



Supply Risk Management Should Begin Before the Shortage:

Moving Electronic Component
Risk Assessment Upstream to BOM Design



Contents

Preface	04
1. From Market Change to BOM Risk: Why Available Today Does Not Mean Available for the Long Term	06
1.1 Market Growth and Supply Divergence Are Occurring in Parallel	06
1.2 Emerging Demand Is Reallocating Supply Chain Resources	07
1.3 Product Lifecycles and the Global Supply Structure Are Increasing Long-Term Uncertainty	08
1.4 A Shortage Is the Point at Which Risk Becomes Visible, Not Where It Begins	09
2. Beyond Technical Specifications: Four Supply-Information Gaps in Component Selection	11
2.1 Beyond Lifecycle Labels: Does the Component Lifecycle Match the Project Horizon?	11
2.2 Beyond the Number of Channels: Are the Underlying Supply Sources Independent?	12
2.3 Beyond Cross-References: Can the Replacement Path Actually Be Executed?	14
2.4 Beyond Purchase Value: Is the Impact of Disruption Being Underestimated?	15
3. From Supply Information to Decision Outcomes: A Method for BOM Risk Assessment and Classification	17
3.1 Establish a Credible Evidence Base	17
3.2 Assess Likelihood, Business Impact, and Room to Adapt	18
3.3 Classify BOM Items by Risk	19
3.4 Move from Individual-Part Risk to BOM-Level Prioritization	20
4. Integrating Supply Chain Information into Design and Product Lifecycle Management	23
4.1 Define Supply Constraints During Concept Design	23
4.2 Evaluate Technical and Supply Fit in Parallel During Component Selection	24
4.3 Complete a Critical-Component Risk Review Before Design Freeze	24
4.4 Continuously Update Risk Status During Production and Maintenance	26
5. How Independent Distributors Can Support Ongoing BOM Risk Governance	28
5.1 Define Supply Constraints During Concept Design	28

5.2 Evaluate Technical and Supply Fit in Parallel During Component Selection ----- 29

5.3 Support Replacement and Disposition Planning for At-Risk Components ----- 30

5.4 WIN SOURCE NEXUS™: From BOM Analysis to Decision Support ----- 31

Conclusion ----- 32

References ----- 34

Preface

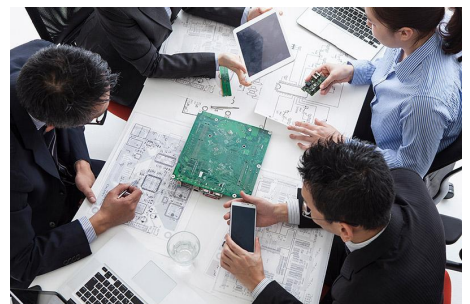
Before a bill of materials (BOM) is approved, it often appears to be little more than a list of components. Once a product enters volume production and long-term maintenance, however, the BOM becomes the structure through which the organization carries supply risk. Every part number selected for a design represents more than a functional building block; it also embodies a set of supply sources, a lifecycle status, replacement options, and the future cost of change.

In many programs, a supply problem does not begin when procurement can no longer find stock. The risk may have existed much earlier in another form: a component may have only one manufacturing source; a package may have no viable alternative; a part may still be listed as Active even though its product platform is approaching a transition; or a low-value item may become a critical constraint on system delivery because it is tied to certification, firmware, or PCB design.

These risks are easy to overlook because conventional component-selection processes focus primarily on whether a device meets the immediate design requirements, while supply chain considerations often enter only after the BOM reaches procurement. Once the design is frozen, the available substitution options, validation window, and qualification conditions are constrained as well. At that point, responding to shortages, discontinuations, or extended lead times often means relying on emergency sourcing, spot inventory, or temporary substitutes, with far less room for proactive adjustment.

This white paper therefore addresses a more upstream question: before a component enters the BOM, how can an organization determine whether it is suitable for the product's full lifecycle? We define "BOM supply resilience" as the ability to identify lifecycle risk, source structure, replacement feasibility, and business impact during design and component selection, while preserving options to respond to future changes in supply.

This perspective also brings the value of independent distributors further upstream. A distributor's role need not be limited to matching spot inventory and executing delivery after a shortage occurs. Before design freeze, it can also provide cross-brand, cross-regional, and cross-market supply information, helping engineering, procurement, and supply chain teams identify latent BOM risk earlier.



The discussion proceeds across five dimensions: industry change; information gaps in component selection; BOM risk assessment and classification; integration of supply chain information into the design process; and the support model available from independent distributors. Together, these dimensions show how supply risk management can move from the back end of procurement to the BOM design stage.

1. From Market Change to BOM Risk: Why Available Today Does Not Mean Available for the Long Term

In electronic component procurement, "available" generally means that inventory can be located, a quotation obtained, and delivery arranged under defined conditions. For short-cycle programs, this information can be highly useful. For products that require extended production, ongoing maintenance, or after-sales support, however, current availability is only the starting point for a supply assessment.

A component that can be purchased today may not support a production plan extending several years into the future. Likewise, a part whose specifications fit the current design may not be suitable for every program horizon. Lifecycle stage, underlying capacity, manufacturing geography, replacement pathways, and the application context all affect a component's long-term suitability for the BOM.

BOM risk therefore does not always originate in procurement. Many issues emerge gradually as the market changes, capacity is reallocated, or a product advances through its lifecycle, yet their roots can often be traced to the earlier component-selection stage. Growth and divergence in today's semiconductor market are widening this gap: a recovering market at the macro level does not necessarily reduce the risk within any particular BOM.

1.1 Market Growth and Supply Divergence Are Occurring in Parallel

The global semiconductor market continued to expand in 2026. According to the Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA), worldwide semiconductor sales reached USD 298.5 billion in the first quarter of 2026, up 25% from the fourth quarter of 2025 [1]. Sales rose further to USD 120.6 billion in May 2026, a 9.2% month-on-month increase and a monthly record at the time [2]. In aggregate, the industry is entering a more active growth cycle.



That expansion, however, is not being distributed evenly across component categories. Deloitte's February 2026 industry outlook noted that high-value AI chips could account for roughly half of industry revenue while representing less than 0.2% of global chip unit volume. It also estimated that approximately 1.05 trillion chips were sold

worldwide in 2025, while silicon-wafer shipments grew by about 5.4% [3]. Together, these figures indicate that revenue growth does not reflect uniform volume growth across every category. AI, data centers, advanced logic, and high-value memory are absorbing a larger share of capital, capacity, and supply chain resources. Mature-node devices, long-tail part numbers, products with fragmented demand, and components in the later stages of their commercial lifecycle may not receive comparable investment or capacity support.

This is why risk assessment must move upstream to the BOM level. A critical component in a given program may not belong to the fastest-growing product category, and its process platform, packaging resources, or manufacturer's product line may not benefit from overall industry expansion. Macro-level market data can indicate industry direction, but it cannot determine whether a specific part will reliably support future production, maintenance, and replacement requirements.

