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Supply Chains Are the Business

By John Gattorna

Your business is not static, and neither should your supply chain be. Instead you need a supply chain that can respond dynamically to your customers' and consumers' constantly changing wants and needs. This requires making sure that your strategy, culture, and leadership style align with your marketplace. The following article is excerpted from John Gattorna's new book, *Living Supply Chains*. (Living Supply Chains, John Gattorna, Pearson Education Limited, 2006)

Illustration by David Cutler

Supply chains and golf have many similarities; for best results, everything must be in dynamic alignment. Ask Tiger Woods.

Of course you know who Tiger Woods is. Just like you know Dell, IKEA, Nokia, Zara, Li & Fung. But do you really *know* them? Do you know what lies beneath their dynamic supply chains? Business leaders around the world admire their superior performance; they can deliver products and services to their customers with breakneck speed and in a way that makes it look easy. But not many of us can understand why.

Let us consider the classic business goal of alignment. Many of you will have heard of alignment; companies have been seeking to align their strategies and goals to the needs of the customer for some time. Alignment in the supply chain is similar—but different. It means aligning your supply chain strategies to customer segments. Dynamic alignment is something different again.

Seeking dynamic alignment means treating your supply chain as a living being, not as a mechanical beast: the difference between a golf club sitting in its bag and the swing of a golf club in the hands of Tiger Woods. It is all about energy, execution, and the dynamism of people and movement. If you capture that you'll be in "the zone," with a bottom line to match ...

Before we explore the detail of dynamic alignment, let's start by shedding the old definition of the supply chain. It is no longer all about technology, warehouses, and distribution centers, or trucks and planes. Agreed, they are elements—they are the hard assets. But a modern supply chain comprises a lot more than that. We have to embrace a far more liberal view of the supply chain. In effect, the supply chain is any combination of processes, functions, activities, relationships, and pathways along which products, services, information, and financial transactions move in and between enterprises. It also involves any and all movement of these from original producer to ultimate end-user or consumer; and *everyone* in the enterprise is involved in making this happen.

Solving the Problem of Complex Supply Chains

If we accept this new definition of the supply chain, then every enterprise on earth has supply chains of some type or configuration running through them. They could be a manufacturer, a service company, a public sector agency, or a private sector firm. Supply chains are omnipresent. They are out there! Most enterprises contain literally hundreds of supply chains that together look more like a bowl of electrified spaghetti than finely tuned conveyor belts.

This has led to two key problems. The first is that many people are largely blind to the presence of these supply chains. They can only see the trackable movement of products and/or the position of hard assets. Complexity makes

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the true supply chain invisible. The second problem is that even if people recognize these complex supply chains, they start attacking the complexity issue in inappropriate ways. Failure to see the full extent of supply chains in your company can be damaging. Seeing it but then confronting it with the wrong solutions can be fatal.

If you are a service organization, companies in your sector are the most likely to suffer from supply chain blindness. They think that because their products are intangible, logistics and supply chain principles don't apply; wrong. If you are in the manufacturing or retail industries, companies in your field are likely to see the complexity but attack it with an operational sledgehammer. They are convinced the solution lies in reducing the internal operational complexity that they have to manage. As a consequence, they are busily standardizing and reengineering processes and installing new technologies, all designed to reduce complexity in the way they deal with customers.

However, these enterprises rarely become easier to deal with from the customer's perspective, quite the contrary. It would be much more productive if they were to accept and confront this inherent complexity, and then set out to master it. The tools and techniques are available, but only the conscious desire—or the understanding—to do so is in question.

Understanding will come from first accepting that the time is here to fundamentally rethink how we design and operate the supply chains that link our enterprise with suppliers and customers, whether they are "just around the corner" or around the world. For too long there has been an unhealthy preoccupation with infrastructure and asset utilization, driven mainly by the obsessive desire to cut costs, mostly brought on by the growing requirement for quarterly reporting. Unfortunately, even today many executives think of logistics and supply chains purely as areas for cost-cutting. While acknowledging that ever-lower levels of operating costs are important, achieving and maintaining future competitiveness demands more sophistication. You cannot grow the business by continuously cutting costs. ...

