



The Long Tail: How endless choice is creating unlimited demand

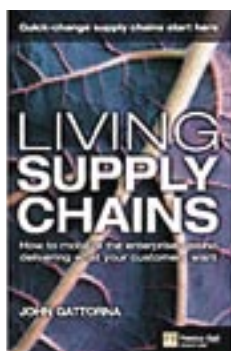
By Chris Anderson
Random House Business Books, 2006

Business models are being overturned by the infinite choice offered to consumers through the internet and “mass customisation”. This book shows that from Amazon.com to iTunes, the accumulated value in a market lies more in a “long tail” of its niche products than the high-volume end of economists’ demand curve.

The Long Tail has its origin in an essay that Chris Anderson published in *Wired*, the magazine he edits. According to Anderson: “The story of the long tail is really about the economics of abundance – what happens when the bottlenecks that stand between supply and demand in our culture start to disappear and everything becomes available to everyone.”

Anderson is constantly expanding and updating the argument on his website, www.thelongtail.com, with the help of a long tail of experts, academics, friends and bloggers. The book has been included on the short list for *The Financial Times*/Goldman Sachs Business Book of the Year award.

ROY GREEN



Living Supply Chains

Dr John Gattorna
FT Prentice Hall, 2006

“Supply chains are the business.” Counter-intuitive? Or a fact so obvious that few have realised it?

John Gattorna asserts that all businesses have multiple supply chains running through them and the first step towards sorting out this complexity is to understand customer-buying behaviour, after which a business aligns strategy, culture and leadership to match. This can be very effective when performed correctly.

To support his premise, Gattorna has packed *Living Supply Chains* with examples of businesses that have found the right formula, and others that have missed the mark.

SURESH CUGANESAN

Change

Robin Kramar

The right resources

Human resource management is changing fast due to the evolution of business and marketplaces.

Globalisation and technology have had a big influence in reshaping economies, businesses and societies. They have also influenced many aspects of human resource management. We can expect the challenges posed by these and other drivers to continue and to also pose further demands on HRM and other HR managers.

Research conducted at the Macquarie Graduate School of Management seeks to identify the HR knowledge, skills and abilities that HR professionals and managers responsible for activities directly involved with customers (line managers) will need to operate effectively. It also explores the implications of these forecasts for the teaching of HRM.

A number of inter-related themes are emerging across industries. HR will be progressively required to ensure there are sufficient competent and committed people available to do the work and to lead the organisation. This will involve much more than recruitment, selection and career planning. It will involve activities such as talent audits, building employee value propositions and monitoring the engagement of employees.

HR will also be responsible for making change happen fast. This is much more than “driving change” – it involves designing work and organisational structures, processes for communication flows and fostering information-sharing. It also involves enabling and developing the capacity of people to participate in fast change.

And what about the line managers? They will be responsible and held even more accountable for managing people. They will be involved in the management of performance and conflict as well as nurturing employees and making HR decisions. HR will be an important source of expert technical advice, but this will not be the “fix it”.

The future poses many challenges for all managers. These involve not only knowledge, skill and personal attributes, but also challenges around the rethinking of concepts and frameworks used in management.

Robin Kramar is Professor in Management at MGSM.