




# Attracting and Keeping **SUPPLY CHAIN** **TALENT**



A group of five business professionals (three men and two women) are seated around a table in a meeting. They are all smiling and looking at documents or laptops. In the background, there is a large screen displaying a line graph with a red line and several data points. The overall scene is dimly lit, with the background elements slightly faded.

**37%** of all jobs in the  
U.S. are in the supply chain  
management field.

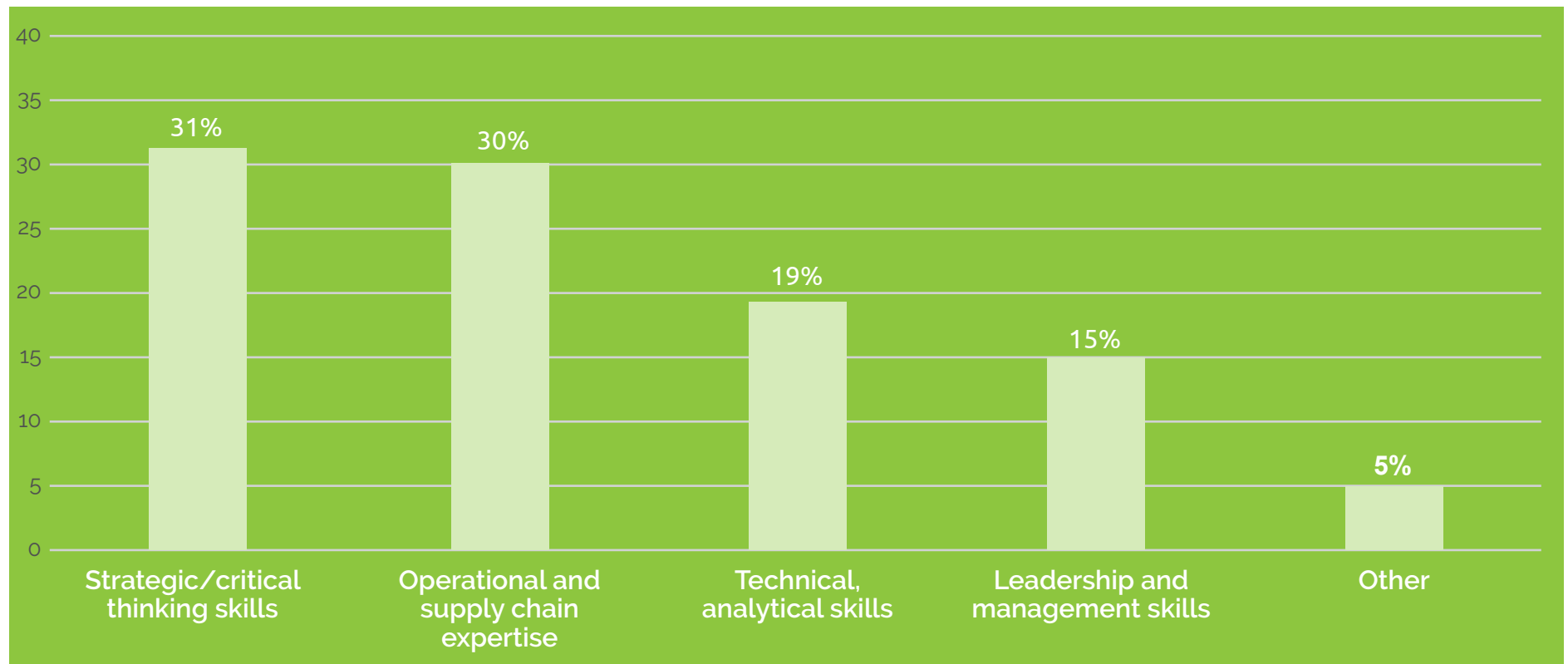
2018 Harvard Business Review,  
*The Supply Chain Economy and the Future of Good Jobs in America*

88,316

Supply Chain Jobs

JOBS ON LINKEDIN AS OF NOVEMBER 19, 2019

# What skills do organizations seek for their supply chain teams?



Source: 2019 Logility and Supply Chain Brain



How do employers attract  
the best of the best?