What is required is sustained investment in performance-enhancing supply chains. Look no further than a leading organization such as Nokia. It has delivered positive cash flow return on investment (CFROI) over a long period and therefore the capacity to invest in competitive-building capabilities on a sustained basis. ...

It's the People, Stupid

What do you think is the key ingredient in modern supply chains? The technology and the trucks? Or the people who design and run them? Supply chains may seem like uncontrollable, inanimate beasts, but they are in fact living systems propelled by humans and human behavior. It seems as though light might be dawning at last, in some quarters at least. *Harvard Business Review* convened an elite panel in 2003 to discuss future supply chain challenges, and one member aptly concluded that "despite years of process breakthroughs and elegant technology solutions, an agile, adaptive

supply chain remains an elusive goal. Maybe it's the people who are getting in the way.¹² Indeed. But what we are interested in is not how they get in the way, but how they bring the supply chain to life.

We can see the potent presence of human behavior both inside and outside the enterprise. Customers, suppliers, and third-party providers are driving the supply chain from the outside, while staff, managers, and board members are seeking to manage and respond from the inside. If you can understand and correctly apply a more enlightened approach to managing this "human factor" in the supply chain, you'll discover a primary source of performance improvement in the foreseeable future. It's all there for the taking.

It is best to stop thinking of supply chains as a 50/50 mix of infrastructure and information systems technology. Start thinking of the ideal mix as more like 45/45/10³—human

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behavior, systems technology, and asset infrastructure. Whether we accept it or not, we are already shifting from Newtonian-like thinking to a more organic model. Once we accept this fact, a new world of performance improvement beckons at every intra- and inter-organizational interface along our supply chains. ...

If you need any more reasons, consider that during the next decade it will become progressively more difficult for enterprises to stand alone and compete successfully in their respective marketplaces. What we will see, and are already seeing, is the formation of supply chains made up of parties that consciously choose to work together in a preferred alliance (on either the supply or user side), competing with other similar supply chain alliances. In this world, you'll need to find and acquire completely new capabilities simply to stay competitive.

Talent will be at a premium. So too will be the ability to select and manage new alliances and relationships with parties who bring specialized capabilities to help us "realign" with customers, fast. At the same time, we will need to transform in other ways by embracing completely new business models. ...

In Search of Dynamic Alignment

As long ago as 1989 it occurred to me that "logistics" as a field of management science lacked any substantive theoretical underpinning. Without such a theoretical base, it offered little prospect of further breakthrough developments, at least in the short to medium term. It seemed that we had hit a type of "knowledge ceiling." In response, I set out in search

ideas beyond the boundaries of conventional logistics thinking in adjacent fields of management science. This proved to be an inspired move as it ultimately opened rich new avenues of thought that helped to inform us better about the workings of modern logistics networks and supply chains. What was started in 1989, and continues to develop to this day, is a holistic view of how enterprises function, a type of "new integrated theory of the firm." The logic that underpins this approach was that casting a wide net could potentially produce new insights into how enterprises, and therefore enterprise supply chains, worked. And so it proved to be.

Alignment is not a new idea. In fact it has quite ancient origins. One of the earliest forms of alignment occurred in nature—the flight of wild geese.⁴ Remarkably, a flock of geese flying in V-formation can fly five times farther than a single goose on its own, so powerful is the aerodynamic effect in formation. A more contemporary example is the Australian 4,000-meter men's pursuit cycling team winning the Olympic gold medal in Athens, with all four riders in line, wheels millimeters apart, chasing around the oval race track at high speed.

By applying the term alignment to the supply chain, I am seeking to emphasize the dynamism involved—the type of movement we can see and measure when it comes to a flock of geese or an Olympic cycling team. Alignment is a living (rather than static) concept that applies to the enterprise as a whole. We want to capture the underlying mechanisms in supply chains, which themselves are integral to all enterprises. We call this overarching concept *dynamic alignment* because it holds true under changing conditions and for the first time gives us an opportunity to design and operate supply chains that stay abreast of customers and consumers as they evolve over time.

