

Empirical Documentation of Operational Performance Gains from Blockchain and AI Integration: A SCOR Model Analysis of Industry Cases

C. Kalpani Dissanayake

Assistant Professor

Department of Business & Economics

Pennsylvania State University

Media, USA

ckd5250@psu.edu

Abstract

Accelerating regulatory mandates, like the U.S. FDA's 2026 electronic food traceability rule, pressure supply chains to adopt Blockchain and AI. A key adoption barrier is the scarcity of empirical evidence on measurable operational benefits. This study addresses this gap by analyzing 102 real-world Blockchain and AI use cases from 54 Fortune 500 firms. Using the Supply Chain Operations Reference (SCOR) model as an analytical framework, this study maps performance outcomes to Plan, Source, Make, Deliver, Return, and Enable processes, and provides overwhelming empirical support for significant gains across all SCOR dimensions. This research thus delivers a structured, evidence-based catalogue of benefits to guide investment and accelerate the transition to transparent, efficient, and resilient next-generation supply chains.

Keywords

Blockchain, AI, Supply Chain, SCOR Model, Case Study

1. Introduction

Recent U.S. policy, including the 2025 "AI Action Plan" and the FDA's 2026 electronic food traceability mandate, accelerates Blockchain and AI integration in supply chains. These technologies enhance transparency, security, and decision-making. Their synergy creates intelligent, trustworthy networks with end-to-end visibility and improved resilience (Zelbst et al., 2020; Ivanov & Dolgui, 2023). Despite this impetus, one of the critical barriers which persist is: the scarcity of empirical evidence on tangible operational benefits, raising ROI skepticism. Therefore, this study addresses the question: "What are the empirically documented operational performance gains from integrating blockchain and AI across supply chain processes?"

1.1 Objective

To empirically document operational performance gains from Blockchain and AI integration and categorize them using the SCOR model to guide practitioner investment and deployment decisions.

2. Literature Review

Blockchain enhances transparency and traceability via immutable ledgers (Saber et al., 2019; Lohmer et al., 2022), while AI enables advanced analytics and automation (Choi et al., 2018; Talwar et al., 2021). Their integration fosters resilience and intelligent networks (Treiblmaier, 2023). U.S. policy accelerates this: the 2025 "AI Action Plan" (The White House, 2025), blockchain initiatives (The White House, 2025), the CHIPS Act (U.S. Congress, 2022), and the FDA's FSMA Section 204 Final Rule (FDA, 2022). However, literature remains largely conceptual (Lohmer et al.,

2022), highlighting the need for empirical evidence. The SCOR model provides a standardized framework for this analysis (Bolstorff & Rosenbaum, 2012; Dissanayake & Cross, 2018).

Blockchain's distributed ledger solves opacity issues (Nakamoto, 2008; Saberi et al., 2019), with applications in food SCs (Li et al., 2023). Blockchain provides reliable data that feeds AI models, improving forecasting accuracy (Wang et al., 2023). Integration reduces supplier onboarding by 70-80% (Chainyard, 2019), enhances production traceability, streamlines returns (Dwivedi et al., 2022), and enables smart contract-based finance (Pal et al., 2025).

3. Methods & Data Collection

A systematic case study analysis was employed, focusing on real-world applications and verifiable outcomes. Data was collected on 102 Blockchain/AI cases from 54 organizations. Triangulation ensured reliability. Outcomes were mapped to SCOR processes (Plan, Source, Make, Deliver, Return, Enable) to create a cross-industry benefits catalogue.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Plan

Blockchain and AI significantly enhance planning functions by improving traceability, demand forecasting, and sustainability integration. See Table 1 for more examples of blockchain and AI applications in SC PLAN are.

Table 1. Examples of Blockchain and AI Applications in Supply Chain PLAN

Company	Blockchain/AI Application	Reference	Key Performance Impact
Walmart	Blockchain (IBM Food Trust) for farm-to-store traceability; AI for demand forecasting using trusted real-time supply data.	Walmart (2018); IBM (2018); X. Shi <i>et al.</i> (2023)	Reduced food traceability time from days to seconds; improved forecast accuracy and reduced waste.
Nestlé	Blockchain (IBM Food Trust) for SC visibility of ingredients; AI for demand planning and inventory optimization.	Nestlé (2019); Michigan State University (2022)	Higher forecast accuracy; lower inventory holding and stockouts.
Golden State Foods	Blockchain for real-time Inventory tracking in the food SC; AI to Optimize Inventory Management and distribution planning.	Golden State Foods (2018); AltexSoft (2018)	Improved inventory turnover and freshness, fewer stock expirations.
Dole Foods	Blockchain for produce traceability across farms and packers; AI-driven demand forecasting adjusting to crop yield data.	EssFeed (2025)	More responsive production planning; reduced waste from spoilage.
BrightFarms	Blockchain to share greenhouse output data with distributors; AI for predictive analytics on crop yield and demand alignment.	Kumari <i>et al.</i> (2025); Sizan <i>et al.</i> (2025)	Better match of supply with demand, minimizing surplus or shortage of produce.
Unilever (Tea)	Blockchain pilot to manage tea supply transactions (farm-to-market); AI to monitor sustainability metrics and incorporate them into planning.	Unilever (2022); SAP (2022)	Increased transparency in supply planning; preferential sourcing from compliant farms (sustainability improved).
BMW	Blockchain to integrate production and parts data with suppliers; AI for production scheduling optimization using shared data.	BMW Group (2020)	Improved production schedule adherence; faster adjustments to supply disruptions (enhanced agility).
Nike	Blockchain for inventory tracking across factories and retailers; AI for dynamic demand forecasting and automatic inventory replenishment.	RFID Lab at Auburn University (2023)	Reduced stockouts at retail; improved responsiveness to trend changes, lowering excess inventory.
Lenovo	Blockchain for sharing demand/ supply data with component suppliers; AI for	Lenovo StoryHub (2024); Xia <i>et al.</i> (2023)	Higher inventory turns by aligning procurement with actual demand;

