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Concerns with Supply Chain Management: Recent Developments and Future Prospects

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a b s t r a c t

Lambert and Cooper laid forth a framework for Supply Chain Management (SCM), discussed potential implementation challenges, and suggested avenues for further study in their 2000 paper "Issues in Supply Chain Management" published in *Industrial Marketing Management*. An innovative approach to supplier and customer relationship management was proposed by the eight cross-functional, cross-firm business processes that made up the framework. Research by a group of academics and executives from non-competing companies who had been meeting frequently since 1992 to improve SCM theory and practice formed the basis of it. The study has now spanned 25 years since it has persisted for the last 16 years. This article identifies areas for further study and reviews the development and execution of the proposed SCM framework since 2000.

1. Introduction

A new business model and a means of achieving competitive advantage via the strategic management of relationships with important suppliers and consumers was proposed in this journal in 2000 through the use of a Supply Chain Management (SCM) framework (Lambert & Cooper, 2000). According to Anderson, Hakansson, and Johanson (1994), this theory proposes that businesses compete not as independent entities but as parts of a larger network. In reality, many businesses buy from and sell to the same suppliers and consumers; hence, the most successful firms are those who excel at managing these connections. The authors presented a framework consisting of eight cross-functional, cross-firm procedures for effectively managing critical connections across a network of enterprises. Every department in the company must be involved in order for the procedures to be implemented. Both in business and academia, the phrases supply chain management (SCM) and industrial marketing management (IMM) have become ubiquitous in the sixteen years after the 2000 publication (Varoutsas & Scapens, 2015). Nevertheless, according to Vallet-Bellmunt, Martínez-Fernández, and Capó-Vicedo (2011), there is no universal agreement

on the nature or method of implementing SCM. It is surprising that out of all the SCM-focused university programs, many of which have dedicated research centers, only two process-based frameworks that can be applied across different firms have been used by large corporations (Lambert, García-Dastugue, & Croxton, 2005): A model that the Supply-Chain Council created and supports, the Supply Chain Operations Reference (SCOR) (now affiliated with APICS) and the SCM paradigm laid forth by Cooper and Lambert (2000). There are still a lot of unanswered questions, but the study group headed by the article's initial author in 2000 has answered a lot of them. Two volumes, one in its fourth edition, and thirty other articles detail the findings from sixteen years of study into expanding the framework. Goals of this article include reviewing the current state of affairs, outlining the advantages of the framework for managers, and proposing areas for further study. What follows is a synopsis of Lambert and Cooper's (2000) contributions to SCM. Following this, we will provide a chronology of the research center's publications as well as a summary of the research goals that the executive members have defined since the center's inception.

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Then, the approaches that have been used to enhance and broaden the initial SCM framework since the year 2000 are detailed. Here are the research findings: a revised definition of supply chain management (SCM), an analysis of the claim that supply chain vs. supply chain is the new foundation for competition, an outline of two tools for mapping supply chains, a description of why supply chain management is about relationship management, a summary of the changes made to the original supply chain framework described in the 2000 article, and finally, a description of two tools for structuring key supply chain relationships. The next part of the document is devoted to the SCM framework in 2016. It covers the following: the present status of the framework; updated process descriptions and statistics; instructions for putting the processes into practice; results regarding value co-creation; an explanation of how SCM process performance affects EVA; a description of process assessment tools; and, an updated list of management components. Then, the SCM framework is compared with the Supply Chain Operating Reference (SCOR) model. The paper ends with opportunities for future research and conclusions.

2. The supply chain management framework in 2000

The original article (Lambert & Cooper, 2000) described the outcomes of empirical research conducted by a team of academics and executives who met regularly since 1992 with the goal of developing a normative SCM framework. The contributions of the article included: 1) a clarification in terminology regarding the differences between logistics (an organizational function) and SCM (the management of a network of companies); 2) a definition of SCM that focused on the integration of eight macro business processes across firms; 3) a requirement that the eight SCM processes are managed by cross-functional teams that involve all key business functions; 4) a recognition of the importance of managing

business relationships within a complex network of companies; 5) a description of methods for mapping the supply chain network structure and for identifying the supply chain members with whom key business processes should be linked (i.e., customer and supplier segmentation); 6) a description of the eight key SCM processes that need to be implemented; 7) an explanation of nine management components to manage each process; 8) a list of recommendations for implementation; and, 9) a summary of directions for future research. The predominant definitions of SCM that existed at the time the research center began in 1992 resembled the contemporary understanding of logistics management. The nature of logistics and SCM as functional silos within companies remained unchallenged, which created confusion for managers and academics. For many, this confusion continues to exist (Hingley, Lindgreen, & Grant, 2015). Also, the complexity required to manage all suppliers back to the point of origin and all intermediaries to the point of consumption by a single function made the popular definitions of SCM unrealistic and impracticable at a minimum. The following definition of SCM, developed with input from the members of the research center, changed the focus from a functional orientation to one that emphasized the management of business processes across companies to create a competitive advantage. products, services and information that add value for customers and other stakeholders” (Lambert & Cooper, 2000, p. 66).