What must be assessed is the supply ecosystem surrounding the specific part number: whether it remains within the manufacturer's long-term support scope; whether it depends on constrained capacity or a particular region; whether an executable replacement exists; and whether the organization will retain room to adapt if supply conditions change.

1.2 Emerging Demand Is Reallocating Supply Chain Resources

Growth in AI infrastructure, data centers, electric vehicles, industrial automation, and other applications is reshaping priorities for resource allocation across the semiconductor supply chain. The effects extend beyond AI processors themselves and propagate through memory, advanced packaging, substrates, test capacity, wafer capacity, critical materials, and a much broader range of component categories.

Deloitte projected that memory revenue could approach USD 200 billion in 2026 and noted that demand for high-performance memory, including HBM, is changing investment and product-allocation priorities [3]. This shift is a reminder that supply risk does not always originate in demand from an organization's own industry. An industrial-control, communications-equipment, or medical-device program may not directly serve an AI application, yet it can still be affected indirectly by changes in lead time, pricing, or availability when it shares memory, packaging, testing, or wafer resources with high-growth markets.

Changes in capacity investment point to the same trend. In its Q2 2026 300mm Fab

Outlook, SEMI projected that global spending on 300mm front-end equipment would reach USD 142 billion in 2026, up 25% year over year, with Logic & Micro - including foundry - remaining the largest investment segment [4]. Memory-equipment investment was projected to rise 29% to USD 52 billion [5]. The same outlook anticipated continued growth in 300mm equipment spending through 2027, 2028, and 2029, although the rate would vary with the investment cycle [4].

These investment patterns show that incremental capacity is increasingly directed toward advanced logic, memory, and manufacturing resources tied to high-growth applications. For BOM management, this is best treated as a risk signal. Organizations should determine whether the wafer size, process platform, assembly and test capacity, and regional resources on which a specific component depends are competing with high-growth products or receiving insufficient ongoing investment.

A component's long-term supply risk, in other words, may be driven not only by demand for the component itself but also by the underlying resources it shares with faster-growing products. If an apparently mature and stable part depends on constrained production lines, materials, or packaging capacity, rapid growth in external markets can still alter its future supply conditions.

1.3 Product Lifecycles and the Global Supply Structure Are Increasing Long-Term Uncertainty

For industrial, medical, automotive, aerospace, and other long-support-life products, a mismatch between component lifecycles and end-product lifecycles is a particularly difficult form of supply risk to detect. An end product may require support for ten or fifteen years - or longer - while many commercial components within it may not remain on the market for a comparable period.



Z2Data's database indicates that 621,909 electronic-component manufacturer part numbers (MPNs) became obsolete in 2025. Of these, 323,286 - 52% - were not accompanied by a manufacturer product change notification (PCN) [6]. For organizations whose designs must remain in service for long periods, this notification gap creates material risk. Engineering and procurement teams may receive insufficient early warning of a discontinuation and discover only after market inventory has begun

to decline, or the last-time-buy window has closed, that a component can no longer support the original design.

An Active designation should therefore be treated only as the starting point for lifecycle assessment. A manufacturer may adjust its portfolio; the relevant process may gradually fall outside mainstream investment; or an existing platform may be superseded by a new generation. Even if a part remains on sale today, declining market demand, reduced support for its product family, or the reallocation of manufacturing resources may erode its ability to support future program requirements.

Changes in the global supply structure add another layer of uncertainty. SEMI's outlook shows that AI, high-performance computing, automotive applications, government incentives, and supply-chain regionalization are jointly shaping 300mm investment and new-fab deployment [4]. Regional expansion can increase local capability, but manufacturing location, policy support, trade rules, and the surrounding industrial ecosystem continue to influence the long-term supply structure of different components.

BOM risk assessment must therefore go beyond the part number. A part's reliability as a supply choice depends not only on whether it remains in the catalog, but also on the continuity of the wafer fabrication, assembly and test, process platform, supply regions, and product road map behind it. For long-term programs, ignoring these underlying factors can turn a component that is "available today" into a structural risk that is difficult to replace later.

1.4 A Shortage Is the Point at Which Risk Becomes Visible, Not Where It Begins

When a component becomes obsolete without a PCN, organizations may receive little or no effective warning. Once the last-time-buy window has been missed, the available options narrow sharply. The organization may be forced to locate remaining inventory in the secondary market while managing higher acquisition costs, source-verification requirements, counterfeit risk, retesting, and requalification. Z2Data also notes that an unexpected discontinuation can trigger engineering work such as PCB redesign, firmware updates, thermal analysis, and compatibility testing [6].

This illustrates why a supply crisis rarely begins at the moment a shortage occurs. Shortages, discontinuations, and lead-time extensions are the points at which risk becomes concentrated and visible during procurement and production. The underlying cause often existed much earlier – before component selection, BOM freeze, and product qualification.

Even when inventory is plentiful, pricing is reasonable, and specifications match the design, a component may already carry latent risk. If it lacks an independent second source, its lifecycle cannot cover the project horizon, candidate replacements require requalification, or an interruption would stop system production, the part becomes a weak point in the product's long-term supply structure from the moment it enters the BOM.

For long-lived products, organizations must therefore ask additional questions: Is the component suitable for the full product lifecycle? Are its sources sufficiently independent? Can a replacement path be executed in practice? If supply conditions change, will engineering, procurement, and quality teams still have enough time and flexibility to respond? Only when these questions are considered before design freeze can an organization move from reactive recovery after a shortage to earlier risk identification and decision readiness.

Key Takeaways

The semiconductor market is growing, but that growth is highly structural. AI, advanced logic, and memory are driving investment while changing the allocation of wafer, packaging, material, and test resources. At the same time, large numbers of components are moving to end-of-life (EOL) or Obsolete status, many without an accompanying PCN. Taken together, these trends demonstrate that a macro-level market recovery does not automatically reduce the risk within an individual BOM.

For original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and electronics manufacturing services (EMS) providers, the more important questions are specific to the component and the program: Can the component support the program horizon? Are its supply sources genuinely independent? Is the replacement path executable? Would the organization retain room to adapt after a supply interruption?

2. Beyond Technical Specifications: Four Supply-Information Gaps in Component Selection

In engineering selection, an electronic component is first viewed as a technical object: Does it provide the required function and performance? Is the package compatible? Do power consumption, temperature range, cost, and design convenience meet the program objectives? These factors are the foundation for admitting a component into the design and remain indispensable to sound engineering judgment.

For products requiring long-term production and support, however, technical fit does not capture the full risk. A part may satisfy the electrical, packaging, and cost requirements yet later become a BOM bottleneck because its lifecycle is approaching a transition, supply is overly concentrated, the replacement path is unclear, or the consequences of disruption are broader than expected.

