Book Review

Supply Chain and Logistics in National, International and Governmental Environment, Concept and Models

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In a globalized world as we live, with an ever-changing context, it is not surprising that ICT professionals usually look overwhelmed by the demands and requirements of customers operating in the manufacturing sector.

Whether they produce goods or services for local or international markets, each cloud or turbulence that appears in the horizon, demand enormous efforts ranging from those characteristic of software engineering, adaptation to new standards or network security design or design of new elements with shortened life cycles that usually are shorter than the products or services our customers products.

At this stage of events the question should be if the demanded by customers of the service and manufacturing sector is what they really needed or whether a new threshold, “a quantum leap” that allows us to give them something they do not know and can be as "innovative pulse" that as professionals build when we combine technologies to solve their problems rather than fix them in patches approach.

From this humble lab of the Center for Logistics and Applications (CEAL), at National University of Cuyo, we believe the answer to the second line of thought exists and, like the authors, we believe that this book is for software factories in Latin America can be well understood by our community, ever committed to developing solutions aimed at large empty space that exist for industrial SMEs in our region and in the world.

If you are thinking to be involved in developing solutions for the manufacturing or services industry, specially if the customer have the problems with very short life cycle of their products; and he or she really are constantly innovating and using technology as a true driver of competitiveness, you can MUST read these authors.

The book is full of concepts and application models that can lead us to better understand how this paradigm shift application development of "Software Factory" can help SMEs. It shows how slowly is bypassing the traditional scheme based on the competitive advantage of logistics contributed during the first decade of this century to replace it with a more general concept and vision of not only financial but economic results with the integrated development model established in the "Supply Chain Management"

In Chapter 1 the authors point out the extent and scope of the theoretical framework for logistics and identified their strengths and gaps to explain the results to the industrial or service will get routed to the emerging paradigm of "Supply Chain Management"

In Chapter 2 will provide formal models and interesting techniques to measure and evaluate the performance of companies. It glides slowly the concept of "systemic competitiveness" as a substitute of the classical concept of competitiveness to dry developed by M. Porter. Then, applying these models to measure performance, are studied both public and private areas in the international order (to Porter) and the National context. Special mention should be reported here when measuring the performance or made benchmarking between municipalities (communes or parties) and to assess the impact their decisions will have on investors and clusters to be developed in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3 is fully devoted to international logistics and, as its title "Global Supply Chain Management" suggests, it can be inferred how in this context international logistics has already been replaced by the emerging paradigm called GSCM.

In chapter 4 the issue is the National Logistics convener. At this point very clearly identifies the impact that logistics costs have in different countries and regions and real cases are studied how small companies have managed to dethrone market empires beyond the seas.

Chapter 5 deals with "Spatial Analysis and Land-Use Planning". Here I would recommend that if you work with GIS technology, buy the book without thinking. This chapter alone fully justifies every penny you paid.

Chapter 6 addresses the problem of designing and building a company based in advance of the supply network. Supply Network Design, as the title leaves no doubt of the recipe to be applied to understand the key factors of success in any public or private activity.

Chapter 7 can be quite painful for us (the Argentine). Under the title "Privatization" shows many cases of analysis and conceptual models that will certainly be helpful. It is curious that these authors located in Singapore, Tehran, have sought examples of privatization and they can see in the examples as might be the results of those previously taken. I say that reading could be painful, because just the cases of failed privatizations are exemplified with the cases of Argentina in the 90's.

In chapter 8 we find a lot of material and less models, but the content is certainly attractive for ICT professionals who aspire to market products globally. In the content of "Export Clusters" the reader will find many examples and analysis of different operating rules of successful experiences and stories of how they were developed from ideas or success stories elsewhere in the world. Besides the classical example of Bangalore (India) pointed out with especial interest for the "Industrial Districts in Italy." If you allow me a personal opinion I think the cluster model exporter in the ICT sector in Latin America is still a model to discover and develop. No doubt tended to have some of the Italian model (for our culture and idiosyncrasy), but I think this would be a more interesting topic to treat in the future.

Chapter 9 discusses issues related to things that any modern software platform should consider in the field of "Green Supply Chain Management". If you are proud to be developing software for management, your product should not fail to measure emissions of greenhouse gases, ecological liabilities, and monitoring of any impact that industrial or services activity. These are assets and liabilities that should be accounted for. Remember that what is not measured is not optimized.

Chapter 10 deals with an issue that we deal Argentines always urgent, but when it is too late. "Logistics Management and SCM in Disasters" speaks for itself. In these cases we have an item chain (the victims) that if my fate would lead me to be included I'd be more than just a number in a database.

Almost finishing the last two chapters are as usual the tastiest. If you develop platforms for government or United Nations and is related to the armed forces chapter 12 is certainly missed. "Military Logistics and Supply Chains" should be a good complement to the content of disaster management. But what ICTs can contribute to the issue of insecurity might surprise you.

Finally, the book closes with Chapter 13, which ("finally") goes completely to Logistics and Supply Chain Management in Information Systems. I think we do not need details of what we read here.

At the end we find a whole separate annex of the cases, as already presented in previous chapters, and new ones. This material is highly recommended if you work in higher education or research. The data sources are reliable, well documented and in many cases available and updated online.

Final Recommendation - 10 out of 10.

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