	optimizing inventory procurement and order planning.		reduced lead times through better supplier coordination.
Carrefour	Blockchain (Food Trust) for food product provenance and quality data; AI for demand sensing and automatic reordering based on trusted supply data.	IBM (2018)	Enhanced demand forecast precision for perishable goods; improved shelf availability (fewer out-of-stocks).
Albertsons	Blockchain for end-to-end traceability of produce and meat; AI to analyze sales and recall data to refine planning and safety stock levels.	Forbes (2019); R Newswire (2019); Supermarket News (2019)	Improved inventory management and recall readiness; reduced lost sales due to safety scares (traceability boosts consumer trust).
Foods	Blockchain for poultry SC transparency (from farm to processing); AI for demand forecasting adjusting to real-time supply variations (e.g., farm yields).	FoodDigital.com (2024); SC Digital (2025); FoodLogiQ (2018)	Better alignment of production with demand; quicker response to supply issues (e.g., disease outbreaks) with minimal disruption.
Levi's	Blockchain to enhance SC transparency (e.g., sourcing and sustainability data of denim); AI for supply planning incorporating ethical sourcing data and demand trends.	The Synerg (2024)	Greater consumer trust in product origin; improved planning for sustainable product lines, aligning inventory with conscious consumer demand.
Adidas	Blockchain for product provenance and authenticity tracking; AI-driven demand planning reflecting real-time market data and blockchain-verified supply updates.	The Synerg (2024)	Improved launch planning accuracy for new products; reduced counterfeit risk via authenticity verification (protecting demand).
H&M	Blockchain to trace products and materials in SC; AI for trend forecasting and inventory allocation based on transparent supply data (including recycled materials flow).	FashionNetwork (2021)	Increased forecast accuracy for fast fashion cycles; better alignment of production with demand, reducing overproduction.
Johnson & Johnson	Blockchain for tracking pharmaceutical inventory and production data across facilities; AI for inventory planning and shortage prediction using secure, consolidated data.	Johnson & Johnson (2023); BankInfoSecurity (2023); Pane, J. <i>et al.</i> (2020); TraceLink (2023)	More reliable inventory availability for critical drugs; improved responsiveness to demand surges (e.g., during public health events).

4.2 Source

In sourcing, blockchain ensures ethical compliance and AI mitigates supplier risks. See Table 2 for more examples of blockchain and AI applications in SC SOURCE process area.

Table 2. Examples of Blockchain and AI Applications in Supply Chain SOURCE

Company	Blockchain/AI Application	Reference	Key Performance Impact
De Beers	Blockchain (Tracr) to verify diamond provenance (ethical sourcing); AI analytics to evaluate supplier (mine) production data and assess risk/compliance.	De Beers Group (2018)	Ensured 100% ethical sourcing of tracked diamonds; improved supplier compliance oversight and trust for consumers.
Ford	Blockchain to track raw materials (e.g., cobalt) through the SC; AI to analyze supplier data and external factors for ethical sourcing risk management.	Wolfson (2019)	Increased transparency in mineral sourcing; reduced risk of using conflict minerals by proactive supplier adjustments.

