The State of Employment in Demand and Supply Planning



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Today's Speakers



Jason Breault

LifeWork Search, Managing Director (19 years)
AMR Research (now Gartner) (5+ years)
Siemens Business Services (5+ years)

Education
University of Rhode Island – BS Electrical Engineering, BA German
IBF Member, Founder of New England Chapter in 2009



Tony Balliro

Zeus, VP, Global Supply Chain (2 years)
Independent Life Sciences Consultant (2 years)
Becton, Dickinson and Company, VP, Global Supply Chain (5 years)
CR Bard, Sr. Director, Global Supply Chain (8 years)
Navilyst Medical, Director, Global Supply Chain (2 years)
Boston Scientific, Director, Global Supply Chain (20 years)

Education
Emmanuel College, Boston, MA – BS, Business Administration
IBF New England Chapter President, 2015 - present

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Unemployment Rate

Unemployment rate

4.2%

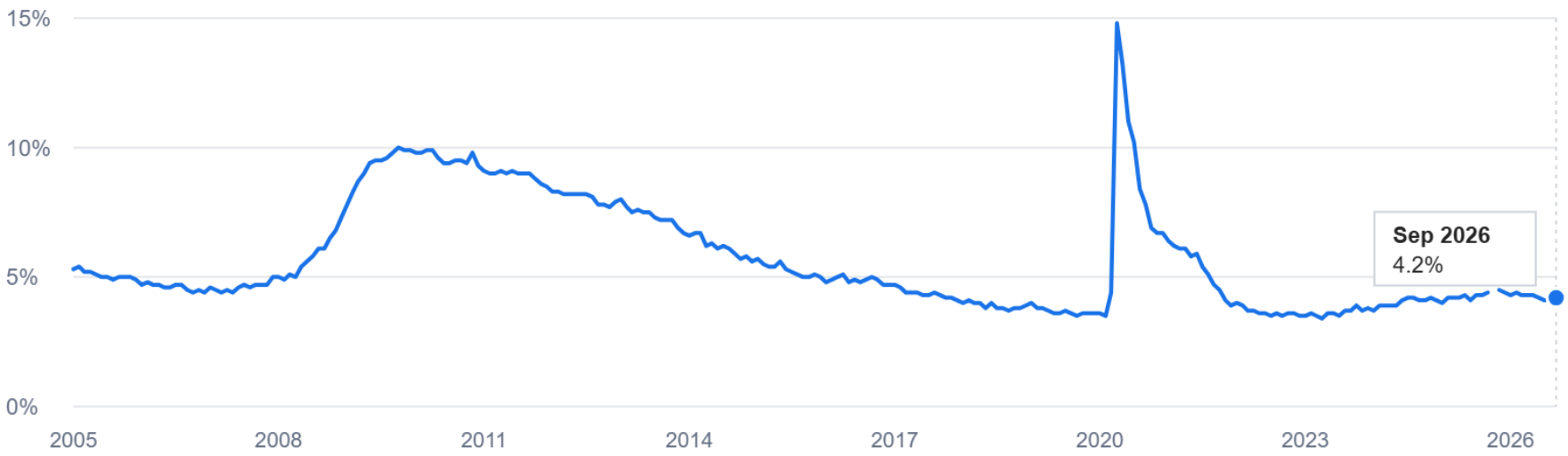
Updated Sep 2026

Measure

Official U.S. unemployment rate

Seasonally adjusted · people age 16 and over

Monthly series · January 2005–September 2026

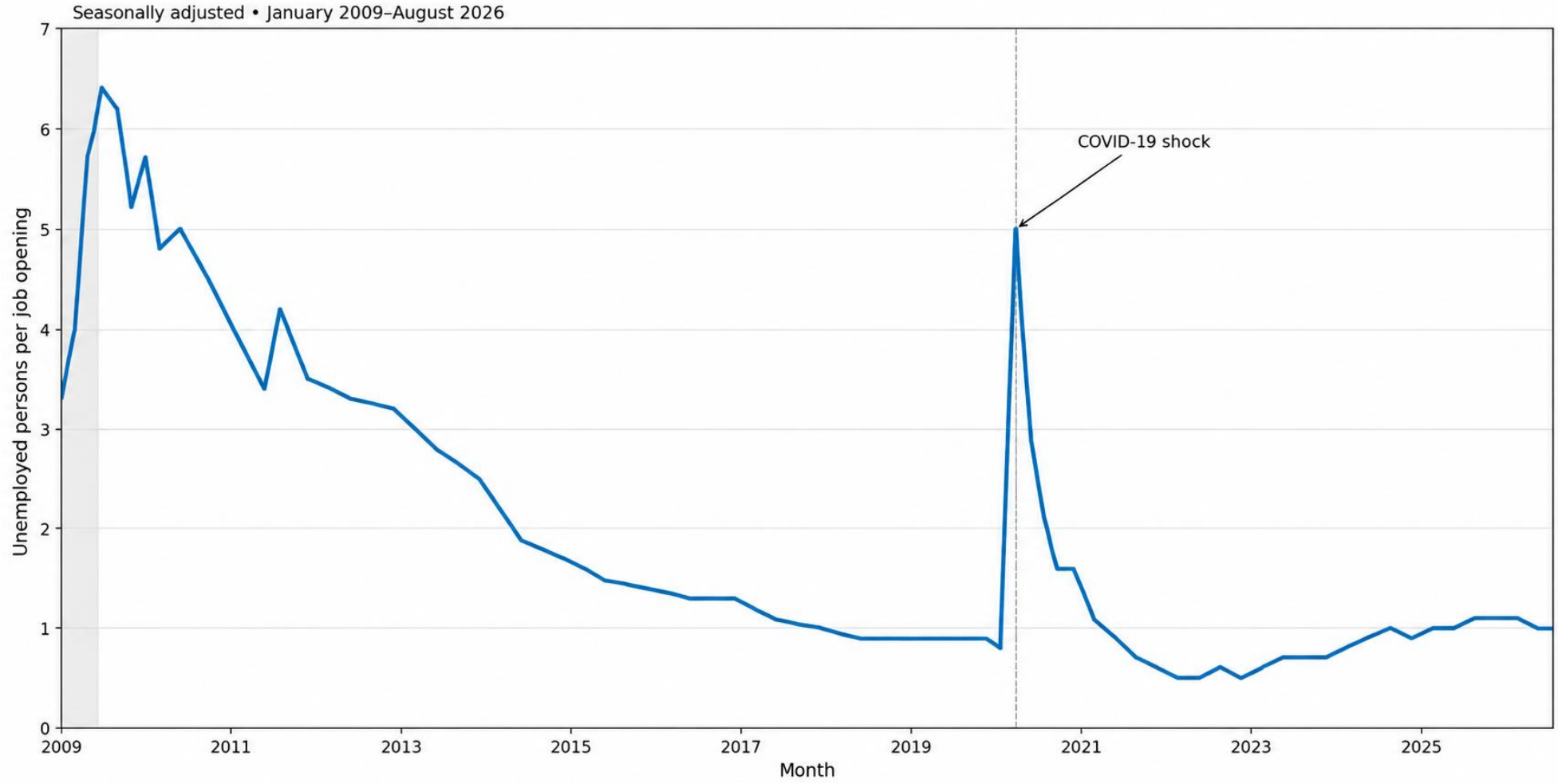


Collected monthly · seasonally adjusted · BLS series LNS14000000

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics · October 2025 unavailable due to lapse in appropriations; gap shown in line.

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Number of Unemployed Persons Per Job Opening



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Job Openings Rate – Professional & Business Services

$$\text{Job Openings Rate} = \left(\frac{\text{Job Openings}}{\text{Employment} + \text{Job Openings}} \right) \times 100$$



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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White-Collar Workforce Has Shifted Since 2019

U.S. employment by occupation, September 2019 to September 2026

Management, professional and related occupations

+13.6%

+8.8 million employed

64.3M in 2019 / 73.1M in 2026

Sales and office occupations

–10.6%

–3.6 million employed

33.7M in 2019 / 30.1M in 2026

For context: total U.S. employment grew 3.1%

Source: BLS, Current Population Survey, Table A-13. Not seasonally adjusted

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The most progressive supply chain organizations are no longer trying to optimize individual functions - they are transforming into ***decision-centric organizations*** where people, processes, and technology work together to make faster, higher-quality decisions.

