



September 2015 - Issue #115

Welcome from Lisa

Another crazy month.....I think this is just my new normal! My highlights include a few trips to AZ to see my parents, time set aside to write and edit my upcoming book *The Amazon Effect* (should be exciting assuming it doesn't kill me:-)) and a trip to Portland, Maine for my cousin's wedding.

It was beautiful in Maine - and, of course the wedding was amazing. Check out the great picture of my Aunt Cheryl, my cousin Tamilla and her new husband Eric.



I was back from Portland for a day before heading to Las Vegas for a training session - always good to keep up with (and preferably ahead of) trends and information that will provide value to my clients! After a brief jaunt to AZ to see my parents, I am back in Vegas to speak on "**Priming Your Supply Chain for the Amazon Effect**" at APICS 2015 International Conference. Should be fun. Join me on Oct 6th if you are here.....

IN THE NEWS

Please check out my latest speeches, articles & quotes:

- I'm especially thrilled that I was a panelist at Industrial Distribution's webinar on VMI - a hot topic if you're interested in success!
- Quoted in an article "Organizational Actions Ensure Entrepreneurial Spirit Thrives" in SAC.
- Published an article "Interested in Growth? Beef up Your Systems & Project Management" in *Project Times*.

I'll also be speaking on October 15th at the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) on "Identify and Leverage Supply Chain Trends for Success". Hope to see you there.

On another note, one of my long-term APICS-IE Board members, colleague and friend is running for a position at Chaffey College Board of Trustees. Please check out **Tony Martinez** and vote - he'll do a great job if elected (which is why we've told him he has to keep providing his talents for us too!).

Happy Birthday to my Dad! I'm glad I'll be in AZ for his birthday, even though I didn't put 2 and 2 together at the time I reserved my flight, it's nice when it works out.

Enjoy,
Lisa

Email
LMA Consulting Group, Inc.

P.S. Please think of me if you should know anyone who would like to elevate their business performance.

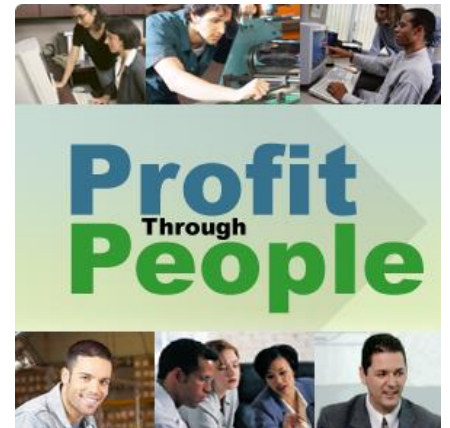
Profit through People Empower Your People to GROW

Businesses must capture opportunities rapidly to outpace their competition. Thus, it is even more important to be the best at identifying, prioritizing, and implementing opportunities which will deliver bottom line business results. The time to leapfrog your competition is now.

Why is empowerment the key to success? Empowered employees achieve substantial results which also tie directly to what's required to succeed in the new normal: 1) Reduce costs & delays. 2) Deliver exceptional service. 3) Innovate in alignment with vision.

Or, just think about the Ritz. Their employees are empowered and will make sure their customers are happy. If you've experienced the service at the Ritz, you won't want to go back! Why not have your customers experience this same success? Thus, consider the following steps: 1) Clear vision & boundaries. 2) Develop the skills and attitudes. 3) Control over their work. 4) Leadership. 5) Communications. 6) Tools & support

1. **Clear vision & boundaries** - If there is a key to empowerment, it lies in creating the playing field. Employees need to understand where the company is headed and why. They need to know how they fit into the big picture, why it's of value, and what is "in bounds" and "out of bounds". The boundaries could be legal, ethical, financial, etc. Last but not least, it is vital that the employee knows that on the field, he/she calls the plays.
2. **Develop the skills & attitudes** - It is not enough to declare, "You're empowered", and then disappear. Have you and the employee brainstormed as to what types of skills and tools he/she will need to perform the role? How about customer service skills? Communication skills? Attitude is vital - does the employee accept accountability? Develop a plan together of what's needed to ensure success. Provide support and feedback. Address issues upfront. Celebrate successes.
3. **Control over their work** - Having control over your work is vital to empowerment. If you don't believe you can control your destiny within a set of guidelines, you will not feel or act empowered.