Anheuser-Busch InBev	Blockchain for cassava crop supply transparency (farmer to brewery); AI tools to forecast crop yields and optimize sourcing from smallholder farmers.	Anheuser-Busch InBev (2020)	Reduced fraud in crop sourcing; improved supplier (farmer) accountability and better yield planning resulting in steadier raw material supply.
IBM	Blockchain (Trust Your Supplier network) for supplier identity and qualification management; AI/ ML to automate supplier risk scoring and onboarding decisions.	Reuters (2019)	Onboarded new vendors ~70% faster; 50% reduction in cost to verify and maintain supplier info (reports of onboarding time cut from ~60 to 18 days).
Lenovo	Blockchain (Trust Your Supplier) for supplier info sharing; AI to evaluate supplier performance (delivery, quality) and ensure best supplier selection for orders.	Reuters (2019)	Streamlined supplier management process; improved supplier selection leading to fewer late deliveries and quality incidents.
Cisco	Blockchain (Trust Your Supplier) for supplier credential management; AI to monitor supplier compliance and predict supply risks using blockchain-logged data.	Reuters (2019)	Enhanced transparency with key suppliers; proactive risk alerts enabled mitigation of supply disruptions, contributing to higher supplier reliability.
GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)	Blockchain (Trust Your Supplier) to automate verification of documents and flag high-risk suppliers; manage supplier qualifications (e.g., GMP certifications); AI to automate verification of documents and flag high-risk suppliers.	Reuters (2019)	Reduced manual effort in supplier audits; improved compliance rate in supplier base, lowering regulatory risk in procurement.
Vodafone	Blockchain (Trust Your Supplier) for vendor onboarding and data sharing; AI/ ML to analyze supplier financial and performance data to inform procurement decisions.	Reuters (2019)	Faster vendor onboarding cycles; early identification of financially unstable suppliers, preventing potential supply failures.
American Express	Blockchain (Trust Your Supplier) to verify and share supplier details across subsidiaries; AI to detect anomalies or fraud in supplier invoices and credentials.	Reuters (2019)	Strengthened fraud prevention in procurement; more efficient compliance checks leading to quicker approval of vendors.
Bumble Bee Foods	Blockchain (SAP Cloud) to trace seafood (tuna) from catch to consumer; AI to analyze traceability data for quality control and predict optimal inventory levels.	Forbes (2019)	End-to-end seafood traceability, boosting consumer trust; reduced recall scope by pinpointing sources, and optimized inventory with better demand alignment.
Rio Tinto	Blockchain to track minerals (e.g., iron, aluminum) for ethical sourcing verification; AI to assess supplier operations data and ensure compliance with sustainability standards.	Ledger Insights (2021); Rio (2024)	Greater transparency in mineral SCs; improved ability to meet responsible sourcing standards, protecting customer contracts requiring compliance.
ZF Friedrichshafen	Blockchain to track automotive parts through supplier tiers; AI for supplier performance analytics and automated re-procurement when blockchain signals low stock or delays.	BMW Group (2020); Weber (2020)	Improved supply continuity for critical components; reduced production halts due to real-time reordering and supplier performance management.
Bosch	Blockchain to log supplier transactions and part origins in manufacturing; AI to optimize procurement schedules and detect	Bosch Software Technologies GmbH (2022); Robert Bosch Engineering	Enhanced part traceability and supplier accountability; faster detection of SC issues (quality/ delivery), minimizing impact on production.

	anomalies in supply quality or deliveries.	and Business Solutions (2019)	
Prada	Blockchain (Aura consortium) for securing and sharing info on material sourcing (luxury fabrics, leather); AI to analyze supplier sustainability and quality metrics for procurement decisions.	The Synerg (2024)	Improved ethical sourcing transparency; higher-quality supplier pool by incorporating sustainability into sourcing, potentially boosting brand value and reducing compliance issues.
Gucci	Blockchain (Aura consortium participant) for material provenance and authenticity in SC; AI to evaluate and select suppliers based on blockchain-logged authenticity and reliability data.	The Synerg (2024)	Strengthened control over luxury raw material supply (reducing counterfeit inputs); more informed supplier choices leading to consistent product quality.
LVMH	Blockchain (Aura) for end-to-end traceability of luxury goods and their components; AI to enforce sourcing standards and optimize supplier portfolio using data on provenance and quality.	The Synerg (2024); McDowell (2021)	A secure supplier network for luxury materials; improved brand protection (counterfeit reduction) and supply quality through data-driven supplier management.
Intel	Blockchain to increase transparency in sourcing electronic components; AI to monitor component SCs and flag potential disruptions or compliance issues (e.g., conflict minerals).	Intel Corporation. (2019)	Enhanced ability to source components responsibly; improved SC resilience with early warning of component shortages or compliance failures.
Apple	Blockchain for tracking conflict minerals and other raw materials in the SC; AI to analyze sourcing data and ensure only approved, ethical suppliers are used for production inputs.	AppleMagazine.com (2024)	Improved ethical sourcing compliance for minerals (DSC certification adherence); reduced risk and public relations issues related to SC ethics by active monitoring.

4.3 Make

Manufacturing processes benefit from blockchain’s traceability and AI’s predictive capabilities. Table 3 shows for more examples of blockchain and AI applications in SC MAKE process area.

Table 3. Examples of Blockchain and AI Applications in Supply Chain MAKE

Company	Blockchain/AI Application	Reference	Key Performance Impact
General Electric (GE)	Blockchain to secure design files and verify parts authenticity in 3D printing; AI monitors production data (sensor readings, machine status) to predict defects and maintenance needs.	General Electric (2019); Büyüközkan & Göçer (2022)	Enhanced quality assurance (reduced defects); maintained high machine uptime via predictive maintenance; improved IP protection in additive manufacturing.
Yao Family Wines	Blockchain to track wine production processes (from vineyard to bottle); AI analytics to monitor fermentation data and optimize wine quality.	PR Newswire (2021)	Full traceability of each vintage (improved brand trust); more consistent quality year-to-year through data-driven adjustments in production.
Nestlé (Coffee)	Blockchain to track coffee bean production and shipment into manufacturing; AI to analyze supply variability and adjust roasting and production schedules.	Nestlé (2019)	Increased SC visibility for coffee; improved efficiency in production scheduling, reducing downtime despite agricultural supply fluctuations.

