**The Role of the Supply Chain Manager in the New Normal – *Accept | Plan | Capitalise***

The outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic altered several business functions and Supply chain management is one of the main functions. The dimensions of entire global supply chain disrupted due to the fluctuation of political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors around the world within very short period of time. More challenges were occurred, as the businesses decided to operate under the new normal. The supply chain management functions are reengineered in order to cater the business requirements. Even the Supply chain risk management & Business continuity management were documented and Practiced in narrow scale by individual countries, Organisations in isolation, the new normal widen the requirement of supply chain risk management to a broader & collective approach. The Countries, regions & Organisations collectively tried to transform their supply chain models compatible with the current agile market conditions. These new supply chain models have created multiple opportunities within short period of time which could be taken several years in previous normal situation before the Pandemic.

**Accepting:** The first thing that the supply chain manager and the subordinates have to do is accept the current situation and the necessity for changing & adapting in order to sustain in this new normal situation. Then only they will be able to think different & identify the strategies to overcome the challenges & capitalise the opportunities in the market. Accepting the requirement for changing will enhance the effective implementation and generating expected outcomes of the strategies identified.

**Frequent Planning:** Organisations should revisit their objectives, goals and budgets prepared before the Pandemic and adjust evaluating the current market conditions & future trends. Based on the revised objectives, goals & budgets the supply chain manager should derived the new set of departmental objectives, goals & budgets. Simultaneously the performance appraisal of the processes & staff should restructure in order to compatible with the changes of the objectives. The supply chain managers should more vigilant on the bullwhip effect as a slight increase of consumer demand which will amplify the upward operations such as Production and Raw Material ordering and the impact will be more critical than before due to the shrinking of demand globally by both normal and artificial factors such as WHO Guidelines, government restrictions. Contingency Planning is one of the key functions of the supply chain manager in this situation as the Supply chain parameters are varying continuously and it is very important to adjust the contingency plans frequently evaluating the assumptions used as basis. The scientific Material Planning techniques will minimise the supply chain risks in this situation. Calculating and maintaining the Correct Safety stock levels, reorder levels, economic order quantities, Sensitivity analysis with proper demand planning by using proper Information Technology tools will minimise the supply chain disruptions.

**Assuring:** In order to ensure the continuity of the operation, it is important to ensure the health & safety of the supply chain staff, workplace & the other stakeholders. Invest on health and safety of the stakeholders will ensure the sustainability of the entire business not only the supply chain as there is a significant positive health and safety of the employees and the workplaces elasticity of customer demand.

**Responsible Staffing:** Identify the critical roles in the supply chain and conduct proper succession planning for key supply chain roles is very important in both short and long term. Same time the supply chain manager should evaluate the current departmental and organisational structure and which affects the decision making process and possibility of improving the efficiency and effectiveness by restructuring or transforming to a modern structures such as matrix Structure, Flat Structure, etc. The role of the supply chain manager will transform to more leadership based role as the operations become more scenario based than standard operating procedure based. Flexibility in staff management is essential and the rosters should redesign by encouraging to promote task oriented culture rather than the traditional time based rosters. Companies should encourage new concepts such as working from home, flexible hours, etc. And should invest on the required infrastructure. The concepts practiced in narrowly in few supply chain functions & Organisations such as multitasking, job enhancement & enrichment, cross functional trainings, training and development should

**Sustainable Financing:** Supply Chain manager has a significant role in managing organisational cash flow. In this situation the cash flow will be the most critical decision maker of the existence of the organisation or potential bankruptcy. Effective negotiation within the supply chain will enhance the cash situation of the entire organisation. Supply chain manager should focus on extending payables, negotiate for better prices without disrupting the relationship with the stakeholders.

**Effective Resourcing:** The modern supply chain technologies which were practiced in isolation and not recognised as very effective resources in the process before the pandemic has emerged and facilitating the functioning of entire supply chain. These technologies have facilitated the connectivity, collaboration, supply chain visibility, resource optimization in this agile environment. The Companies should invest on the technologies such as AI, ERP and Digital Network Planning which will improve the supply chain visibility and transparency while minimising the uncertainty and facilitating the efficient and effective decision making process. Most of the supply chain managers will experience challenges when they try to use AI in decision making as most of the current data in not digitalise. So it is very important to identify the methods to generate the data in digital platform and convert the historical data to a digital data base. It is very important to convert the current manual approval processes to an electronic platform which will eliminate the supply chain delays & also minimise the health and safety risk.

**Collaborating:** The companies are focusing on new methods to minimise the dependency due to the economies of scale & specialisation on few industrial countries such as China, South Korea, Taiwan, etc. By investing on new technologies such as 3D printing, automation to produce raw materials in-house or onshore. The supply chain managers should try to mitigate the supply chain risks by improving the collaboration and coordination with the current suppliers. At the same time it is very important to diversify the supplier base in order to minimise the supply risk. This is the best time to develop and improve the relationships with the stakeholders as everyone appreciates and recognises the importance of the other in overall performance of the supply chain. The importance of supply chain communication has been further enhanced and that has decided the smooth operation & connectivity of individual functions. Supply chain manager should conduct a proper gap analysis and develop strategies to bridge the communications gaps.

**Learning:** Developing and implement a comprehensive risk management matrix is very essential to allocate the current limited resources in effective & efficient way based on the likelihood and the consequences of each risk identified. It is important to maintain the records of the situations faced, scenarios identified, strategies developed and implemented, Performance of each strategy and overall leaning in this outbreak of Covid-19 in order to use as a guideline in future challenges. Those information will advance the knowledge as a whole which will transform the entire supply chain to more advanced level.

**Capitalising:** In overall supply chain perspective the Covid-19 pandemic & New Normal has created multiple opportunities to transform the traditional supply chain models into more effective & efficient modern supply chain models by eliminating several non-value adding activities existed before which will provide a competitive edge for Organisations and the individual supply chains in both short and long term if the opportunity is capitalised effectively.

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