



December 2013 - Issue #94

## Welcome from Lisa

I hope you enjoyed Thanksgiving. I enjoyed the day with friends and spent the weekend getting caught up on a few tasks (like cleaning out the garage) and saw a few movies. I thought *Delivery Man* & *Last Vegas* were a hoot!

I've also spent considerable time this past month with my APICS Inland Empire chapter. We are thrilled to announce our newly branded & vastly improved [website](#) and [blog](#).

Even more exciting is that we have our [events](#) (classes, dinner meetings, tours, & symposiums) scheduled out for the next several months - please check them out and join us. I wanted to give a huge THANKS to my outstanding Board of Directors (thanks to Susan Brunasso of Classic Elegance)!



### ***IN THE NEWS***

Please check out my latest speeches, articles & quotes:

- Quoted in SAC's "[How Can We Maximize Business Referrals?](#)".
- Published "[Speed is King: How Do We Leverage for Projects?](#)" in *Executive Brief*.
- Published "[What Often-Hidden Year-End Project Priority Can Yield Results?](#)" in *Project Times*.
- Lastly, I'm excited to have been asked to speak at a UCLA alumni event on supply chain management in January.

I'd like to invite you to my complimentary [webinar](#) on Sales, Inventory & Operations Planning (SIOP) also known as S&OP. I've found it is an excellent process/ tool to improving service levels, increasing profitability and accelerating cash flow. I'll be sharing a few secrets to success in the webinar.

Don't forget - please check out my [Linked In Company Page](#) and **follow me** if you enjoy the value. You'll see my blog articles and other items of interest posted frequently.

I hope you have a wonderful holiday season with your family and friends.

Enjoy,  
Lisa

Email  
LMA Consulting Group, Inc.

P.S. Please think of me if you should know anyone who would like to elevate business performance & accelerate cash flow. I will take good care of your referrals!

Those who make a concerted effort to identify and leverage emerging trends outperform their counterparts. As I want to make sure my clients are at the forefront of this path, I pay attention to emerging trends among my best clients. Anytime I've seen a common thread among the best, it has signaled a noteworthy change.

I've noticed that although executives are not completely comfortable with the current new normal business environment (as who knows what taxes, health care impacts or other items will be thrown into the mix tomorrow), they are starting to think about investing in select projects again - ones with a substantial return on investment and/or required to support their long-term strategy.



Thus, ERP system upgrades and new implementations are on the rise. Therefore, why not get ahead of the curve and think about the hot ERP trends. The top ones that pop to mind include: 1) The Amazon effect. 2) ERP in the Cloud. 3) Big data. 4) CRM 5) Flexibility 6) Mobility 7) ERP for small business

**1. The Amazon effect:** Amazon has been making a splash everywhere you turn. There are distribution centers within a short proximity to key markets. Sunday deliveries. Reinvented publishing. The bottom line is that customers expect 24/7 access and quicker delivery with exceptional service, and you must figure out how to make it happen! Thus, e-commerce is no longer a "nice-to-have"; instead, it is a "must-have" in your ERP system. Your customers will want to order, understand their order status and provide feedback at any time, any day of the week.

**2. ERP in the Cloud:** People are becoming more comfortable with the idea of ERP in the cloud. There is less complexity, less work, less skills and often times less cost required while accessibility is increased and your ability to recover from a disaster is improved. The "big guys" like SAP and Oracle are going down this path and so they are seeing enough advantage to invest.

**3. Big data:** Although big data is "old news", it remains "new news" in terms of implementation and utilization. We are living in an information overloaded society, and so concepts like big data will be essential in making sense of it all. Business intelligence can be utilized to better understand customer trends and how to optimize inventory and margins - who wouldn't consider this approach?

**4. CRM:** Since I've always focused part of my practice on ERP as it's an essential tool for manufacturers and distributors, and I have a unique skill of zeroing in on connection points (which is cornerstone in selecting, designing and implementing systems), I've noticed that a particular connection point has arisen as a key contributor to bottom line business results - CRM (customer relationship management) functionality. You must start with the customer to succeed; thus, better understanding your customer relationships is a great place to start (CRM).