This is why supply chain information must enter the component-selection process. Lifecycle, source structure, replacement feasibility, and business impact are the four supply-information gaps most easily overlooked beyond the technical specifications.

2.1 Beyond Lifecycle Labels: Does the Component Lifecycle Match the Project Horizon?

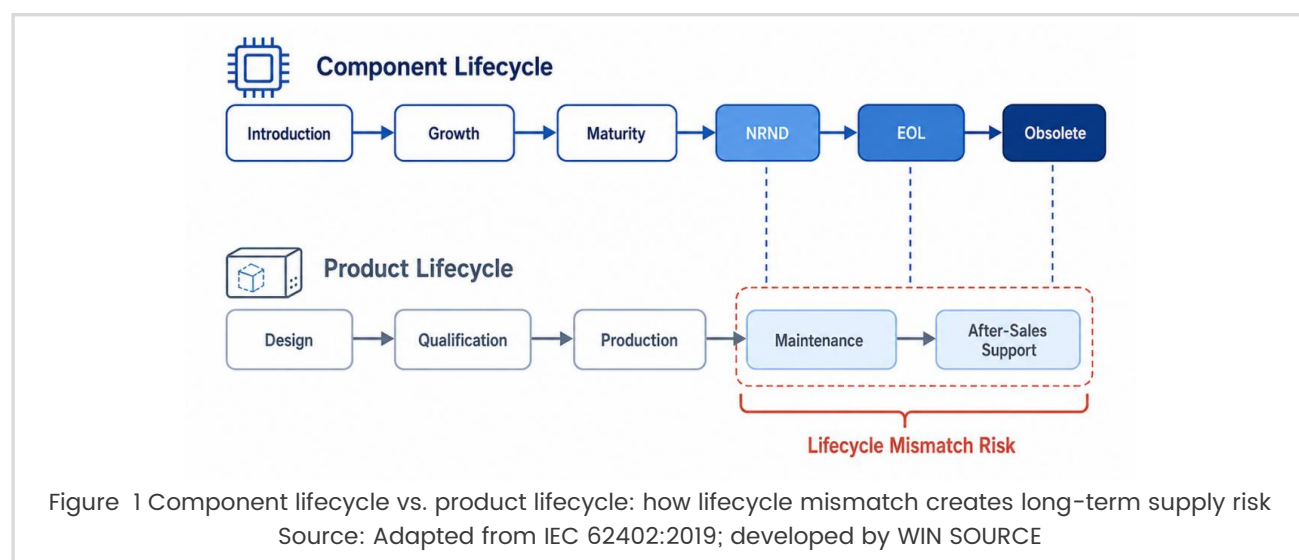
Lifecycle status is an important entry point for component-risk assessment. Labels such as Active, not recommended for new designs (NRND), end of life (EOL), and Obsolete help engineering and procurement teams understand a component's current stage. By themselves, however, these labels do not establish whether the part is suitable for a particular program.

The same Active component can carry very different risk in different programs. For a low-volume program scheduled to finish within two years, the risk may be acceptable if supply is stable and lead times are manageable. If the same component is used in industrial equipment planned for eight years of production plus five years of after-sales support, treating it as safe solely because it is Active is clearly inadequate.

The relevant question is whether the component lifecycle matches the project horizon. A part that has been on the market for many years, sits behind a newer platform launched by the manufacturer, belongs to a product family with slowing updates, or resembles parts recently subject to frequent discontinuation notices may be losing long-term support. Conversely, a component in an expanding product family, backed by a clear manufacturer migration path and relatively stable market supply, is generally better

aligned with a long-term program.

IEC 62402:2019 states that obsolescence management should apply across all stages of the product lifecycle and should include establishing an obsolescence-management plan, developing design-stage strategies to reduce obsolescence risk, selecting resolution options, and continually evaluating management effectiveness [7]. Lifecycle assessment must therefore consider whether a component can cover the complete period from design and production through maintenance. In long-lifecycle sectors such as industrial, medical, automotive, and aerospace, organizations should also consider whether a sustainable upgrade path and verifiable replacement options will remain available, and whether there will be sufficient time to transition once the part enters end of life.



Independent distributors can add observations beyond the manufacturer's own product pages. Manufacturer information naturally centers on the status of its own products, while a distributor can combine shifts in market inquiries, historical supply performance, availability of alternatives, and cross-brand road maps to provide a lifecycle perspective grounded in procurement reality. This information does not replace engineering validation, but it can help identify earlier which parts are suitable for long-term adoption and which warrant caution.

2.2 Beyond the Number of Channels: Are the Underlying Supply Sources Independent?

When assessing supply risk, procurement teams often begin by checking whether a component is available through multiple purchasing channels. If inventory appears on

several platforms or from several suppliers, the component may initially seem to have a diversified supply base. This is useful for short-term sourcing, but it does not demonstrate that the underlying sources are genuinely independent for long-term BOM risk management.

Channel diversity and manufacturing-source diversity are not the same. Multiple channels may be offering stock from the same manufacturer, the same production lot, the same wafer process, the same assembly and test resources, or even the same product platform. The customer may appear to have several purchasing routes, yet all of them may lose stable supply simultaneously if the original manufacturer reallocates capacity, discontinues the product line, or if fabrication, assembly, or test resources in one region are disrupted.

Component selection should therefore look through the channel layer to the underlying source. In addition to asking "Where can we buy it?" teams should ask "Who makes it?", "How concentrated are the manufacturing resources?", and "Is there a genuinely independent second source?" Relevant factors include the number of manufacturers, wafer-fabrication regions, assembly and test locations, shared process platforms, dependencies on critical materials, underlying links between brands, and the availability of a second source capable of supplying independently.

Scenario: Multiple Channels Do Not Equal Multiple Sources

An industrial-control system uses a critical analog component. At the beginning of the program, procurement finds inventory through several channels and concludes that supply is relatively diversified. A deeper analysis shows that all of the inventory ultimately comes from one manufacturer; the component depends on wafer production in one region; and technically similar parts on the market are not pin compatible. Because the customer's product has already been qualified, the room for a later transition is also limited.

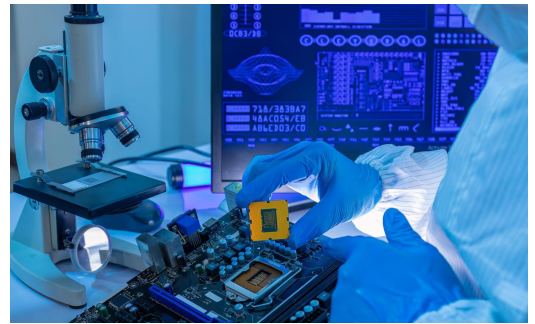
In this case, inventory across multiple channels can ease short-term purchasing pressure, but it does not create a true long-term second source. If the original manufacturer changes product strategy, reduces capacity, or alters allocation priorities, the customer remains exposed to the same underlying supply risk.

