

# How the Bar Code Created the Modern Supply Chain

The Universal Product Code (UPC), or more commonly known as the barcode, is the most pervasive inventory tracking tool on the planet. Over the last 50 years the UPC has given rise to the modern supply chain as we know it—and continues to play a vital role in supply chain management. However, as supply chains have become increasingly more complex, the tracking and management tools we use are also more sophisticated. IBM is now using new technologies like AI and blockchain, supported by hybrid cloud, to assist companies as they navigate the complexities of today's supply chain. Yet the COVID-19 pandemic added further layers of complexity to global supply chains: How do you keep sufficient inventory of high-demand products? How do you get the right inventory supply demand in the right location? How do you detect when there's a sudden change—either in demand or supply, in production or in transportation—and quickly change your plans? [Meet IBM's Continuous Intelligent Planning \(CIP\) solution.](#)



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