The economist R.H. Coase,⁵ in his 1937 essay "The Nature of the Firm," introduced the notion of "moving equilibrium," where internal components interacted in such a way to cause the firm to either expand or contract in size. It is very likely that Coase was primarily thinking of economic components and did not consider the behavioral dimension, but this concept is very relevant to supply chains. Some 60 years later, Labovitz and Rosansky went part of the way towards redressing this apparent oversight with their dual concepts of vertical alignment (linking strategy and people inside the organization) and horizontal alignment (linking processes and customers).⁶ They also introduced the notion of the self-aligning organization, but their work was mainly based on anecdotal evidence, and as such lacks predictive capability.

Perhaps the first indication that strategy and culture in an enterprise could be systematically linked came from Norman

Chorn's doctoral research in 1987.⁷ Subsequently, Chorn, myself, and co-workers in our consulting firm⁸ set out to study the leadership styles of individual executives. This led us to Carl Jung's seminal work on personality types⁹ and ultimately to Ichak Adizes¹⁰ and Gerard Faust,¹¹ who developed the "P-A-E-I" coding system to categorize different management styles, encompassing "producer-administrator-entrepreneur-integrator."

Our collaboration during this period proved to be fortuitous, as we were able to combine this important research on leadership and personality types with my earlier work in customer segmentation and vision development. It led directly to the first genuine multidisciplinary dynamic alignment framework that linked marketplace and strategy with internal cultural capability and leadership styles in the enterprise.

We realized that the P-A-E-I behavioral coding methodology (or "logics" as we called them) developed by Adizes and Faust to describe different management styles of individual managers applied equally well at the aggregate level—this was the step jump in logic we made at the time. In other words, groups of people inside enterprises with similar values could be identified and described as subcultures. Similarly, groups of people on the outside who shared similar dominant buying values for specific product or service categories could be identified and described as behavioral segments (otherwise known as external subcultures).

We had indeed found the "missing link," which turned out to be a behavioral metric (or logic) that could be used to describe (and measure) what was happening at all four levels of the emerging dynamic alignment model. This new behavioral metric is indeed the DNA of business and enterprise supply chains. Just as important, this new coding regime facilitated comparative analyses of all four levels of our model in search of potential "misalignments." ...

Behavioral Forces at Work in Supply Chains

The roots of this [behavioral coding] system are firmly embedded in Carl Jung's theory of psychological types, which states that all conscious mental activity occurs in two perceptual processes: sensing and intuition; and two judgment processes: thinking and feeling. Adizes and Faust resolved and simplified Jung's original framework and identified four key types or "logic sets" that might exhibit a dominant tendency. These are best represented as two pairs of countervailing (behavioral) forces, which are always in dynamic tension, and are present in all human interactions, as depicted in Exhibit 1.

In the context of supply chains, we are particularly interested in the specific interaction between buyers and sellers. Adizes and Faust originally labeled these behavioral forces as P-A-E-I as described above, but we later relabeled "E" to "D" and defined them as follows:

P (Producer): the force for action, results, speed, and focus.

A (Administrator): the opposing force to D, and repre-

sents stability, control, reliability, measurement, logic, and efficiency.

D (Developer): the force for creativity, change, innovation, and flexibility (originally labeled "E" for Entrepreneur by Adizes and Faust).

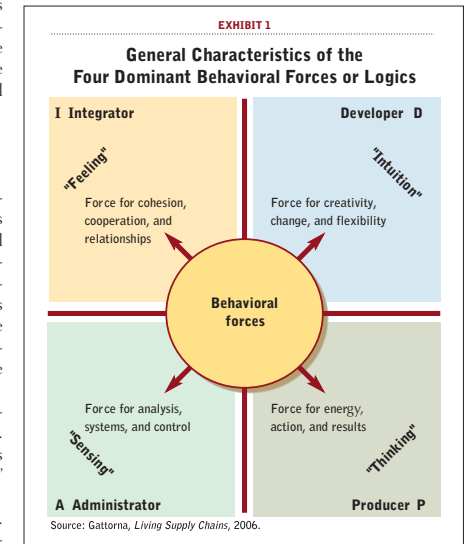
I (Integrator): the opposing force to P, and represents cooperation, cohesion, participation, and harmony.