Channel diversity primarily answers "Where can we buy it?" Source resilience asks "Who will continue to manufacture it, and is independent replacement supply available?" For a

long-term program, the second question often matters more to BOM stability than short-term inventory visibility.

2.3 Beyond Cross-References: Can the Replacement Path Actually Be Executed?

Replacement assessment is one of the areas most frequently oversimplified in BOM supply-risk management. Many organizations use cross-reference results, parameter similarity, or package information to determine whether a part has alternatives. This screening is a useful starting point, but it does not establish an executable replacement. SAE EIASTD4899D requires the responsible party for an electronic-component management plan to understand the component's design, materials, configuration control, qualification approach, and capability in relation to the specific application, and to identify and mitigate risk on that basis. Replacement assessment must therefore extend beyond datasheet parameters and package form to confirm whether a candidate is suitable for the actual circuit, environmental conditions, reliability requirements, and qualification regime [8].



In practice, there is often a substantial gap between a candidate alternative and a replacement path that can actually be deployed. Similar parameters do not imply drop-in interchangeability, and an identical package does not guarantee identical system behavior. Start-up sequencing, control logic, external circuitry, firmware compatibility, thermal design, reliability performance, customer qualification, and industry certification may all determine whether the alternative is viable.

Replacement assessment should therefore move from "Is there a candidate?" to "Can it be introduced under the conditions of this program?" A functionally similar part may not be practical during an emergency shortage if it requires a PCB redesign, firmware changes, renewed reliability testing, or customer requalification. Conversely, a solution with less-than-identical specifications may provide a stronger long-term risk buffer if the required changes are controlled, validation is relatively short, and supply is stable.

Scenario: Similar Specifications Do Not Guarantee an Executable Replacement

A power-management component in a system develops an extended lead time, and several candidates with similar specifications are available. Further comparison shows

that one has the same package but different start-up timing; another has similar primary electrical parameters but requires changes to external components; a third can provide the required function but requires firmware modification; and a fourth has stable supply but has not passed the customer's existing qualification.

The question is no longer whether similar parts exist, but which option best balances the scope of change, validation time, supply stability, and program stage. If the product is still in design, engineering may have significant room to evaluate a new solution. If it is already in production and customer-qualified, the replacement path must be approached more cautiously, with preference given to solutions that minimize change, validation risk, and introduction time.

The value of an alternative therefore depends on whether it can be introduced within the business's acceptable time, cost, and qualification constraints. An independent distributor can help identify candidates and compare lifecycle and market-supply conditions, but electrical validation, reliability confirmation, qualification-impact assessment, and final approval remain the responsibility of the customer's engineering, quality, and certification teams.

2.4 Beyond Purchase Value: Is the Impact of Disruption Being Underestimated?

Unit price often influences risk priorities in BOM assessment. High-value components naturally attract attention because they directly affect acquisition cost, budget control, and inventory value. Purchase value, however, does not fully represent a component's importance to the business or the system.

Some low-cost parts – including connectors, power-management devices, basic logic, interface ICs, and memory – may perform critical functions. If their supply is interrupted, the impact may extend well beyond the individual item to system production, program delivery, customer qualification, after-sales repair, and long-term support.

Organizations should therefore assess BOM risk by more than purchase value or annual usage. They should examine recovery difficulty after a disruption: whether the part affects system start-up or a core function; whether it could stop the production line; whether replacement would require PCB redesign, firmware changes, or reliability testing; whether customer approval or industry certification would need to be repeated; and whether service-parts availability would be affected during the after-sales period.

These impacts may be invisible in routine purchasing but become amplified quickly when supply is disrupted. A low-value part in a power, control, communications, memory,

or qualification-sensitive module, with no replacement that can be introduced quickly, may carry far more risk than its purchase price suggests.

The objective of BOM supply-risk management is therefore to identify the critical nodes that are hardest to recover after disruption and most likely to affect system delivery and lifecycle support. Purchase value is one useful input, but it should not be the sole basis for prioritization.

Key Takeaways

Component selection must extend beyond technical specifications and current purchasing conditions. For long-lived products, BOM supply resilience depends directly on whether the component lifecycle covers the project horizon, underlying supply sources are genuinely independent, replacement paths are executable, and the impact of disruption is assessed accurately.



Figure 2 Four information gaps in component selection:
lifecycle fit, source independence, replacement feasibility, and business impact
Source: Original WIN SOURCE framework

Engineering determines whether a component meets functional, performance, and application requirements. Procurement and supply chain teams must also assess commercial conditions, sources, and long-term availability, while quality and certification teams evaluate the validation and compliance implications of change. Independent distributors can add evidence from cross-brand, cross-regional, and cross-market supply information, including lifecycle conditions, source structure, market change, and candidate alternatives.

Only when these factors are assessed together during component selection can BOM risk management move beyond reactive shortage response and become an earlier process of comparable, prioritized, and executable decision preparation.

3. From Supply Information to Decision Outcomes: A Method for BOM Risk Assessment and Classification

Identifying gaps in supply information is only the first step in BOM risk management. The practical challenge is to convert fragmented information into comparable risk judgments and then into priorities and action paths.

This is the purpose of BOM risk assessment and classification. It allows engineering, procurement, supply chain, and quality teams to apply a common logic when deciding which parts need routine monitoring, which require early validation of alternatives, which should be reassessed before design freeze, and which warrant a dedicated risk-treatment process. The point of BOM risk management is to make the information usable in real decisions.

3.1 Establish a Credible Evidence Base

The BOM risk-assessment logic presented here draws on the risk identification, analysis, evaluation, treatment, monitoring, and communication process set out in ISO 31000:2018. It combines that process with the lifecycle, source structure, replacement conditions, and program impact of electronic components to form a practical framework for BOM supply-risk decisions [9]. A BOM risk judgment should not rely on a single data source or



on one static label. Information on lifecycle, market supply, alternatives, and business impact is usually dispersed across manufacturer product status, PCN and EOL notices, public databases, market observations from distribution channels, internal BOM systems, purchasing history, and the application experience of engineering and quality teams.

Each source provides value, but each also has limits. Before assigning risk levels, the organization should establish evidence across four areas: (1) manufacturer information, including lifecycle status, PCN/EOL notices, product release date, and changes within the product family; (2) market information, including inventory, lead time, price volatility, supply regions, and channel shifts; (3) replacement information, including candidate specifications, package, lifecycle, and market-supply status; and (4) customer-program information, including annual usage, production horizon, after-sales period, qualification requirements, reliability standards, and change-approval conditions.

When consolidating this evidence, the critical questions are whether the information is sufficiently reliable and whether it applies to the program at hand. An Active label may no longer reflect a changing product road map; reported inventory may represent only residual short-term stock; and a candidate with similar parameters may not fit the customer's circuit or qualification conditions. Turning incomplete information directly into a firm conclusion can make the risk assessment itself a source of error.

