

Armada Center

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The New Consultants: How Today's Generation of Supply Chain Vendors is Bridging the Gap Between Strategy and Services

More and more, businesses are looking to solutions-oriented providers to fill the role of both consultants and vendors. They're finding that there are real benefits to working with partners who not only analyze their situation, but also develop and implement solutions.

The Typical Role of Supply Chain Vendors

Typically, the role of most supply chain vendors is simply to provide a company with goods or services. There tends to be a focus on Supply Chain Management (SCM) for the sourcing and procurement of goods, as well as conversion and logistics management activities. Most vendors also focus on supply and demand management, meaning that they communicate with their suppliers to ensure that all goods smoothly and efficiently make it to their final destination.

Supply chain vendors have a hefty responsibility, but do they offer you enough to keep businesses competitive? Today, more and more businesses are looking to plan ahead for the future, and supply chain vendors who simply provide goods for their clients are falling by the wayside. Rather than hire a vendor and then hire a separate consultant, whose job is to provide advice in one specific area, companies are looking to hire a provider who does it all and keeps the business involved.

How Partner-Based Relationships Drive Strategy

If your business is looking to strategize for success, smooth existing flaws in your system and prevent future problems, consider how a multi-tasking provider, such as Hub One, can work both for and with you. There are several benefits of working with a provider who acts as both consultant and vendor. To begin with, there is a much larger focus on directing SCM to include coordination and collaboration with customers in a partner-based relationship. This relationship allows for all parties involved to have equal say in any decisions and equal value in the corporate relationship established. Primarily, however, it is the strategy behind this partner-based relationship that really helps businesses develop and prosper.

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A provider like Hub One, who handles both the consulting and the vending, also works to integrate tactical and operational strategies into vending decisions. Rather than simply delivering goods or services, careful thought and planning go into each step of the process. Strategic network optimization such as the number, location, and size of warehouses, DCs and facilities involved with your business are considered. In addition, strategic partnership with suppliers, distributors and customers are established, creating communication channels for critical information and operational improvements, including cross-docking, direct shipping and third-party logistics. Working this way offers the opportunity for both your provider and you, as a business, to formulate the same goal outcomes by aligning supply chain strategies with customer strategies.

Increasing Capacity for Growth

Growth is also a benefit of working with a provider who serves as both consultant and vendor. New and existing products can be optimally integrated into the supply chain for your business through product design coordination, while updated IT infrastructures can be created to support supply chain operations consistent with your customer needs. Also, transportation strategizing allows for a thorough review of processes related to moving and shipping goods, including frequency of delivery, the routes used, and the contracting involved for your products.

Regardless of where your business is developmentally, considering a provider to service you in the capacity of both vendor and consultant can take your organization even further. If you are considering seeking out a new provider for your business, look for a provider, such as Hub One, who meets your needs in a partner-like capacity and will work to strategize with you rather than for you.

Partner-Based Solutions that Lead to Success

“At Hub One, we do the right thing for growth and development of our customers, not just ourselves,” states says Jeff Bayer, Vice President and General Manager of Hub One. “We communicate openly with customers, focus on customers’ needs and desires, and embrace the concept of teamwork to promote success. Through our demonstrated leadership and creativity, we customize supply chain and logistics solutions to help businesses and organizations successfully compete in the global market and economy.”

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Hub One uses consultants to provide its customers with visionary strategizing specifically for vending. It focuses on inventory management, utilizing stock rotation and putaway, creating an automatic ordering system and utilizing an unassisted delivery program. Combined with this is Hub One's updated IT; it has recently introduced RedPrairie as its new warehouse management system and has upgraded electronically in several areas. For example, Hub One now has a web-based vendor homepage and electronic data interchange (EDI) to help everything flow and function more smoothly and efficiently for its customers.

Hub One's ability to serve in the capacity of both vendor and provider strengthens the relationships that it has with its clients, while strengthening its clients' core businesses. Because of Hub One's commitment to work with customers, it has managed to continue its own growth as a provider, while its futuristic thinking and partner-based relationships with customers allows it to grow to its fullest potential. By offering businesses numerous benefits that can yield further growth and development, Hub One ultimately rewards its clients with prosperous opportunities all around.