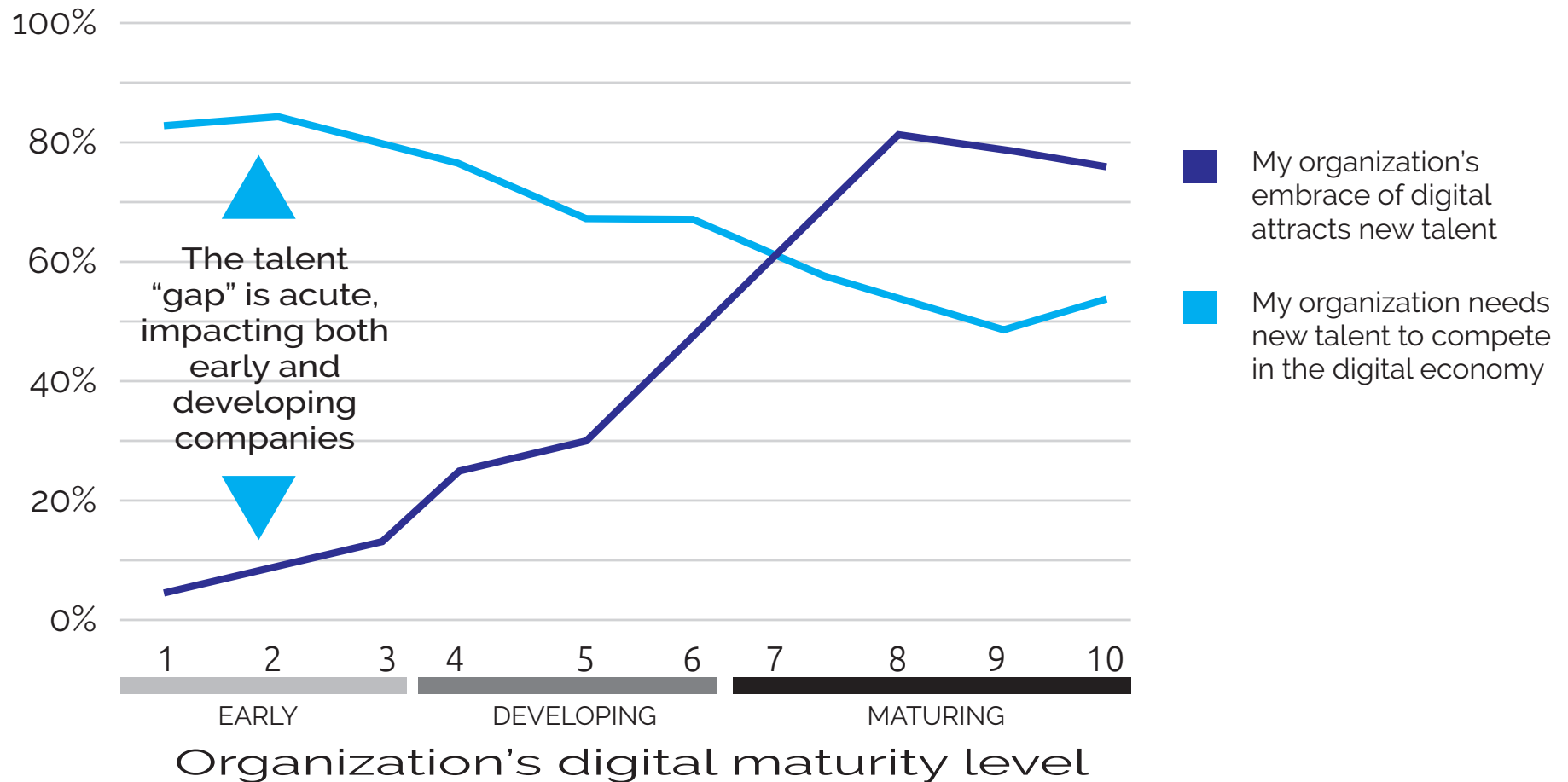
“Partner with the closest university to you. Sponsor a case competition. Coach a team. Teach a class. Send your smart people in, let them identify who the best students are for your company, and make them offers before everyone else. The department head at your local university will thank you.”

