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Book Review: Dynamic Supply Chain Alignment: a New business model for Peak Performance in Enterprise Supply Chains Across all Geographies

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BOOK REVIEW

John Gattorna and friends *Dynamic Supply Chain Alignment – A New Business Model for Peak Performance in Enterprise Supply Chains Across All Geographies* Farnham: Gower Publishing 2009 (ISBN 978-0-566-08822-3).

Edward Sweeney and Daniel Park

As we noted in our review article based on one of his earlier books (Sweeney and Park, 2006), John Gattorna's contribution to scholarship and practice in supply chain management (SCM) is substantial and sustained. His perspective has evolved from his earliest writings to the present as the potential and impact of logistics and SCM have shifted from purely a set of tools and techniques aimed at securing operational improvement through cost reduction into a platform on which corporate differentiation and strategic advantage can be built. The focus of his latest book is on how multiple supply chains, with the required levels of flexibility and responsiveness, can be created and sustained. As might be expected from Gattorna there is a strong focus on aligning organisations with suppliers, partners and customers. Indeed, the book follows on from his successful *Strategic Supply Chain Alignment* (Gattorna, 1998) and *Living Supply Chains* (Gattorna 2006).

Dynamic Supply Chain Alignment is written by a mix of practitioners, consultants and academics. The high calibre of the contributors assembled by Gattorna is in itself testament to his influence and reach in global supply chain thinking and scholarship. There are over 30 contributors to the book, each considering the underlying concept of dynamic alignment of supply chains from his/her own particular perspective. Furthermore, and as suggested by the phrase "across all geographies" in the book's subtitle, the contributors are based Europe, the Americas, the Middle-East and the Asia-Pacific region. Despite this variety of professional and geographical perspectives, Gattorna has succeeded in putting together a volume that is itself characterised by alignment between its various sections and chapters. This is facilitated by the very useful "Alignment Insights" boxes at the end of each chapter.

The concept of integration has always been at the heart of SCM thinking. Indeed, the principle of alignment works effectively only if it includes the dimension of integration. As a philosophy, SCM is fundamentally concerned with moving away from traditional organisational models where key supply chain functions were often measured and managed in isolation from each other. The application of the SCM concept requires a paradigm shift away from approaches characterised by fragmentation towards more ***integrated*** organisational models. The fact that "the whole is greater than the sum of the parts" has been recognised by an increasing number of organisations as SCM principles have been adopted and operationalised. A key message from *Dynamic Supply Chain Alignment* is that the new challenge for many organisations is to take the next step and ensure that dynamic alignment principles and concepts are incorporated effectively into supply chain design and improvement processes. As supply chain configurations become more international as a result of business globalisation, and as these architectures become more virtual as a result of the outsourcing of supply chain functionality, the focus of organisations on this thinking will be sharpened. Gattorna's dynamic alignment concept takes this focus to a new level with a strong focus on alignment between, for example, product development and manufacturing processes and the changing requirements of discerning customers in today's sophisticated global marketplace.

Following a short preface, *Dynamic Supply Chain Alignment* provides an extended (over 40 pages) "Prelude" based on panel discussions at the Supply Chain Business Forum held in Melbourne in February 2008. Gattorna states that these "are included here because they point to the topics that are covered in more detail later in this book" (p. 1). This is undeniably true and many rich pieces of anecdotal evidence are presented in this section. However, there is limited reference back to this material throughout the remainder of the book with little attempt by the chapter authors to address directly the challenges outlined. The reader may be left undervaluing this section and with the impression that the real work commences on page 45.

However, what follows represents a thorough and comprehensive coverage of the key issues from a variety of perspectives. Of particular note is the focus on quickly getting behind the hype and the terminology and into the real issues both into relation to creating and sustaining the required levels of alignment. This is enhanced through the effective use of case studies and other illustrative examples throughout the text. The figures and

tables throughout the text are clearly presented and enhance the arguments being advanced through an appropriate combination of both quantitative and qualitative illustration. The strong focus of the people dimension in all its facets is another feature that provides *Dynamic Supply Chain Alignment* with a valuable differentiating attribute.

Professor Gattorna's latest work is a valuable addition to scholarship and practice, and can be read equally profitably by practitioners, consultants and academics.

References

Gattorna, J. (1998) *Strategic Supply Chain Alignment - Best Practice in Supply Chain Management* Farnham: Gower Publishing 1998.

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