



EFFICIENCY in MOTION

John Coyle, Director of U.S. Production Operations and Corporate Supply Chain at former Marathon Oil, is a cross-functional supply chain and business leader with a strong performance track record and experience across the whole function. Throughout his career, he has focused on unlocking value in the supply chain through collaboration and ensuring the integration of business processes across internal and external stakeholders.

John Coyle's career spans military service, leadership in supply chain management, and strategic transformation within the oil and gas industry. His journey began in the military, where he served in the 1st Battalion Parachute Regiment in the UK, completing four deployments across Northern Ireland, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

A large oil drilling rig stands in the center of a vast, green field under a clear blue sky. The rig is tall and complex, with various structures and pipes. In the background, there are some smaller buildings and structures, possibly part of the drilling site. The overall scene is a mix of industrial and natural elements.

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Later, he transitioned to civilian life and assumed material and logistics management roles, initially with Woodgroup and Shell, where he contributed to onshore and offshore operations in the North Sea.

Empowerment and accountability

In 2011, he joined Marathon Oil as the UK procurement and shore-based manager, overseeing material and equipment acquisition, inventory, logistics, and shipping. As his career progressed and his responsibilities increased, he moved to the United States in 2015 to lead supply chain management for the Eagle Ford asset.

“My role required handling decentralized operations, which later evolved toward a centralized model after Marathon’s acquisition of assets in the Permian Basin,” he explains, adding that his leadership style helped the team to increase efficiency and adaptability. “I believe in empowerment and accountability. I try to encourage team ownership and foster a continuous improvement mindset that focuses on innovation.”

One notable initiative Coyle championed was the creation of a Commercial Community of Practice (COP) in 2023, designed to foster cross-functional engagement and knowledge sharing among different supply chain functions. “Providing more opportunities for cross-learning across the different functional groups is important - supply chain doesn’t differ whether you are sourcing drilling conditions or production material equipment services,” he points out.

He further explains that the COP provided Marathon employees with leadership opportunities and has helped standardize best practices across the company, enhancing collaboration and efficiency.



Proud achievements

When asked about his most notable achievements throughout the years at former Marathon Oil, he says: "Of course, there are the standard achievements and multiple initiatives aimed at streamlining operations and reducing costs. Some stand out - a major achievement was outsourcing material management and warehouse services to DNOW, a leading global distributor to the oil and gas and industrial market."

"This allowed Marathon to maintain a leaner inventory without compromising on timely access to critical materials, and, importantly, facilitated a smooth staff reduction process, with many Marathon employees transitioning to DNOW roles."

He further mentions a major project in transportation, where inefficiencies and fraud were

addressed by implementing a Transportation Management System (TMS), allowing Marathon to monitor logistics more effectively and ensure compliance. "As a result, Marathon was able to strengthen its relationships with vendors and achieve operational cost savings."

"Implementation of the outsource model, leveraging technology to manage trucks, the integration of an inflationary model and helping with planning and capital allocation decisions, were all important initiatives with major impacts to the business - not only on how we make decisions, but on our bottom line."

Environmental and social considerations

Needless to say, the ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) principles and their integration into Marathon's supply chain were also looked at very carefully under Coyle's management.

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“The ESG principles affected every part of the supply chain and we launched several initiatives to support our operations teams,” he says, highlighting the investment the company made in electrifying its gas compressors to significantly reduce its carbon footprint.

Another focus was on water savings and recycling. “Our operations used a lot of water and we looked at how to reduce consumption and increase recycling rates. To this end, my team collaborated closely with operations and vendors to extend our water recycling efforts, setting ambitious targets for reducing freshwater consumption in hydraulic fracturing operations.”

“By partnering with external water transfer companies and negotiating shared resource agreements, we managed to enhance our recycling capabilities, a formidable achievement,” he affirms, adding that sustainability initiatives also included optimizing truck routes to reduce fuel consumption, another significant environmental initiative his team helped to promote.

Leveraging artificial intelligence

Looking to the future, Coyle admits that artificial intelligence (AI) applications within sup-

ply chain management will play a significant role to increase efficiency. “AI will certainly help to enhance tracking, data validation, and vendor compliance.”

“Also, automating data processing will reduce human errors and allow companies to reduce manual oversight while maintaining accurate records. This will make the supply chain team more agile and capable of handling large-scale operations more easily.”

In terms of commercial strategy, Coyle has redefined the approach to vendor relationships by implementing a holistic commercial role model. This structure allowed supply chain professionals to engage across the full lifecycle of vendor relationships, from contract drafting to performance management.

Coyle points out that by having a single point of contact throughout the process, vendors build stronger relationships with companies, and internal teams gain deeper insights into both market conditions and vendor performance. “This structure resulted in higher operational efficiency and stronger vendor partnerships, which has clearly benefited the company.”

People - the key asset

Against his wide-ranging experience and proven track record in the supply chain management, there is one aspect that Coyle is particularly proud of - the impact he has made on his people, helping them to discover their full potential and to grow. Through his empowerment-focused management style, Coyle has cultivated a collaborative team culture that emphasizes continuous improvement and accountability.

His own career, which spans material control, procurement, contracts, and supply chain management, serves as a model of versatility that he aims to promote in his team. “A comprehensive skill set positions anyone well for future opportunities, be it in oil and gas or any other industry,” he says.

“In terms of helping employees to grow, I feel mentoring is very important. Not only does it create the right culture of employee support and cooperation but also helps to foster a high level of retention and also prepares the next generation of leaders. Seeing my people develop and grow their professional careers under my leadership has been the most rewarding achievement of all.”