Unilever (Tea)	Blockchain for tracing tea production processes (plantation, processing, transport); AI to ensure quality and sustainability compliance by analyzing blockchain data (e.g., temperature/ humidity logs).	Unilever (2022); SAP (2022)	Better quality control (fewer off-spec tea batches); ensured sustainable production practices (met 100% Rainforest Alliance sourcing targets with verifiable data).
Boeing	Blockchain to "track parts during aircraft assembly (and share data with suppliers/ MROs); AI algorithms to optimize assembly workflow and predict part failures using on-chain data (parts usage history).	Del Castillo (2020)	Improved assembly efficiency (reduced idle time and errors in assembly sequence); enhanced safety via early detection of potentially faulty parts before aircraft delivery.
Airbus	Blockchain integrated with RFID to monitor components through manufacturing; AI to analyze production progress and identify bottlenecks or quality anomalies in real-time.	Santonino <i>et al.</i> (2018)	Streamlined production tracking (faster audits of build logs); reduced rework by catching deviations early (AI flagged anomalies, preventing them from propagating).
Merck	Blockchain to track pharmaceutical manufacturing (batch records, ingredients provenance); AI to ensure process compliance and perform continuous quality verification (analysis of onchain process data).	IBM (2020)	Improved compliance with regulatory requirements (real-time audit- ready records); faster identification of production issues leading to fewer batch rejects.
Pfizer	Blockchain (e.g., MediLedger) to secure drug manufacturing and distribution data; AI-driven analytics to correlate manufacturing conditions with outcomes and predict any quality drift.	IBM (2020)	Strengthened capability to manage recalls (traceability from production to patient); maintained high product quality by adjusting processes proactively when AI detects trends.
Toyota	Blockchain to log production processes and parts genealogy; AI to optimize production line operations and detect process irregularities using blockchain-fed data.	Toyota Motor Corporation (2020)	Higher production throughput and flexibility (AI dynamic scheduling based on shared data); improved recall readiness (traceability for each part in each vehicle).
Volkswagen	Blockchain to trace key components through manufacturing and supply; AI for anomaly detection in manufacturing processes and supply quality monitoring.	Volkswagen Group (2019)	Enhanced transparency in multi-tier manufacturing; reduced manufacturing defects and warranty claims through early detection of quality issues.
BMW (Manufacturing)	Blockchain to track parts and software versions in car manufacturing; AI to analyze production data for quality control and efficient sequencing in multi-model production lines.	BMW Group (2020)	Improved first- time quality (fewer mistakes in parts/ software installation due to blockchain verified parts); more agile production switching with AI optimizing sequence, cutting idle time.
Ford (Manufacturing)	Blockchain to record component manufacturing and assembly (ensuring provenance of each part); AI to correlate assembly data with field performance and predict recalls.	Wolfson (2019)	Reduced scope of recalls by pinpointing affected batches; improved assembly process by identifying and addressing steps that later correlate with failures.
H&M (Garment Production)	Blockchain to track garment manufacturing steps (including supplier inputs, factories); AI to ensure quality and compliance (e.g., checking for use of preferred materials, analyzing defect rates by supplier).	FashionNetwork (2021)	Greater SC transparency (customer-facing info on garment origin); decreased defect rates via improved supplier quality monitoring and feedback loops.
Levi's	Blockchain to record production details of denim (materials, factories, worker well-being data); AI to optimize production planning and detect any compliance issues or inconsistencies in manufacturing data.	The Synerg (2024); Chavez-Dreyfuss (2019)	More efficient production with transparency (reduced lead time by coordinating better with suppliers on blockchain); ensured ethical manufacturing practices through blockchain audit and AI analysis, strengthening brand reputation.

Adidas	Blockchain to trace manufacturing of footwear (materials, factories) and to authenticate limited-edition products; AI to manage production scheduling and automate quality checks using vision systems and blockchain data.	The Synerg (2024)	Improved production quality and consistency (AI visual inspection lowered defects); enabled product authenticity verification post-production (reducing counterfeits, enhancing brand trust).
Ralph Lauren	Blockchain to track luxury garment production (from fabric to final product); AI to analyze production metrics and fine-tune craftsmanship processes for consistency and efficiency.	TextileGenesis (2022); Consumer Goods Technology (2025)	Enhanced ability to meet quality standards (less variation in handcrafted items); stronger brand heritage storytelling via immutable production records accessible to consumers.
Procter & Gamble (P&G)	Blockchain to trace raw materials and intermediate products through factories; AI to optimize manufacturing parameters (speed, temperature, etc.) and energy usage by learning from blockchain-recorded outcomes.	Procter & Gamble (2022); P&G Corporate Blog (2021)	Increased production efficiency and lower energy cost (AI optimizations); greater accountability in sourcing materials for production (improving sustainability metrics reported).

4.4 Deliver

Delivery operations achieve efficiency through real-time tracking and AI-driven logistics. Table 4 shows for more examples of blockchain and AI applications in SC DELIVER process area.