This is probably the hardest part of empowerment which is why I've seen so few cases of true empowerment. The most successful lean environments typically support empowerment as it is core to success; however, it is surprising the number of touted lean environments which do not hold up muster when push comes to shove.

4. **Leadership** - The key to empowering and engaging employees begins with leadership. I've yet to work with a client that had empowered and engaged employees with a weak leader on top. Yet I've seen the least likely suspects turn into empowered and engaged employees with an exceptional leader on top! For example, one employee would rarely if ever make a decision as he was interested in being "under the radar" and keeping his job. With enough encouragement that we wanted his input and wouldn't hold him responsible for a bad decision (so long as it didn't occur repetitively), he eventually spoke up and was an invaluable team member.
5. **Communications** - A simple word for a vast topic - nothing is more critical. This must start at the beginning with the vision and encompass the entire process through metrics and feedback. Begin by clearly articulating the vision and goals - why does it matter? Why is the employee important to the vision? How does he/she tie in? Most importantly, do not say you'll support empowerment and not live up to your promise. It isn't as easy as it sounds. You might agree in concept but when your employee doesn't handle a situation as you'd prefer, you might be tempted to intervene. Don't do it! Those who empower even when it's inconvenient or difficult will be those who succeed.
6. **Tools & support** - Empowered workers will expect the appropriate tools and support to expertly perform their work. No need to jump on the latest bandwagon and think these cool tools will be desired by your high performers. They'll be unappreciated - or worse a distraction in supporting your high performers. They will know the right tools for the job and will request them. Listen, ask questions, push back when needed (as would be expected from a top performer) and make the tools needed for success a top priority.
7. **Appreciation** - A simple thank you can go a long way! It is amazing how much of an impact being appreciated has on an employee's level of engagement. Unfortunately, I've seen countless examples of exceptional employees who don't receive appreciation; worse yet, they gain unwanted negative attention at times for bringing up potential problems or roadblocks that must be tackled in order to achieve the corporate goals. There is nothing more disheartening to an exceptional employee than a complete lack of appreciation for the results achieved. The best leaders who drive bottom line business results speak with their employees. They review goals on a frequent basis and discuss roadblocks. They show interest in the employee's ideas and provide immediate positive and corrective feedback.

Did you like this article? [Continue reading on this topic: Do You Have Engaged Employees?](#)

Eagle Eye Overriding Metrics

As I sat in a SCOR training class to learn more about the Supply Chain Operations Reference model which provides the executive level viewpoint on supply chain, I thought about the importance of metrics to running your business.

More than the importance of metrics in general, the key is to focus in on the select few that can benchmark your performance and ignore the rest. In essence, the SCOR model provides a methodology option to support the review of your high-level supply chain. It's one of the main reasons clients call me....to look at the supply chain from a strategic viewpoint and help them figure out which critical few projects and associated metrics will have the largest impact.



In today's marketplace, the Amazon Effect has taken hold and expectations are elevated. My firm completed [research](#) on this topic and I'm writing a book on the Amazon Effect - the bottom line is that if you aren't paying attention to these elevated expectations and how you'll raise the bar to meet them and go beyond, you'll be left in the dust by those who will.

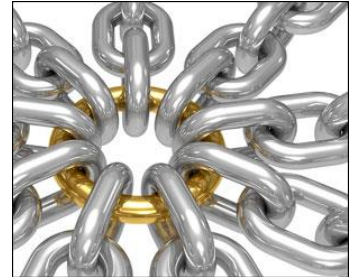
To avoid being left in the dust, focus on the key high level metrics for the supply chain - reliability, responsiveness, agility and cost and asset management efficiency. If you are not reliable, you can't even get in the game. Amazon is known for responsiveness. Same day delivery, Sunday delivery, drone delivery pilot programs - they constantly push the envelope. Amazon is also known for agility - if the customer changes his mind, how easy is it to stop or change an order? Quite easy! What if you receive a defective product? How easy is it to return? Think about how prepared you are for changing conditions and how quickly you can respond. Certainly, we all think about cost - no one can afford to add cost to their product as customers are unwilling to pay for anything that isn't viewed as high value. And, asset management efficiency relates significantly to cash flow - the faster cash moves through the process steps, the better.

