



GLOBAL C-SUITE SUPPLY CHAIN & PROCUREMENT APPOINTMENTS

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H1 2026

*A data-led review of CSCO, CPO & COO
external appointments in the first half
of 2026*

INTRODUCTION

H1 2026 has been an even more uncertain period for global Supply Chains than the year preceding it.

Following a highly optimistic Q1, the market saw a significant shift. Escalation of conflict in the Gulf, and financial market instability led to a highly uncertain hiring market - but created yet again a strong priority on Supply Chain and Procurement resilience. Companies are being forced to make rapid, high-stakes decisions on their networks - creating subsequent hiring demands.

Following the interest in our 2025 report, this year, Pod Talent have tracked the movement of the top Supply Chain and Procurement leadership in the market, enabling a comprehensive analysis of 111 global leadership appointments made between January and June 2026 – 50% ahead of H1 2025, despite a slowdown in hiring in Q2.

For analytical consistency, the dataset includes only external appointments, while internal promotions have been deliberately excluded.

The following document explores the key data, trends, and insights extrapolated from these movements, and considers their broader implications for how businesses select, shape and deploy Supply Chain and Procurement leadership.

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ABOUT POD TALENT

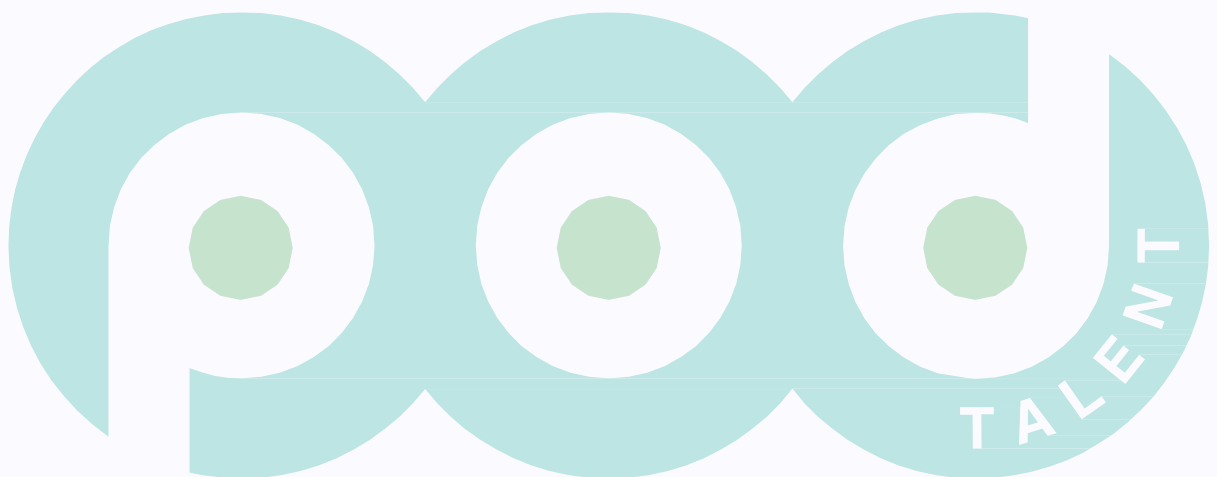
Pod Talent is a specialist global Supply Chain & Procurement Talent Partner recruiting exclusively across the end-to-end Supply Chain covering Plan, Source, Make, Deliver and Digitalise.

We've placed over 1000 supply chain professionals across 25 countries into brands both big and small, ranging from Fortune 500, FTSE 100 multinationals to VC and PE backed start-up businesses.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

H1 2026 has been a highly volatile six months for global Supply Chain and Procurement leadership.

Against a backdrop of geopolitical and financial market instability, organisations have been forced to make rapid decisions on their leadership benches - accelerating critical hires in some months, and pausing processes entirely in others.

Despite this volatility, demand for senior Supply Chain and Procurement leadership has remained resilient. Pod Talent tracked 111 external global appointments across CSCO, CPO and COO positions between January and June 2026 - 50% ahead of H1 2025's 74 appointments, driven by an exceptionally strong Q1 that more than offset a sharp Q2 slowdown.

