

GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN REVIEW

Published by the Global Supply Chain Leaders Group
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LEADER PROFILE:
INTERVIEW WITH
ABDI HARIRI

IT'S THE RELATIONSHIP!
HOW JOINT TEAMS CAN
TRANSFORM YOUR
MANUFACTURING
OUTSOURCE
ENGAGEMENT



Abdi Hariri
Group Vice President, Global Operations
Lam Research Corporation

Message from the President of GSCLG

The GSC Review Magazine continues its series on outstanding individuals in Supply Chain. This month, we present an interview with Abdi Hariri, Group Vice President of Global Operations, at Lam Research Corporation.

Hariri is responsible for Global Operations at Lam Research Corporation. He has extensive international experience including serving as the General Manager of Lam Research Co., Ltd. (Japan). Lam Research Corporation has a complex and extensive supply chain, comprised of suppliers, spare parts operations, and OEM customers worldwide. Hariri is a leader with a superb ability to manage across varying geographies and organizations. He holds a Master's Degree in Chemical Engineering from Stanford University.



We will do our best to continue to provide you with interviews of leaders that deserve your recognition. I ask you to send me the names of those you would like to be interviewed so we can learn from their views and accomplishments. We started this series in 2009 and we have an excellent lineup of individuals to fill out 2010. You can find past interviews at http://www.gscreview.com/home_com.php.

We celebrate supply chain leaders with vision, passion, and care for their customers and employees. These leaders provide the value shareholders' deserve; they ensure that their customers keep moving forward while dealing with global challenges affecting the day-to-day operations.

If we recognize great performance and leadership potential, we will promote our capacity to lead both operationally as well as at the C-level. As senior-level supply chain leaders, the senior executives featured in our magazine should be recognized by their peers and by the industry. We hope to see them grow and become the future CEOs that we all deserve and admire.

We are honored to present Abdi Hariri, Group Vice President, Global Operations, at Lam Research Company and look forward to honoring many more like him in the Global Supply Chain Review.

Sergio Retamal

Publisher, GSC Review

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President, GSCLG

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We are a group of the most influential, accomplished, and renowned executives from some of the better known corporations worldwide. We continue to seek those individuals who have made the most significant contributions to the advancement of the supply chain industry at the same time helping their companies' bottom lines. In other words, the Top 25 Global Supply Chain Leaders LinkedIn group seeks individuals that will inspire both veterans and new hires in supply chain. These are the individuals people would like to be when they reach their professional goals.

Our group of leaders come from various industries such as: Automotive, Aviation & Aerospace, Computer and Network, Security, Computer Chips, Computer Hardware, Computer Industry, Computer Networking, Computer Security, Computer Software, Consumer Electronics, Consumer Goods, Cosmetics, Food, Furniture, IT and Services, Leisure, Travel, Medical Devices, Oil and Energy, Pharmaceuticals, Renewable & Environment, Retail, Semiconductor, and Telecommunications.

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Interview with Abdi Hariri of Lam Research

By Nancy Ellen Dodd, MPW, MFA

Abdi Hariri was named Group Vice President, Global Operations in April of 2009. Prior to his current position, Mr. Hariri had been Group Vice President of the Customer Support Business Group since March 2007 and Vice President and General Manager of the Customer Support Business Group since August 2004. Mr. Hariri previously served as the General Manager of Lam Research Co., Ltd. (Japan) for approximately 18 months and has served in a number of different assignments with the Field Sales and Product Groups. His experience prior to his appointment in Japan included over 13 years at the company with various responsibilities, including global business development and engineering. Prior to his employment at Lam Research, Mr. Hariri served as a Process Engineer at Siliconix, Inc. He holds a Master's Degree in Chemical Engineering from Stanford University.



How important is supply chain management to Lam Research's overall business strategy?

Lam Research was among the first equipment suppliers in the semiconductor industry to adopt a broad, multi-function outsourcing strategy. Initiated in early 2000, our plan targeted the outsourcing of support and "non-core" functional areas, which enabled us to focus on our differentiating core competencies. Today, manufacturing of many of our products is outsourced. As a function of this transition as well as changes in the market conditions, supply chain management has become a focus and core competency at Lam Research.

What primary areas of focus (or key initiatives) should Lam Research be looking at for Supply Chain Management?

Our integrated approach to supply chain management - including suppliers, manufacturers, and logistics - keeps us focused on all areas. In the end, our objective is to continue to improve service levels while we deliver the highest quality products at the lowest cost of ownership for our customers.