The research conducted with the member companies combined with concepts from the marketing channels literature led to a “conceptual framework of supply chain management” (Lambert & Cooper, 2000, p. 69) that described three major interrelated steps that needed to be designed and implemented in order to successfully manage a supply chain. The first step consisted of identifying the key supply chain members

with whom to link processes.

The second step consisted of determining what processes needed to be implemented with each of the key supply chain members. In order to successfully achieve cross-firm process integration, the development of standard supply chain processes was considered necessary because communication problems may occur when firms have different number of processes, different process definitions or different activities included within each process (Lambert & Cooper, 2000; Piercy, 2009). The eight key SCM processes identified by the research team are shown in Fig. 1, which comes from the 2000 article and provides a simplified representation of the eight key SCM processes cutting across functional and inter-company silos.

The third step was to determine the right level of integration and management to be applied to each process link. The research team identified nine management components that should be considered when implementing the processes. The level of integration of a supply chain process link could be adjusted by increasing or decreasing the number and intensity of the components implemented in that link.

Lambert and Cooper (2000, p. 65) stated that: “Thus far, there has been little guidance from academia, which in general has been following, rather than leading, business practice.” In an effort to keep the SCM framework relevant for the business community and academics, all of the elements described in this section have been improved upon or extended since its publication in *Industrial Marketing Management* in 2000. In order to reflect these changes, the definition of SCM was updated, the eight key SCM processes were developed in detail (one article was devoted to each process) and complemented with detailed implementation guidelines and tools. Also, the management components were updated. These changes are described in the following sections of this paper.

3. Supply chain management research

priorities and publications, 1992 to 2016

On April 23 and 24, 1992, executives from six companies met with the lead author to begin a research center. There were a number of things that made this research center unique at the time, but the two most significant were that the members would be executives from non-competing companies and the executives would determine the research agenda. Each company would contribute \$20,000 per year and two people from each company could attend the meetings. The mission was to provide the opportunity for leading practitioners and academics to pursue the critical issues related to achieving excellence in SCM. Membership consisted of representatives of firms recognized as industry leaders. Balance was maintained both as to the nature of the firms and the expertise of their representatives, and the membership was targeted at 12 to 15 firms in order to preserve the intimacy provided by the smaller size.

Fig. 2 provides a timeline of the topics addressed by the research team and the publications that resulted. The first research project funded by the companies was on the topic of partnerships (see Fig. 2 and Table 1). The executives were unanimous in their belief that this should be the first research project because the long-term success of their organizations would depend on the ability to collaborate with key customers and suppliers, and their companies were not good at this. They gave examples of relationships that were called partnerships and where there was a great deal of excitement in the beginning but, as one executive explained, “most of these relationships turned out to be bad marriages that ended in divorce.” The members identified 18 relationships that were considered to be good partnerships. They believed that if we studied these relationships, we would learn what made them successful so they could build more relationships like these and have fewer relationships that failed to meet expectations. Unlike previous partnership research which was based on surveys to a single informant on one side of the

relationship, a multiple case study approach was used in order to increase the robustness and the managerial meaningfulness of the findings (Baba, 1988; Eisenhardt, 1989). A 45 question interview guide was used to structure interviews with multiple individuals on each side of each relationship.

A case report was developed on each relationship and the members involved were given a copy to discuss within their organizations. It was decided that some of these relationships were not partnerships even though they were win-win business relationships. It was also recognized that when relationships were partnerships they were not all the same: there were degrees of partnering. In 1996, the Partnership Model, a tool that can be used to determine when a partnership is appropriate and to structure a relationship to meet the expectations of both parties was published (Lambert, Emmelhainz, & Gardner, 1996a, 1996b).

Since 1996, the Partnership Model has been used to structure, in a one and one-half day meeting, more than 100 relationships including complex relationships such as the one between The Coca-Cola Company and Cargill and less complex ones such as Wendy's and Tyson Foods (Lambert & Knemeyer, 2004). An article was published describing a partnership between Whirlpool Corporation and ERX, a third-party logistics provider (Lambert, Emmelhainz, & Gardner, 1999), and another describing 20 relationships that were used to validate the model (Lambert, Knemeyer, & Gardner, 2004).