Key insights from H1 2026 include:

- **Procurement leadership is back in focus**, with CPO appointments making up 37% of all moves tracked - more than double the 17.6% share seen across all of 2025 - as organisations prioritised leaders who could actively manage tariff exposure, cost and supplier risk.
- **Consumer-facing sectors continued to dominate hiring**, with Food & Beverage (25%) again the largest single category. However, Industrial (15%) and Pharma & Life Sciences (14%) industries saw significant increases on 2025.
- **The US remained the dominant global hub**, accounting for 62 of 111 appointments tracked, with Europe a distant but active second. APAC and the GCC stayed comparatively quiet, with GCC hiring directly suppressed by regional conflict.
- **Gender diversity improved meaningfully**, with women representing 26.1% of external appointments, up from 17.4% in 2025 – and notably, 39% of CPO appointments went to female leaders, a huge reversal from just 8% the year before.

We hope this report provides a valuable reference point as you plan for the second half of 2026 and consider your leadership bench moving into 2027.

METHODOLOGY

Across H1 2026, the Pod Talent team have identified and tracked the movements of Global Supply Chain, Procurement and Operations leaders.

These moves were captured through a combination of methods, including manual LinkedIn monitoring, news and press release alerts, AI-driven tracking of company announcements, and ongoing market intelligence gathered through the global networks of our specialist headhunters.

The appointments tracked covered a wide range of job titles, but focussed exclusively on top global leadership roles across Supply Chain and Procurement. This included SVP-level leaders in which they were the top leader within the organisation, and Chief Operating Officers in which no Chief Supply Chain Officer or similar role exists.

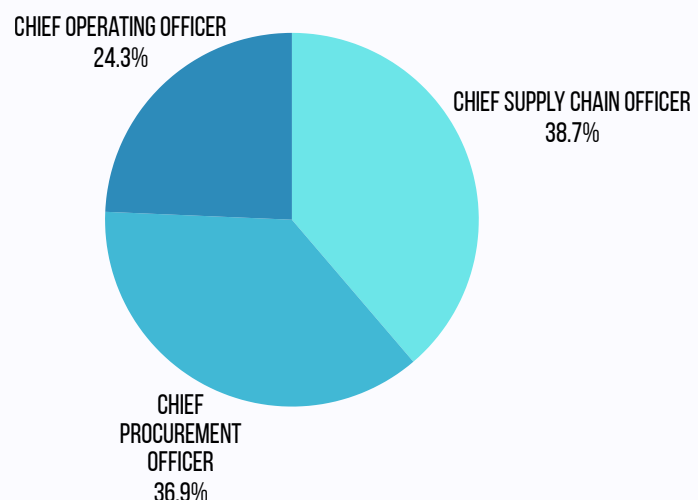
These were across major multinational organisations, as well as smaller Private Equity portfolio companies, privately owned organisations, and fast-growth mid-market businesses. Given the volume of smaller entities in the wider market, leadership appointments to organisations with revenues under \$50m were excluded to ensure the dataset remained focussed. The vast majority of appointments were in organisations with multi-billion dollar revenue.

Throughout the period, we monitored both internal appointments and external hires, sharing monthly updates with our network. In parallel, we maintained a separate, structured dataset focused exclusively on external appointments, enabling us to analyse macro trends and extract higher-level insights across the half.

In total, we tracked 111 external global leadership appointments between January and June 2026, capturing a consistent set of datapoints for each appointment to support structured and comparable analysis:

The report below examines when, where and in which industries these leaders were hired; the extent of cross-industry versus like-for-like movement;

and the gender diversity trends observed within global Supply Chain and Procurement leadership appointments.