Did you like this article? [Continue reading on this topic:](#)

[Metrics Rule!](#)

The Strongest Link in Your Supply Chain **Collaborative Planning**

My most successful clients consider collaborative planning a no-brainer. In its simplest form, collaborative planning is partnering with your customers, suppliers and other supply chain partners to effectively plan the end-to-end supply chain. Why wouldn't we do this together?



For example, if your customer knows of an upcoming event for their customer, if we are working in silos, we continue to plan for their typical usage. However, what we should be doing is planning for the impact of the event. We are all busy, and so it is unlikely the customer will think about calling to tell us about the upcoming change. They probably expect that we'll be ready with what they need when they need it as is commonplace in today's Amazon impacted environment. On the other hand, if we were utilizing collaborative planning, it would be a natural part of the process to communicate this type of information. It could be automated or just built into part of the routine.

By collaborating, we create a win-win-win. The customer has what he needs when he needs it without having to go out of his way and deviate from his typical process. The supplier has information in advance about an upcoming event and so can modify plans as appropriate to better serve his customer at the lowest inventory levels and maximum efficiency levels. The end customer wins because he receives what he needs when he needs it. And the supplier's supplier will probably benefit as well because he is likely to have better information as to what the supplier will need to support the event sooner than he would otherwise.

There are software tools and best practice processes for collaborative planning; however, I've found the simple approach often works best. Set up the right relationships, processes and systems and communicate frequently.

Did you like this article? [Continue reading on this topic:](#)

[Hot Supply Chain Trends](#)

I've been involved in a few projects lately where data migration has been the hot topic. As much as it seems quite mundane, it can make or break success. When moving to a new system, it is your opportunity to start with a clean slate.



A few tips to think about with data migration:

- **Start early:** You cannot start too early. The more time you have to cleanse your data, the better. Eliminate obsolete items. Review items you haven't used in the last few years, customers you haven't sold to in a few years, suppliers you haven't utilized. Should you move them to the new system?
- **Data setup:** Think through data setup in the new system. How will the flags you set affect your business processes? Find out what they mean. Think about expansion from your current practices. What does that mean in terms of data setup?
- **Keying vs. automation:** Consider keying dynamic information such as sales orders, work orders and purchase orders. It will be a good opportunity to clean up garbage, close old work orders, etc. It will also give you a good idea of how the new system will work so that you have a leg up with your first day of transactions.
- **Ask for clarification:** One of my clients is proactive on this topic. She wants to know how each field is used, how it will affect reports etc. This is the ideal process because the more you know about how the field will be utilized or could be utilized, the better opportunity you have to utilize it for success.
- **Excel:** Excel can be your friend when it comes to cleansing data. If you take it out of your current system, massage it in Excel and then upload it to the new system, you can save yourself a lot of trouble. It isn't always feasible but it is viable most of the time.

Remember to give data migration your focus as it will have a profound impact on whether you'll be able to leverage your system for success.

Did you like this article? Continue reading on this topic:

[**Build a Solid Foundation with Data Integrity**](#)

Connections

Connections and relationships are the 80/20 of success!

THIS MONTH'S REQUESTS:

- My APICS Inland Empire Chapter Board of Directors would like to invite you to our upcoming executive panel and networking symposium on Nov 14th. [Reserve your seat](#) to participate in the discussion and debate about growth.
- My Ontario ProVisors group of trusted advisors is looking for a real estate attorney. Please [email me](#) with ideas.
- An excellent Supply Chain Manager with expertise in inventory management, systems, business processes, and project management with a specialty in aerospace in the Wichita area is looking for her next career opportunity. Please contact [her](#) with referrals and ideas.
- I know of an exceptional Planning and Logistics Leader who are interested in making a change for the "right" opportunity in the Inland Empire. Please email [me](#) if you have referrals.



I know an Operations Leader who is interested in potential opportunities in Southern California or Arizona, if you have leads for him, please email [me](#).

What is *Profit through People*?

I've used the Profit through People brand since my newsletter's inception in 2006 as it resonated with me. Although I consult on topics within each of my service lines--Eagle Eye Strategic Focus, The Strongest Link in Your Supply Chain, the Systems Pragmatist & Profit through People--I find that people are key to success in every situation. If you are interested in elevating your business performance, please [contact us](#).



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