Evidence confirmation is therefore the starting point: which information comes from a formal manufacturer release, which reflects observed market supply, which is directly relevant to the customer's program, and which still requires validation by engineering, quality, or supply chain. Only a credible evidence base can support executable classification, prioritization, and recommended actions.

3.2 Assess Likelihood, Business Impact, and Room to Adapt

Supply-risk assessment should not be limited to asking whether a shortage will occur. A shortage is only one manifestation of risk. Decision quality depends on the likelihood of the event, the business impact if it occurs, and whether the organization still has sufficient room to adapt.

The first dimension is likelihood. Lifecycle stage, changes in market supply and demand, source concentration, manufacturer product strategy, regional supply conditions, and the trade environment all influence the stability of a component's future supply. Even an Active part may warrant closer attention if updates to its product family are slowing, the manufacturer has introduced a next-generation platform, or market supply is becoming increasingly concentrated.

The second dimension is business impact. Supply risks do not produce equal consequences. A lead-time extension for some components can be absorbed through inventory, alternatives, or changes in purchasing cadence. If the component affects system production, customer qualification, PCB design, firmware compatibility, delivery milestones, or after-sales repair, its risk level cannot be based solely on purchase value or current stock.

The third dimension is room to adapt. The difficulty of response depends on whether an alternative has already been validated, design changes are acceptable, enough time remains for testing and qualification, and inventory or procurement buffers are available. Two late-lifecycle parts should carry different management priorities if one has a validated replacement while the other requires redesign and requalification.

BOM risk assessment should therefore consider three questions together: How likely is the risk to occur? How large would the impact be? Can the organization adapt in time? The first two dimensions determine severity; the third determines controllability. For long-term programs, the components that deserve the earliest action are often those that remain purchasable today but leave little room to respond if conditions change.

Illustrative scoring method: Score probability (P), business impact (I), and adjustment difficulty (A) from 1 to 5, and calculate $R = P + I + A$. Organizations may adjust the weighting to reflect regulatory obligations, customer requirements, and internal processes. Override criteria should be applied rather than relying on the aggregate score alone when, for example, a critical component is at EOL, is single-sourced with no validated alternative, or a disruption would invalidate mandatory certification.

Score	Probability (P)	Business Impact (I)	Adjustment Difficulty (A)
1	Stable lifecycle and normal market supply	No impact on core functions; manageable through routine inventory buffers	Validated alternative already available
2	Minor lead-time or product-road-map signals	Impacts limited production or selected orders	Limited parameter confirmation or sample testing required
3	Concentrated sources, an older product, or continued supply contraction	May affect system production or the delivery schedule	Full engineering validation required
4	NRND/EOL status or clear supply abnormalities	May cause a production stop, delay, or customer breach	PCB or firmware changes, or requalification, required
5	Discontinued; supply sources highly uncertain	Impacts a core product, long-term support, or mandatory certification	No executable short-term alternative

3.3 Classify BOM Items by Risk

Once the evidence has been assembled and assessed across multiple dimensions, BOM items should be converted into manageable risk tiers. Classification is not intended merely to attach a label to a part; it defines the appropriate intensity of management. Some components need only periodic review, some require continuous attention to market signals, some warrant early alternative validation, and some should be reconsidered at the design stage.

A practical framework can classify BOM items according to lifecycle, source structure, replacement conditions, and business impact as follows:

Risk Tier	Typical Characteristics	Recommended Action
Routine Monitoring	Relatively stable lifecycle, transparent sources, good market availability, and an executable replacement path	Periodically review lifecycle, lead time, and supply status; maintain baseline monitoring
Heightened Attention	Some signs of lifecycle change, source concentration, lead-time volatility, or changing market supply, but no direct pressure on the program yet	Add supply evidence; increase monitoring frequency; track PCN/EOL notices, lead times, and inventory
Early Validation	Replacement path not yet confirmed, or a lengthy transition would be required after the risk materializes, potentially involving engineering, quality, or certification work	Begin candidate assessment and schedule the necessary engineering validation and introduction preparation
Priority Adjustment	Highly concentrated sources, difficult replacement, and a disruption that could affect system production, delivery milestones, or long-term support	Reassess selection before design freeze or establish a dedicated risk-treatment plan

This tiered approach avoids applying the same level of management to every BOM item. Components with stable supply, clear replacements, and limited business impact may require only routine review. Parts with concentrated sources, difficult replacement, and critical delivery impact should be addressed while the design can still be changed.

The purpose of risk classification is to allocate engineering, procurement, quality, and supply chain resources intelligently. The team should use the assigned tier to define the owner, review interval, trigger conditions, and next action so that the risk judgment becomes part of the program-management process.

3.4 Move from Individual-Part Risk to BOM-Level Prioritization

BOM risk is not the simple sum of individual-part risks. In many cases, program stability is shaped less by one part number than by common dependencies across multiple components. Several critical items may rely on the same manufacturer, manufacturing region, assembly and test capacity, process platform, or supplier product line. Individually, none may appear exceptional; a change in the shared underlying resource, however, can affect several parts simultaneously and amplify pressure across the BOM.

After classifying individual items, the organization should therefore return to the BOM as a whole and reassess the distribution of risk. Where are risks concentrated? Do they affect the same functional module? Do they depend on the same supply source? Could they affect production, delivery, or maintenance at the same time?

If several critical components rely on one manufacturer, for example, the BOM's dependency on that supplier increases. If multiple items share a process or regional resource, a regional supply event can create cascading effects. A functional module containing several late-lifecycle components will also be more difficult to maintain. Likewise, if many parts lack executable replacement paths, the organization will have little flexibility when future supply conditions change even if no shortage exists today.

The objective of BOM-level assessment is to progress from identifying isolated risk to managing priorities. It helps distinguish a localized issue from a risk that could affect system delivery, and from risks that require coordinated action before design freeze.

End-to-End Assessment Example

An industrial product is planned for eight years of production followed by five additional years of after-sales support. A critical controller in the BOM remains Active, and current market inventory and lead times appear normal. Based only on current purchasing conditions, the component might be treated as low risk. Once the project horizon, source structure, and replacement conditions are considered, however, a different risk profile emerges.

Assessment Area	Key Finding	Risk Implication
Lifecycle	The product has been on the market for years, and the manufacturer has launched a next-generation platform	Active status does not guarantee long-term availability
Source Structure	Single manufacturer with no pin-compatible second source	Multi-channel inventory does not eliminate concentration in the underlying source
Replacement Conditions	Candidate alternatives require PCB and firmware changes	A future transition would require substantial lead time and introduction cost
Business Impact	The program has a long production and after-sales horizon	Lifecycle mismatch may compromise long-term delivery and support

In this example, there is no clear shortage signal and short-term purchasing is not directly constrained. Yet the long program horizon, single source, high replacement difficulty, and impact of a supply change on future maintenance and delivery mean that the part should not be classified automatically as low risk.