While we strive to optimize each segment of the supply chain, in the end, an integrated view of the whole is very critical. For example, a low-cost manufacturing opportunity would be dismissed using an integrated approach upon learning there was no supply base or other necessary infrastructure. The lack of an adequate infrastructure could impact cycle time, freight costs, and taxes. In addition, legal compliance items, such as export control and IP control, weigh heavily in our decisions. While such an opportunity on its own shows promise, overall, it would lead to a net loss.

In addition to taking an integrated approach, we need to be flexible and be able to quickly adjust to the changing needs of the market and our customers. Since our supply chain is an integral part of our business, each component must also be highly adaptable.

For example, as product lifecycles shrink, time-to-market requirements become a more important focus area. As a supplier of semiconductor manufacturing equipment, we are often asked to provide customized solutions timed to meet the market demands of an industry challenged by short business cycles. This requires we evaluate our suppliers' abilities to respond to changing needs in a timely manner.

Another example is our response to the financial crisis that the world was facing during the second half of 2008 and 2009. We increased our focus on business continuity plans and, more specifically, on the long-term health of our supply chain.

How has outsourcing enabled Lam Research to be successful with these initiatives?

Outsourcing has led us to regard our suppliers as an extension of Lam Research, and we work collaboratively and very closely with them. We have extended teams that work with suppliers on critical elements of their operation that impact our business. These include inventory management, cost reduction, quality, on-time delivery, solving very complex technical issues, time to market of new products, and business continuity plans.

How is Lam Research addressing the market's increasing focus on "green" supply chains and reducing a company's carbon footprint?

We are designing products with higher productivity, where the output per square area is improving year over year. We are also using energy efficient components in our designs. Reducing the use of consumables and spare parts through lifetime extensions and alternative parts programs is another strategy we are implementing. By reducing waste and becoming "green," we also help our customers become more cost competitive.

What do you think the key supply chain management priority for the coming 2-3 years is for Lam Research?

As we enter new markets and develop new products, we will be reviewing our infrastructure, processes, systems, and capabilities to optimize them for evolving business and customer needs.

What do you think the key Supply Chain Management priority for the coming 5-10 years is for Lam Research?

As our customers, markets and products evolve, we need to develop better strategic decision support models to deal with a complex set of global issues impacting multiple organizations (internal and external to our company). Sourcing, manufacturing of new products, service locations, capacity planning, and distribution models will continue to play a larger role in our company's market share and profitability objectives.

What are the biggest INTERNAL challenges for manufacturers to achieve supply chain excellence?

When a company is experiencing success, it is hard for employees to understand the need for change. Resistance to change can hinder efforts to position for the future, leaving a company vulnerable to becoming irrelevant. Vision and leadership are essential under such circumstances to effect the changes needed to position for continued success.

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What We Do: We help our clients save large amounts of money, improve efficiencies, and avoid costly errors in their global logistics operations.

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Transportation Cost Savings
We conduct a 1-2 day no-cost audit of your transportation spend and identify opportunities for cost savings in areas such as rate reduction, coding errors, commodity code classification, or service level requirements. At the conclusion of this audit we present you with our findings and recommendations, including a quantifiable cost savings opportunity.

Client: Large West Coast contemporary clothing retailer
Concern: The client company was concerned that its global transportation expenditures were escalating and they could not pinpoint cost savings opportunities. The company also desired to establish a best-practices import compliance program to eliminate non-compliance entries and subsequent risk of fines and penalties.

Results:
Global4PL conducted a pilot audit of recent freight invoices and shipments, and discovered transportation cost savings totaling over 27% net cost savings. Global4PL reviewed the company's import compliance program and documented required changes to achieve best practices status, and identified classification changes to comply with US CBP regulations.

CBP 951 and 951 Compliance
We offer a comprehensive set of services to ensure compliance with import / export regulations and to improve the efficiency of your compliance processes. We develop and document a comprehensive import / export program, present to your master with CBP and / or IS in the event of an audit or entry. We will assist our clients to avoid costly fines. We will identify any duty savings opportunities.

Client: Mid-size computer company
Concern: The client company had a small logistics staff with limited import/export compliance expertise and a potential risk of non-compliance in import/export operations.

Results:
Global4PL compiled a best-practices import/export compliance program that detailed compliance procedures, documentation formats and record retention methods and requirements. Global4PL reviewed all product HTS commodity codes and uncovered a classification error. Thanks to rectify the past error, Global4PL presented thorough documentation of the error, calculated duties owed to US CBP and prepared the post-entry filing for submission to US CBP. The self-disclosure was accepted by US CBP with no assessment of penalties and no further action.