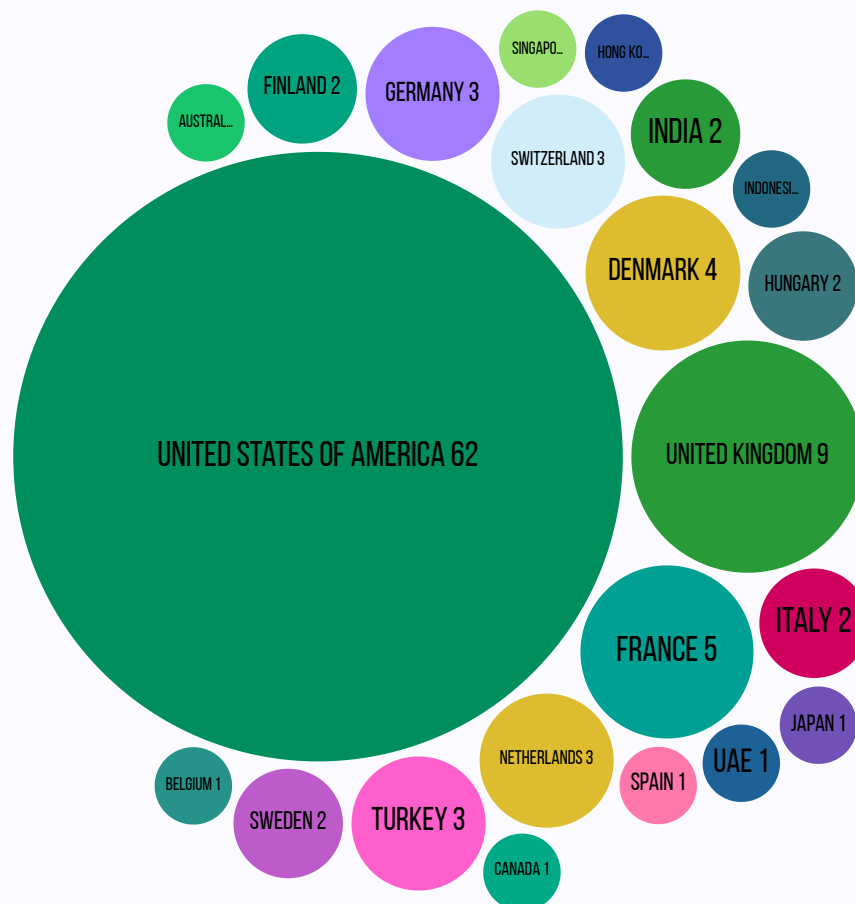


GEOGRAPHY

This year, we measured senior Supply Chain and Procurement appointments across every major region of the world - offering a real-time picture of global leadership appointments anywhere in the market, even as geopolitical conditions shifted sharply through the half.

Across the 111 total external appointments tracked between January and June 2026:

- 63 were in North America, reinforcing its position as the most active global hub for senior Supply Chain hiring, with the US alone accounting for 62 appointments.
- 40 were in Europe, with the UK, France and the DACH/Nordics cluster remaining the most active markets on the continent.
- 7 appointments were recorded in APAC, spanning India, Singapore, Australia, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Japan - a region that stayed operationally active but continued to see limited C-suite placements based in-region.
- 1 move took place across the GCC, reflecting the direct impact of regional conflict on senior hiring activity through the first half of the year.

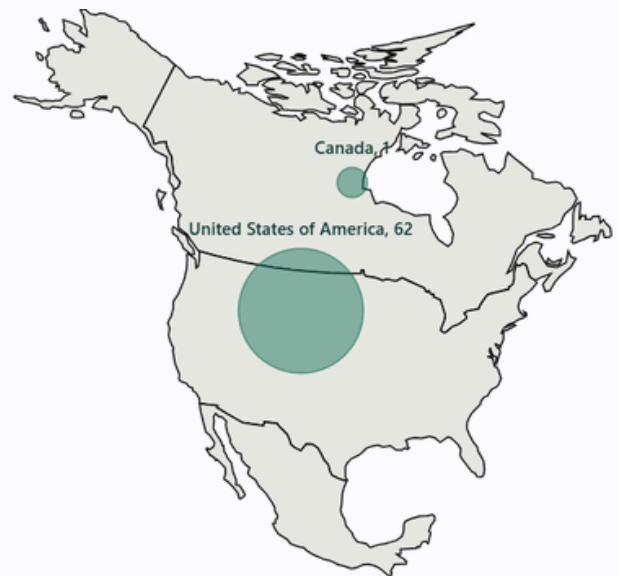


- Methodological Note: because our research relies on English-language sources and predominantly European and US tools, leadership moves in non-English-speaking markets are likely underrepresented. As in 2025, we recorded no appointments in China or Korea - likely a reflection of limited language coverage rather than genuine market inactivity.