**Sean Willems, PhD**

Haslam Chair in Supply Chain Analytics, University of Tennessee

# Digital Talent Needs vs Ability to Attract

Percentage of respondents



Source: Material Handling Institute (MHI)

“The adoption of NextGen supply chain technologies will require a greater need for skilled workers. Whether that requires bringing in new talent or offering additional training to the existing workforce, expanding the company's skill base will remain a top priority for the foreseeable future.”

2019 MHI Annual Industry Report,  
*Elevating Supply Chain Digital Consciousness*



# What do you wish undergrads understood about a career in supply chain?

“That it's not strictly academic. You can be the most brilliant math or engineer major and fail in supply chain if you are not a strong communicator, or if you can't analyze a situation, tell a story about the analysis and recommend an action plan.”

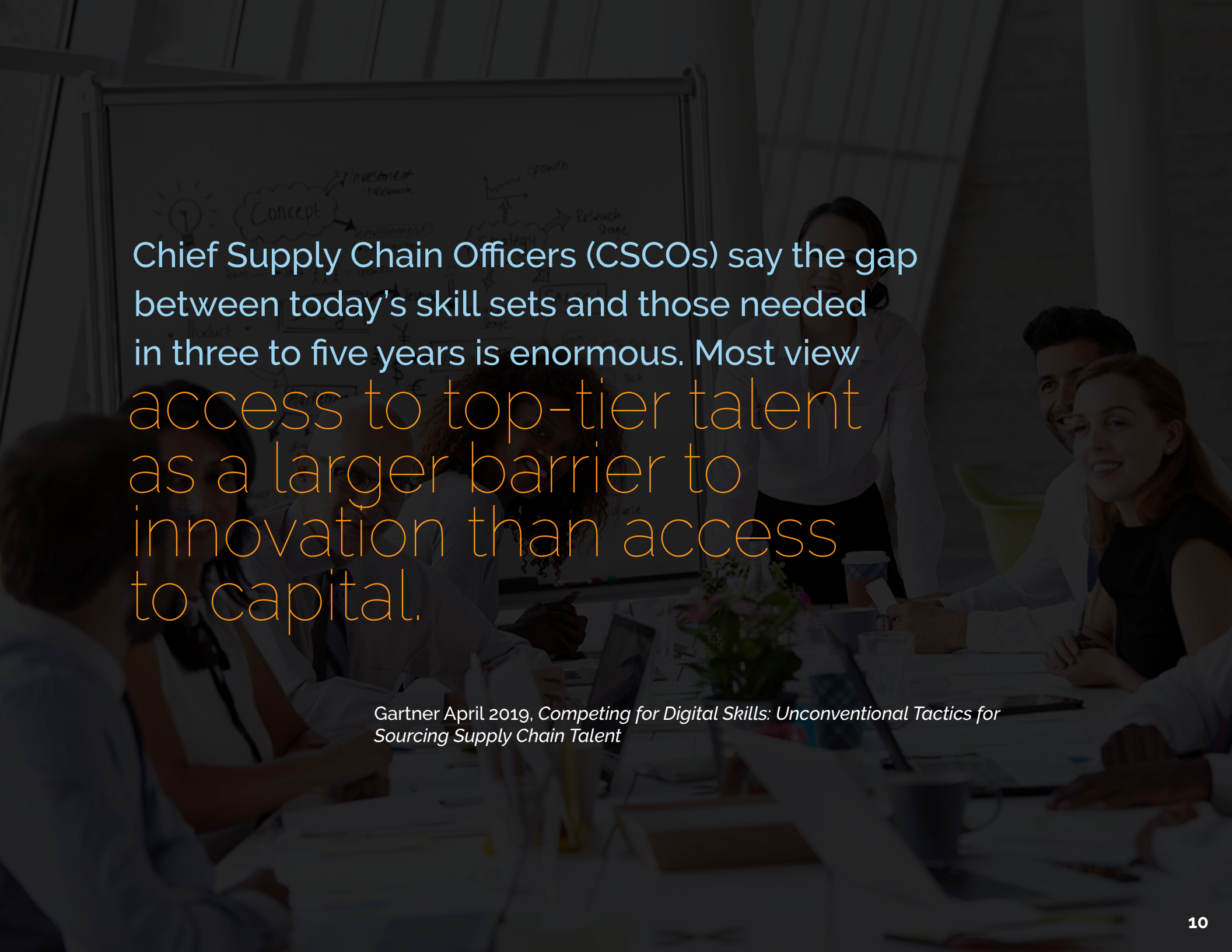
**Karen Smith**

Vice President, Global Supply Chain Operations  
Kontoor Brands



“In terms of experience level, entry level people are easy to attract and hire. Middle management is harder to find – 46 percent of respondents indicate a high level of difficulty. But executive level beats both, with 73 percent ranking this category a five – most difficult.”

