

Innovation SIG Track 35

35.3. Supply Chain Innovation

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Introduction

Innovation has become a central topic for companies and, in many cases, it has been recognised as the cornerstone for organisational survival and growth. However, as modern competition does not take place between individual companies but between entire supply chains, the emerging challenges have to be faced at the supply chain level. There is a need to construct innovative supply chains, as opposed to independent innovative companies.

From a general perspective, innovation generation in a supply chain context involves changes in product, process, or service that either reduce cost, improve efficiency or increase end-of-chain customer satisfaction. At the organizational level, collaboration is considered as a key driver for innovation. Collaboration among the supply chain actors may facilitate the sharing of tacit and explicit knowledge and enhance knowledge creation and innovation spillovers. Further, collaboration enhance the innovative efforts of the firms as it reduces contracting costs, frequent communication and acts as a joint approach to operational problem-solving.

Incremental and radical innovations can be developed in various activities such as new product development, process improvements, service delivery, inventory management, technology transfer and capacity planning. Further, global sourcing and procurement strategies are often suggested as powerful sources of innovative input both in private and public contexts.

In recent years the supply chain theme has enlarged from focusing on strictly "technical" issues of flow optimization and improvement towards broader issues such as social responsibility and ethics. In fact, even if the basic IT tools and inter-organizational procedure are not fully in place, there is already pressure towards a higher level approach, looking at "sustainable development" issue. Ethical, social and environmental values have to be taken into account as they influence the firms' innovative capability and the sources of supply chain innovation. From the above it emerges that the supply chain is a critical system in which it is possible to evaluate and allocate strategies related to the concepts of efficiency/effectiveness but also the issues of responsibility/fairness. Thus, in a supply chain context, innovations are new processes, products and services that produce a substantive change resulting in improvements in operational efficiency, better value to the customer or a positive impact on the environment and the society.

This track provides a forum for networking, and for presenting and discussing contemporary issues and developments related to both the more technical and more social/environmental aspects of supply chain innovation. Contributions could include, but are not limited to, the following topics: supply chain innovation; driving change through collaborative relationships; changes in the global supply chain landscape; innovation driven procurement; new approaches to managing supply chain risk; logistics innovation; new product development and the supply chain; sustainable development as a driver for supply chain innovation; challenges in ethical supply chain management; human resources role in supply chain innovation.

