



December 2015 - Issue #118

Welcome from Lisa

I hope you had a very Merry Christmas or Hanukkah! I went to Arizona to see my Mom and the rest of the family. My Aunt Joan's birthday is on Christmas day, and so we always have multiple celebrations for that as well.

I enjoyed spending time with them and working around the house on several much-needed projects for my Mom.

Next, I want to wish you a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year as well. I have been on a marathon client call today, and am now putting together my newsletter. I have a few year-end items to complete and then I hope to relax this weekend, see a few movies and spend time with friends.



I hope to stay up until midnight but we'll see...last night I didn't make it until 10 pm (pretty sad!).

Speaking of the New Year, I've tailored my articles this month to kicking off the New Year with gusto. It is a good time to start with a sprint to kick it off on the right foot. I was maxed out this fall with my Dad being in hospice, my best friend's dad being in hospice, preparing for the holidays, and making sure to give my clients the focus needed to ensure success. Thus, I will now get back to writing my Amazon Effect book next week, and I will be following up on my next set of priorities. How about you?

IN THE NEWS

Please check out my latest speeches, articles & quotes:

- Quoted in *Global Trade Magazine's* "[Finding Efficiencies: Tips for Enhancing Your Warehouse Solutions](#)".
- Published an article "[Close Out the Year with Project Success](#)" in *Project Times*.
- Published an article "[5 Best Practices for Managing Manufacturing Projects](#)" in *Liquid Planner*.

Hope you have a wonderful New Year's and a fabulous 2016!

Enjoy,
Lisa

Email

LMA Consulting Group, Inc.

P.S. Please think of me if you should know anyone who would like to elevate their business performance.

Since I work with clients ranging in size from small, family-owned businesses to multi-billion dollar corporations, industries ranging from aerospace to building products to value-add distribution and on topics ranging from growth to service level improvement to increasing business performance, I have the opportunity to see countless businesses - and what works and what doesn't work.



It seems like a great time to share what is important as we head into a new year, new quarter or even new day. There is always opportunity to take that critical step towards success.

From a systems standpoint, here a few of the top strategies/ areas to consider as a next step in driving business success:

1. **Leverage what you have** - Even though I dedicate a portion of my practice to selecting the "right" system to best meet business objectives, I find that 80% of the time, the current system (almost no matter how bad it seems) can be further leveraged to drive results. There are two situations I can think of where the client was extremely system challenged but we found a few ways to improve upon processes, even in the worst of cases. Start by thinking about what is most important to your business. Then dig into the areas of the system that could support that critical business process. It can be as simple as that.
2. **Upgrade when it makes sense** - As I said earlier, every business can be improved with its current system; however, there is a limit. If you are in a high-growth mode and leveraging a system geared to small business, you'll begin to run into the wall in terms of capabilities. It might be time to upgrade. If you have gone through a merger or acquisition, it is likely you'll need to consider upgrading to have a common platform. If you have a highly customized system to support your business with limited growth potential without continuing down the customization path, it is likely time to consider upgrading. If you want to make a leap forward with your technology and are using an outdated system that has weak support and might be bought up by the next software giant to come along, it might be time to consider an upgrade.
3. **Select the "right" system to drive business results** - I have helped many clients select the best system to meet their business objectives the last several years. It can be a dog eat dog world with radically-different estimates and smooth talking salespeople; however, there are also great suppliers selling highly functional and flexible systems to bring your business to the next level of performance. The bottom line is that it boils down to how well the software options support your critical business factors (which should be a short list; not 100 items) and how well the software suppliers will partner with you for success. Implementation will cost more than software and it will cost more than you expect to do it well yet it will deliver substantial results after things smooth out.
4. **CRM** - In today's Amazon-impacted marketplace, service is of critical importance. My clients are expected to deliver faster, provide more options, suggest value-additions, be available 24/7 - and the list goes on. CRM software can help you keep track of your relationships, potential business and provide extra value to your customers.
5. **Warehouse automation** - As e-commerce continues to grow in importance around the globe, many manufacturers and distributors must rise to the occasion. It isn't as easy as using the same processes that work effectively for your regular business. E-commerce drives significant differences to warehouse operations if you want to be able to provide the level of service consumers have become accustomed to at the price they are willing to pay. These changes are driving significant investments in different equipment and technology for those companies with heavy e-commerce business. Bring in experts. Do your research. It will make or break success.
6. **SIOP functionality** - More and more of my clients are further leveraging their planning, capacity planning, demand planning / forecasting, MPS/MRP and advanced planning systems to better align

demand and supply for improved service levels, reduced lead times, improved margins, accelerated cash flow and to support growth.

Think about which of these might benefit your business. Leveraging systems is one way to grow without adding overhead and it will improve your business performance by utilizing an already-existing asset in most cases. Give it a try. Contact me for support with these strategies and/or to let me know how it goes. Sharing success stories and even failures can propel you to success.

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[**6 Process & Systems Trends for Success**](#)

Profit through People

People Strategies to Kick Off the New Year

People are your #1 asset. It makes imminent sense to kick off the New Year with this tenet in mind. How can you start with gusto?

