

The \$3 Part

An industry-insider post that names an overlooked problem in the AI infrastructure buildout and offers practical advice, positioning the CEO as an operator who sees the whole supply chain.

Format: LinkedIn post · **Voice:** CEO of a global electronic components distributor (fictional)



Chief Executive Officer

Global electronic components distributor

Everyone wants to talk about GPUs. I want to talk about the \$3 part.

Last quarter, a customer building out their AI data center capacity had everything lined up: the accelerators, the racks, the power contract. The site sat idle for weeks anyway. The holdup wasn't a chip generating headlines. It was a power management component that had gone on allocation.

This is the part of the AI story that doesn't get talked about, because the build-out runs on thousands of unglamorous parts: connectors, capacitors, power ICs, cooling components and transformers. For some of them, lead times are now measured in years, not weeks. When one is missing, nothing ships.

Three things I've seen separate the teams that deliver on schedule from the ones that don't:

1. **They design in availability, not just performance.** The best engineering teams check the supply picture before they lock the bill of materials.
2. **They qualify a second source early,** before they need it rather than during a shortage.
3. **They treat their distributor as a planning partner, not a vendor.** The earlier we see your roadmap, the more options we can protect.

AI is changing what's possible. Supply chains will decide how fast it happens.

What's the most unexpected bottleneck you've hit in an infrastructure build?

Written by Katharine English. The executive, company and anecdotes are fictional; this post was created as a portfolio sample.