Logistics Strategy
We conduct a complete review of your supply chain management that spans all movement and storage of raw materials, work in process inventory, and finished goods from point of origin to point of consumption. We provide a complete assessment of your product's distribution, warehousing and reverse logistics functions, both domestically and internationally. We identify inefficiencies and opportunities for cost savings.

Client: Large telecommunications manufacturer
Concern: The client company modified its supply chain footprint as the market and strategies shifted over time.

Results:
Global4PL executed the project to rationalize the company's logistics strategy and to optimize the revised supply chain strategy. Global4PL's assessments (including geopolitical and process risks) and solutions improved the company's intra-Asia shipping efficiency. Global4PL set up customized import / export compliance programs, having met with officials at contract manufacturers and conducted packaging redesign which resulted in 50% overall cost savings without compromising engineering requirements. Global4PL revamped transportation provider relationships, resulting in 20% reduction in transportation costs. Global4PL developed and implemented an operational strategy to minimize EU VAT charges (including reverse logistics considerations). Last, but not least, Global4PL provided a supply chain visibility tool (IPO Navigator™) that tracks product movement at the part number level.

"In the first month we engaged Global4PL we were able to implement three cost reduction projects which will result in millions of dollars in savings over the next five years."

JB Delaney
Director, Supply Chain
Infra Corporation

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What are the biggest EXTERNAL challenges in achieving supply chain excellence?

The biggest external challenges are predicting our customers' and market needs for the future so we can design our supply chain to respond to those needs and be differentiated.

What are the supply chain challenges to which Lam Research SHOULD be paying more attention?

We should continue all of our ongoing activities that improve quality and reduce costs, lead times, and cycle times. The challenge is to proactively respond to future requirements so that we deliver the needed solutions timed with market demands. To understand these emerging needs, we focus on developing high-trust relationships with our customers and our suppliers.

Who is responsible for planning your company's business continuity when facing natural disasters, major disruptions or other geopolitical issues?

Every organization within the company is responsible for having a business continuity plan. These plans are reviewed on an annual basis. Our Global Operations team plays a centralized role in ensuring the plans are documented, reviewed, and tested on a regular basis.

How do you grade Lam Research's overall supply chain performance in client satisfaction?

Because we have a very close relationship with our customers, we receive direct feedback on key metrics such as on-time delivery, cost, and quality. We also use a number of internal metrics, for example, inventory turns, and benchmark ourselves in our industry. Based on these data, we do quite well in a number of key areas. However, we are always mindful that the bar is constantly being raised, and we continuously strive for improvement.

How do you prepare for the upturn now that the economy is showing improvements?

Our industry is cyclical. We go through a cycle at least every 18-24 months, and sometimes the cycles are even shorter. In addition to internal planning, we work closely with our suppliers to give them the visibility they need to be prepared for our upcoming business needs.

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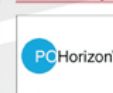
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As an importer and/or exporter, you are aware of the GDP (Customs & Border Protection) and ISD (Bureau of Industry & Security) recordkeeping regulations, whereby your company is required to keep all records of import and export transactions for a period of five years. Our online document center will not only help to satisfy the government's regulations, but it will also facilitate access for everyone in your company. You save time in searching for documents and money for storage space.

Import / Export Tool



Simply create your export paperwork online or integrate your existing system with our export solution. Our export document and compliance tool has a simple interface, but it is coupled with a powerful search engine. For the Bureau of Industry & Security (BIS), you make a search and complete export paperwork with updated lists of all denied party activities performed. You can file your Shipper's Export Declaration (SED) directly with the Automated Export System (AES) and for your customers overseas, you can customize any of the available documents to suit your customer's individual requirements.

SCM Training



We emphasize best practices in customer-oriented, solution-based training programs. Global4PL brings top organizational development experts to meet your company's goal of building a high-performing supply chain team. Global4PL provides award-winning supply chain training online, on-site, and on-demand. Global4PL also offers a unique train-the-trainer program designed to accelerate system adoption and lower overall training costs.

Consulting Services



Global4PL is an award-winning supply chain consulting firm with its own unique suite of services helping companies rapidly evolve and implement global supply chain programs. Our consulting and implementation services go beyond effective and efficient integration of process, systems, and training. Our clients include high-tech, retail, and manufacturing companies.

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When do the fuel cost / dollar exchange and / or geopolitical factors make insourcing a viable option?

The decision whether to insource or outsource involves more than a simple assessment of fuel costs and the exchange rate. It includes consideration of the complex technology and processes of our business as well as what we believe to be our core competency. We use these factors and others to determine who can best do the job with the flexibility that our customers require.

What attracted you to supply chain management?

