



Think Differently

Stop for a moment and imagine the supply chain differently. These were Supply Chain Insights' founder Lora Cecere's opening remarks at the Supply Chain Insights Global Summit in Atlanta earlier this month. The customer is changing, business is changing, the world is changing. And, so too must the supply chain if we are going to drive increased value and promote customer loyalty and retention.

What does "think differently" mean? For many supply chain organizations, the past decade has required a lot of different thinking. From the global financial crisis to the devastating tsunamis across Japan and Southeast Asia to the avian flu outbreak and more recently hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, have forced supply chain leaders to think differently in times of great risk. At the same time, the rise of the more informed customer has placed great pressure on supply chains to deliver higher quality products faster and cheaper with greater levels of service.

To visualize her "think different" call to arms, Lora highlighted an exercise she conducted during one of her training programs where she asked participants to draw their supply chains. Sounds relatively straightforward right? However, Lora pointed out that every single supply chain drawn started with the supplier and branched out from there. The center of the supply chain universe, according to these drawings, was the supplier. Think differently flips this around and places the customer at the center.

Regardless of if you sell directly to consumers, wholesale or direct to other businesses/manufacturers, the customer is the life blood of your organization. It is critical you place them at the center and design networks and processes that will most cost-effectively satisfy them while driving profitable growth for the business.

As part of the "think differently" approach, Lora also highlighted five key trends from Supply Chain Insights' research.

Outside In Process. The customer should be at the center of the discussion. Now is the time to make this a reality.

Autonomous Supply Chain. Enable the supply chain to sense and respond at the speed of business through advanced capabilities such as Cognitive Computing, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.

Real-Time Data. There are mountains of data available to supply chain teams. As the time available to collect, analyze and act on this data becomes shorter and shorter, the need to turn the data into actionable insights in real-time becomes greater.

Digital Manufacturing. The rise of Additive Manufacturing (3D Printing), Paperless and Robotics is changing the landscape and supply chains must be ready. In many cases the quality and reliability of 3D printing is now equal to that of the injection mold process.

Network of Networks. There is a great opportunity in front of supply chain leaders to gain greater visibility both internally as well as externally with partners.

“Where there is a will, there is a way. If there is a chance in a million that you can do something, anything, to keep what you want from ending, do it. Pry the door open or, if need be, wedge your foot in that door and keep it open.” *Pauline Kael*



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