**5. Flexibility:** Old (often called legacy) systems are rarely flexible. To succeed in the fast pace of the new normal business environment, you must be flexible. Those who can introduce new products rapidly, adjust capacity rapidly, change items on the fly etc. will thrive. Your ERP system is the backbone.

**6. Mobility:** Do you know anyone who doesn't have a cell phone? Even my parents cannot remember how they survived without a cell phone. They don't keep track of appointments, look up directions and utilize advanced functionality but they understand that it exists - and so they utilize their resources in those situations (call their kids). Being connected 24/7 requires mobility. It should be fundamental to your ERP system.

**7. ERP for Small Business:** ERP is no longer just for medium to large size companies. In my recent experience with ERP selection projects, the cost is minimal vs. the automation and speed advantages it will provide to even a small business. Do customers care if you are small or big when they want an order status at 8pm on a Sunday?

Of course, understanding these trends is a great first step; however, it is useless unless you put together a plan of action on what is noteworthy for your company and your situation. What will you do differently tomorrow? Many of the best inventions were invented by someone else long before the known inventor; however, they did not act upon the goldmine.

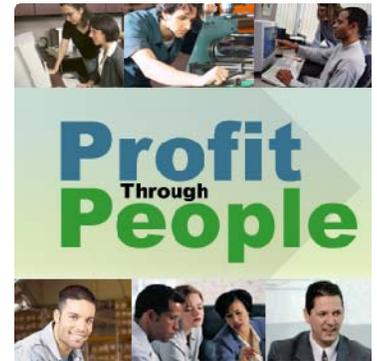
**Did you like this article?** [Continue reading on this topic: Leverage Your ERP System for Bottom Line Business Results](#)

[ERP Fact Sheet - downloadable PDF](#)

## Profit through People Communications Rule!

As much as we know that communication is critical, we often ignore this key area. We are swamped with daily work, getting the month's sales shipped out, learning the latest technical gadget etc., and our communications go by the wayside. In my recent skills gap survey in combination with [APICS Inland Empire](#) chapter, we found communications skills to be lacking. So what are a few tips for success?

1. **Repetition** - In today's information-overloaded society, we cannot pick up on all the information we receive. If you plan to be heard, you must repeat important messages. There are varying studies; however, the bottom line is repetition is essential.
2. **Varied formats** - Repetition alone can just be annoying. To be successful you must vary your communication mode. Do you write it? Speak it? Illustrate it in Power Point? Hold a group meeting? Post on the website?
3. **Listen first** - Successful communicators listen FAR more than they talk. Do you listen carefully to what people are saying? Do you let them know you are following along? Do you paraphrase? I've found people can think I'm a master communicator when I say 5 words - solely because I've listened.
4. **Talk about the why's** - One of the keys to communication in the workplace is to explain WHY the topic should matter to the recipient. WIIFM! I find that when employees understand how they contribute to value, communication suddenly improves from the listener's perspective.
5. **Stick to the big picture** - Don't go into all sorts of details that will likely confuse meeting attendees. Stick to the big picture and impacts. Pictures and graphics will help with this objective.
6. **Be succinct**: Less is more.



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[Presentation Skills](#)

## Eagle Eye Strategic Focus The Systems View

I was collaborating on a book on the topic of increasing the value of your business with a colleague yesterday, and we both latched on to the systems thinking view. We agreed it is "the" way to look at a business.

