
Interview with...

Jaro Caban
Supply Chain Manager Europe
SCA Packaging



On Supply Chain Planning Education

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SCA Packaging is Europe's leading producer of customer-specific packaging solutions, with some 260 locations in 25 countries. SCA Packaging Europe puts emphasis on state-of-the-art design and local services close to customer facilities. More than 200 SCA Senior Management and Supply Chain Practitioners went through a Supply Chain Planning Education Programme, with the help of independent Supply Chain Planning specialist, Hughenden.

Q: What motivated SCA Packaging to educate its people in Supply Chain Management?

A: As soon as I entered the role of Organization & Supply Chain Manager Europe for SCA Packaging at the beginning of 2003, I saw that there was a lack of knowledge and skills in this area. People were trying to improve the practices but it was often short-sighted and a lot of it was fire-fighting as opposed to an organised approach.

Q: How did you decide on the audience and structure of the programme?

A: In my own experience with Deloitte, I had seen a customer move its entire people through an education programme with an Academy and various Awards... Although I realised that SCA was not ready for this, we still wanted to bring the education to different levels of people, so we needed our own tailored programme.

Q: What made you choose Hughenden to run these courses?

A: After we had identified our requirement, we did some research through the Internet, the APICS... to find suppliers that could support our education project. But we realised that 80% of them offered something as rigid as an institution – with fixed structures and even fixed dates! We needed something tailored, that would suit our multi-level audience, our own and newly growing supply chain terminology and that would not be too expensive in the end. We already knew the 'WHAT'; we were looking for a company that could teach us the 'HOW' of Supply Chain Management. It started with a long list of 9 companies, and, in view of how tailored the offering could be and the price, we chose Hughenden.

Q: How have the courses been received so far?

A: On the one side excellently! There had never been anything like this at SCA before. If a score of 100% was perfect, then I would say that these courses reach up to 90%! On the other hand, there are now worries... Before, we did not know what we had to do to improve and become even more responsive to our customers. Now we know... So they are informed worries! We worry that we do not always have the right people and structures in our organisation to make some of the changes.

Q: Can you give examples of changes that are happening as a result of this project?

A: On multiple occasions, I have heard people refer to PODR*, saying that we must plan things first and not just rush into doing it! I now see people making informed decisions on Supply Chain issues. People know in which directions they need to make change happen. For example in forecasting, I now see people discussing how the customer forecast should be used. In addition, I believe that the education programme has helped me and other people push for the initiative to implement a Sales & Operations Planning process. We now have huge support for this and it is a clear direction given by the top Vice-President. I also feel that we have managed to eliminate the preconception that Supply Chain is just logistics. We even have roles of Demand Planners appearing in certain management areas, countries and clusters. I think people realise that organisational responsibilities are now needed. Finally, I know that some regions are asking for more courses to be run and there is a need for some sessions specifically for sales personnel.

**Editor: PODR (Plan, Organise, Do and Review), is a continuous improvement technique featured in the Hughenden courses.*

Q: What advice can you give to companies thinking of educating their people in Supply Chain Management Best Practices?

A: My first advice is to link the education top-down. I mean, you can teach 3 planners some techniques but this will not bring culture change! There needs to be top-down integration, even if the education to the Top Executives is brief, with gradually more detail as you go down the levels. My second advice is not to use your own colleagues as tutor but do not run the courses without them: involve them to show commitment. My final advice is to outsource education! But, do not outsource it to rigid Universities or Institutes. Tailor it with a company on a long-term partnership basis, so it integrates within the business. Do not just pay for a course by sending your people somewhere. The more you do this, the more disconnection there will be in the messages and the terminology will not fit. Instead, find a flexible organisation to create a partnership from which you can pull resources.

Want to go further?

Are you looking to educate your people in Supply Chain Planning but you cannot find a programme that really suits your needs or which focuses on the topics that are important to you?

Hughenden's unique approach offers you a Library of over 500 modules from which you can pick and mix. Our methodology involves specifying a programme that will match your exact needs. Its flexibility and modular structure means that you can benefit from a multi-level programme to suit your audiences. And you get the added benefit of our expertise and experience in educating people: all our courses and workshops are involving and feature games, exercises and simulations that will ensure change does happen for your business.

To find out more, contact us at info@hughenden.net