FROM THE FIELD

How F*cked Up Are We? The Most Honest Question in Supply Chain Planning

Christian Kroschl · 28 October 2025

Article on kroschl.com · Read on LinkedIn

AFTER WRITING ABOUT AI-NATIVE PLANNING LAST WEEK, ONE QUESTION KEPT ECHOING IN MY MIND.

Not from a conference or a whitepaper — but from the field.
From a Head of Supply Chain of a global top 5 pharma company, who asked me, fifteen years ago after an initial SC diagnosis

“Christian, how fucked up are we?” Still the most honest question I’ve ever heard.

Fifteen years later, the symptoms haven’t changed.
Technology moved forward — but it didn’t change how the company steers its supply chain.

Tens of millions spent.
Still not a single S&OP cycle fully run in the tool.

WHY?
Ownership = no
Processes and rules across SC, Manufacturing, CMOs, QA/QC, and R&D — not aligned
The function itself? Stripped and hubbed outside the country

The classic pattern.

LESSON
Where there’s no margin pressure, there’s little anxiety for long-term supply chain value.
Until the next crisis hits.

And then the question returns:
“How fucked up are we?”

One thing, though, remains constant
While structures shift and systems come and go, planners, schedulers, and expediters keep it running — quietly, relentlessly, every day.

They’re the real stabilizers.
The local heroes of every supply chain.

THE REAL CHALLENGE
How do we improve when leadership still believes supply chains should be automatic, autonomous — and that AI will somehow replace the very people holding it together?

#supplychain #leadership #execution