What is claimed is:

1. A computer-implemented method comprising:

receiving a group of predefined forecastability strategies, each forecastability strategy representing a set of rules used to determine whether each item of a plurality of items within a supply chain management system is to be managed using statistical forecasting;

receiving historical supply chain management data representing past events in a supply chain associated with at least two items selected from the plurality of items within the supply chain management system;

applying, by one or more computing devices, each of the forecastability strategies to the historical data in order to generate a plurality of business outcomes for each of the forecastability strategies, where each business outcome indicates at least two or more business characteristics for a particular selected item for a particular forecastability strategy in the group of predefined forecastability strategies;,

wherein applying each of the forecastability strategies to the historical data includes, for each forecastability strategy:

classifying each of the selected items as either forecastable or non-forecastable according to the forecastability strategy,

for each of the selected items classified as forecastable, selecting a forecasting model for inventory management of that item according to the forecastability strategy,

for each of the selected items classified as non-forecastable, selecting a non-forecasting rule for inventory management of that item according to the forecastability strategy,

simulating inventory management of the selected items according to the one or more selected forecasting models or non-forecasting rules over a period of time represented by the historical data, and

generating the plurality of business outcomes based on the simulated inventory management of the selected items;

for each of the business characteristics of the plurality of business outcomes, normalizing the business characteristic based on corresponding business characteristics of the plurality of business outcomes;

generating, by the one or more computing devices, scores for the plurality of business outcomes, where each score for a business outcome represents a weighted average of the at least two or more normalized business characteristics of the business outcome;

selecting a forecastability strategy from among the group of forecastability strategies based on a comparison of the scores for the plurality of business outcomes; and

implementing the selected forecastability strategy to manage each of the plurality of items within the supply chain management system.

~~2. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein applying each of the forecastability strategies to the historical data comprises:~~

~~for each of the forecastability strategies,~~

~~for each of the selected items of the plurality of items,~~

~~selecting a forecasting model or non-forecasting rule for inventory management of that item according to the particular forecastability strategy;~~

~~simulating inventory management of that item according to the selected model or rule over a period of time represented by the historical data; and~~

~~generating the plurality of business outcomes based on the simulated inventory management of the item.~~

~~3. The computer implemented method of claim 02, wherein generating the business outcomes for each of the forecastability strategies involves, for each forecastability strategy, aggregating the plurality of business outcomes based on the simulated inventory management of each of the selected items according to the particular forecastability strategy.~~

42. The computer-implemented method of claim ~~2~~1, wherein simulating inventory management ~~over a period of time represents~~ comprises iterating the inventory management over a plurality of management cycles and using the simulated results of each cycle to simulate the results of the next cycle.

~~5~~3. The computer-implemented method of claim 42, wherein the period of time for simulating inventory management is at least a year.

~~6~~4. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the two or more business outcome characteristics comprise at least two of average inventory, number of backorders, average customer wait time, number of purchase requisitions, and value of purchase requisitions.

~~7~~5. The computer-implemented method of claim ~~6~~4, wherein for each of the business characteristics of the plurality of business outcomes, normalizing the business characteristic based on corresponding business characteristics of the plurality of business outcomes comprises for each of the business characteristics of the plurality of business outcomes, normalizing the business characteristic according to a median value for the business characteristic.

~~8~~6. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving user input specifying the weights to use for each business outcome characteristic; and

using the specified weights to generate the weighted average.

~~9~~7. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein selecting a forecastability strategy comprises:

reporting the plurality of business outcomes associated with each of the forecastability strategies to a user; and

receiving user input representing a selection of a forecastability strategy from among the group of forecastability strategies.

~~10~~8. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein implementing the selected forecastability strategy comprises, for each of the plurality of items, selecting a forecasting model or non-forecasting rule for inventory management of that item according to the selected forecastability strategy.

~~11~~9. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the selected forecastability strategy comprises a first criterion associated with a first forecasting model such that items meeting the first criterion are evaluated according to the first forecasting model, a second criterion associated with a second forecasting model such that items meeting the second criterion are evaluated according to the second forecasting model, and a non-forecasting rule such that at least some items not meeting the first or second criteria are evaluated according to the non-forecasting rule.

~~12~~10. The computer-implemented method of claim ~~11~~9, wherein the second forecasting model is a simple moving average statistical model.

~~13~~11. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of business outcomes for each forecastability strategy are compared against a plurality of business outcomes for a baseline strategy using one or more non-forecasting rules.