NORTH AMERICA

A substantial number of appointments were made in the US (62), spanning both major multinationals and domestically-focused organisations. This represents 56% of all appointments tracked, reinforcing the US as the most active global market for senior Supply Chain and Procurement hiring - even as confidence wavered through the middle of the half. In addition, one appointment was made in Canada.

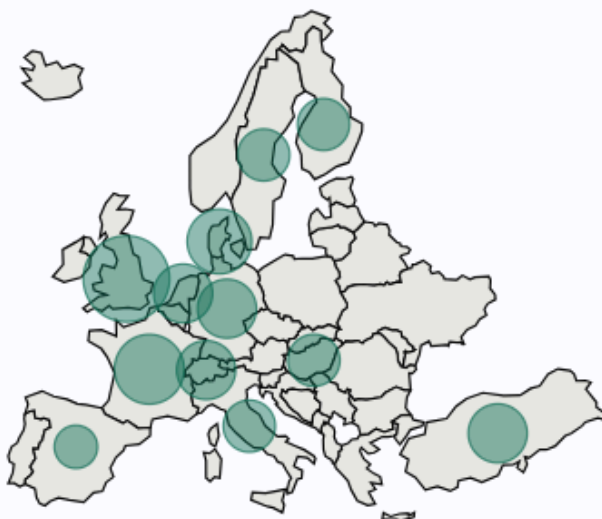
January and February saw high levels of hiring as large corporates and Private Equity-backed businesses re-engaged after a quiet 2025, with PE firms continuing to draw talent away from listed companies and triggering further replacement hiring in turn.



EUROPE

There was sustained activity across Europe throughout H1, with 40 appointments recorded - though, as in North America, hiring became markedly more deliberate as the half progressed.

The UK (9) saw the highest total number of appointments in Europe, with activity holding up notably well against a challenging domestic economic backdrop. France (5) also saw a meaningful increase in activity, and Denmark (4) recorded a stronger showing than in 2025, alongside continued movement in Switzerland (3), Netherlands (3), Germany (3) and Turkey (3).



DACH and Benelux remained consistently active hubs for industrial and manufacturing-led hiring, while Centre-of-Excellence investment continued to support activity in Eastern Europe and Iberia.

As in North America, European hiring was characterised by caution and longer decision-making cycles from Q2.

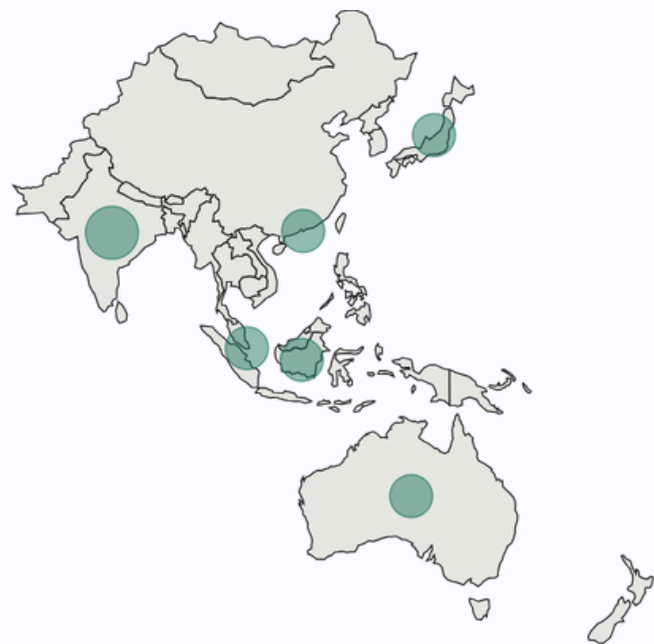
ASIA PACIFIC

APAC remained highly busy in H1 2026, though - as in 2025 - this activity has not consistently translated into C-suite placements based in-region.

Most global multinationals continue to base their top Supply Chain and Procurement leadership outside Asia, even as China+1 strategies and new sourcing hub build-outs drive substantial hiring at C-1 and C-2 level.

Across H1 2026, we tracked 7 appointments across the region: 2 in India, and 1 each in Singapore, Australia, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Japan.

We recorded only one non-Asia headquartered business making a C-Suite appointment - that of Jane Liang, as Chief Supply Chain Officer at SharkNinja, who is now based in Hong Kong. This follows the trend of other consumer electronics businesses, including Dyson and Electrolux, who have placed CSCO / CPO level leaders in either Singapore or Hong Kong.



