



Supply chain woes and our movement toward localization

Editorial – Joel Wiebe, Government Relations Coordinator with the Peterborough Chamber of Commerce

Supply chain issues have become one of the dominant business news stories, holding back our economic recovery while driving up inflation.

On the simplistic end, it's a perfect storm of demand greatly outpacing supply. Of course, it's much more complicated than that.

Like many issues, it's one that has been building for some time before COVID-19 became the catalyst that drove it to a breaking point. We've come more and more to rely on the timely delivery of goods from just-in-time buying for manufacturing and agriculture to home delivery of consumer goods. We've not only increased demand, but also the timeliness and personalization of the service.

Globalization has also led to a world-wide diversification of the supply chain. Raw materials from various countries are sent to manufacturing facilities, who in turn send their products to the assembly plants, before eventually getting products to market. A delay at one part of the chain has impacts all the way down to the consumer.

Though personal spending dropped as people remained cautious, it shifted away from services to buying more goods — which requires more of our supply chain.



We've been increasing our dependency on speedy delivery of goods, so when COVID-19 hit, various delays around the world were compounded into an issue that has crippled some sectors and industries.

This perfect storm brought the human factor to the forefront as facilities had to restrict output or shut down all together to manage the impact of the virus, putting more and more pressure on the people still running our supply chain. This has led to burnout, sickness and labour action. This is impacting port workers, truck drivers, and warehouse staff.

Our transportation networks are struggling to keep up, with widely reported backlogs at ports and shortages of trucks and drivers around the world.

Further adding to this have been extreme weather events, including the flooding in British Columbia knocking out rail and highway access to the Port of Vancouver.

Factory shutdowns and an increase or shift in demand have driven up demand for raw materials. Earlier this year it was widely reported that the increase in homebuying as well as reconstruction from catastrophic weather events had contributed to a wide-reaching shortage of foam used in furniture.

While the hindsight view of how we got into this mess is pretty clear, getting out isn't going to be easy or quick. Current estimates don't put a return to normal access to goods and materials for another year or two.

Part of the solution involves

investment in infrastructure, both by the private and public sector on assets including ports, warehouses, roads, and rail. Another part involves wages, labour conditions, and training programs.

All of this comes at a price — but so do the delays.

Like many things impacted by COVID-19, a return to normal is a moving target. Businesses have turned local wherever possible to supply the goods and materials they need. Lower labour, material and production costs in foreign markets are offset by high transportation costs and lagging delivery times. Localization is a way to compress the supply chain, managing risks and costs. The term "nearshoring" is coming up as businesses focus more on the resilience of their

supply chain, focusing on access to goods and materials closer to their facilities.

This movement should help alleviate some of the strain on the global networks and reduce greenhouse gas emissions on top of the benefits to local communities receiving increased investment.

The cost of doing business was identified by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce as the single biggest issue facing businesses at the moment, with supply costs being a significant driver of that. Prices aren't likely to drop soon, but the more we invest locally in sourcing what we buy, the stronger we'll be positioned as a community, a region, and a province to handle what comes our way. ...

Medical Officer of Health Issues Letters of Instruction for Local Workplaces and Food Premises

Medical Officer of Health Dr. Thomas Piggott has issued two Letters of Instruction for workplaces and food premises designed to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in high-risk settings as the community braces for the impact of the Omicron variant.

"More stringent measures are needed now in high-risk settings to prevent a surge of COVID-19 cases as other jurisdictions are experiencing," said Dr. Piggott. "These measures focus on keeping local businesses open while ensuring they can operate safely and protecting staff and patrons."

Effective December 15, 2021, local workplaces are

instructed to shift all non-essential employees to remote work arrangements, except where on-site presence is required. Essential staff who must remain on-site must keep 2 metres physical distance from each other and stagger lunch times to avoid crowded eating areas. If a workspace does not allow for physical distancing (e.g. in vehicles or confined workspaces), workers must wear tightly-fitting masks. Social gatherings are also prohibited in workplaces, and can only take place in designated event facilities where public health measures can be enforced. Full details can be found in the December 13, 2021 Letter of Instruction for

Workplaces available on the Chamber website.

Also taking effect on December 15, 2021, food premises will also be expected to comply with the following instructions:

- Ensure that the maximum number of patrons seated at each table does not exceed 10 people.
- Arrange the premises to ensure that patrons seated at separate tables are distanced by at least 2 metres, or separated by an impermeable barrier.
- Allow patrons to consume food and/or beverage only while seated.
- Modify buffet-style food service to permit only one table at the buffet at a time, and ensure patrons wear masks at all times when

accessing the buffet.

- Ensure that all serving staff (including waitstaff and bartenders) are provided with, and wear, appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when in close proximity to patrons who are eating and/or drinking. PPE includes the following:
 - A medical-grade, tightly fitting face mask; and
 - Eye protection, such as a face shield or safety glasses.
- Advise patrons to wear tightly-fitting face masks when they are not actively eating or drinking. This includes when moving throughout the premises or while socializing at their table.

Complete details can be found in the December 13,

2021 Letter of Instruction for Food Premises found on the Chamber website.

The Chamber is committed to bringing you up-to-date information from all three levels of government. Our dedicated COVID-19 Business Resource Portal contains detailed information on acquiring Rapid Screening Kits, Financial Support Programs, Business Resources for Recovery, Wellness Support, Vaccine Information, Government Responses, and a direct link to Peterborough Public Health's Workplace Guidelines page. It is continually updated as new information becomes available. ...



Member Milestones

- With finding employees surfacing as one of the most difficult problems for local businesses, the **New Canadians Centre** has put together an information session designed to close your workplace gap with International Students. Scheduled for January 20, the one-hour online session promises to outline how you can hire international students, ensure successful immigrant integration and

keep valuable talent in Peterborough. For more information please contact Olga Stetsyuk at the New Canadians Centre at (705) 743-0882.

- **Electric City Football Club** has launched some sponsorship opportunities - get the details, email Neil Morton at sponsorship@electriccityfc.com
- Join **DeafBlind Ontario Services** for an interactive virtual workshop of self discovery on February 7th at 12-4PM. Develop a better understanding of and appreciation for yourself and others. Build stronger teams and optimize team performance. Identify personality strengths,

similarities and potential challenges. For further info, contact mcs@deafblindontario.com or call 1-855-340-3267 x 237.

Featured Member Discount Program:

Free Float Therapy Session

Get one free float therapy session for you or a member of your staff.

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Chamber Members, send your Member Milestones to shelby@peterboroughchamber.ca (705) 748-9771 ext 210 ...

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