I have always enjoyed solving business and technical problems. In my previous role as Vice President of Lam Research's Customer Support Business Group, I had high-level visibility into the areas of supply chain management that impacted achievement of our business goals. This insight enables me to have a broader perspective when approaching new and challenging problems in the supply chain.

What are the main skills and personal attributes that have helped you reach your current position?

Because I have always challenged myself to keep learning, be versatile, and take risks, I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to work in a number of different functional areas and levels of management.

What are your thoughts regarding globalization?

Globalization is an ongoing growth opportunity for companies, provided they understand the challenges, set clear objectives, plan, and execute well.

What would you say is the most rewarding experience you've had in your career?

Turnarounds and winning new markets can be very rewarding. I have been fortunate to have been part of Lam Research's turnaround as well as the company's business growth in Japan and customer service.

What have you learned as Group Vice President of Global Operations that has surprised you or changed the way you do business?

While supply chain and operations are not highly technical areas, I have encountered unique business problems and opportunities that have challenged the organization to be very innovative.

Who do you rely on for advice?

I work closely with my team, management, and colleagues. We are fortunate to have a seasoned management team that works well together and provides help or input whenever it is needed.

Turbulent times can be the best time to implement changes. However, companies tend to paralyze due to uncertainty in the market or their human capital. What is your advice to maximize the opportunities to implement changes during tough times?

Turbulent times are opportunities to strengthen weak areas and/or refocus the organization in a new direction. This requires having a vision for the company following the turbulent times and a strategic plan for how to achieve that transition. To do so will require a lot of communication with employees around the need to change and what we will become once the change is complete. This will require risk-taking, which may not be easy for some people.

How important is it for leaders to actually work overseas?

Every country and every culture provides a unique experience, which is difficult to come by unless you actually live there. Just getting the exposure to how various people think and how their perceptions, values, thought processes, and logic vary is an invaluable experience for anyone, especially in leadership. In global organizations, one of the issues of not having that perspective is people may tend to think and behave in a siloed manner, not really understanding the consequences of what they say or what they do to a broader set of people and organizations.

What are some of the differences between your experience overseas and your U.S. experience?

The decision-making process varies significantly from country to country and in some cases from company to company. For example, in some of the Asian countries there is a lot more consensus building that goes into a decision-making process, and things may tend to take longer and may come across as being slow. But what happens is that you have a decision that is bought into by more of the people and supported more broadly. That's the good part of it. The bad part could be that it may take longer to make a decision.

On the contrary, in many western companies you have situations where decisions can be made by individuals and then cascaded down to other people in the organization to execute. We may not spend enough time building consensus and getting proper feedback.

In working with multi-national teams, how do you mesh a standard set of best practices while accommodating different cultures?

The important thing is to be focused on the end results. What a customer wants, regardless of regional location, is a product that works, at the lowest cost of ownership, delivered on time, with the highest quality, and properly supported. We have key performance indicators (KPIs) and performance metrics with which we measure ourselves globally.

From an internal perspective, we measure by answering these questions:

1. Are we increasing our customer trust?
2. Are we increasing our market share?
3. Are we generating the right return on our products and services to finance the next-generation solutions?

It's important to have the end success criteria in mind. Then it's really about the process of how you go from where you are to where you need to be. The approach that works in the U.S. is not necessarily going to work in another country. This is when you have to customize your approach to the cultures with which you are dealing. It's really important to set global KPIs and not lose sight of the end business results that you are after.

How do you manage multinational teams effectively?

One of the things that Lam Research has done fairly successfully is to proliferate our vision objectives, core values and governance systems. We use global standard KPIs to measure business results and success. As long as you have that as the framework, you can have objective and open discussion focused on business results.

Cultural training and sensitivity play a key role in increasing mutual understanding of how things are done a certain way in each country and bring a common understanding between different cultures.

What are the most important steps to keep a global team motivated and effective across various time zones?

We set what we call stretch targets every year, and we work very hard under what we call the core values of the corporation to achieve those objectives. As a whole, I think what keeps people motivated is being successful.

How do you improve employee morale in a downturn?

Considering the environment that we are in, this is a challenge for any company. We were facing a similar challenge over a year ago ourselves. I think it is important to be honest and open with your employees about the reality of the business and where it is. Having a vision for what things could be like after the downturn is also going to be very important. We look at downturns as great opportunities to position the company to become stronger when the upturn comes. The key is understanding what the business environment will look like after the downturn and how to position the company to be stronger. When you are in a downturn, it is critical to get your people and resources focused on the few things that are relevant to ensuring the success of your corporation after the downturn ends.

What should newcomers in the supply chain industry know in regards to working overseas?