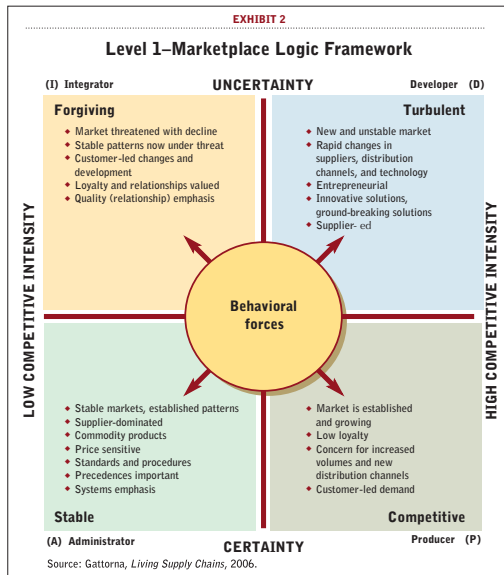
The four elements of the P-A-D-I logic come together in different ways to produce 16 possible combinations, all of which are in dynamic equilibrium; each dominant logic combination has a different "center of gravity." For example, if we are describing a particular buying style, we may discern an overriding preference for speed, results, and performance to specifications (P logic), and a lesser preference for reliability, consistency, and price (A logic). There may also be some preference expressed for flexibility (D logic) and cohesion (I logic). So the overall summary of this particular buying behavior can be represented by the shorthand code Pa. ...

The important insight to take on board here is that all customers have hierarchies of values. We are seeking to bring the most dominant buying values to the surface as these will ultimately drive behavior and therefore are the values that we need to align our responses with.

The Four Elements of Dynamic Alignment

So let us consider the logic in our model and see what impact it has on our thinking. The key driver in the marketplace is the dominant buying behavior or natural preference exhib-





because it helps to pinpoint how to align specific supply chains to customer behaviors. This is why it's such an important breakthrough for management thinking in general, and for the design and operation of supply chains in particular. It explains for the first time how the softer science of human behavior can be integrated with the more tangible—and generally better understood—world of infrastructure and technology.

The underlying logic of the dynamic alignment framework is that an enterprise needs to be aligned with its customers or markets in the context of the prevailing operating environment. The power of this framework lies in its ability to reveal the interaction between customers' needs, helping to formulate appropriate response strategies and to successfully execute those strategies through the shaping of internal cultural capabilities by appropriate relevant leadership. The essential starting point for successful dynamic alignment is a comprehensive understanding of customers' fundamental needs and matching dominant buying behaviors. ...

Successful organizations generally have leadership that is clearly in close touch with, and empathetic to, their customers and market conditions. Empathetic leaders tend to formulate the relevant strategies and shape the most appropriate cultural

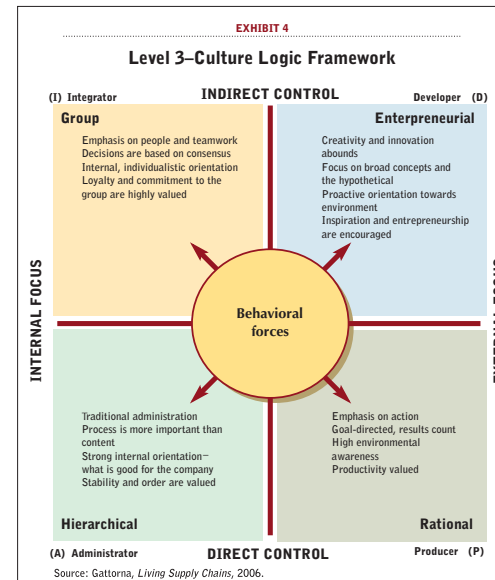
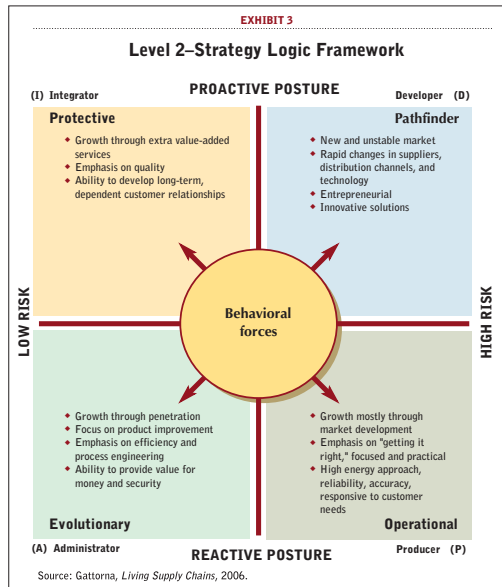
ited by customers for a particular product or service category in a particular competitive environment. This is Level 1 in the dynamic alignment framework, as depicted in Exhibit 2. Level 2 is the strategy element. This is the bridge that links the enterprise's internal culture capabilities with the external marketplace, as shown in Exhibit 3.

