



S&OP IS DEAD. LONG LIVE DEO.

Why Integrated Business Planning Is Outdated—and What Comes Next

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Executive Summary

Let's just say it—S&OP is tired. What started as a noble attempt to align supply and demand has become a bloated, calendar-driven exercise in compromise. And while IBP promised to elevate the conversation by integrating finance, strategy, and operations, it often just layered more process on top of the same rigid foundations. Meanwhile, volatility is up. Planning cycles are too slow. And supply chain leaders are stuck playing catch-up in a world that demands adaptability, not consensus.

It's time to stop chasing "alignment" through stale templates and start engineering smarter decisions in real time. That's where **Decision Engineering & Orchestration (DEO)** comes in.

How DEO Compares to S&OP and IBP

Feature	S&OP	IBP	DEO (GAINS)
Planning Cadence	Monthly	Monthly to quarterly	Continuous, event-driven
Focus	Consensus & alignment	Strategic financial integration	Smart, aligned decision-making
Tools	Suite-based platforms	Spreadsheets & bolt-on software	Composable, AI-powered platform
Flexibility	Rigid & slow to adapt to disruption	Somewhat flexible	Built for uncertainty & agility

The Problem: S&OP and IBP Can't Keep Up

Let's face it:

The business environment that gave rise to S&OP doesn't exist anymore. Yet many companies still rely on monthly planning cycles and manual consensus meetings to make their most critical decisions.

That's not strategy—it's survival mode.

Even IBP, with its promise of strategic integration, tends to get bogged down in bureaucracy. The process becomes the point. The goal becomes consensus. And the business misses the moment.

Demand isn't predictable.

Consumer preferences shift overnight. Promotional cycles, influencer marketing, seasonality, and geopolitical events all introduce sudden spikes or slumps in demand. Relying on month-old assumptions in a demand landscape that changes daily puts businesses at risk of stockouts, lost sales, and missed opportunities.

Lead times aren't consistent.

Global supply chains are being reshaped by port congestion, raw material shortages, and policy shifts. A manufacturer that once enjoyed steady 45-day lead times from an overseas supplier might now experience delivery swings between 30 and 70 days — sometimes within the same month. These fluctuations break traditional planning cycles, leading to misaligned inventory, excess safety stock, or last-minute expediting.

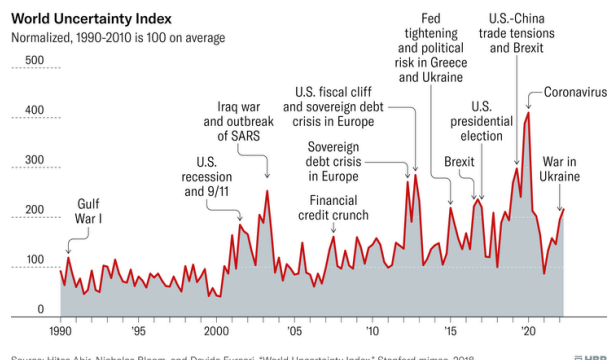
Static planning doesn't reflect modern business

Most businesses aren't operating on quarterly rhythms anymore — they're adjusting strategy weekly, sometimes daily. Take a distributor managing a diverse product portfolio across hundreds of locations: a rigid monthly S&OP cycle won't keep pace with what's happening on the ground. Promotions change, suppliers shift, and customer needs evolve mid-cycle. When planning can't flex to match business velocity, companies fall into a reactive trap — always catching up instead of leading the way.

Global Uncertainty Index

Economic Uncertainty Is Rising

The World Uncertainty Index, a measure of economic uncertainty, has been consistently rising since 2016, with its biggest spike during the beginning of Covid-19.



Where IBP and S&OP Fall Short

Let's bust a few myths:

These processes were designed in an era of relative stability. But now, the world changes between meetings. What's needed isn't a better consensus. It's better decisions—faster, smarter, and continuously informed.

The Myths

"S&OP is a strategic process."

"IBP drives agility."

"We've invested in a tool, we're set."

"Consensus is alignment."

The Truth

It's usually an operational meeting disguised as strategy.

It's often a slower version of S&OP with more stakeholders.

A better tool doesn't fix a broken process.

True alignment requires clarity and trade-off transparency, not just agreement.

Enter DEO: Decision Engineering & Orchestration

Decision Engineering & Orchestration (DEO) is a fundamentally different approach. It doesn't try to patch the old process. It replaces it with a framework built around decisions, not dates, not meetings, and not just forecasts.

At its core, DEO helps companies:

- Identify the most important decisions across time horizons
- Engineer decisions using the best solution method (AI, machine learning, mathematics, or optimization) guided by domain experts
- Orchestrate them across strategy, planning, and execution

That means no more waiting a month to respond to a disruption. It means modeling risk in real time. It means choosing with clarity—even when certainty isn't on the table.

What This Means for You: Start Smart, Scale Fast

You don't need to rip and replace everything.

Unlike monolithic platforms, GAINS DEO is fully composable. Plug in advanced modules where you need them, when you need them — without waiting for major platform upgrades: GAINS DEO lets you modernize decision-making without disrupting your business.

By applying DEO where it matters most, you can:

Lead with Clarity

No more managing by spreadsheet or chasing consensus. With GAINS, you lead with visibility, confidence, and control.

See Risk & Opportunity Earlier

Spot disruptions, shifts, and trends before they hit. GAINS gives you early-warning signals so you can act before your supply chain feels the pain.

Adjust Faster

Break free from slow, rigid planning cycles. Make confident mid-cycle adjustments powered by real-time data and predictive insights.

Make Trade-Offs with Context

Every choice affects cost, service, and risk. GAINS gives you the clarity to simulate options and make the best decision—not just the familiar one.

Shift from Firefighting to Orchestration

Instead of reacting to problems, you align cross-functional teams to proactively coordinate and execute around shared priorities.

From Theory to Results

Take L'Oréal. They were managing thousands of SKUs across multiple divisions, using quarterly, Excel-based stock parameters. It worked—until it didn't.

By moving to GAINS and embracing DEO, they:

- Reduced manual processes
- Gained real-time lead-time prediction
- Empowered planners with explainable, adaptive AI
- Rolled out across 4 divisions in under a year

They didn't just plan better, they made better decisions.



Ready for the Next Chapter?



GAINS is the supply chain performance optimization company helping companies fulfill their customer's promise. For more information, visit www.gainsystems.com.