In 1995, with the partnership research coming to completion, effort was directed at identifying the next research project and two topics emerged: measuring and selling value, and SCM. The managers wanted to focus on the development of a framework to assist them in coordinating activities across corporate functions and with other key members of the supply chain. They viewed SCM as a way to achieve a competitive advantage through the implementation of cross-functional processes which would achieve the necessary coordination. In 1995, it was decided that an executive seminar as well as teaching

materials needed to be developed and the first seminar was offered at the Marriott Sawgrass Resort in February of 1996. The seminar was structured based on the SCM framework which at the time included seven processes. An eighth process, returns management, was added prior to the second seminar held in April 1997. The framework and a definition of SCM were published in 1997 (Cooper, Lambert, & Pagh, 1997) based on the contents of the seminars and research (See Fig. 2 and Table 1). The framework was further developed as the research continued and follow-up articles were published in 1998 (Lambert, Cooper, & Pagh, 1998) and 2000 (Lambert & Cooper, 2000). Also, an article summarizing the research on measuring and selling value was published (Lambert & Burduroglu, 2000).

In 2000, an MBA course on SCM based on the framework was offered for the first time at The Ohio State University. In 2001, an article was published on supply chain metrics research (Lambert & Pohlen, 2001) in which process performance was tied to EVA® (Economic Value Added) and it was concluded that there were no end-to-end financial measures possible for the entire supply chain. Rather, SCM was really about relationship management, and the customer relationship management process of the seller organization and the supplier relationship management process of the customer organization formed the links in the chain. Performance at each link would be measured as the impact of the relationship on each organization's incremental profitability. Also in 2001, an article was published that described the strategic and operational sub-processes for each of the eight SCM processes (Croxtton, García-Dastugue, Lambert, & Rogers, 2001).

Publications based on our continuing research provided details on each process: the returns management process (Rogers, Lambert, Croxtton, & García-Dastugue, 2002), the demand management process (Croxtton, Lambert, García-Dastugue, & Rogers, 2002), the order fulfillment process (Croxtton, 2003), the customer service management process (Bolumole,

Knemeyer, & Lambert, 2003), the manufacturing flow management process (Goldsby & García-Dastugue, 2003), the product development and commercialization process (Rogers, Lambert, & Knemeyer, 2004), the customer relationship management process, (Lambert, 2004, 2010), and the supplier relationship management process (Lambert, 2004; Lambert & Schwieterman, 2012). In 2004, the first edition of *Supply Chain Management: Processes, Partnerships, Performance* (Lambert, 2004) was published.

4. Research methodology

In this section, we describe the research methodology used to extend and refine the SCM framework since 2000. The research included: focus groups with executives; breakout sessions and discussions during research center meetings; site visits to document best management practices; analysis of the data collected; preparation of manuscripts; and, executive feedback on the manuscripts. The triangulation of the results obtained using different research approaches increased the robustness of the findings (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009). Next, we describe the methodologies used to: 1) identify the sub-processes of the eight SCM processes and develop the assessment tools, and 2) conduct the value co-creation research.

In order to identify the sub-processes of the eight SCM processes and the specific activities that comprised each sub-process, executives were engaged in focus group sessions (Calder, 1977; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan, 1997). The executives were from several industries including agriculture, consumer packaged goods, energy, fashion, food products, high-technology, industrial goods, paper products, and sporting goods. The companies occupied multiple positions in the supply chain including retailers, distributors, manufacturers and suppliers. Participants represented various functions and their titles included manager, director, vice president, senior vice president, group vice president, and chief operations officer.

Executives were involved in a total of eight two-day research center meetings over a period of 28 months from July 2001 to October 2003. In the first three meetings, the executives provided the research team with input on the sub-processes that should comprise each of the eight business processes. Then, in the next five meetings, sessions were held for each specific process. For example, sessions were specifically devoted to identifying the detailed activities and implementation issues for the customer relationship management process (Lambert, 2010). In the July 2002 meeting, 22 executives participated. The task was to determine the specific activities that comprised each of the strategic and operational sub-processes. During the October 2002 meeting, in which 18 executives participated, slides were presented that summarized the results of the previous session and the learnings from company visits. Following the presentation, the executives participated in an open discussion providing suggestions for clarification. Based on the executives' feedback and additional company visits to document practice, a manuscript was produced for the following meeting. In the third, fourth and fifth meetings, 16, 17, and 21 executives respectively participated in open discussion and after each session, the manuscript was revised. Additional revisions were made to the material as experience was gained working with member companies on implementation of the customer relationship management process. A similar methodology was used to develop the assessment tools (Lambert, 2006) that can be used by managers to identify opportunities for process improvement (the assessment tools are described in 'The supply chain management framework in 2016' section of this manuscript).