A more appropriate response is to place the component in the Heightened Attention or Early Validation tier and complete additional decisions before design freeze: whether to retain the current part, assess the next-generation platform, preserve design flexibility for an alternative, begin candidate validation early, and define ongoing monitoring of lifecycle and market supply after production begins.

This is the value of BOM risk assessment: before the risk becomes visible, it reveals whether sufficient room to adapt remains and moves the response into the period when the organization still has choices.

Key Takeaways

The core of BOM risk management is not simply to collect more lifecycle, inventory, source, or replacement data, but to convert that information into comparable judgments, actionable tiers, and implementable responses. Lifecycle, source structure, replacement conditions, and business impact can support aligned decisions across engineering, procurement, quality, and supply chain only when they are evaluated within a common framework.

An effective assessment distinguishes early between components that require only routine monitoring, those needing sustained attention to market signals, those for which alternatives should be validated in advance, and those that must be reconsidered before design freeze. BOM risk management can then become an upstream decision tool in product design, procurement planning, and lifecycle management rather than an emergency response after a shortage.

4. Integrating Supply Chain Information into Design and Product Lifecycle Management

When supply risk is identified only after design freeze, many lower-cost opportunities to adapt have already been lost. Replacing a part, modifying the PCB, repeating validation, or resubmitting for customer approval is then constrained by time, cost, qualification, and the program schedule. The closer the product is to volume production, the more readily a single-component risk becomes a program-delivery risk.

A more effective approach is to bring supply chain information into product lifecycle management earlier. Before the BOM is formed, engineering, procurement, quality, and supply chain teams should jointly assess critical components: which are suitable for long-term adoption; which require advance validation of alternatives; which should be kept out of the core design; and which risks can be managed through later monitoring and sourcing strategy. The earlier lifecycle, source structure, replacement paths, and business impact enter the discussion, the greater the opportunity to make lower-cost changes while options remain open.

4.1 Define Supply Constraints During Concept Design

During product architecture and concept design, organizations typically define functional objectives, performance boundaries, cost ranges, and application scenarios. For products with long lifecycles, demanding qualification requirements, or extended after-sales periods, these design conditions are not sufficient. Supply constraints should also be defined early as fundamental boundaries for component selection.

Such constraints may include the planned product lifecycle, target markets and sales regions, expected production volume, industry-certification requirements, after-sales and repair periods, acceptable redesign cost, tolerance for single-source components, and restrictions on using late-lifecycle parts. These factors do not determine whether a component can perform the circuit function, but they do determine whether it is suitable for a long-term program.



For industrial-control equipment intended for long-term supply, for example, the concept-stage requirements may state that critical controllers, power-management components, communications interfaces, and memory should avoid late-lifecycle

products where possible; critical parts with no replacement path require additional review before design freeze; and any component that may affect qualification, firmware, or PCB layout must have an executable replacement strategy assessed in advance.

Engineering should recognize supply boundaries from the outset. The earlier supply information enters the discussion, the greater the chance of identifying a potential issue before the component is written into the BOM.

4.2 Evaluate Technical and Supply Fit in Parallel During Component Selection

In a traditional process, engineering selects components against technical requirements and procurement subsequently confirms price, lead time, and source. This sequence is efficient in a stable market, but downstream procurement confirmation alone can no longer identify issues early enough when lifecycle change, source concentration, and replacement difficulty create long-term risk.

A more resilient process evaluates technical fit and supply fit in parallel. Engineering determines whether the component meets functional, performance, temperature-range, reliability, and application requirements. Procurement and supply chain assess lifecycle, source structure, price, lead time, and commercial conditions. Quality and compliance consider testing, qualification, change approval, and the impact of introducing a replacement. An independent distributor can add an external perspective based on market supply, cross-brand comparisons, candidate alternatives, and lifecycle signals.

Parallel assessment exposes potential problems during selection. Two components may both meet the technical requirements, but one may depend on a single manufacturer and lack a clear replacement path. The other may differ modestly in cost yet belong to a more stable platform, carry clearer lifecycle support, and offer alternatives that can be assessed. For a long-term program, the latter may be more consistent with BOM supply resilience.

Supply assessment during component selection helps the team make a more complete choice among technically viable options. Technical specifications determine whether a component can be used; supply information helps determine whether it should be used for the long term.

4.3 Complete a Critical-Component Risk Review Before Design Freeze

Design freeze should mean not only that product function, performance, and test results meet requirements, but also that critical-component supply risks have received the

necessary review. Once a long-term product is frozen, component replacement is no longer simply a purchasing action. It may entail PCB modification, firmware adjustment, reliability validation, qualification updates, and customer approval. The later the risk is discovered, the fewer response options usually remain.

Before design freeze, the organization should conduct a focused review of critical components. The objective is not to reassess every item in the BOM, but to identify parts with concentrated sources, uncertain lifecycles, unclear replacement paths, and the potential to affect system delivery or long-term support if interrupted.

For each such component, the review should determine at minimum whether the current part will remain in the design; whether an approved or assessable alternative exists; which candidates require advance validation; what hardware, software, or qualification changes a transition may involve; and how engineering, procurement, quality, and supply chain will divide responsibilities if the risk materializes after production begins.

Two Treatment Paths for the Same Component

Path A: Risk Discovered After Design Freeze

Engineering completes component selection and testing before procurement discovers that the part is single-sourced. After production begins, the manufacturer issues an EOL notice. Candidate alternatives exist, but they require PCB changes and retesting. Because the product has entered the customer's qualification system, any substitution also requires renewed validation and approval. The organization is left to rely on spot-market inventory, long-term stock, or temporary purchasing buffers; an issue that could have been addressed during design becomes a higher-cost, time-critical, reactive response.

Path B: Risk Assessed Before Design Freeze

Before design freeze, engineering proposes two technically viable options, while procurement and the distributor add lifecycle, source-structure, and market-supply information. The assessment shows that one part has no credible long-term replacement path; the other belongs to a more stable platform and has candidates suitable for further validation. The program can therefore choose the clearer supply path during design while preserving validation and introduction options for a future transition.



The difference between the two paths is that the second addresses risk while the organization still has choices. Moving risk management upstream allows the organization to act on preparations already in place when supply conditions change, instead of beginning its search for options only after a shortage, discontinuation, or lead-time extension.

4.4 Continuously Update Risk Status During Production and Maintenance

Product lifecycle management should also track manufacturer notices of product and process changes. The Electronic Components Industry Association (ECIA) identifies JESD46D as an important industry reference for customer notification of product and process changes to electronic components and has issued a position paper on product change notifications. Such notices may concern product design, manufacturing location, materials, processes, test methods, or supplier changes. Even when the part number remains unchanged, its suitability and risk status may need to be reassessed [10].