Things in our industry are changing constantly, so whatever you know today, there is a very good chance it will become obsolete tomorrow. You have to keep yourself up to speed on the latest developments and trends and be really hungry for learning and improvement.

It is very important to think about the impact on your customers in everything you do. Always think about the needs of the customer first and foremost. Think about the fact that it is a global industry, and people have different views. We have to be open to cultural traditions and understand why people do some things and think a certain way while staying focused on the end result.

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It's the Relationship! How Joint Teams can Transform Your Manufacturing Outsource Engagement

By Larry A. Brown

Manufacturing in the high technology industry is a tough, resource-intensive and often nerve-wracking business. I discovered as much while running Sun Microsystems' largest production organization in the world several years ago. No wonder so many companies are eager to hand over the difficult function to a contract manufacturer.

The trend of outsourcing manufacturing and its related supply chain activities to a trusted contract manufacturer continues to grow, especially to "offshore" locations outside of North America. Also, the tendency for companies to outsource more complex products is on the rise.

Complex Products, Greater Risks

It is common knowledge that as you outsource products and processes that are more complex, you also increase the risks to the contract manufacturer, the outsourcing company and its customers. Complexity can manifest itself in many ways. It can show up in the form of multiple options and configurations available on the product, cutting edge hardware and software technology, sophisticated test requirements, the volatility of demand forecasts associated with high ticket, lower volume items, the long distance of the contract manufacturer from markets, and other variables. With increased product and process complexity the outsourcing company takes a greater chance that product quality, cost and delivery will suffer disruptions and fall short of targets.

Much has been written about the kinds of operational variables and performance that will come under added strain in a contract manufacturing relationship as complex products are outsourced to it. There is a greater likelihood of more excess and obsolete inventory, overlong materials lead times, increased freight and expedite costs, language, culture and time zone challenges, weaker protections for intellectual property in some offshore locations, and other risks.

The Need for an Effective Engagement Model

Just about everyone has a checklist to qualify a contract manufacturer, a template for service level agreements or a favorite boilerplate for a vendor scorecard. Making checklists and boilerplates is relatively easy. In my opinion, however, that is not enough.

One area that I believe has been glossed over and not given enough serious attention in the industry is the need for a highly-structured joint engagement model between the outsourcing company and its contract manufacturer.

There are dozens of moving parts that have to work well together, like the sections of an orchestra, to ensure that the risks associated with complex product outsourcing are mitigated or eliminated. Unless those moving parts are brought together and managed under a single, disciplined relationship framework, those parts have a tendency to spin out of control and strain the relationship between partners.

In the outsourcing literature, the need for an engagement governance model is alluded to but not explored or formalized in much depth, with a few exceptions. Maybe the writers assume that everyone intuitively knows the best way to define and implement such a model. In my experience, that is far from the truth. Most of the literature vaguely alludes to the need to implement "the right collaborative model," or "a solid management framework" or "experiential workshops" or "a common DNA of execution" but doesn't provide any practical, proven advice on how to do so. It is my objective in this article to help bridge some of that information gap.

The VOCAL® Customer-Supplier Engagement Model

In my book, [Get VOCAL! Growing Profits Through Customer-Supplier Relationships](#), © 2007, Cisco Systems, Inc., I define a customer-supplier engagement model for which I led the development and deployment with significant success during my eleven plus years at Cisco. VOCAL is an acronym that stands for visibility, ownership, communication, accountability and leadership, the five interlocking elements that are essential to the model. The VOCAL elements appear, in turn, throughout a governance structure made up of executive co-sponsors, cross-functional joint engagement teams and "one-voice, no surprises" communication.

At Cisco we realized many notable successes as a result of using VOCAL to transform our relationships and, ultimately, our results with many of our toughest customers. In one such example, we used the model to form a joint (Cisco and customer working together) High Availability (HA) team at a major telecom on the East Coast. A loyal Cisco customer for many years, the telecom's senior executives were growing frustrated with Cisco over declining network availability and other problems.

The first problem the HA team tackled was that it normally took six months (way too long) to perform major software upgrades on more than five hundred Cisco optical devices across the customer's synchronous optical network (SONET). In addition, the upgrades had been plagued by unscheduled network outages resulting in disrupted service and upset end-users.

The joint HA team wrote a method of procedure (MOP) on how to effectively and efficiently upgrade their network. The team held planning meetings and, for the first time, laid out everyone's cross-functional roles and responsibilities and approved a sequence of events, backup plans, and how to communicate their preparations to the end-users on the network.

