



February 2017 - Issue #132

Welcome from Lisa

Wow! Another month flew by with amazing events, client results and intriguing experiences. It started with a bang as I led the Innovation Awards for the Manufacturing Council of the Inland Empire's (MCIE) Manufacturers Summit. Congrats to all the award winners (stay tuned for my press release) but especially to Kusum Kavia and Combustion Associates for innovation in process and the Harvey Mudd students for innovation by students (in conjunction with Niagara Bottling).

Also I led the APICS West Coast Student Case Competition (with Ellen Kane as co-chair - thanks Ellen!), and we had an amazing turnout of over 100 students from around the world. An APICS Inland Empire team, Harvey Mudd College, won not only 1st place for undergraduates but also took home the grand prize of top scoring team of both undergraduate and graduate levels who will represent us at APICS 2017 International Conference (see us pictured below with their professor, Kash Gokli).



And, last but not least, I spoke for PMI on "Elevate Your Personal Brand and Advance Your Career". In addition, from a client perspective, I wrapped up an ERP selection project and have been knee deep in improving service levels and productivity metrics with a few clients. And, I am in the final stages of publishing a book of 101 strategies to help you make and keep bold customer promises from my I've Been Thinking collection of turning everyday interactions into profitable opportunities. I'm very excited! It will be an e-book and available in hard copy.

IN THE NEWS

Please check out my latest speeches, articles & quotes:

- Quoted in *DHL's* article "[Why E-Commerce is Raising the Service Bar](#)".
- Quoted in *InlandEmpire.US's* article "[Annual Manufacturers' Summit Awards Highlight Top IE Innovators](#)".
- Quoted in *RV Pro* and *Business Facilities* articles on outsourcing/ near-sourcing research study results.
- Quoted in *Camcode's* article "[51 Expert Tips on Inventory Control Methods](#)".

In March, I am leading a panel discussion at the [CEO Summit](#) at the University of LaVerne on "Leveraging Your Supply Chain for Growth & Profitability". If you are an executive and interested in attending, [email me](#) as I have a few seats left at my table.

I'm mixing it up again this month and providing lists of questions to spur thinking with my articles....

Enjoy!
Lisa

Email

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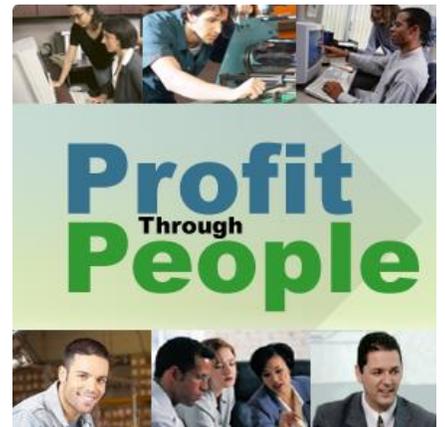
P.S. If you know of anyone who could benefit from improved service levels, decreased lead times or increased levels of cash due to improved inventory processes, please refer them.

Profit through People

Do You Really Support Empowerment?

The 80/20 of business success stems directly from leadership. The best leaders can make even the worst-performing teams excel and, unfortunately, the weakest leaders can drag down even the best of teams. A few questions to ponder include:

1. Does your culture encourage empowerment? Regardless of what you say, do people believe they will be rewarded for empowering employees?
2. Do your managers jump to answer questions or give their employees a chance to shine?
3. Do you communicate empowerment but would get upset if your employee made an empowered decision that created a month-end shipping crisis?
4. Do your employees understand the guidelines within which they can make an empowered decision?
5. Are you willing to live with and vocally support an empowered decision that doesn't align with how you would have handled the situation?



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[**Empower Your People to Grow**](#)

Cross-functional collaboration can make or break success. No matter how well a particular department or team performs, it is largely useless if done in isolation. Just like a car won't go if you press the accelerator and the engine isn't connected properly, a company won't achieve results if the units and people aren't connected properly. Here are a few questions to ponder:

1. On a cross-functional project with two department teams, can one team/department be viewed as successful if the other one isn't?
2. Do your teams attempt to talk in the other team's preferred style or in their own?
3. Do the teams understand the objective and why cross-functional collaboration is required?
4. Are team members rewarded for individual success or for cross-functional success?
5. Are there opportunities provided to learn collaboration and communication skills?