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Supply Chain Planning is at an Inflection Point

Then	Now	Next
Transactional	Analytical	Strategic
Data gathering	Data interpretation	Decision intelligence
Forecast production	Forecast management	Scenario orchestration
Spreadsheet driven	Platform-driven	AI-enabled
Functional	Cross-functional	Enterprise-wide

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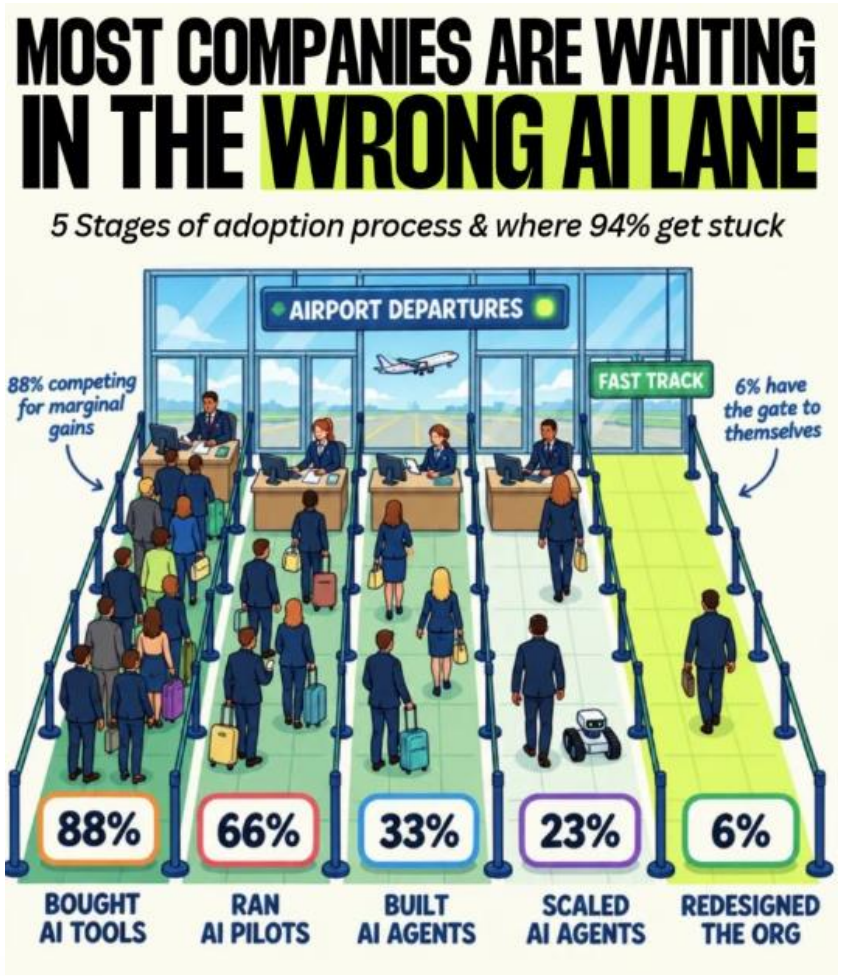
The Role of the Supply Chain Planner is Evolving

Planner →	Business Partner →	Planning Leader
Produces information	Interprets information	Shapes decisions
Runs the process	Improves the process	Redesigns the process
Answers questions	Anticipates questions	Defines the questions
Reports variance	Explains the variance	Changes the outcome
Functional focus	Cross-functional	Enterprise-wide

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5 Stages of AI Adoption – Talent Considerations