Having an aligned set of subcultures (sitting on top of a set of enterprise-wide shared values, otherwise known as corporate culture) is crucial to the successful implementation of operating strategy. Exhibit 4 shows this third level in the dynamic alignment framework.

Finally, Level 4. Effective leaders understand the aggregate values of their enterprise and can mould from these the appropriate subcultures to align with the preferences being expressed by customers in the marketplace. There are four primary leadership styles identified: Visionary (D), Company Baron (P), Traditionalist (A), and Coach (I). These different leadership styles are depicted in Exhibit 5. ...

Time to Reinvent the Enterprise

The [dynamic alignment] model provides both a *map* and a *tool* to help you achieve superior performance across your corporate supply chains. It is a map to help you navigate your way through the increasingly complex network of supply chains out there today. And it's a tool



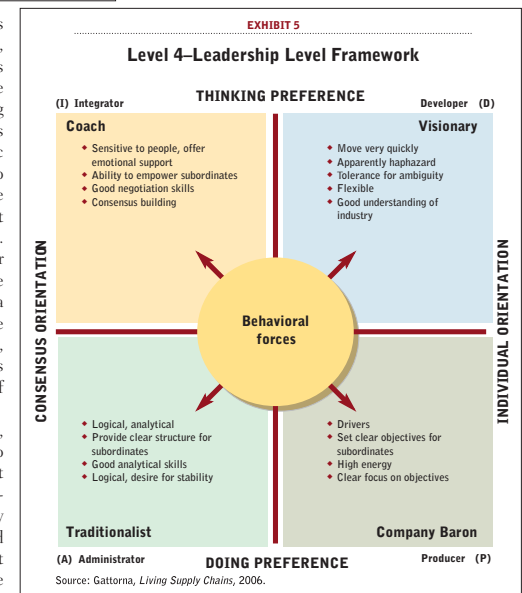
capabilities to underpin and drive these strategies into their marketplace. Tesco, IKEA, Cessna, Nokia, Nestlé, Caterpillar, and Dell are just a few examples of successful dynamic alignment in their respective marketplaces. And the way Lord Coe and his bidding team dramatically won the 2012 Olympic Games for London is another example of superior dynamic alignment, beautifully conceived and executed to perfection. There is no real size limitation on the application and usefulness of dynamic alignment—it applies equally well to large and small enterprises. An example of the latter is the nine-strong chain or "charm bracelet" (as Belinda Seper refers to the store group) of fashion retail stores developed by Belinda Seper in Sydney under her "Belinda" branding. While there is clearly a common theme across all stores, each is different in its own way. Each store has its own personality in response to the lifestyle needs of women in each store's catchment area.¹²

Less successful enterprises, on the other hand, fall at the first hurdle. Their leadership appears to lose touch with customers and corresponding market conditions, and the strategies and underpinning cultural capabilities put in place become progressively more misaligned, until finally the responsible board is forced to move to replace the leadership and start the process all over again—often resulting in huge

expenses to the business with an accompanying negative impact on the share price. We saw clear evidence of this when IBM got into trouble in the early 1990s, and more recently with the much publicized demise of Carly Fiorina at Hewlett-Packard. Other examples of significant misalignment include such high-profile names as Enron, Marks & Spencer, AMP, Paramalat, and J. Sainsbury. All of these organizations are endeavoring to regain their former glory through radical initiatives designed to overcome serious misalignments with their customers, which resulted in progressively worsening operating and financial performance.

Responsiveness at Last

We did not set out to solve every problem in the world faced by enterprises, but it's increasingly obvious that little or no progress can be made to improve performance unless we take a more eclectic approach than is in vogue at the moment. By going well beyond the accepted boundaries of conventional management theory and practice, we can practice and embrace a new approach to the art of supply chains. And they are still something of an art form. Fortunately, the more holistic whole-of-enterprise perspective offered by the dynamic alignment framework gives us a new way forward. A fertile new world awaits if we pursue this line



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of thinking, a world where more value can be released and higher performance achieved, on a sustained basis.

