

# Tariffs 2025: A Strategic Inflection Point for U.S. Businesses

A Roland Berger Whitepaper

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## **How leading companies are mitigating trade disruption and building long-term resilience.**

While many organizations are still assessing the near-term cost implications, the most forward-looking leaders are already taking action. This is not a temporary disruption; it is a structural change that requires a strategic response.

### **The moment to act is now**

The 90-day pause granted by the White House to most countries (excluding China) offers a narrow but critical window to get ahead of the curve. At Roland Berger, we work with companies across sectors— industrials , automotive , electronics , and more—to help them understand their exposure and chart a course forward for strategic advantage.

Our experience shows that rapid, cross-functional action during this window can mitigate cost and unlock both short and long-term value.

### **Three strategic imperatives**

#### **1. Assess exposure and quantify financial impact**

A precise understanding of where and how tariffs will affect the business is essential. Many organizations are discovering that their exposure is more extensive than anticipated, often buried in sub-tier suppliers, overlooked HTS codes, or product groupings.

Roland Berger applies a structured diagnostic approach:

Full tariff load modeling by supplier, country of origin, and product category

Competitive benchmarking to assess your exposure versus your peers. And how best to mitigate and/or use it for an advantage

Scenario simulations to test business resilience under different policy paths

#### **2. Implement targeted mitigation levers**

Tariffs affect every part of the value chain—from sourcing and manufacturing to pricing and working capital. Organizations must align their commercial, operational, and supply chain strategies to respond effectively.

Key actions include:

- Deploying pricing strategies informed by elasticity analysis and market dynamics
- Planning liquidity and cost management levers to preserve short-term flexibility
- Optimizing supplier portfolios and activating multi-sourcing strategies
- Re-engineering products and packaging to reduce tariff liabilities
- Realigning manufacturing footprints to de-risk high-exposure regions

### **3. Engage proactively with the evolving policy landscape**

Tariffs are not static—they are ongoing geopolitical and economic negotiation instruments. Businesses that understand policy direction and build internal alignment around a response strategy are better positioned to engage with stakeholders and influence outcomes.

We help clients:

- Evaluate geopolitical risk scenarios and model their operational implications
- Align internally with C-suite and board stakeholders on response strategies
- Develop external engagement plans for regulators, investors, and policymakers
- Prepare exemption or deferral requests backed by robust business cases

### **The path forward**

Tariff disruption, while challenging, can serve as a catalyst for long-overdue operational transformation. Businesses that respond decisively now will not only manage risk but also reposition themselves for short and long-term competitiveness.

Roland Berger brings the tools, experience, and cross-sector insight to help clients build that strategy rapidly, pragmatically, and with measurable ROI.

### **Let's talk**

Contact our U.S. operations experts to schedule a strategy session to explore how Roland Berger can support your organization in navigating tariffs and building long-term resilience.

*<https://www.rolandberger.com/en/Insights/Publications/Tariffs-2025-A-strategic-inflection-point-for-U.S.-businesses.html>*