



April 2017 - Issue #134

Welcome from Lisa

April flew by rapidly. I enjoyed seeing my family for Easter, going to Chicago for a convention (and seeing old friends/ family) and attending a few conferences. My ONT (for Ontario-based geography in the Inland Empire) group of ProVisors trusted advisers is celebrating our 5th anniversary. I'm fortunate to be the leader of such a fabulous group of high-quality people (see us below).



We laugh more in these ONT meetings than almost any other type of meeting that pops to mind. How fortunate to have a group that I enjoy and that raises the bar from a business perspective!

Similarly, in manufacturing and supply chain circles, my APICS Inland Empire Board members are top notch. Speaking of which, if you are in Southern CA, join us this Saturday May 6th. We have an amazing lineup of logistics experts for our Executive Panel & Networking Symposium on "Disruptive Innovations in Logistics." [Learn more & register](#) while seats remain.

IN THE NEWS

Please check out my latest speeches, articles & quotes:

- Participated as a Thought Leader in the U.S. Roadmap for Material Handling & Logistics, covering between now and 2030. It is noted in the article "[Roadmap 2.0's Open Community of Thought Leaders](#)".
- I'm also speaking at the ProVisors Inland Empire Distributors & Manufacturers Group (ODAM) on the global supply chain & related trade associations.

And, I'm especially thrilled that I was featured in **Manufacturing Today's** article, "[Deep in Options: Onshoring Profits: Rethinking Sourcing Strategies](#)"

I've decided to go with thought provoking questions again this month as I gained some nice feedback that it stirred ideas.

Hope you and your family have a nice Mother's Day!

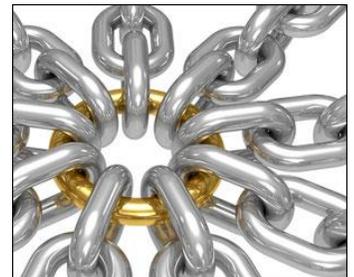
Enjoy!
Lisa

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.

The Strongest Link in Your Supply Chain **Are You Investing in Service?**

Unanimously, since the recession, our clients have seen an increase in customer expectations. Excellent customer service has become expected. Instead, we must stand out from the crowd to keep the business. What must we do to maintain our preferential position in our customers' eyes?



A few questions to think about include the following:

1. Are you investing in customer service like you invest in people, systems and programs? How much do you put aside for this critical endeavor?
2. Who is responsible for customer service? Is it a Customer Service or Sales Manager? Why isn't it a part of each person's performance? Does the CEO consider himself/ herself ultimately responsible?
3. Are all customers created equal? Do they receive equal priority? Or, do your top customers that do not complain receive less attention because the squeaky wheel gets the attention?
4. Do your customers know they are important to you?

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

The Systems Pragmatist **Are You Thinking About Cyber Security?**

Cyber security has taken over the news and trade magazines lately as risk levels are elevated and cyber security is a real threat. Are you developing strategies to address cyber security concerns? It is no laughing matter as you listen to what could happen....



Tonight, we attended a ProVisors (group of trusted advisers) cocktail reception. In two hours, we ran into multiple people who talked about the relevance and risk associated with cyber security. If you aren't thinking about these questions, you should sit up and pay attention:

1. Does your company have the appropriate security and protocols in place to fend off hackers? If each of us thinks we aren't important enough for a hacker, someone will be surprised.
2. Have you thought about your supply chain partners and cyber security? It can be a vast topic. Although the risk might be low, the impact can be high. Just ask folks like Target and Home Depot.
3. Have you thought about cyber security and your manufacturing machines like CNC machines and manufacturing execution systems? Suddenly the topic got a lot bigger!
4. How about the internet of things? Have you thought about how to prevent cyber security threats from non-work devices that can connect with work-related devices?
5. Do you have cyber security insurance?

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[***What's Important in Technology?***](#)

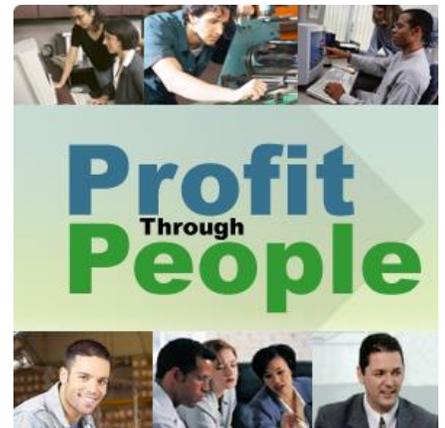
Profit through People

Are You Asking Good Questions?

There is a shocking number of clients and colleagues that struggle, gather teams, run kaizen events and do all sorts of other activities (and throw good money after bad more frequently than anyone cares to admit) to improve operations (improve the customer experience / service levels at greater profit and margins levels) while missing the most obvious answer - asking good questions.

We've found that asking good questions can be the "secret weapon". Thus, we'll ask questions about asking questions...

1. Before leaping to a standard toolkit such as "run a kaizen event", have you asked common sense questions? Is common sense uncommon in your company?
2. Before scheduling more meetings to discuss topics (several of my clients run from one meeting to the next ALL day, every day), have you thought about asking if anyone has gone to "see" the issue? What did he/she see?
3. Do you think there is an art in formulating a question? If you've ever talked with an effective questioner, you'd know there is more to asking questions than just asking questions. What thought have you put into your question?
4. Do you think about the objective of your question? If you try it for a week, do your questions and meetings become clearer?



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[***Lessons Learned: Asking Questions Isn't Enough***](#)

Lately, there has been a common theme at seemingly unrelated events - the importance of employee engagement and empowerment. Just in the last several weeks, it has come up at the Drucker Supply Chain Forum, the [Harvey Mudd executive panel](#) event, and at the [CEO Summit](#).



Do you have empowered teams? Or do you just think you do? In thinking about empowered teams, we can ask a few pointed questions:

1. Do you communicate the importance of employees acting in the best interest of the customer? Do your teams understand what they are able to do to satisfy a customer?
2. If an employee makes a decision within reason of the guidelines you set and with the "right" end goal (whether or not it is the way you would have made the decision), do you pat them on the back?
3. Would your team members ever cite policies and procedures to internal or external customers as a reason something cannot happen if pressed for an answer? How do you think it makes your customers feel?
4. Can your teams spend money to satisfy a customer? How much is too much?

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

[**Do You Really Support Empowerment?**](#)

Connections

- We have an AMAZING panel for our APICS Inland Empire executive panel & networking symposium on Disruptive Innovations in Logistics. Last call to [**learn more**](#) and register while seats are available.
- Do you know a top notch executive recruiter in the Inland Empire or surrounding area? Please introduce [**me**](#).
- A few excellent positions are available for industrial engineers and continuous improvement at Pharmavite. [**Refer**](#) qualified candidates.
- My colleague, a multi-dimensional, C-level Operations Executive in apparel manufacturing, supply chain and e-commerce with over 20 years of experience in providing smart solutions to complex challenges is looking for a COO or Executive role in Operations and/or Supply Chain in the Orange or South Los Angeles counties in the apparel or consumer products industries. Please [**refer**](#) her to potential opportunities and contacts.
- A colleague's son is looking for an internship in engineering in Southern California. If you have any leads, please [**pass**](#) them along.
- Our APICS Inland Empire chapter is offering the new and exciting certification CLTD (certified logistics, transportation and distribution). Refer anyone interested in taking their personal career up a notch with [**CLTD classes**](#).



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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