

# Supply Chain Complexity

H. Donald Ratliff  
School of Industrial & Systems Engineering  
The Logistics Institute  
Georgia Tech

Over the past thirty years, the complexity of supply chains has dramatically increased. Over the same period, the ability of enterprises to manage this complexity has also increased but at a much slower rate. This has resulted in “gaps” between the complexity of supply chains and our ability to manage this complexity. These complexity gaps have created a combination of increased risks and huge inefficiencies in supply chains.

This session will focus on the following three questions. (1) What are the root causes of supply chain complexity? (2) How can we recognize complexity gaps? (3) What can we do to close these gaps?

## Possible questions for the group:

1. Are there root causes of supply chain complexity other than those presented?
2. Are there fundamental ways of managing supply chain complexity other than those presented?
3. What are possible ways to measure supply chain complexity?
4. What are possible ways to measure supply chain complexity gaps?
5. What are possible ways to assess the importance/impact of a particular complexity gap?
6. What trends do you see impacting supply chain complexity?
7. What new concepts or technology do you see helping to manage complexity?
8. Does decision technology just replace some supply chain complexity by decision technology complexity?