

# Pandemic could level the playing field between small and large companies, MIT's Yossi Sheffi says

Technology leaps and nimble computing systems could change supply chains in the long run, professor says in latest book.

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Driven by the chaos of the coronavirus pandemic, companies have created “corporate immune systems” to recognize and manage large-scale disruptions quickly, [according to a new book from Yossi Sheffi, a supply chain professor at the Massachusetts Institute of technology \(MIT\).](#)

Despite being forced to grapple with the economic implications of the health crisis, companies can learn to survive and thrive as the crisis subsides by keeping a sharp focus on their supply chains, Sheffi says in “The New (Ab)Normal: Reshaping Business and Supply Chain Strategy Beyond Covid-19.” [The author is a professor of engineering systems and the director of the MIT Center for Transportation and Logistics \(MIT CTL\).](#)

While there have been some logistics failures during the pandemic, supply chains have generally performed heroically during the pandemic and maintained supplies of critical products such as food, Sheffi argues. That is critical because civilization depends on supply chains to convert the planet’s bounty into needed products and deliver those products to 7.8 billion human beings at an affordable price, he says.

Looking forward to scenes of a post-pandemic future, Sheffi predicts that technological advances inspired by the crisis could level the playing field between small and large companies. Nimble small businesses can use a growing array of off-the-shelf cloud computing and mobile apps to narrow the competitive gap between themselves and larger rivals, he says.

The “new normal” could also include phenomena such as the rise of telecommuting and the emergence of “business safe zones” that protect customers and workers from the contagion.

“Much has been written about the pandemic, but the book takes a different perspective by showing how the virus emphasizes our interconnectedness and how supply chains

are the connective tissue that is vital to the health of a vibrant society,” Sheffi said in a release. “One of my key objectives in writing the book is to help executives adapt their business models and supply chains to a world transformed by Covid-19.”