Indeed, logistics networks and supply chains ... are largely driven by people power, either in customer or employee capacities. Systems are the next most critical area because these deliver information to people for decision making, such as "make or buy or act" in some way in the enterprise. So it appears that the whole concept of dynamic alignment, when applied to logistics systems and supply chains, is simply another way of expressing optimal cost-service effectiveness. This is the realm where customers are serviced appropriately, no more, no less, eliminating over- and under-servicing forever. At last we have a way around the service problem that confronts every manager every working day, epitomized by the words, "We know we are over-servicing some customers and under-servicing others, but we don't know which is which."

Dynamic alignment principles bring with them a paradigm shift, away from conventional thinking which suggests that as service levels are progressively increased, cost-to-serve increases at a faster rate, approaching infinity at very high levels of service. This does not necessarily follow if resources are



subtly reallocated to align better with and more accurately reflect customer buying behaviors. Armed with a clearer understanding of the implications of improved alignment between an enterprise and its marketplace, the potential exists to move to a best-of-both-worlds strategy, where improved service comes at a lower overall cost-to-serve, at least up to a point.

Building more responsive supply chains means building more responsive enterprises overall, because service means different things to different people, and customers do not split hairs between functions inside the enterprise. Exhibit 6 illustrates in more detail the four primary customer-service logics that result in at least 16 possible combinations; some types are more often observed than others, but they all exist in practice.

For one class of customer, good service means surprising them with an innovative, creative response to meet their unique needs, at speed. This is a D logic. For another class of customers with a different mindset, good customer service means delivering a reliable, predictable service, on a consistent basis. For this type of customer, consistency is essential. This is the A logic. For yet another class of customer, good service means being responsive to their demanding requirements in a commercial way. For them, straight out responsiveness and timeliness is paramount. This is the P logic. Finally for another group of customers, the opposite is true, as they seek service that is empathetic and understanding, generally delivered in a quietly consistent way. For them the crucial ingredient is having suppliers understand their special need for a close and sharing relationship, which ensures they are not taken out of their comfort zone. That is the I logic.

Following these logics leads us to conclude that the concepts of "responsiveness" and "flexibility" (much sought after by all supply chain participants) are not about doing one thing well after all, but rather having the capability to do several things well, often concurrently.

If you have any doubt about the importance of managing modern supply chains look no further than the example of some leading companies that I mentioned earlier. Why is it that one national icon, Marks & Spencer, could lose its way, while another, Nestlé, could move from strength to strength? Both had secure positions in their respective markets, enjoying a strong brand and loyal customer following. But one misunderstood its customers and made the wrong decisions about its supply chains; the other was in touch its customers and was unfazed by supply chain complexity. Nestlé knows what dynamic alignment means. ...

Trying to navigate your way through the spaghetti bowl of today's supply chains is not easy for any enterprise, regardless of its age, market penetration, or financial resources. Some do it better than others and reap the rewards. Successful organizations understand that building more responsive, customer-focused supply chains is the key to the future. Dynamic alignment of supply chains means being able to see the life within those supply chains, capturing the energy and opportunity, and lining that up with the demands of customers. In the coming decade, little else is going to happen in an enterprise outside the domain of its supply chains. Supply chains are the business, and you better believe it!

Endnotes

- 1 CFROI= [(cash flow from operations/capital – capital charge), generally expressed as a percentage. CFROI percentage spread correlates positively with share price and market capitalization.
- 2 Julia Kirby, "Supply Chain Challenges: Building Relationships," *Harvard Business Review*, July 2003; pp. 64-73.
- 3 This is the author's own assessment based on more than 100 consulting assignments.
- 4 K. Akumatsu, "A Historical Pattern of Economic Growth in

Developing Countries," *Japanese Economic History 1600-1962*, vol. 1 (1962); pp. 1-23. Akumatsu applied the wild geese analogy to economic theory, specifically the adoption of new technology by Asian nations.