Source: DHL Research Brief: *The Supply Chain Talent Shortage*

A group of business professionals are gathered around a large conference table in a modern office setting. In the background, a whiteboard displays a process flow diagram. The diagram starts with a lightbulb icon labeled 'Concept', followed by an arrow pointing to 'Investment Research', then 'Business Plan', and finally 'Research Stage'. A separate arrow points from 'Investment Research' to 'Growth'. The text 'access to top-tier talent' is highlighted in orange, while the rest of the text is in white.

Chief Supply Chain Officers (CSCOs) say the gap between today's skill sets and those needed in three to five years is enormous. Most view access to top-tier talent as a larger barrier to innovation than access to capital.

Gartner April 2019, *Competing for Digital Skills: Unconventional Tactics for Sourcing Supply Chain Talent*

# How do you find good candidates?

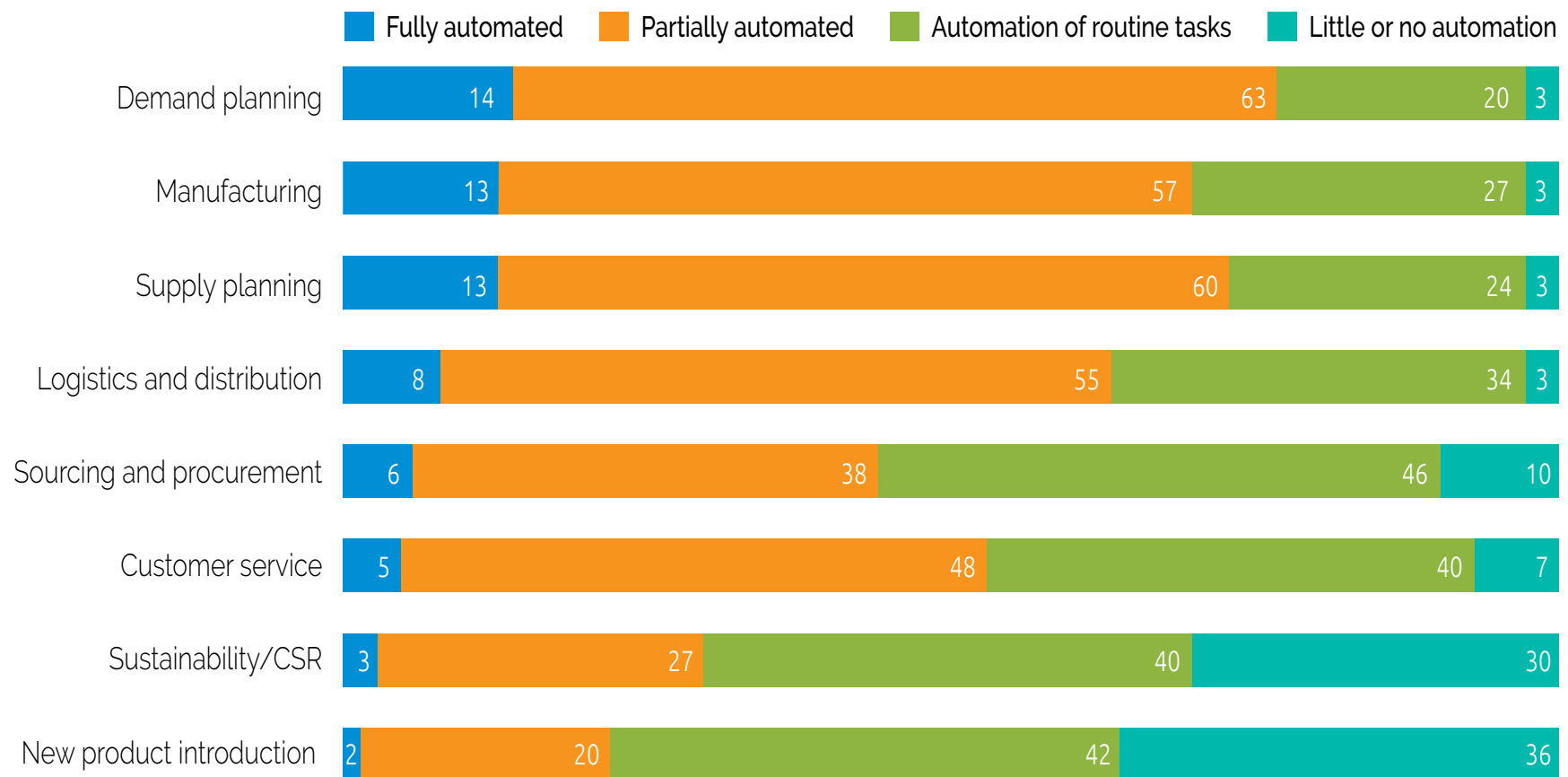
“When candidates come in, it’s almost a given that we’ll hear, ‘I’ve already seen your job description. I’ve gone online and know about your organization. Can you tell me what my second and third career stepping stone opportunities are?’ So in that regard, being able to have and articulate a clear career path during the hiring process is critical.”