~~14~~12. A system comprising:

a data repository storing historical supply chain management data representing past events associated with a plurality of items within a supply chain management system;

a simulation engine that receives a group of predefined forecastability strategies, accesses the historical management data, and applies each of the forecastability strategies to the historical data in order to generate a plurality of business outcomes for each of the forecastability strategies, where each business outcome indicates at least two or more business characteristics for a particular selected item for a particular forecastability strategy in the group of predefined forecastability strategies~~; and~~,

where the simulation engine that applies each of the forecastability strategies to the historical data includes, for each forecastability strategy:

classifies each of the selected items as either forecastable or non-forecastable according to the forecastability strategy,

for each of the selected items classified as forecastable, selects a forecasting model for inventory management of that item according to the forecastability strategy,

for each of the selected items classified as non-forecastable, selects a non-forecasting rule for inventory management of that item according to the forecastability strategy,

simulates inventory management of the selected items according to the one or more selected forecasting models or non-forecasting rules over a period of time represented by the historical data, and

generates the plurality of business outcomes based on the simulated inventory management of the selected items; and

one or more computers and one or more storage devices storing instructions that are operable, when executed by the one or more computers, to cause the one or more computers to perform operations comprising:

for each of the business characteristics of the plurality of business outcomes, normalizing the business characteristic based on corresponding business characteristics of the plurality of business outcomes;

generating scores for the plurality of business outcomes, where each score for a business outcome represents a weighted average of the at least two or more normalized business characteristics of the business outcome;

selecting a forecastability strategy from among the group of forecastability strategies based on a comparison of the scores for the plurality of business outcomes generated by the simulation engine; and

implementing the selected forecastability strategy to manage each of the plurality of items within the supply chain management system.

~~15. The system of claim 14, wherein the simulation engine applies the forecastibility strategies to the historical data by,~~

~~for each of the forecastability strategies,~~

~~for each of at least two items selected from the plurality of items,~~

~~selects a forecasting model or non-forecasting rule for inventory management of that item according to the particular forecastability strategy;~~

~~simulates inventory management of that item according to the selected model or rule over a period of time represented by the historical data; and~~

~~generates the plurality of business outcomes based on the simulated inventory management of the item.~~

~~16~~13. The system of claim ~~14~~12, wherein the ~~two or more~~ business outcome characteristics comprise at least ~~two~~ one of average inventory, number of backorders, average customer wait time, number of purchase requisitions, and value of purchase requisitions.

~~17~~14. The system of claim ~~14~~12, wherein simulation engine receives user input specifying the weights to use for each business outcome characteristic and uses the specified weights to generate the weighted average.

~~18~~15. A non-transitory computer-readable medium storing software comprising instructions executable by one or more computers which, upon such execution, cause the one or more computers to perform operations comprising:

receiving a group of predefined forecastability strategies, each forecastability strategy representing a set of rules used to determine whether each item of a plurality of items within a supply chain management system is to be managed using statistical forecasting;

receiving historical supply chain management data representing past events in a supply chain associated with at least two items selected from the plurality of items within the supply chain management system;

applying each of the forecastability strategies to the historical data in order to generate a plurality of business outcomes for each of the forecastability strategies, where each business outcome indicates at least two or more business characteristics for a particular selected item for a particular forecastability strategy in the group of predefined forecastability strategies;, wherein applying each of the forecastability strategies to the historical data includes, for each forecastability strategy:

classifying each of the selected items as either forecastable or non-forecastable according to the forecastability strategy,

for each of the selected items classified as forecastable, selecting a forecasting model for inventory management of that item according to the forecastability strategy,

for each of the selected items classified as non-forecastable, selecting a non-forecasting rule for inventory management of that item according to the forecastability strategy,

simulating inventory management of the selected items according to the one or more selected forecasting models or non-forecasting rules over a period of time represented by the historical data, and

generating the plurality of business outcomes based on the simulated inventory management of the selected items;

for each of the business characteristics of the plurality of business outcomes, normalizing the business characteristic based on corresponding business characteristics of the plurality of business outcomes;

generating scores for the plurality of business outcomes, where each score for a business outcome represents a weighted average of the at least two or more normalized business characteristics of the business outcome;

selecting a forecastability strategy from among the group of forecastability strategies based on a comparison of the scores for the plurality of business outcomes; and

implementing the selected forecastability strategy to manage each of the plurality of items within the supply chain management system.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the non-forecasting rule comprises a rule defining that when an inventory level of an item satisfies a predetermined minimum level criteria, a quantity of the item is ordered to replenish the inventory level of the item to a predetermined maximum level.