The results of the next software upgrade surprised everyone. It was completed in *less than four weeks* with no unplanned outages, a six-fold reduction in cycle time and unprecedented end-user satisfaction. The customer's senior executives were delighted. The first joint team had scored a touchdown with its first deliverable and Cisco was on its way to repairing a damaged relationship with a key customer. The telecom's director of engineering, at first a skeptic of the process, said "each team member brought his or her own technical expertise to the table. It has been very productive to be able to raise an issue and have it immediately understood and tackled."

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What We Do: We help our clients save large amounts of money, improve efficiencies, and avoid costly errors in their global logistics operations.

Who We Are: We are a team of high performance, hands-on industry veterans that come to the table with proven experience. We deploy experts in import / export compliance, multi-mode transportation, partner negotiations, third party logistics, and general operations management to implement innovative solutions with immediate, measurable results. Our resources, along with our supply base management techniques, collaborative communication infrastructure, and technologies frequently produce savings of 15% to 25% of a company's logistics spend.

Customized Supply Chain Solutions to Help You Succeed

See how our results speak for themselves

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We offer a comprehensive set of services to ensure compliance with import / export regulations and to improve the efficiency of your compliance processes. We develop and document a comprehensive import / export program process to pass muster with CBP and / or SOX in the event of an audit or error. We will not rest until we avoid costly fines. We will identify any duty savings opportunities.

a. Review existing operations
b. Set up compliance programs
c. File rulings
d. Review products, classification, create databases
e. Free trade agreements - qualifications / reviews
f. Create policies and procedures
g. Draft disclosures

Client: Mid-size computer company
Concern: The client company had a small logistics staff with limited import/export compliance expertise and a potential risk of non-compliance in import/export operations.

Results: Global4PL compiled a best practices import/export compliance program that detailed compliance procedures, documentation formats and record retention methods and requirements. Global4PL reviewed all product HTS commodity codes and uncovered a classification error. Then, to rectify the past errors, Global4PL presented thorough documentation of the error, calculated duties owed to US CBP and prepared the post-entry filing for submission to US CBP. The error correction was accepted by US CBP with no assessment of penalties and no further action.

Logistics Strategy
We conduct a complete review of your supply chain management that spans all movement and storage of raw materials, work-in-process inventory, and finished goods from point of origin to point of consumption. We provide a complete assessment of your shipping & inbound distribution, warehousing and reverse logistics functions, both domestically and internationally. We identify inefficiencies and opportunities for cost savings.

Client: Large telecommunications manufacturer
Concern: The client company modified its supply chain footprint as the market and strategies shifted over time.

Results: Global4PL executed the project to rationalize the company's logistics strategy and to optimize the related supply chain strategy. Global4PL's assessments (including geopolitical and process risks) and solutions improved the company's intra-Asia shipping efficiency. Global4PL set up a customized import / export compliance program, having met with officials at contract manufacturers and conducted packaging redesign which resulted in 15% parcel cost savings without compromising engineering requirements. Global4PL revamped transportation provider relationships, resulting in 20% reduction in transportation costs. Global4PL developed and implemented an operational strategy to minimize EU VAT charges (including reverse logistics considerations). Last, but not least, Global4PL provided a supply chain visibility tool (PO Horizon™) that tracks product movement at the part number level.

"In the first month we engaged Global4PL we were able to implement three cost reduction projects which will result in millions of dollars in savings over the next five years."

JB Delaney
Director, Supply Chain
Infenra Corporation

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Over a period of two years, the VOCAL model was expanded to include several teams at this telecom and resulted in additional business worth several millions of dollars being awarded to Cisco after the customer had threatened to take the business to Cisco's competitors.

The engagement model was used with many other customers with equally dramatic results. For example, it reduced time-to-market of one complex software product by 63% and lowered customer-found defects by 85%. In another major telecom the model and its joint teams drove down network availability defects-per-million from 1500 to 30 in two years, an astounding 50-fold reduction that led the customer's network reliability executive to announce "We now have the most reliable IP network in the world." These wins were instrumental, once again, in helping to steer millions of dollars of new business to Cisco.

Joint Outsourcing Team

How can the VOCAL engagement model help an outsourcing company and its contract manufacturer navigate the perilous waters of complex product outsourcing? I would start by re-branding VOCAL and calling it the Joint Outsourcing Team (JOT).

A JOT would consist of two team co-leaders and a cross-functional team of a dozen or so members who report to two executive co-sponsors. One co-leader would be from the outsourcing company and one from the contract manufacturer. They would work together to share the program management role and help break down barriers and resolve issues within their respective companies.