GCC

GCC hiring activity was significantly more subdued in H1 2026 than in 2025, with the escalation of conflict in the Gulf directly suppressing senior leadership appointments through the first half of the year. Several processes we're aware of were paused, delayed, or cancelled outright during Q2, with only tentative signs of stabilisation returning by May.

We tracked just 1 appointment across the GCC in H1 2026 - in the UAE - compared to 4 across the region in the whole of 2025 (2 in the UAE, 1 each in Saudi Arabia and Qatar). Looking ahead to H2, we expect renewed momentum as Gulf-based organisations resume global expansion plans - providing geopolitical conditions permit hiring processes to restart.



INDUSTRY BREAKDOWN

While H1 2026 saw leadership movement across every major sector, the largest share of C-Suite Supply Chain appointments continued to come from consumer-facing industries - though with a notably stronger showing from Industrial and Pharma & Life Sciences than in 2025.

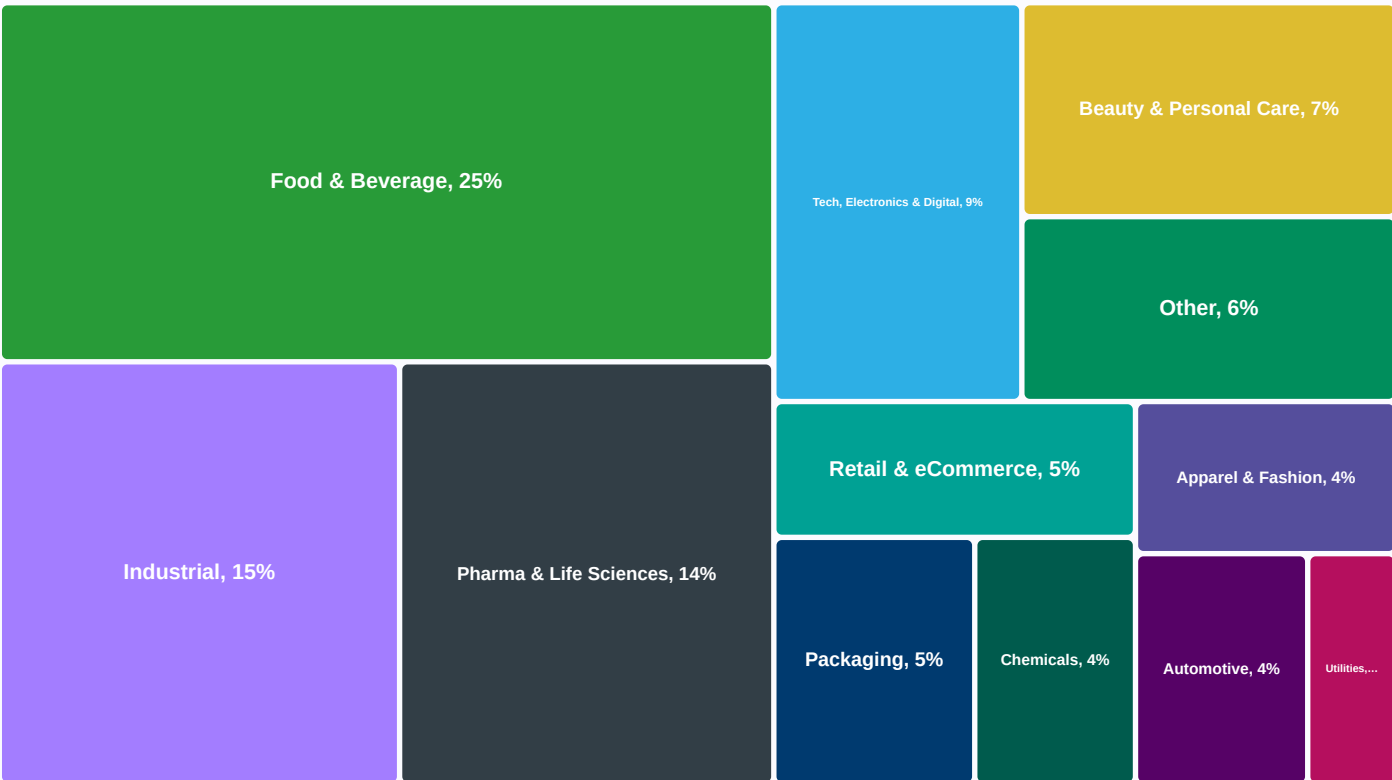
Food & Beverage (28) remained the single largest category, consistent with 2025, as consumer businesses continued to prioritise resilient, cost-disciplined Supply Chain leadership amid tariff and cost pressures, with high profile appointments at Hershey, McDonald's and Starbucks, and a notably high volume in the QSR space.