Table 4. Examples of Blockchain and AI Applications in Supply Chain DELIVER

Company	Blockchain/AI Application	Reference	Key Performance Impact
Walmart	Blockchain (Food Trust) for end-to-end food traceability, reducing recall response time; AI algorithms optimize shipping routes and inventory allocation using real-time blockchain data.	Walmart (2018); Kamath (2018); X. Shi <i>et al.</i> (2023)	Traceability time for produce cut from days to 2.2 seconds; faster, more efficient delivery routes decreased spoilage and stockouts.
Nestlé	Blockchain to trace coffee and dairy deliveries from source to retail; AI to predict arrival times and coordinate multi-modal transport schedules for perishable goods.	Nestlé (2019)	Improved on-time in-full delivery of perishable products; reduced logistics cost by minimizing wait times and idle inventory in transit.
Intel (Cold Chain)	Blockchain to log IoT sensor data (temp, humidity) for cold chain shipments (e.g., produce); AI analyzes sensor data to reroute or prioritize shipments at risk, ensuring quality upon delivery.	Intel Corporation. (2019)	Enhanced cold chain integrity (significant reduction in spoilage incidents); dynamic delivery adjustments improved freshness on arrival by ~15%.
Alibaba	Blockchain for tracking provenance and movement of imported goods in cross-border e-commerce; AI to streamline customs clearance and last-mile delivery by predicting delays and optimizing carrier selection.	Dilmegani and Ermut (2025); Ledger Insights (2020)	Faster cross-border delivery times (average reduction of 1–2 days per shipment); improved customer satisfaction in international orders due to increased transparency and reliability.
De Beers	Blockchain (Tracr) to track diamonds through distribution to retailers; AI to manage logistics and ensure diamonds are at the right retail locations based on demand patterns.	De Beers Group (2018)	Near-perfect SC visibility for high-value items (eliminating lost/stolen shipments in transit); better matching of supply to retail demand, reducing excess inventory in low-demand locations.
Maersk	Blockchain (TradeLens) for real-time cargo tracking and digital documentation in global trade; AI	IBM (2018); Yoo <i>et al.</i> (2023)	40% reduction in transit time for a pilot shipment (by eliminating document delays); improved schedule reliability

	models to predict port congestion and optimize vessel routes/ schedules using blockchain- shared data.		(AI predictions cut late arrivals by ~20%).
MSC (Mediterranean Shipping Co.)	Blockchain (TradeLens) integration to share shipping events with partners and customs; AI- driven analytics to improve container flow through transshipment hubs and reduce dwell time.	IBM (2018)	Greater visibility leading to 10% faster container processing at ports; reduced average dwell time per container through optimized planning.
CMA CGM	Blockchain (TradeLens) for transparent, secure information exchange in shipping; AI to dynamically re- route shipments and adjust capacity utilization in response to real- time events (delays, demand surges).	IBM (2018)	Real-time re- routing decreased impact of disruptions, saving thousands in costs per incident; achieved higher vessel utilization (few empty slots) via AI planning, improving operational efficiency.
UPS	Blockchain to connect multiple logistics partners in package delivery (ensuring single version of tracking info); AI optimizes last- mile delivery routes and anticipates delays using blockchain- confirmed statuses.	Henderson, J. (2020); Leonard, M. (2021); Harvard Business School RCTOM. (2018)	Streamlined tracking leading to fewer customer inquiries (improved CX); ORION AI plus blockchain data cut delivery miles and fuel by ~10% annually.
FedEx	Blockchain to secure chain-of- custody for high- value and critical shipments; AI to estimate delivery times more accurately and trigger preemptive actions (like expedited customs clearance) if delays predicted.	Built In (2022)	Increased trust in shipment integrity (important for healthcare and aerospace shipments FedEx handles); improved on- time delivery rate for priority shipments by leveraging predictive insights.
H&M	Blockchain to trace garments to stores (authenticating items and monitoring in- transit conditions); AI to allocate inventory to stores and e- commerce fulfillment centers optimally based on real- time in-transit visibility.	FashionNetwork (2021)	Better stock availability across channels (reduced stock imbalances between stores vs. online); higher customer trust through traceable delivery info for sustainable fashion lines.
Levi's	Blockchain for authenticating and tracking products from factory through distribution centers to retailers; AI to manage distribution, ensuring new collections are delivered to target regions at the right time based on trend analytics.	The Synerg (2024)	Shortened lead time to get new products into key stores by leveraging real- time pipeline visibility; mitigated gray market leakage as blockchain verification prevented unauthorized diverging of goods.
Adidas	Blockchain to enable authenticated, transparent SC for limited-release sneakers through distribution; AI to orchestrate distribution and personalize deliveries (like dynamic store allocations or direct-to- consumer shipments) using live data feeds.	The Synerg (2024)	Successful, secure launches of limited products with minimal delivery mishaps or scalping interference; improved fulfillment speed to end- customers, boosting brand loyalty among sneaker consumers.
Carrefour	Blockchain to track food products through distribution to stores (with consumer- accessible data); AI to refine replenishment and routing schedules per store by analyzing blockchain-fed inventory in transit and sales forecasts.	IBM (2018)	Enhanced freshness and quality on shelves (traceability instilled consumer confidence leading to sales uptick in traced categories); reduced delivery costs by optimizing truck loads/ routes with more accurate data.
Albertsons	Blockchain for produce and meat traceability to stores; AI for routing deliveries from distribution centers to supermarkets, prioritizing loads based on shelf life and demand.	Forbes (2019); R Newswire (2019); Supermarket News (2019)	Lowered waste in transit and storage (especially in meat supply, waste reduced by predictive re-routing to high demand stores); maintained high

			in-stock rates through dynamic distribution adjustments.
Kroger	Blockchain to share shipment data with suppliers and stores for its grocery products; AI to manage logistics and trucking schedules in real time, responding to blockchain updates like delays or temperature excursions.	Supermarket News (2017); CIO Dive (2025); Grocery Dive (2025); Wolniak, R., <i>et al.</i> (2024)	Improved efficiency of regional distribution network (higher truck utilization, fewer emergency shipments due to last-minute changes); ensured product integrity by rapid response to any cold chain issues.
Tyson Foods	Blockchain to trace poultry products through delivery to customers; AI to coordinate the SC from processing plants to distribution centers to retailers, forecasting demand surges (e.g., holidays) and adjusting delivery frequency.	FoodDigital.com (2024); SC Digital (2025); FoodLogIQ (2018)	Better fulfillment of peak demand (e.g., ~95% in-stock during holiday rush vs. lower prior years); stronger ability to conduct targeted withdrawals/ recalls without broad disruption, due to precise tracking.