The team members would also come from both partner companies and include representatives from manufacturing, engineering, purchasing, forecasting and materials planning, legal, transportation and logistics and other functions as needed. The two executive co-sponsors should be vice presidents or senior director level executives from each partner company who provide leadership, accountability and course corrections to the team.

The Joint Outsourcing Team would be expected to meet via conference call or video conference at least weekly and perhaps more frequently at the start of the engagement to ensure that the outsourcing plan is comprehensive, truly cross-functional and crisply kicked off and executed. The meeting frequency could be reduced to bi-weekly and, finally, monthly once product output and operational maturity are found to be consistent, predictable and routine.

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Holding JOT conference calls becomes more difficult as the physical and cultural distance between team members becomes greater and exposes language, thought process and time zone challenges. The temptation would be to say that conference calls are too inconvenient and should be done away with because someone always has to be on the phone or webcam too early in the morning or too late at night. At the risk of sounding glib, that is one of the costs of doing business offshore. Email and voicemail of themselves are no substitute for real time face-to-face or at least voice-to-voice communication.

One-Voice, No Surprises Communication

The Joint Outsourcing Team's co-leaders are responsible to ensure that the team's activities, obstacles, decisions and wins are communicated to the right people at the right time. Each communication is to be jointly produced and distributed. Known as "one-voice, no surprises" communication, this approach goes a long way toward preventing a common relationship strain from gaining a foothold. That relationship strain is the tendency for outsourcing companies and their contract manufacturers to produce competing and contradictory status reports that go up their respective chains of command. This disjointed, ad hoc approach allows inaccurate information, rumors and friction to fester between partner companies. Only a joint communication process can prevent this from happening.

Quarterly Reviews to the Executive Co-Sponsors

In addition to the JOT co-leaders providing regular status updates to all stakeholders, they would be expected to conduct quarterly review conference calls at which they and team members jointly present their program updates to the executive co-sponsors.

The quarterly presentation would generally include three main sections at a minimum:

- Team accomplishments during the last ninety days.
- Team deliverables committed for the next 90 days.
- Obstacles or threats that the team wants the executive sponsors to be aware of and possibly help eliminate.

The JOT executive review is not the same as the quarterly business reviews (QBR) or vendor scorecard sessions that are common in the industry. The latter forums tend to be one-sided in most relationships. That is, the supplier or contract manufacturer reports on their metrics and the outsourcing company evaluates them and sends their partner home with an admonition to do better next time.

In contrast, the JOT is intended to be a real partnership, a dialogue in which the team co-leaders and members are truly accountable as a joint team to their executive co-sponsors. This has been proven in actual engagements, most of them very difficult relationships, to transform the tone of the relationship from adversarial to collaborative, resulting in greater transparency and trust.

Scalable Model

One key advantage of the Joint Outsourcing Team is scalability, the ability to seamlessly include additional partners in the relationship. For example, there is sometimes a "Last Mile" contractor, often called a "postponement partner," positioned in the supply chain between the contract manufacturer and the market or the outsourcing company. In a supply chain where the goal is to postpone the configuration of a product until the last possible point before fulfilling an order (especially in build-to-order processes), it is the Last Mile's role to configure, test, brand and fulfill orders as close to the final markets as possible. In this case, representatives from the Last Mile partner should be added to the JOT and expected to own and execute action items in the same way the contract manufacturer and outsourcing company members do.

JOT Advantages

It is the joint, cross-functional, cross-company nature of the JOT's leadership and membership that is the secret sauce of the process. It offers the following advantages:

- Improves the visibility and communication of requirements, action items and status.
- Surfaces problems or disconnects more quickly.
- Owns and resolves issues and makes decisions at the right level, avoiding gridlock and constant and unnecessary escalation to executives.
- Builds an ongoing relationship of trust and cooperation between partner companies.

Retaining Supply Chain Competencies

It is paramount that outsourcing companies retain at least a small cadre of employees on their payroll who are competent in manufacturing and supply chain skills to provide assistance to and a check and balance on their contract manufacturers. For the JOT engagement model to work, the outsourcing company must retain enough personnel who are experienced in manufacturing, engineering, forecasting and materials planning, etc. to be able to provide regular evaluations of and guidance to the contract manufacturers.

In their zeal to turn over all of their manufacturing to a contract manufacturer, some outsourcing companies go too far and cut out all of their related skill sets. Sandeep Duggal, Chief Executive Officer of Extron (www.extroninc.com), a Fremont, California-based supplier of Last Mile supply chain solutions, said "too many outsourcing companies have decimated their manufacturing organizations and capabilities, leaving only project managers in their place." This is clearly a higher risk strategy.

