



SUPPLY CHAIN & OPERATIONS

Roundtable Summary

Equity Exchange · July 2026

"Everyone's got the same challenges, that's what life is. But everyone's also got ideas about how they'll overcome them."

All contributions anonymised.
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"Resilience isn't dramatic. It's the boring admin nobody wanted to do, finished six months before you needed it."



AI & AUTOMATION

AI Works Best Under the Hood

AI adoption has moved from nice-to-have to baseline in job specs this year. The real risk isn't the tool, it's losing critical thinking. It works best embedded quietly in a consistent process, not applied inconsistently.



REGULATION

Compliance Is a Hidden Tax on SMEs

DRS, EPR and packaging rules were discussed. Larger businesses notice the same changes but have more resources, while smaller teams absorb them without a dedicated function.



TALENT

Growth Doesn't Need a Ladder

Discussion around building depth through projects, secondments and international moves rather than assuming growth only means a new title. A shortage of experienced middle-management talent was flagged as a potential structural gap currently



FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility Is a Retention Lever

Views were genuinely split: some value spontaneous, in-person collaboration; others need school-hours flexibility to stay in the industry at all. Both experienced and younger talent are affected.



RESILIENCE

Resilience Is Built in Advance

Tariff shocks and duty changes were absorbed more easily by businesses that had already digitised and standardised their processes. Resilience is boring admin done early, not a scramble under pressure.



CULTURE

Connection Doesn't Happen by Default

The session closed on protecting in-person connection deliberately, within teams and across the wider trade. It no longer happens by accident, so businesses now have to design it in.