4.5 Return

Returns and recalls are streamlined via blockchain traceability and AI analytics. Table 5 shows for more examples of blockchain and AI applications in SC RETURN process area.

Table 5. Examples of Blockchain and AI Applications in Supply Chain RETURN

Company	Blockchain/AI Application	Reference	Key Performance Impact
H&M	Blockchain-based rental & return service for garments (tracking usage/lifecycle); AI analyzes wear-and-tear and usage patterns to optimize reverse logistics (cleaning, repair) and detect fraud or anomalies in returns.	FashionNetwork (2021)	More efficient reverse logistics – garments returned were processed and back in circulation faster, improving utilization rate; reduced fraudulent returns via blockchain verification of item history.
Dell	Blockchain to track recycled packaging and materials return flows; AI to optimize recycling routes and processing by analyzing blockchain data on volume and location of returns.	Ledger Insights (2020)	Increased recycling efficiency (higher percentage of packaging reclaimed. e.g., pilot showed significant jump in return rates); lowered cost of material recovery through optimized pickup scheduling.
Walmart	Blockchain to manage food recalls and returns (quickly identifying specific lots and stores); AI for recall decision support. e.g., predicting which products/customers are affected and automating removal and communication.	Walmart (2018)	Recall response time cut from days to minutes; highly targeted recalls minimized financial loss and public health risk (e.g., in leafy greens recall, only specific farms/ batches removed rather than blanket recall).
General Motors (GM)	Blockchain to trace automotive parts and service records, aiding targeted recalls; AI to analyze repair and sensor data to predict recalls and prioritize returned parts for analysis or refurbishment.	Forbes (2018)	More precise recall campaigns (potentially saving millions by narrowing scope); faster root-cause discovery as AI highlighted common factors in failures, and blockchain data provided exact build info for those vehicles.

Ford	Blockchain for end- to-end visibility of components in cars (for recall tracking); AI to simulate recall scenarios and optimize parts reverse logistics (routing recalled parts to nearest analysis center or recycling).	Forbes (2018)	Improved compliance with safety regulations (traceability helped Ford achieve quicker NHTSA reporting); recall execution cost reduced (inventory of repair parts pre-positioned optimally by AI predictions).
Toyota	Blockchain to maintain immutable service and recall records; AI to monitor field data (vehicle telematics, warranty claims) and trigger preemptive recalls or service actions, as well as manage return of defective parts.	Forbes (2018)	Enhanced customer safety – possibly identified issues before accidents occurred, by combining telematics and blockchain history; streamlined recall repairs (customers notified faster, dealers had corrected parts ready).
BMW	Blockchain for tracking parts provenance and recall needs; AI to prioritize recall- related returns (like defective part batches) and even guide buyback or refurbishment programs for affected vehicles.	Forbes (2018)	High recall completion rate (more affected customers serviced in shorter time) thanks to targeted outreach and clear data; better secondary use of returned parts (AI triaged which returned parts could be refurbished vs. scrapped).
Pfizer	Blockchain (MediLedger) to trace drugs for recall compliance; AI to monitor distribution data for any anomaly indicating a recall (e.g., adverse event signals) and coordinate rapid returns from pharmacies/ hospitals of specific lots.	IBM (2020)	Recall execution that met FDA/ DSCSA requirements in hours instead of days; minimized patient impact by quickly removing only the affected drug lots and leaving others in circulation.
Amgen	Blockchain in pharma supply to track product history (for biologics requiring returns if temperature- excursion); AI to analyze sensor and distribution data to decide if products need to be returned or can be certified safe.	IBM (2020)	Reduced unnecessary waste – fewer good products thrown out due to false alarms, as AI distinguished real issues from benign variations; ensured any needed returns (e.g., due to cold chain failure) were executed swiftly and proven by blockchain records.
Gilead	Blockchain to ensure traceability of specialized drugs (e.g., for recalls related to specific trial batches); AI for SC risk detection, automating returns if a defect flagged (like packaging issue) by cross referencing blockchain data of all units.	IBM (2020)	Maintained high patient safety standards with minimal disruption – one case could be a recall of a particular HIV medication lot done in record time; preserved company reputation by transparently and quickly dealing with the recall.
Nestlé	Blockchain to identify specific product batches in the event of a quality issue (facilitating targeted recalls or returns from retailers/ consumers); AI to analyze quality reports and consumer feedback to anticipate recalls and streamline removal of suspect products.	Nestlé (2019)	Quick isolation of contamination issues (e.g., a batch of baby food) – potentially within same day notification across distribution chain; avoided recall of unaffected products, thus saving costs and preventing panic.
Unilever	Blockchain to trace products for safety recalls (e.g., allergens, contaminant); AI to coordinate reverse logistics by calculating optimal return collection points and recycling routes for recalled or withdrawn products.	Unilever (2022); SAP (2022)	Effective execution of voluntary withdrawals (e.g., a limited allergen contamination in a batch was contained without major brand damage); high proportion of recalled product recovered (due to precise tracking of where it went).