BOM risk management must therefore continue through production and maintenance. Organizations should periodically update the lifecycle status of critical components; PCN and EOL notices; market lead times; inventory and supply-demand conditions; manufacturer road maps; supply conditions for alternatives; regional and trade risks; and the remaining production and service horizon of the program. For long-lifecycle products, this review should not be a procurement-only activity. It should connect with engineering changes, quality reviews, annual purchasing plans, and customer-program milestones.

Continuous updates prevent the BOM from being treated as a static object. Risk priorities change as the program advances: early design focuses on whether a component is suitable for adoption; production emphasizes continuity and delivery stability; maintenance focuses on discontinuation, service parts, and replacement feasibility. Only an up-to-date risk status allows the organization to take the appropriate action at each

stage.

For long-running programs, BOM reviews may operate on a fixed schedule or be triggered by events such as a PCN, an abnormal lead time, a sharp price movement, a change in a key supplier's product line, an extension of the customer's demand horizon, or the transition into after-sales support. Lifecycle change and supply risk can then enter the engineering, procurement, and supply chain workflow before a shortage makes them visible.

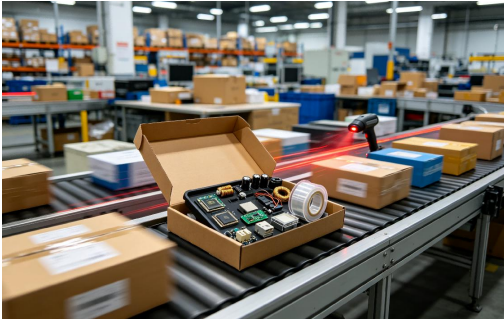
Key Takeaways

Bringing supply chain information into the design process reduces the cost of reactive change later. Defining supply constraints during concept design, assessing supply during component selection, reviewing critical parts before design freeze, and updating risk status throughout production and maintenance all preserve greater room to adapt at each stage of the product lifecycle.

More importantly, this turns BOM risk management from a one-time check into an ongoing judgment. Supply risk does not stop changing when the design is frozen, and organizations should not wait for a shortage, discontinuation, or lead-time exception before responding. The earlier lifecycle, source structure, replacement path, and business impact are incorporated into product decisions, the more likely the organization is to prepare a lower-cost, more controlled response before the risk becomes visible.

5. How Independent Distributors Can Support Ongoing BOM Risk Governance

BOM risk governance in the electronic-component supply chain cannot readily be performed using internal information alone. Manufacturer data, engineering experience, purchasing history, and internal program plans are essential, but they are usually



oriented toward a single product, a single program, or an established supply path. Customers with long production and support horizons also need an external market view: cross-brand supply performance, regional market changes, lifecycle trends, availability of alternatives, and channel-level supply-demand signals.

This is the principal point at which an independent distributor can participate in BOM risk governance. Supply Chain Connect's 2026 analysis of the electronic-component distribution industry observed that, after several years of volatility, customer expectations of distributors extend beyond immediate spot supply to include supply visibility, flexible inventory management, digital access to information, and more reliable responsiveness [11].

In the context of BOM risk management, these capabilities do not mean that the distributor replaces engineering, procurement, or quality in the final decision. Rather, the distributor adds external supply information and translates market change into risk signals that engineering and procurement can use. Its value is not confined to emergency sourcing after a shortage; it can also support BOM analysis, lifecycle assessment, source-structure review, and replacement planning before design freeze.

5.1 Add Cross-Brand, Cross-Regional Supply Intelligence

Manufacturers naturally provide information about their own product status, technology road maps, and official lifecycle position. This information is foundational, but BOM risk assessment also requires a wider market view: how comparable parts are performing across brands; whether lead times are shifting within a category; whether regional inventory is concentrated; whether candidate alternatives have durable availability; and whether apparently diverse sources share common dependencies.

Independent distributors can observe supply changes across multiple brands, regions, and channels. Long-term patterns in inquiries, purchasing, delivery, and substitution

demand can supplement official manufacturer information. Relevant signals might include rising inquiry frequency for a class of analog devices, early signs of supply contraction in mature-node products, migration of a brand's portfolio toward a new platform, or unstable real-world supply for candidates whose specifications appear similar.

SAE ARP6178A provides supplier-assessment tools for organizations procuring electronic components from sources other than authorized channels, with particular emphasis on processes for preventing, detecting, containing, determining, and reporting suspect or counterfeit parts. The value of an independent distributor therefore depends not only on its ability to locate inventory, but also on the completeness and credibility of its supplier management, quality controls, inspection capabilities, and information sources [12]. These capabilities help the customer see the supply structure behind the BOM. For a long-term program, the key questions are not limited to whether stock is available now, but include whether the product platform is stable, sources are concentrated, credible replacements exist, and an executable option will remain if conditions change.

When a customer is choosing among several technically viable components, for example, the distributor can help compare platform lifecycle status, market availability, regional supply, and the conditions surrounding candidate alternatives. Final selection remains with the customer's engineering and quality teams, but external supply intelligence provides a more complete basis for judgment beyond the technical specifications.

5.2 Map External Market Signals to the Customer's BOM

Changes in price, inventory, lead time, and manufacturer strategy create decision value only when they are connected to the customer's specific part numbers, project horizon, and business context. A lead-time shift in a component category does not mean that every customer must act immediately; a price change for one part does not necessarily threaten a program's delivery. The question is whether the external signal relates to a critical BOM item, a long-term program, or a high-impact module.

An independent distributor can perform this mapping function by relating market changes to specific components in the customer's BOM. This helps identify which items need more frequent monitoring, which may be approaching a later lifecycle stage, which lack an executable replacement path, which programs should begin engineering validation in advance, and which market developments may affect future production, maintenance, or after-sales support.

In a BOM containing hundreds or thousands of part numbers, it is difficult for the customer to track the lifecycle, source structure, market supply, and replacement status of each component individually. Structured analysis by the distributor can convert dispersed market signals into clearer risk tiers and help distinguish parts for routine monitoring, heightened attention, early validation, and priority adjustment.

The objective is not merely to relay market information, but to help the customer understand how that information relates to its own BOM. Only when an external signal is mapped to a specific part number, program stage, and business impact can it become an actionable BOM risk alert rather than a general market update.

5.3 Support Replacement and Disposition Planning for At-Risk Components

Replacement planning for a component identified as high risk should begin early. SAE AS5553E requires organizations that procure and integrate electronic components to use a risk-based approach to counterfeit-part avoidance, detection, and mitigation based on application criticality and performance and reliability requirements. Emergency sourcing must therefore evaluate not only inventory and price, but also source, inspection requirements, and the component's criticality in the application [13].

An independent distributor can provide candidate leads, cross-brand parameter comparisons, lifecycle status, market-supply conditions, and availability information. It can also help distinguish among drop-in replacements, alternatives requiring validation, and parts for which no near-term alternative exists. In parallel, it can separate two different needs: an emergency supply solution for short-term delivery pressure and replacement preparation for long-term design and lifecycle management.