Evolution of the Partnership - The Incremental Approach

As the contract manufacturer demonstrates, over time, that it is capable of performing to expectations and that the JOT model is delivering consistent, predictable output, the outsourcing company can hand off additional responsibilities to its partner. For example, tier 1 materials planning and procurement, which constitutes up to 80% of total spend in some products, could be handed over to the contract manufacturer, in increments, to leverage the contractor's flexibility and purchasing power.

Cover the Critical Few

A JOT may require too many resources to cover all of an outsourcing company's contract manufacturing partners. Instead, it should focus its JOT program on the short list of strategic partners to whom it has outsourced its most complex and strategic products and processes.

Keep Weeding the Garden

Do you ever get to the point where the outsourcing company and its contract manufacturer can pull the plug entirely on the JOT? Not likely. Not with complex products. In my book I have a chapter titled "Keep Weeding the Garden." In it, I make the point that a corporate partnership is like a garden. We use the VOCAL (in this case the JOT) engagement process to clear the garden of a number of troublesome weeds that get in our way.

By weeds, I refer to the self-defeating process obstacles that the outsourcing company and its contract manufacturer permit to get in the way of an effective partnership. Weeds can include unclear product and process requirements, unforeseen startup issues, "tribal knowledge" not adequately shared across corporate or functional boundaries, and a deficient communications and reporting structure, among other relationship troubles.

Solving these issues once in the JOT program is not enough. To prevent the same problems from growing back to plague the partnership, a new "normal business process" must be put in place or the JOT must be maintained in some form throughout the duration of the contract.

Sum and Substance

In an era in which more high technology companies are outsourcing complex products and solutions to contract manufacturers, the need for structured, disciplined partnership engagement models that match the complexity of the products also continues to increase.

The use of a cross-functional, cross-company Joint Outsourcing Team made up of co-leaders and members from both partners reporting to executive co-sponsors with "one-voice, no surprises" communication is a powerful approach. It has a proven track record in the production and deployment of complex technical products and solutions.

While the challenges and risks of entrusting the quality, cost and delivery of your products to contract partners can be daunting, done right and in the spirit of partnership and collaboration, they can also be rewarding.

About the Author:



Larry A. Brown is Owner and Principal of ProcessProud (www.processproud.com), a consultancy devoted to helping clients optimize their business processes. Larry has over 25 years experience in the computer networking, semiconductor, computer workstation, and software application industries. He has previously worked for Cisco Systems where he led a program that improved the quality and delivery of Cisco's technical solutions to major customers. At Sun Microsystems, Larry led its largest production organization in the world during some of the highest growth years in Sun's history. He has also worked for Novell as a Director of Quality Programs, for WordPerfect as a Director of Worldwide Forecasting and Materials Planning and has held manufacturing management positions at Advanced Micro Devices and Fairchild Semiconductor. He is a Commander (Ret.) in the U.S. Naval Reserve and has Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Michigan Technological University and Brigham Young University respectively. Larry is the author of *Get VOCAL! Growing Profits Through Customer-Supplier Relationships* ©2007, Cisco Systems, Inc.



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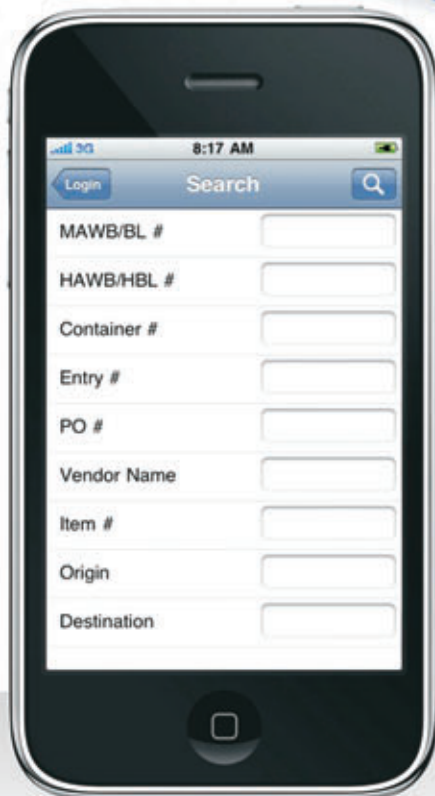
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Publisher GSCLG Publishing

Editor Andrea Kostelas

Guest Contributors Larry Brown, ProcessProud
Nancy Ellen Dodd, MPW, MFA, Graziadio School of Business and Management, Pepperdine University

Advertising Director

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How to reach us:

2953 Bunker Hill Lane

Suite 400

Santa Clara, CA 95054

800.354.8579

Web Site:

www.gsclg.com

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