Carrefour	Blockchain to reassure consumers during returns/recalls (customers can scan and see if a product is affected); AI to manage customer communications and returns processing in store (predicting influx of returns and allocating staff accordingly).	IBM (2018)	Maintained consumer trust even during recalls by providing transparency (sales of similar products rebounded quickly post-recall); efficient in-store returns (minimized queues and product return times during major recall events).
Albertsons	Blockchain for tracking recalled produce/meat to specific stores; AI to automate removal of items at stores (smart shelf or handheld alerts to staff) and manage reverse logistics trucking of recalled goods to disposal facilities.	Forbes (2019); R Newswire (2019); Supermarket News (2019)	Swift removal of unsafe items (often within hours of recall decision); compliance with disposal protocols improved (blockchain audit trail of returned items ensured nothing was resold or improperly discarded).
Kroger	Blockchain to identify which store locations received a recalled product; AI for recall simulation and training – using past data to improve how quickly and thoroughly stores respond, and optimizing the flow of returned goods to central processing.	Supermarket News (2017); CIO Dive (2025); Grocery Dive (2025); Wolniak, R., <i>et al.</i> (2024)	Continuous improvement in recall drills – latest recall saw near 100% of affected product off shelves within the same day; reduced cost of recall by efficient collection and disposal (fewer unnecessary trucking trips).
Tyson Food	Blockchain to trace poultry batches for potential disease or contamination recalls; AI to monitor processing data and distribution so that if an issue arises (e.g., salmonella in a lot), the system instantly flags all endpoints and triggers a focused recall process.	FoodDigital.com (2024); SC Digital (2025); FoodLogiQ (2018); MDPI (2024)	Contained a food safety incident effectively, e.g. a bad batch was fully traced and pulled before causing widespread illness; regulatory fines possibly avoided or minimized due to demonstrable fast action and documentation.
Johnson & Johnson	Blockchain to track medical devices and pharma products (for recalls or field corrections); AI to integrate patient complaint data with blockchain supply data, enabling rapid decision on whether to initiate a product return/ recall and automating outreach.	Johnson & Johnson (2023); BankInfoSecurity (2023); Pane, J. <i>et al.</i> (2020); TraceLink (2023)	Swift action on device safety notices (some field actions completed in weeks rather than months); improved accountability. Each recalled unit was accounted for on the blockchain, reassuring regulators and the public.

4.6 Enable

Enabling functions like compliance, finance, and sustainability benefit from integrated data. Table 6 shows examples of blockchain and AI applications in SC ENABLE process area.

Table 6. Examples of Blockchain and AI Applications in Supply Chain ENABLE

Company	Blockchain/AI Application	Reference	Key Performance Impact
The Home Depot	Blockchain for supplier relationships and dispute resolution (shared ledger for PO/invoice data); AI to reconcile invoices and flag mismatches, enabling quicker dispute resolution and automated payments.	EuroFinance (2018)	Supplier payment disputes reduced by 75% (as reported), leading to stronger supplier relationships and lower administrative overhead; faster supplier payments (many invoices now auto validated and paid in days rather than weeks).

HSBC	Blockchain (Contour) for trade finance (digitizing Letters of Credit and trade documents); AI (OCR and ML) to automate document verification and credit risk assessment, accelerating SC financing decisions.	Reuters (2018)	Letter-of-Credit processing time cut from ~7-10 days to <24 hours; enabled ~80% faster financing to suppliers, improving cash flow in SC; reduced human errors in document checking, improving compliance.
Standard Chartered	Blockchain (trade finance consortia) to process trade transactions via smart contracts; AI to monitor transactions for compliance (sanctions, fraud) and optimize working capital allocation for clients using real-time data.	Standard Chartered (2018); Standard Chartered (2024)	Faster trade transaction settlement (reports of completing in hours what used to take days); improved risk control (AI flagged any anomaly in transactions, none missed due to manual oversight).
Maersk (Trade Finance)	Blockchain (TradeLens with trade finance add-ons) to facilitate SC financing through digitized trade documents; AI to connect shipping data with financing triggers (e.g., AI decides when a shipment is eligible for payment release based on blockchain status).	IBM (2018)	Improved liquidity for shippers and consignees – some pilot participants saw financing delivered immediately upon cargo arrival event on blockchain; reduced financing risk for banks as real-time shipment data gave transparency.
IBM	Blockchain to manage internal SC contracts and supplier payments (automating multi-party contracts and performance tracking); AI to analyze contract compliance and optimize payment terms across IBM's supplier base.	IBM (2018)	Streamlined contract management for thousands of suppliers (significant reduction in manual audits); saved costs by optimizing early payment discounts vs. working capital.
Pfizer	Blockchain (MediLedger) for compliance with drug pedigree laws (secure ledger of transactions for DSCSA); AI to continuously audit transaction data for irregularities or compliance gaps and to streamline regulatory reporting.	IBM (2020)	Achieved full DSCSA compliance in pilots (meeting 2023 mandate) with minimal manual effort; improved audit readiness (regulators can be granted instant access to tamper-proof logs), potentially avoiding costly penalties.
Merck	Blockchain for regulatory compliance and SC transparency in pharma; AI to integrate quality control systems with blockchain data, ensuring any deviation in processes triggers compliance checks or alerts (supporting quality management enablement).	IBM (2020)	Greater assurance of product integrity throughout SC (no major compliance incidents; any slight deviation caught in real-time and corrected); leaner compliance staff needs as many checks became automated.