The value co-creation research was conducted using case study (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009) and action research methodologies (Näslund, Kale, & Paulraj, 2010; Stringer, 2007). Theoretical sampling was used to select two pairs of relationships (one pair was between a customer firm and two of its key suppliers and the other pair was

between a supplier firm and two of its key customers). The relationships within each pair were comparable in terms of business volume and importance, and the main factor that differentiated them was that one of the relationships within each pair was managed using cross-functional teams while the other was based on traditional salesperson and buyer interactions. The first step consisted of interviewing managers from different functional backgrounds within the six firms in order to identify and compare their perceptions about the relationship in which they were involved. The second step consisted of identifying the collaborative initiatives conducted within each relationship during the previous two years and calculating the contribution to the focal firm's profitability. We found that relationships managed using cross-functional teams led to appreciably more financial value than those managed using a single contact within each organization (Enz & Lambert, 2012). In a third step, we interviewed a subset of managers in the original sample in order to explore how perceptions about the relationships had changed after we showed managers the financial results associated with each relationship. The evolution of the one pair of relationships was monitored for the next six years (Lambert & Enz, 2015a).

For the next project, an action research approach was used to explore how the Collaboration Framework can be used to develop Product Service Agreements (PSAs) and create joint action plans for value co-creation (Lambert & Enz, 2012). The researchers helped managers develop a management structure and measurement methods to support the implementation of the action plans. The financial outcomes of the value co-creation initiatives were measured over time.

5. Research findings

As a result of the research conducted since 2000, a number of changes have been made to the SCM framework and to our thinking about SCM. The definition of SCM

developed in 1995 and reported in Lambert and Cooper (2000) was updated because it did not mention: relationships, network of organizations or that the processes were cross-functional. In 2013, we worked with the executive members of the research center to craft the following new definition:

“Supply chain management is the management of relationships in the network of organizations, from end customers through original suppliers, using key cross-functional business processes to create value for customers and other stakeholders” (Lambert, 2014, p. 2).

It had become common to say that competition is no longer between companies, but it is “supply chain versus supply chain” (Lambert & Cooper, 2000, p. 65). We have changed our minds about this. While supply chain versus supply chain has some appeal given that companies exist in supply chains, it is not technically correct. For the competition to be supply chain versus supply chain, there would have to be a team “A” playing a team “B”. When does this happen? The Coca-Cola Company and PepsiCo Inc. both purchase sweeteners from Cargill and packaging from the Graham Packaging Company, and in many cases, their products are sold to the same retail customers. This overlapping of supply chains is the rule and not the exception. Fig. 3 illustrates how the supply chains of major competitors can overlap. For example, the oral care businesses of Colgate-Palmolive, P&G and Unilever. If all three companies purchase from many of the same suppliers and sell to the same retailers, how can it be supply chain versus supply chain? It is not! If executives at Colgate-Palmolive manage relationships with suppliers and customers better than the executives at P&G and Unilever, Colgate-Palmolive will win more often.

Thus, supply chain management is actually about relationship management (Dyer & Singh, 1998; Piercy, 2009). A supply chain is managed, link-by-link, relationship-by-relationship and the organizations that manage these relationships best will win (Lambert & Pohlen, 2001). The links in the

chain are formed by the customer relationship management process and the supplier relationship management process. For this reason, management needs tools that can be used to structure the key relationships (Varoutsas & Scapens, 2015) that are identified during the segmentation that occurs when implementing the customer relationship management and the supplier relationship management processes. As part of our research, we have developed two tools that can be used for structuring key business relationships: The Partnership Model and The Collaboration Framework.

The Partnership Model (Lambert et al., 1996a) was developed prior to the 2000 *Industrial Marketing Management* article and at the time we had no idea that it would be a key tool for implementing the SCM framework. Now, we realize that SCM is really about relationship management and the Partnership Model provides a structure for developing key relationships. The Partnership Model

6. Conclusions

In 2000, a cross-functional, cross-firm SCM framework was presented as a new business model that would overcome the silo mentality within the firm and lead to the integration of key members of the supply chain (Lambert & Cooper, 2000). It was suggested that the ultimate success of a single organization would depend upon management's ability to ventilate functional

and corporate silos through cross-functional and cross-firm processes. In 2016, the framework remains one of two cross-functional, cross-firm process frameworks that can be and have been successfully implemented in major corporations. The other model, SCOR, does not include key business functions such as marketing, finance, and R&D.

separates the drivers, the facilitators, the components and the outcomes of partnership into four separate areas for attention. Drivers are the compelling reasons to partner and must be assessed independently by each organization in order to arrive at a common vision of the business benefits associated with building more closeness into the relationship. Then, the managers from each organization present their drivers to the other organization in order to set expectations. Facilitators are characteristics of the two firms that will help or hinder the partnership development process and they are assessed by the two groups together. Drivers and facilitators determine the potential for partnership: Type I, Type II or Type III (Lambert et al., 1996a). Components are the managerially controllable elements that should be implemented at a prescribed level depending on the type of partnership. Outcomes measure the extent to which each firm achieves its drivers.

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