Industrial (17) saw a marked increase on 2025, reflecting sustained investment in manufacturing, nearshoring and network redesign as organisations respond to rising tariff exposure and trade tensions with notable moves at the likes of 3M.

Pharma & Life Sciences (16) also strengthened versus 2025, with notable appointments at GSK, Medtronic, and GE HealthCare.

Tech, Electronics & Digital (10) followed, led by Vertiv, Ciena, Verizon and Vantage Data Centers, alongside steady activity in Beauty & Personal Care (8), including Edgewell Personal Care, Revlon and Nutrafol.

While there were limited moves in Retail (5), these included high profile moves at Target, Kohl's and Walgreens.

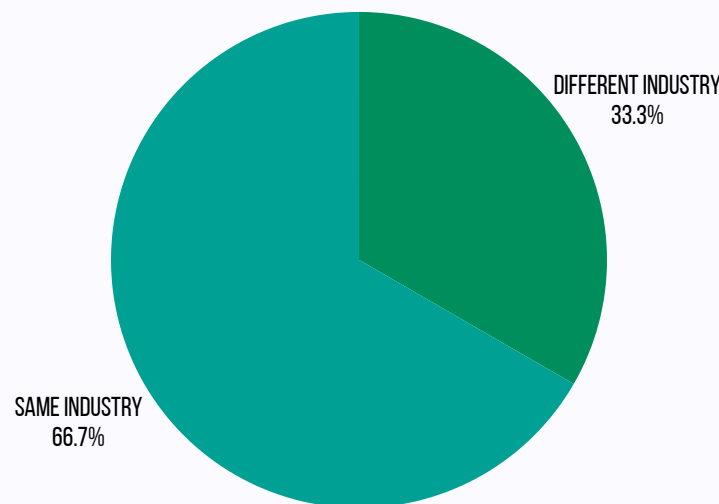


CROSS-INDUSTRY MOVES

Cross-industry hiring accelerated further in H1 2026, continuing the trend first flagged in the 2025 report.

Given the sustained geopolitical and economic uncertainty through the first half of the year - from the Gulf conflict to tariff escalation and financial market instability - we might have expected companies to favour "safe" hires from direct competitors or closely adjacent sectors. Instead, we found 33.3% of all appointments came from non-adjacent industries, up from 25.7% across all of 2025.

It's important to recognise that some of these leaders did have some earlier-career exposure to the sector they were entering, but not at a global leadership level. Their selection suggests that companies are becoming more open to broader operational skillsets, rather than relying solely on longer industry tenure.



Some noteworthy examples include:

- **Karen-Marie Katholm**, moving from **AkzoNobel** into a Chief Supply Chain Officer role at **Orkla Foods**, transitioning from chemicals into food and beverage.
- **Paul Gallagher**, appointed to **3M** as Group President, Enterprise Supply Chain, after a career spanning primarily FMCG and consumer goods at **General Mills** - a shift from consumer packaged goods into industrials.
- **Rogério Branco**, moving from **Eaton** into a Chief Operations & Supply Chain Officer role at **Medtronic**, transitioning from industrial manufacturing into medical devices and life sciences.

We will continue to track this evolution into H2 2026 to see whether cross-industry hiring becomes a settled feature of Supply Chain leadership recruitment, or a response specific to this period of sustained market volatility.