- 5 R.H. Coase, "The Nature of the Firm," *4 Economica NS*, 1937; pp 386-405, quoted in O.E. Williamson and S.G. Winters, eds. *The Nature of the Firm* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1991); pp. 19-31.
- 6 G. Labovitz and V. Rosansky. *The Power of Alignment: How Great Companies Stay Centered and Accomplish Extraordinary Things* (New York, N.Y.: John Wiley & Sons, 1997).
- 7 N.H. Chorn, "The Relationship Between Business-Level Strategy and Organizational Culture," unpublished PhD thesis, Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg, 1987.
- 8 Gattorna Strategy Consultants, Sydney, Australia, 1985-1995.
- 9 See G. Adler, M. Fordham, and H. Read, eds., *The Collected Works of CG Jung*, vol. 6: Psychological Types, Bollingen Series 20 (Ewing, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971).
- 10 Ichak Adizes, *How to Solve the Mismanagement Crisis*, 5th printing, (Santa Monica, CA: Adizes Institute, 1985).
- 11 Gerard W. Faust, president, Faust Management Corp., Poway, CA (previously president of Adizes Institute).
- 12 Jamie Huckboy, "Queen B," *Harper's Bazaar*, September 2005; pp. 118-120.

EXHIBIT 6

Primary Customer-Service Logic

(I) Integrator	Developer (D)
Understand Me	Surprise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration • Mature –imminent change? • Loyalty and long-term relationships • Brand loyalty • "Joint venture" mentality • "Quality" emphasis • Teamwork • Consensus • Price tolerant <p>Customer service = empathy, understanding, relationship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early/young market • No clear patterns/traditions yet to be established • New product/technology • High-level R&D (e.g., CDs) • Supplier-led risk • Entrepreneurial • Low price sensitivity <p>Customer service = innovative, creative response to unique needs</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable market, patterns are established • Commodity • Drive for efficiency—"experience" culture • Value for money • High price sensitivity • Procedural • Standards • Structure <p>Customer service = reliability, predictability, consistency</p> <p>Be Consistent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patterns emerge—growth • Customer-led demand • Sales, promotion, distribution important • Strong commercial attitude • Price aware • "Hollywood" syndrome—only as good as your last performance • Product differentiation <p>Customer service = responsiveness in a commercial way</p> <p>Respond</p>
(A) Administrator	Producer (P)

Source: Gattorna, *Living Supply Chains*, 2006.

Supply-Chain Council Develops Six New Workshops

Supply-Chain Council will soon offer six completely new, two-day workshops for training in design and supply chain—watch for more details coming soon!

SCOR is a recognized standard business process model for excellence in supply-chain management. Supply-Chain Council is a not-for-profit membership organization serving hundreds of companies worldwide in the design and function of their supply chain operations.

Design Chain Operations Reference Model (DCOR) 1.0 Framework
This revision of the original SCOR workshop introduces attendees to the full scope and framework of the SCOR Model Version 8.0.

Supply Chain Operations Reference Model (SCOR) 8.0 Framework
Introduces attendees to the major process components of the DCOR framework (Research, Design, Integrate, Amend, Plan, Enable) from a designer perspective for use in benchmarking and performance improvement.

Supply Chain Operations Reference Model (SCOR) 8.0 Implementation
Increases depth of understanding of the SCOR Project Roadmap and develops knowledge and skills on how to produce key project deliverables for project-based or enterprise-scale SCOR implementation.

SCOR 8.0 and Performance Based Logistics
Trains participants in SCOR in the context of supply chain optimization, specifically in how operational reference modeling can be leveraged to plan, and measure outcomes, of high-performance Performance-Based Logistics (PBL) partnerships.

SCOR 8.0-Six-Sigma-Lean Convergence
Guides participants in the use of the best strengths of the SCOR framework and SCOR project roadmap together with the power of Six-Sigma and Lean techniques for supply-chain optimization.

SCOR 8.0 Team Development
Develops skills in how to create sustained SCOR organizations beyond project-based implementations within small- medium- and large-scale organizations. Covers the basic phases of team development including securing Sponsorship, setting up operations, resource management, SCOR implementation, and ongoing maturity management.

For the location of a course near you, for more detailed explanations and prices for each Workshop, or for information on SCC membership, contact the Supply-Chain Council Inc. at (202) 962-0440 or visit www.supply-chain.org, or e-mail info@supply-chain.org.