What is a business other than a set of interconnected dynamic systems? To give you a flavor of these systems, I thought I'd list several to spur thinking. Stay tuned for workshops, assessment tools and our book on increasing the value of your business:

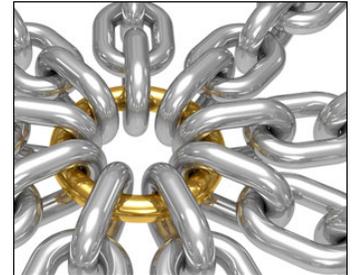


1. **Financial** - Every company has financial systems. P&Ls, balance sheets, cash flow statements, key performance metrics...
2. **Operational** - How does your company operate? Does it produce products? Provide services? Service repairs? There are countless operational processes we could discuss.
3. **People** - Do you have employees? How do you hold your employees accountable? What reward and recognition systems do you have in place?
4. **Strategy** - Do you have a strategy? If not, does that mean you are flying blind? How does your strategy fit with your day-to-day operations?
5. **Metrics** - How do you track progress? Do you know if you are improving or declining?
6. **Planning** - How do you translate your strategy into plans? Do you have goals and objectives? Is there a continuous feedback loop?
7. **And the list goes on:** I would be remiss if I didn't mention that there are countless more. The key is how to put all these together successfully.

**Did you like this article?** [Continue reading on this topic: What is Eagle Eye Strategic Focus?](#)

### The Strongest Link in Your Supply Chain What are the Benefits of SIOP?

Sales, Inventory and Operations Planning (SIOP) is a process that manufacturers and distributors utilize to align supply with demand. What are the key benefits?



- **Happy customers:** Lately, I've seen this objective rise in importance - customers want more for less NOW. Lead times must decrease! The SIOP process can have a direct impact on on-time-delivery percentages, past due dollars and lead times.
- **Increased margins:** One of the key benefits of aligning demand with supply is that it provides the opportunity to increase production efficiencies (because you have more time to plan effectively), increase logistics efficiencies (by having more time to optimize and through customer collaboration opportunities), reduce purchase spend (with a longer forecast, there is opportunity to develop contracts and collaborate with suppliers), and increase revenues (through customer partnerships).
- **More cash:** By balancing demand with supply, you have more of the right items at the right place at the right time. Thus, inventory levels can decline without negatively impacting service levels. Thus, cash is freed up for better investments.
- **Improved teamwork:** The SIOP process has also proven extremely effective in bringing cross-functional teams together to agree on one plan. Although it doesn't sound difficult, I've worked with countless companies that have multiple plans - one for Wall Street; one for sales, yet another one for production and potentially yet one more with new product development goals. Once everyone is working from the same sheet of music, results follow and morale improves.
- **Increased revenues:** What else could you ask for to round out the benefits? By collaborating with customers on their demand (and often on collaborative inventory programs), you become a dependable, more valuable partner. I've seen volumes increase multiple times as a result.

**Did you like this article?** [Continue reading on this topic: S&OP](#)



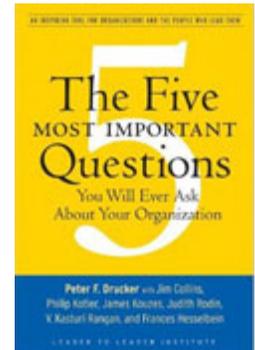
Attend our complimentary [SIOP Webinar](#).

**Register now, space is limited.**

## Recommended Reading

### [The Five Most Important Questions You Will Ever Ask About Your Organization](#)

By Peter F. Drucker - Peter is considered by many to be the father of leadership. This one is a classic.



## Connections

### Connections and relationships are the 80/20 of success!

Please see this month's requests:

- My APICS Inland Empire Chapter is starting to prepare for our spring executive panel & networking symposium on May 3rd. We are looking for compelling panelists and sponsors. If you are interested or know someone who would be a good choice, please [email me](#).
- My Ontario ProVisors group of trusted advisors continues to search for attorneys and marketing professionals. If you know anyone who fits the bill, please refer them to [me](#).
- A colleague and APICS Board member with expertise in sustainability is looking for project work in this field. If you are interested, please [email him](#) directly.
- A key contact is looking for a position as a paralegal/ legal secretary in the Santa Clarita/San Fernando Valley areas. She has 19 years of experience in family law, civil litigation, estate planning, insurance defense, contracts, unlawful detainer, and criminal law. Please contact [her](#) [directly](#)



**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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