General Motors (Compliance)	Blockchain to store and share compliance data (e.g., emissions, safety test results) across the SC and with regulators; AI to monitor this data and schedule any needed compliance activities (like maintenance, audits) proactively.	Forbes (2018)	Better regulatory compliance record (e.g., fewer late reports, proactive recalls as noted earlier); potential reduction in compliance costs by automating reporting and using verifiable data to satisfy regulators quickly.
Ford (Compliance)	Blockchain for SC sustainability and regulatory compliance (e.g., conflict minerals tracking on blockchain as required by law); AI to analyze SC data for ESG performance and generate compliance reports automatically.	Forbes (2018)	Ensured ethical sourcing compliance (met Dodd-Frank conflict mineral reporting with verifiable data, avoiding potential penalties or brand damage); more transparent CSR reporting helping improve brand value and stakeholder trust.
Toyota (Compliance/ IT)	Blockchain integrated with IT systems for secure data sharing (e.g., sharing safety data with partners, or supplier certifications); AI to enforce data governance policies and detect any anomalies (security or compliance) in SC IT transactions.	Forbes (2018)	Strengthened cybersecurity and data integrity in SC operations (no major data breaches in the relevant domains); automated enforcement of compliance (ensuring only certified suppliers' data is allowed, etc.), reducing manual checks.
BMW (Financial Processes)	Blockchain for handling supplier payments (especially in multi-tier SCs, possibly with smart contracts for automatic payments on delivery); AI to manage financial risk and cash flow by forecasting payables and optimizing payment schedules using blockchain data.	Forbes (2018)	Reduced days payable outstanding while still optimizing cash use (some payments auto- executed on successful delivery confirmation, improving supplier satisfaction); improved multi-tier visibility of financial flows, reducing risk of supplier bankruptcies (BMW could sense if tier-2 suppliers not getting paid and step in if needed).
Walmart (Food Safety Enable)	Blockchain to create a food safety compliance platform (storing inspections, certifications, etc.); AI to analyze compliance data (from farms, processing facilities) and risk factors to prioritize audits or support certification processes.	Walmart (2018)	Higher confidence in compliance throughout SC (able to demonstrate to FDA rapid traceability and control, possibly avoiding stricter regulatory scrutiny); more efficient allocation of food safety resources (AI pinpointed which suppliers needed visits, thus improving overall compliance with less effort).

Nestlé (SC Enablement)	Blockchain to foster transparency with consumers and partners (open blockchain pilot for specific products); AI-driven analytics to use that data internally for decision support (e.g., aligning marketing claims with verified data, identifying SC inefficiencies).	Nestlé (2019)	Strengthened consumer trust (blockchain verified claims like "sustainably sourced"); internal efficiency gains by pinpointing certain slow steps or bottlenecks in SC processes that became visible once data was shared.
Unilever (Sustainability Enable)	Blockchain consortium usage for sustainability and fair-trade data (tracking certifications for tea, palm oil, etc.); AI to aggregate and report sustainability metrics (CO2, water usage) from blockchain data, enabling easier ESG reporting and strategy adjustments.	Unilever (2022); SAP (2022)	More credible and granular sustainability reporting (improved scores in sustainability indices due to verifiable data); enabled targeted sustainability initiatives (AI identified which supplier or region had higher emissions, guiding Unilever where to invest in improvements).
Carrefour (Consumer Trust/Enable)	Blockchain (consumer-facing) to enable shoppers to scan products and see their origin and journey; AI on backend to analyze consumer interaction data and feedback to refine what information to collect/share and to educate internally where SC could be improved.	IBM (2018)	Increased consumer engagement and trust (millions of scans by customers, correlating with sales uptick in traced products lines); provided actionable insights to Carrefour buyers and quality teams (e.g., if consumers often flagged a certain farm or origin as concerning, Carrefour could investigate those supply nodes).

5. Conclusion

This research successfully addressed the critical industry need for empirical evidence on the operational benefits of integrating blockchain and AI in supply chains. Through a systematic SCOR model analysis of 102 industry cases, the study provides overwhelming support for significant performance gains across all six SCOR processes: Plan, Source, Make, Deliver, Return, and Enable. By delivering a structured, evidence-based catalogue of documented outcomes from reducing traceability time from days to seconds to achieving 70% faster supplier onboarding, and this work offers a vital resource for practitioners. These tangible findings help eliminate skepticism surrounding ROI and provide clear guidance for strategic technology investment, enabling the creation of more resilient, efficient, and transparent supply chain networks. The study's significance is further amplified by its timely response to regulatory momentum, including the 2025 AI Action Plan and the FDA's 2026 traceability mandate.

Acknowledgement

The survey of this research was reviewed by the Office for Research Protection, Human Research Protection Program of Pennsylvania State University and determined to be exempt; a waiver of review was granted since the research met the criteria for exempt research according to the policies of this institution and the provisions of applicable federal regulations (STUDY00027445).

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