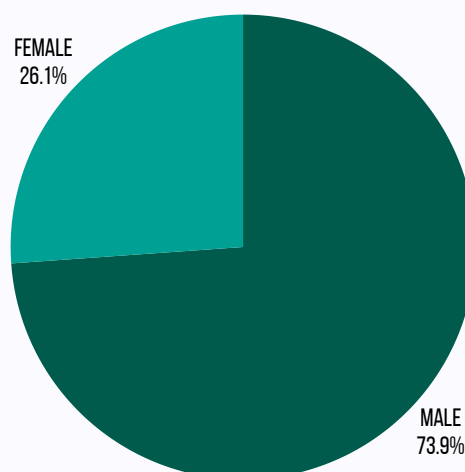
DIVERSITY

Gender representation among newly appointed global Supply Chain and Procurement leaders improved by a significant amount in H1 2026 when compared to 2025.

Working from our previous benchmarks (Gartner reported that women held 26% of Chief Supply Chain Officer roles in 2023, and a 2020 study found female representation among Chief Procurement Officers to be 14.7%). Our own numbers found that in 2025, CPO/CSCO diversity data lagged even these external benchmarks - with just 8% of CPO appointments and 17.4% of appointments overall going to women, reinforcing a clear bias toward men in external Supply Chain and Procurement appointments.

Across the external appointments we tracked in H1 2026, women represented 26.1% of all moves, with the most notable shift came in Procurement leadership. Of the 41 CPO appointments tracked, 16 went to women - 39% of all CPO hires, up sharply from just 8% in 2025, and now well above both the CSCO and CPO industry benchmarks.

While H1 2026 is a shorter window than the full-year 2025 dataset, this represents a genuinely encouraging signal - particularly given how disproportionately low female representation in Procurement leadership had been. We will continue to track whether this holds as a sustained shift through H2 2026, or reflects a shorter-term fluctuation within a smaller sample.



1, Gartner - Gartner Says 26% of Supply Chain C-Suite Roles Now Filled by Women
<https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2023-06-29-gartner-says-26-percent-of-supply-chain-csuite-roles-now-filled-by-women>

2, BSR - Purchasing Power: The Opportunity for Women's Advancement in Procurement and Global Supply Chains
<https://www.bsr.org/en/blog/purchasing-power-opportunity-women-procurement-global-supply-chains>

MONTHLY TRENDS

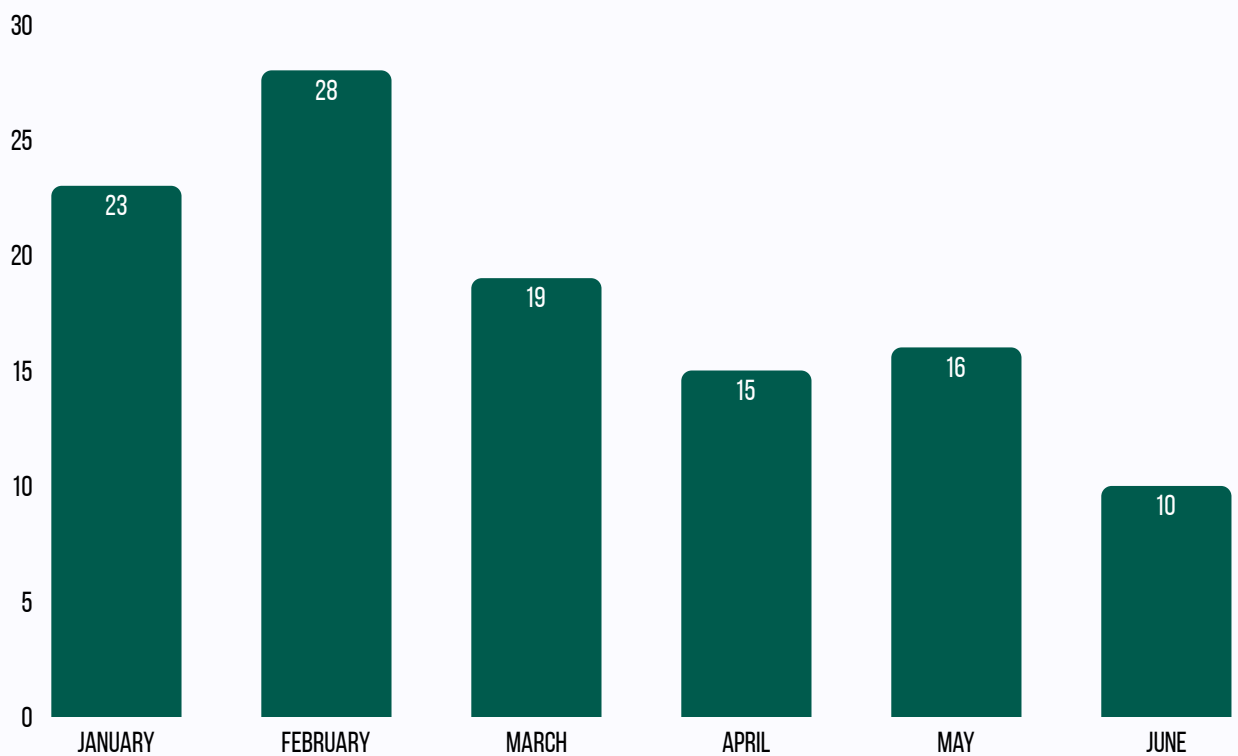
While the beginning of 2026 saw high levels of optimism, geopolitical events in March led to a significant decrease in C-Suite hiring as companies took steps to pause hiring.

