

BOOK REVIEWS

DYNAMIC SUPPLY CHAIN ALIGNMENT

A new business model for Peak Performance in Enterprise Supply Chains across all Geographies

by John Gattorna and Friends

Reviewed by Ray Moorcroft FlinstAM

This is a very ambitious book. The sheer scope of the coverage is impressive – from Brazil to Bologna and on, to the 'future giants' of China and India. Gattorna and his 'Friends' attempt to extract relevant common lessons for all in industry or the public sector. The interesting thing about the book is that if you think that 'Supply Chain Management' is not something which will ever be of interest or relevance to you – think again!

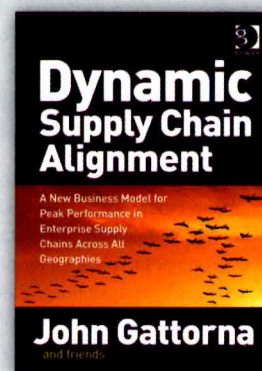
It's actually all about encouraging 'a commitment'. By this, Gattorna means commitment to customer service, to internal quality chains and to creation of high value at all levels in the Company. For example, take the issue of Risk Management: "Often when there's a risk, people don't want to talk about it. So you really have to build a culture where people are very open, even when it's bad news. Without a rigorous approach to risk mitigation and management, any investment (in people and equipment) made to reach high performance levels is wasted."

If not this example, try the issue of 'collaboration'. This,

as Gattorna points out, is largely a myth: the concept requires much more analysis and thought than simply agreeing to work together. "We are now operating in a world where fine nuances make the difference between success and failure, operationally and financially," and therefore a real distinction has to be made between 'time collaboration' and window-dressing. Gattorna quotes Unilever former CEO, Anthony Burgmans, to summarise the optimum approach – "You should only collaborate with those customers (& suppliers) who genuinely want to collaborate."

This sounds like a folksy generic cliché beloved of business books until you realise that doing otherwise is "wasteful of resources ... and (leads to) too many suppliers over servicing some customers and under servicing others, and have no idea which is which!"

There is much in this book for the Administrative Manager beyond supply chain management if you are prepared to make the necessary mental leap.



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IT SAVVY

What top executives must know to go from pain to gain

by Peter Weill and Jeanne W. Ross

Reviewed by Ray Moorcroft FlinstAM

I confess I put this book at the bottom of the pile of those awaiting review and then waited until I got to it! The reason was simply that I am daily involved in IT and business applications and dreaded reviewing 'old stuff' and 'dry' theories.

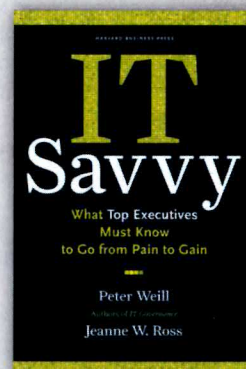
However, I received two pleasant surprises. Firstly, the style was user friendly and warm; secondly, the 'stuff' (despite being in hard copy) was fresh. It's also worth bearing in mind that the book is based soundly on research covering 1,800 companies in more than 60 countries.

The emphasis on clarity is consistent, and summed up by the 'Governance Objectives' (for senior executives to inform strategic decisions). These simply condense the work to two 'critical' objectives.

- To promote desirable behaviour in the management and use of IT; and
- To formalise organisational learning about IT and digitised processes

In explaining the use of these, the authors are not afraid to tackle conventional wisdom, and to challenge organisations to experiment and to "align individual projects with objectives ... (and) change expectations to make innovation a part of managers' jobs." Wal-Mart (naturally), comes up as an example of good practice but the international perspective is maintained throughout.

This is a useful and intriguing book which adds real value to its reading.



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