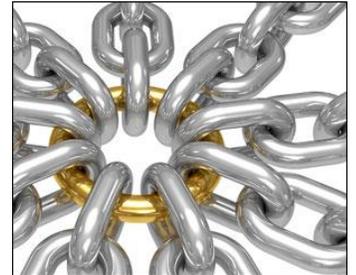


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[**Cross Functional Success**](#)

In almost every client, trade association and trusted advisor meeting I attend, service emerges as a hot topic. In today's Amazon-impacted world, our expectations are high. Although we might not complain, good service is no longer sufficient.

If you don't meet and frequently exceed expectations, you will lose customers. There are countless options available and loyalty runs only so deep. Thus, it makes sense to put aside time to think over key questions with your team:



1. Who is responsible for service in your organization? Are they able to impact service?
2. How do you measure service success? And how does it align with how your customers measure service?
3. Are your employees empowered to handle service requests without annoying approvals that delay the customer?
4. Do you view ALL people who interface with the customer as key to service? For example, the truck delivery personnel, the service technician and the doorman?
5. Do you know what your customers value - delivery on-time, in complete, quick turnaround, frequent communications, suggestions that aid the customer, etc.?

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[**Why Customer Service Trumps All**](#)

Do You Know What is Important in Selecting the Right System?

ERP systems often fail to live up to their promise - even in the best of circumstances. It is a tough environment - software suppliers are consolidating, the smaller ones can disappear or get gobbled up in a moment's notice, good resources are hard to find, and the list goes on. Yet there is no choice but to proactively address this topic to have a scalable business and to meet customer expectations as you get to a certain size and complexity. Thus, it is worth-while thinking about whether you are prepared:



1. Do you fully understand your business requirements and specifically your critical success factors (from a company, industry and ERP functionality perspective)?
2. What safeguards do you have in place to avoid getting excited about non-essential bells and whistles that seem important at the time but are not critical to your growth and profitability? Be honest!
3. Do you know what questions to ask to dig deeper into down-the-line impacts of functionality options? Overlook this step and it is likely you'll be gravely disappointed later.
4. Do you have software and implementation cost estimates for what you can expect for your software tier? Would you know if your deal sounds "too good"?
5. Do you know the qualities to dig into to be assured that your implementation resources are best suited for success?

Did you like this article? Continue reading on this topic:

[**Serving Up an ACE in Your ERP Selection and Design**](#)

Connections

Connections and relationships are the 80/20 of success!

THIS MONTH'S REQUESTS:

- Grab your seat for our APICS Inland Empire executive panel & networking symposium on Disruptive Innovations in Logistics. We expect a sold out event with top notch speakers. Sign up ***now***.
- Do you know a top notch commercial real estate broker in the Inland Empire or surround area? Please introduce ***me***.
- I know of an excellent opportunity for a Supply Chain Leader in the valley. If you know of any good candidates, please refer them to ***me***.
- An excellent and well-respected Inland Empire manufacturer is looking for a Supply Chain Assistant. Check out the job ad for Combustion Associates on the ***APICS-IE website***.



Refer anyone interested in taking their personal career up a notch by advancing their supply chain and manufacturing skills to take a look at the best ***education and certifications*** available.

NOTE: To submit an item for this section, please send me an email with a short description of your needs and an email address. Please note that NOT all requests will be published as it must fit the guidelines and align with the Profit through People brand.

What is *Profit through People*?

I've used the Profit through People brand since my newsletter's inception in 2006 as it resonated with me. Although I consult on topics within each of my service lines--Eagle Eye Strategic Focus, The Strongest Link in Your Supply Chain, the Systems Pragmatist & Profit through People--I find that people are key to success in every situation. If you are interested in elevating your business performance, please [contact us](#).



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