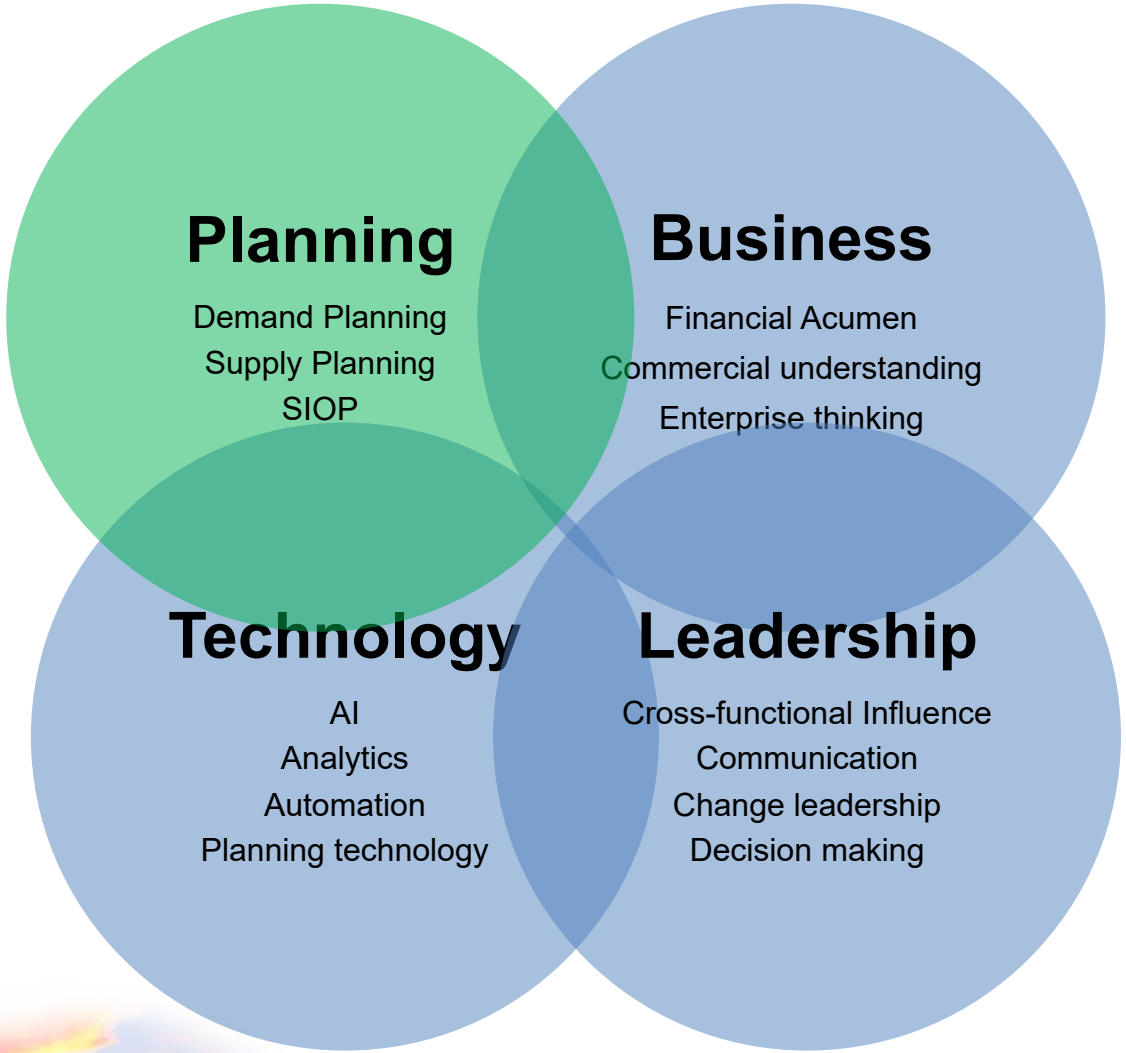
Jonny Tooze, ENDGAME, Building Agentic Organizations, October, 2026

"Build digital and AI capability in your people. **Talent will remain a constraint** …Companies can move faster by upskilling process experts, creating bridge roles between operations and data, and involving frontline teams directly in the transformation."

Backbones and Networks: A Blueprint for the Biopharma Plant of the Future, McKinsey & Company, Sept 15, 2026

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Skills Employers are Really Looking for in Supply Chain



Supply Chain Planning capability in an AI-enabled world is not enough. Employers increasingly want Supply Chain Planners who can connect their expertise to ***business economics, technology and leadership***.

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The Supply Chain Planner of the Future

The emerging Planner must have strong capability across five key areas



Analytical

Turning data into insights and insight into action.



Digital

Leveraging technology to simplify, innovate and drive better outcomes.



Commercial

Creating value through customer focus, market understanding and business performance.



Strategic

Seeing the bigger picture, setting direction and turning plans into results.



Influential

Building trust, energizing others and creating positive, lasting change.

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Where and How Do I Use AI in Supply Chain?

AI is very good at ….	*Humans remain critical for ….*
Processing massive datasets	Business judgment
Detecting patterns	Trade-off decisions
Generating reports	Business context
Identifying exceptions	Cross-functional influence
Summarizing information	Ambiguous decisions
Running scenarios	Organizational dynamics
Automating repetitive tasks	Asking the right questions
Generating narratives	Taking accountability

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Five Things You Should Consider Immediately

01

Learn one AI capability every month.

02

Understand your company's financial drivers.

03

Ask "so what" about every analysis you produce.

04

Volunteer for cross-functional assignments.

05

Stop being the person who produces the report. Become the person who explains what we should do.

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Questions?

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