**Vice President**

Supply Chain, Smithfield Foods

# How will technology and automation impact the skills needed by the supply chain workforce?

Anticipated degree of change to the functional workforce due to technology and automation in supply chain by 2025



Source: Gartner March 2019, *Innovate, Disrupt and Scale the Digital Supply Chain*

# How has technology impacted your search for supply chain talent?

“We try to find candidates that are tech savvy, have used some technology solutions and have an aptitude to learn to use others. Candidates must be comfortable asking “why” questions, and have strong decision-making and communication skills.

Also, no one who has spent time, effort and money on a four- or six-year supply chain degree wants to join an organization that is still being run by Excel. Not that Excel is a bad tool at all, but spending time moving data around from one spreadsheet to another is not a good use of skillsets.”

**Karen Smith**

Vice President, Global Supply Chain Operations  
Kontoor Brands



# What does it take to get the talent to say “YES”?

- 1 Get creative with benefits –**  
including working remote.
- 2 Use referral fees –**  
turn your team into a recruiting army.
- 3 Bring the firepower –**  
have a plan to sell your company to  
candidates. With unemployment under  
4%, the ball is really in their court.

## Hey. Can I work remote?

“I know everyone's heard this 1,000 times. It's one of the first questions recruiters get. In large urban cities, we all try to avoid the commute and there's lots of other factors, but being flexible is a big way companies can attract and keep talent.”

### Scott Luton

Founder, CEO & Host of Supply Chain Now Radio, former President, APICS Atlanta



What are the profiles of university students entering supply chain programs, and what do they take to the market upon graduation?

“At the undergraduate level, there are still students who need a level of nurturing while they develop a whole set of life skills. But what you see at the graduate level is quite different. You've got a set of people who now want to focus on analytics – these are the undergrads who were originally into metrics. The graduate students have a hammer, and they need guidance on what to go hit.”

**Sean Willems, PhD**

Haslam Chair in Supply Chain Analytics, University of Tennessee

# What do you hear from candidates entering the market?

**“Growth, growth and growth.**  
Candidates don't want to be doing the same thing for 20 years. So growth opportunities where they're making an impact are important.”

**Scott Luton**

Founder, CEO & Host of Supply Chain Now Radio, former President, APICS Atlanta



## WEBCAST: ATTRACTING AND KEEPING SUPPLY CHAIN TALENT IN THE DIGITAL AGE

[LINK TO WATCH WEBCAST REPLAY](#)

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