



Reshaping supply chains for a sustainable future



Ever wondered how we can make our world more sustainable? The circular economy in supply chains and logistics might be the answer.

This innovative approach is transforming how we at Unipart Logistics support our customers to produce, use, and dispose of goods sustainably. We look at how this concept is creating a greener future and why it matters.

Have you ever wondered what happens to all the stuff we buy after we're done with it? Most of the time, it ends up in landfills, contributing to a growing waste problem. But what if there was a better way?

At Unipart Logistics, we think the answer lies in the circular economy – a game-changing approach that's revolutionising how we think about supply chains and logistics.

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What is a circular economy?

Most current systems follow a "take-make-dispose" model to goods. On the whole, we extract raw materials, make products, use them, and then throw them away. This linear economy is causing serious environmental issues. The UN predicts that global waste will grow from 2.3 billion tonnes in 2023 to 3.8 billion tonnes by 2050¹.

The circular economy offers a solution. Instead of throwing things away, we design products to be reused, repaired, or recycled. This keeps materials in use for longer, reducing waste and the need for new resources.

The European Parliament² explains, "In practice, it [circular economy] implies reducing waste to a minimum. When a product reaches the end of its life, its materials are kept within the economy wherever possible thanks to recycling. These can

be productively used again and again, thereby creating further value."

How does it work in supply chain and logistics?

Supply chains and logistics are all about getting products from manufacturers to consumers. Circular economy practices in supply chain and logistics include the 4Rs:

- Reduce: Creating products that use fewer resources and last longer.
- Resell: Setting up systems to sell used products.
- Repair: Making it easier to fix products instead of replacing them.
- Recycle: Ensuring materials can be recycled into new products.



**Your choices as a consumer
can drive positive change!**

Why should we care?

The circular economy isn't just good for the planet – it's also creating opportunities for the future. Here's why it matters:

Job opportunities: As companies adopt circular practices, they'll need people with new skills. The European Parliament estimates that the circular economy could create 700,000 jobs in the EU by 2030!

Innovation: Circular thinking drives creativity. From designing products that are easy to repair to creating new recycling technologies, there's plenty of room for fresh ideas.

Fighting climate change: By reducing the need for new materials and energy-intensive manufacturing, the circular economy could cut global greenhouse gas emissions by 39%³. That's huge for tackling climate change!

Saving resources: Did you know that only 7.2% of the 100 billion tons of virgin materials we extract from the earth each year make it back into the economy⁴? A circular approach could reduce material consumption by one-third, helping preserve our planet's resources.

Consumer power: As more people learn about the circular economy, they're choosing to support businesses that are environmentally responsible. Your choices as a consumer can drive positive change!

What is Unipart Logistics doing to support the circular economy?

Supply chain and logistics companies are already embracing circular principles, and at Unipart Logistics, we have worked with companies to:

- Cover the entire lifecycle of portable electronic products, aiming to maximise asset value and circularity
- Play an important role in the company's handset trade-in process, grading, screening, and repair ahead of disposition and resale
- Identify and remove single-use plastics from all operations - eliminating 127 tonnes from the supply chain for just one customer
- Develop a sustainable packaging solution, to help remove those single-use plastics
- Achieve zero to landfill for our customers
- Use fully electric trucks to drive down environmental impact

Challenges and opportunities

Whilst the work we are already doing is a great start, the UK government has set ambitious targets to achieve zero avoidable waste by 2050 and eliminate avoidable plastic waste by the end of 2042⁵.



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Implementing a circular economy isn't easy. It requires rethinking how we design, use and re-use products alongside changing consumer habits, and creating new systems for collecting and processing used goods. But these challenges also present opportunities for innovation and leadership, especially in supply chain and logistics!

Your role in the circular economy

We all have the power to shape the future and be more environmentally conscious. Here's how you can get involved in circular economy practices:

- Learn more about circular economy principles and share your knowledge with others.
- Support businesses that embrace circular practices.
- Repair and reuse items when possible, instead of buying new ones.
- Consider a career in fields that support the circular economy, like sustainable design or green logistics.

The circular economy in supply chains and logistics is more than just a trend – it's a necessary shift towards a more sustainable future. By understanding and supporting these principles, you're helping to create a world that's not only more efficient but also kinder to our planet. So, are you ready to join the circular revolution?

About the author

Adam Jones is an experienced sales and marketing director, with a career spanning over 15 years, and over 10 years in supply chain globally. With a focus on supply chain reliance and managing accelerated growth within organisations. He is currently Director of Business Development & Sector Strategies for Unipart Logistics.

Unipart is a leading provider of supply chain solutions and performance improvement technologies. It has deep expertise and breadth of capabilities in seven core sectors – automotive, rail and public transport, technology, healthcare, aerospace and defence, e-commerce, consumer and retail, and industrial sectors.

Unipart is committed to setting the highest standards for colleague safety and wellbeing and sustainability. In 2023 it became the first organisation ever to be recognised with a world-class safety, wellbeing and sustainability 'treble' by the British Safety Council and had its ambitious near-term and net-zero targets validated by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi).



So, are you ready to join the circular revolution?

Information and suggested further reading:

Find out more:

Sources

1. UN environment programme: News, Stories & Speeches / press release (28/02/2024): [World must move beyond waste era and turn rubbish into resource: UN Report](#)
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4. Circle Economy: News (09/02/2024): [Cutting material consumption by one-third is key to tackling climate change: study](#)
5. Gov.UK: Environment / 25 Year Environment plan (17/02/2023): [Policy paper- At a glance: summary of targets in our 25 year environment plan](#)

Articles

Unipart: [Keeping devices working longer makes environmental and financial sense](#)

Unipart: [Circular Economy's Impact on the Tech Sector](#)

Information

Unipart Group: [Home - Unipart Logistics](#)

Unipart: [Environment and Sustainability](#)

Careers

Unipart: <https://www.unipartjobs.com/>

Generation Logistics: [Generation Logistics | Where Talent Meets Opportunity](#)

