assets that will help companies to make amends before time and create an action plan for the future.

The future of sustainable organisations

COVID-19 has brought many new things to light for businesses, and in a way, has become a reset button for the 'green recovery' as it focuses on the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for manufacturing.

By reducing energy consumption during production and cutting waste, companies can accelerate their drive towards sustainability, and with access to live data, they can use these insights to make informed decisions before the project cycle begins.

Technology is allowing people to stay connected and with people or whole teams bought-in and on-board with the drive of technology enhancements for sustainability, businesses can only expect positive improvements and growth.

Key Takeaways:

Sustainability and digital transformation are promising for the corporate culture, with the unlikely possibility that they will be removed from a business' policies due to pressure from the public.

The pandemic has made us understand the repercussions of keeping digitisation out of the loop; Many companies failed to make quick decisions and were unable to stand up to the increasing pressure.

Companies that are not using the right technology to help digitise processes and improve sustainability will find themselves at the low end when fulfilling the public and their own customer's demands.

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

Corporate experts have extensively spoken of how digitisation and sustainability are the future and that the growth needed for a long-term business model is not achievable if the business fails to make digitisation a central strategic pillar. And, that the benefits of adopting digitisation outweigh the costs consumed to adopt these resources.

Business leaders must integrate sustainability measures across their organisations after evaluating the current trends. Remember, the trends in this field are changing rapidly; lagging could result in you paying the price. Businesses have risen and fallen because of not adapting to modern environmental needs, so they have to stay ahead of the curve.

With e-Bate's intelligent rebate management solution, businesses can increase sustainability and reduce environmental impact by digitising their rebate process. With e-Bate, there's no need for files full of paper and endless mountains of spreadsheet printouts. And that's just one of the many benefits e-bate can bring, you can see the wealth of other benefits by [clicking here](#). To streamline your rebate accounting process and add another string to your sustainability bow, contact our team today to discuss how e-bate can change how you do business.



Analyse your objectives

This goes without saying really, but always come back to your original reasons for implementing a new software solution.

Lastly, ask for help - most software solution companies will offer a product demonstration without obligation to help you make the right decision. [Take a look at our guides and other white papers](#) for further help and advice, or call us on **033 022 32500** to talk about your requirements or book a discovery call by clicking the button below.