This support is especially valuable before design freeze and during product maintenance. If a candidate alternative enters the assessment process before the risk materializes, the customer has more time to complete engineering validation, quality confirmation, qualification-impact assessment, and the introduction decision.

Distributor support should not be confused with approval of a replacement. The customer's engineering, quality, and certification teams remain responsible for confirming circuit suitability, reliability requirements, customer qualifications, and industry compliance. The distributor's role is better suited to adding information, screening candidates, comparing supply conditions, and recommending risk priorities so the customer can begin its internal assessment earlier and with a stronger evidence base.

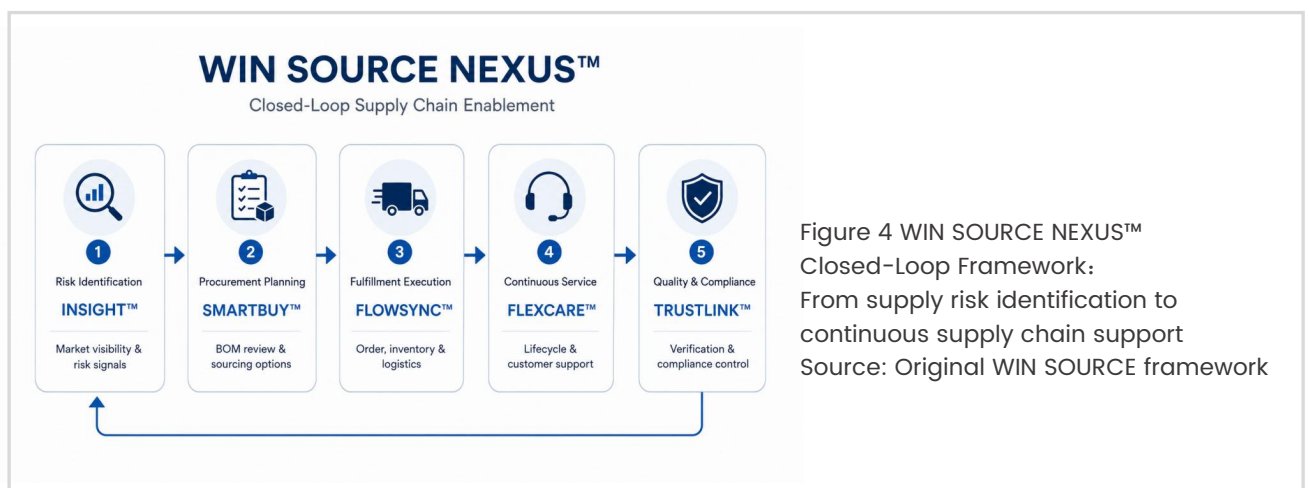
5.4 WIN SOURCE NEXUS™: From BOM Analysis to Decision Support

When a customer submits a BOM containing a large number of part numbers, inventory searches and quotations alone cannot meet the long-term program requirements for risk identification, replacement planning, and continuity management. WIN SOURCE NEXUS™ integrates market intelligence, BOM management, procurement execution, customer service, and quality and compliance capabilities to convert dispersed supply information into clearer risk judgments and courses of action.

Within the framework, INSIGHT™ analyzes changes in supply and demand, price, lead time, and material availability. SMARTBUY™ supports BOM review, candidate comparison, and sourcing-plan optimization. FLOWSYNC™ coordinates inventory, orders, delivery, and logistics execution. FLEXCARE™ provides flexible support for emergency procurement, EOL sourcing, and different stages of the product lifecycle. TRUSTLINK™ incorporates supplier management, product verification, quality control, and compliance requirements into the procurement process.

Working together, the five capabilities help identify parts at a late lifecycle stage, with concentrated sources, volatile supply, or difficult replacement. Attention can then be prioritized according to the program horizon and business impact, connecting BOM risk analysis with replacement validation, procurement planning, and delivery execution.

NEXUS™ does not replace the customer's engineering design, electrical validation, quality qualification, or final purchasing decision. Its core value is to provide engineering, procurement, quality, and supply chain teams with more complete supply information and coordinated support, helping the customer identify risk earlier and preserve room to adapt before design freeze, volume production, and long-term maintenance.



6. Conclusion

The role of an independent distributor in BOM risk governance is not limited to matching spot inventory after a shortage. Long-term programs require earlier access to external information on lifecycle, source structure, market change, and candidate alternatives so that decisions and preparations can be completed before the risk escalates.

A distributor's central contribution is to translate dispersed market signals into specific risk indicators within the customer's BOM and help distinguish components that require monitoring, validation, or an advance disposition plan. The earlier a distributor participates in identifying critical components, assessing supply, and preparing alternatives, the more likely the customer is to preserve options before supply risk becomes visible. For BOM supply resilience, this upstream support delivers greater long-term value than a one-time response after a shortage.

The semiconductor market is entering a new growth cycle, but supply risk will not disappear simply because the market expands. Structural divergence in growth, the reallocation of underlying resources to AI demand, increasing lifecycle events, and changes in regional supply structures are making BOM-level risk assessment more complex.

For OEMs and EMS providers, a genuinely resilient BOM assesses lifecycle fit, source independence, replacement feasibility, and business impact before a component enters the design. A part that is available today may not be suitable for a long-term program, and a part that meets the specifications may not offer sufficient supply flexibility.

Organizations must therefore move supply-risk management upstream from the back end of procurement into design and component selection. Engineering focuses on functional and application requirements; procurement and supply chain assess sources, lead times, market supply, and lifecycle risk; quality and certification teams consider the validation and compliance implications of substitution. Independent distributors can add a cross-brand, cross-regional, and cross-market perspective that helps customers identify latent BOM risk earlier.

Competition among electronic-component distributors will increasingly extend beyond resource matching and price response to information integration, risk identification, replacement planning, and coordination efficiency. Supply chain partners capable of helping customers identify issues, assess impact, and preserve options before risk becomes visible will be better positioned to contribute to long-term BOM resilience.

Supply risk management should not begin with a shortage. Risk should be identified before the BOM is formed, assessed before design freeze, and continuously updated throughout production and maintenance.

About WIN SOURCE

Founded in 1999, WIN SOURCE is a global distributor of electronic components. Working with more than 3,000 manufacturers, the company offers supply capabilities covering over 1.2 million part numbers, including commonly used devices, discontinued parts, and hard-to-find components. Its global sourcing network, rapid delivery, and rigorous quality-assurance system provide customers with dependable supply support.

WIN SOURCE differentiates itself by integrating supply chain intelligence into the design stage, turning procurement from a reactive response into an upstream advantage. Combining global reach, rapid fulfillment, and trusted quality assurance with the intelligent capabilities of the NEXUS™ Solution, WIN SOURCE helps engineering and procurement teams move more efficiently from design to production.

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