

Geopolitical Resilience is a UX Problem, Not a Press Release



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Industrial Buyer Pulse

A quarterly research initiative capturing the evolving perspectives of industrial buyers across North America.



In the Q1 2026 Industrial Buyer Pulse, 59% of respondents said geopolitical conflict or instability has significantly affected their evaluation of industrial suppliers in the past 90 days. Another 29% reported some impact. Only 12% said the effect was negligible. When buyers were asked how continued conflict would most likely change their behaviour, the top two answers were: prioritizing suppliers with stronger delivery guarantees (31%) and shifting more spend to regional suppliers (30%). That is a remarkably clean signal in a turbulent environment. 61% of buyers want assurance and proximity, and they are willing to reorganize their supplier base to get them.

The instinctive marketing response to a finding like this is to write about it. Publish a blog post on supply chain resilience. Add a paragraph to the corporate "About" page about diversified sourcing. Issue a thought-leadership piece on nearshoring. None of those are wrong, exactly. But they treat resilience as a claim to be communicated rather than a property to be demonstrated, and the buyer who is genuinely worried about delivery in a disrupted corridor is past the point where claims will move them.

Buyers need to verify your resilience, not just read about it

The Q4 Buyer Pulse made the point that the strongest reliability signals in industrial buying are not brand statements or testimonials. They are historical on-time performance, live or near-real-time lead-time visibility, and third-party certifications. The Q1 data sharpens that observation. A buyer evaluating you against a backdrop of geopolitical risk is not asking whether you describe yourself as resilient. They are asking whether they can see the evidence themselves, quickly, without a sales call, and in a form they can defend internally to a procurement committee that has its own anxieties.

This is fundamentally an information design problem. The proof points likely already exist inside most manufacturers – in ERP systems, in CRM, in operations dashboards, in compliance archives. The question is whether any of that ever surfaces in the digital experience the buyer actually uses.



What this can look like when a manufacturer takes it seriously

Cynthia Kellam, who previously lead digital customer experience at TE Connectivity, joined us on [The Kula Ring](#) twice to talk about the foundational data work behind TE's product experience. One of the outcomes of that work is that on a TE product page, a buyer can see real-time stocking information for the part itself, and also see which distributors near their location have it on the shelf and in what quantity. The page does not ask the buyer to call, fill out a form, or wait for a response. It surfaces the answer to the question the buyer is actually asking, at the exact moment that they're asking it: can I get this, when, and from where.

This matters because the Q1 findings are pushing buyer expectations toward exactly the kind of experience TE has built. If 30% of buyers are actively planning to shift more spend to regional suppliers, the manufacturer who can show, on the product page, where the part is stocked closest to the buyer has effectively pre-answered the regional sourcing question. The manufacturer who cannot is asking the buyer to take their word for it.

The buyer's internal job is to defend the choice

Roughly 14% of Q1 respondents said continued conflict would push them to delay major purchases. Read alongside the Q4 finding that proven ROI is the single biggest accelerator of internal approval, a coherent picture emerges. The buyer who wants to act is not necessarily the buyer who can. Their internal job, regardless of category, is to anticipate objections from finance, operations, and procurement and to arrive at the approval meeting with answers ready.

A real-time stocking map the buyer can screenshot. A delivery-performance figure with a date stamp. A distributor proximity view that pastes into a procurement memo. These are not decoration. They are the artifacts a champion needs to win the room. A manufacturer that produces them as a natural output of its digital experience does more than build trust with the individual buyer; it lowers the activation energy of the entire approval process behind that buyer.



Why this is an opportunity for mid-market manufacturers

Enterprise competitors will respond to geopolitical risk with global PR campaigns, glossy supply-chain stories, and conference keynotes. Mid-market manufacturers cannot win that contest, and they should not try. What they can do, often faster than larger rivals burdened by legacy systems and committee-driven web governance, is make resilience visible at the product level. A small manufacturer with a single regional plant and a clean lead-time feed has, at minimum, a more credible story than a multinational whose website is silent on origin and timing.

The TE example sets a high bar, but it also reveals where the work actually lives. The differentiator is not a clever interface treatment. It is the willingness to do the data discipline that makes the interface trustworthy. That is a project most mid-market manufacturers can start, in some form, with the systems they already own.

The takeaway

Buyers are no longer waiting for manufacturers to tell them about resilience. They are looking for evidence of it, on their own, before a conversation ever starts. The Q1 Buyer Pulse makes that clear: 59% say geopolitics is actively reshaping their supplier evaluation, and the responses they favour like delivery guarantees, real-time stock information, and regional sourcing, are things a digital experience can either prove or stay silent on. Manufacturers that surface that proof inside the product experience, at the page, at the moment of decision, turn a macro anxiety into a competitive advantage. Manufacturers that treat resilience as a messaging exercise will find the buyer has already moved on, quietly, to someone whose website did the work for them.