Frequently, employees take off time near the end of the year, and so it can take time to get back into the swing of things. To shorten that cycle - and, most importantly, to empower and engage your people, think about leveraging some of the following strategies:

1. **Check in:** Start the New Year by checking in with your employees. How are they doing? What are they working on? It's interesting how often we find out that we didn't know where our employees spend their time. Find out. Are they concerned about potential roadblocks? What would they most like to accomplish this year? Make it your priority to find out.
2. **Remind employees of the vision:** You cannot emphasize the whys behind what your company does enough. Remind your employees of the vision. What does it mean to you? What does it mean for your customers? End users? In essence, remind everyone why what they are doing is worthwhile.
3. **Align on goals:** I believe in quarterly goals with frequent check-in's. What lasts for a year unchanged anyway? Not much! Your employees will ditch their cobweb goals with or without you. It is always better to align, discuss priorities, strategize on resources etc. The bottom line is to make sure everyone has clarity and is involved in creating that clarity.
4. **Recognize successes:** There's no better time to recognize small wins than after the holidays. It jump starts success. Success builds on success.
5. **Communicate, communicate, and communicate:** In essence, the title says it all. Don't expect people to fully absorb with one communication. Be repetitive. Vary the medium so that you don't sound like a broken record or your mother. Collaborate on ways to communicate effectively. Involve the team in communication.

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

Eagle Eye

Strategy to Kick Off the New Year

Strategy is often thought about near year-end. What was your strategy and is it still valid? Is it effective? Do you have a short-list to think about if you want to ensure your strategy delivers results?

I have found that strategy rarely fails in formulation. Instead, it fails in execution. This would indicate that less time should be spent on formulating strategy and putting it into pretty binders.



On the other hand, more time should be spent on how to ensure success. One of the reasons over 80% of my business is repeat business is because I help my clients through the implementation of their strategy and plans - and results follow. Execution requires focus, hard work, persistence, strong people and culture - and more. Is it any wonder we struggle with this topic? A few keys to success:

1. **Leadership** - Since success begins and ends with leadership, this must be #1. Read one of my countless [articles](#) on the topic to delve into the details.
2. **Project management** - I find that these skills are often undervalued yet are critical to success. Start asking your executives who has a talent in project management and leverage the expertise.
3. **Cross-functional view** - Strategy cannot be implemented in a silo. Thus, it seems somewhat obvious that a cross-functional and cross-organizational view should be leveraged yet it is easy to fall back into our silo at the sign of the first conflict. Incorporate into your performance expectations, training and mentoring programs and projects to ensure success.
4. **Collaborative approach** - Are all the areas of your organization on the same page with the same game plan? I've spent quite a bit of time helping clients implement SIOP (sales, inventory and operations planning programs). The HUGE results come mainly from getting everyone on 1 page. Once you are on 1 page, check in with your customers and suppliers? How successful will your strategy be if they are going in a different direction from you?
5. **Communicate, communicate and communicate** - Since communication is at the root of success, it would be unheard of to overlook it on this list of critical success factors for strategy.

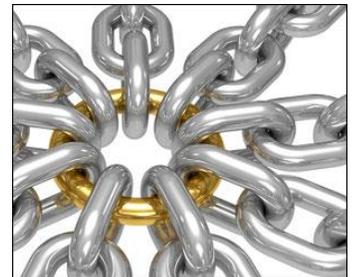
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[Strategy: It Doesn't Fail in Formulation; It Fails in Execution](#)

The Strongest Link in Your Supply Chain Supply Chain Strategies for Success

If there is one area that changes on a seemingly daily basis, it is your end-to-end supply chain. World events change your supply chain. Natural disasters impact your supply chain. Security concerns dictate your supply chain. Customers changing expectations drive supply chain change. How do we keep up with it all?

As opposed to talking about the latest supply chain trends, I thought it might be valuable to think about ways to keep up with supply chain changes which could be critical to your success:



- **Pay attention:** Look at your trends. What is changing? Are customers ordering smaller packages? More interested in packaging? What is happening?
- **Ask your employees:** I guarantee that you'll be amazed at the valuable information your employees have tucked away in their minds. Ask them what they see. Ask them what they are having to do more of lately - and why. If you don't ask, you won't receive!
- **Ask your customers:** Pick up the phone or get in the car/ plane and go find out what is changing for your customers. It doesn't have to relate directly to you at this time. What challenges are they facing? Can you help? What do they see coming down the road? Again, ask and you shall receive.
- **Ask your suppliers:** Similarly to your customers, your suppliers have a wealth of knowledge about the industry, your organization (probably a different view than yours) and your competitors. Ask them what they see. Ask them what you can do to make it easier for them to do business with you.
- **Go to your trade and industry groups:** One of our goals at [APICS-IE](#) is to discuss the latest trends and help companies gain the skills and tools needed to succeed. We are more than happy to share our knowledge, and we have members across almost every industry, company size etc. We are not alone. What trade associations, industry groups and alumni groups can provide ideas of what is critical in the supply chain?
- **Read:** You'll pick up on what is important by reading the Wall Street Journal, your local newspaper and trade journals. Stay up-to-speed and share your knowledge.

Did you like this article? Continue reading on this topic:
[Hot Supply Chain Trends](#)

Connections

Connections and relationships are the 80/20 of success!

THIS MONTH'S REQUESTS:

- My APICS Inland Empire Chapter Board of Directors had another successful executive panel and networking symposium earlier this month, and so we are already planning for our April 30th event. **Email me** with ideas for engaging panelists and topics.
- My Ontario ProVisors group of trusted advisors is looking for a HR guru. Please email me with referrals.
- Looking for an exceptional Supply Chain Manager in the Wichita area? I have the perfect person for you! Please contact her with referrals and ideas.
- One of my key contacts in the Inland Empire is looking for a Quality Control Manager. If you know one, please email me.



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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