The year started with incredibly strong optimism, and high levels of hiring activity in January, February and March. As time has gone on, we have seen a steady decline in appointments, one which we expect to continue into H2.

Generally, there is a lag between the completion of a search, and announcement / start date - anywhere from 2 weeks in the US, to 3+ months in the rest of the world.

This lag is reflected below; while the market began to dip in late March, we are only now beginning to see a marked decrease in hiring.

NUMBER OF EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS



H2 2026 OUTLOOK

H1 2026 has demonstrated just how directly geopolitical conditions can now shape Supply Chain and Procurement leadership hiring - a market that swung from its strongest opening quarter in years to a sharp Q2 slowdown within the space of a few months. As we move into H2, the trajectory of the Gulf conflict and broader financial market stability will remain the single biggest variable determining hiring momentum.

H2 2026 Outlook

That said, several underlying trends look set to continue regardless of how geopolitical conditions evolve. Procurement leadership is likely to remain a priority - CPO hiring has defined H1 2026, and the pressures driving it (tariff exposure, cost discipline, supplier risk) show no sign of easing. This will likely also drive significant demand for C-1 Procurement talent, with functions across Indirect Procurement, Procurement Excellence and Digital Transformation already in high demand.

At the -1 and -2 level, we are also seeing a high level of demand within Quality and Manufacturing Leadership, particularly at the Plant Director level, Logistics Transformation functions as companies explore operational efficiencies and automation within their networks, Centre of Excellence leadership functions, and leadership within Trade Compliance functions.

Regionally, we expect North America and Europe to remain the dominant hubs for senior Supply Chain hiring, with Europe likely to face the usual Q3 slowdown through summer. APAC markets are likely to continue to see high activity, albeit at C-1 / 2 level without a major increase in C-suite placements based in-region. The GCC's hiring trajectory will depend heavily on how regional conditions develop - a return to something closer to 2025 levels is plausible if stability holds through the second half of the year.

Ultimately, H1 2026 has reinforced that Supply Chain and Procurement leadership is no longer a function organisations can afford to leave unresourced, even amid significant uncertainty. We expect that principle - resilient, adaptable leadership as a strategic priority rather than a discretionary hire - to only strengthen through H2 2026.

We will continue to track and monitor, and look forward to sharing our end-2026 report in late December.



WHO ARE POD TALENT?

Pod Talent is a specialist Supply Chain & Procurement Talent Partner providing Recruitment, Search, Market Intelligence and Interim services. We've placed over 1000 supply chain and procurement professionals across 25 countries into brands both big and small, including Fortune 500, FTSE 100, VC and PE backed start-up businesses, and start-up Unicorns.

With over 70 years of combined experience of recruiting into our markets, and a business that has existed for over 13 years, our supply chain knowledge is unrivalled; our network is exceptional and it allows us to fill the roles you can't.

If you're looking to hire your next Supply Chain leader, have questions on the market, or are looking for your own next career move, reach out today and one of our team of 15 Supply Chain experts will be able to help.



SAM BERKE HEAD OF GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN SEARCH

he/him

Sam Berke (sam.berke@pod-talent.com) is the Head of Global Supply Chain Search within Pod Talent's Executive Search practice, working across European, APAC and American markets on providing senior Supply Chain hiring and insight services.



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