Supply Chain Management: A framework to characterize the Collaborative Strategies

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Abstract

The current intense competition forces enterprises to pay attention to supply chain collaboration with their upstream and downstream partners. Different collaborative strategies such as Quick Response (QR), Efficient Consumer Response (ECR), Vendor Managed Inventory (VMI) or Collaborative Planning, Forecasting and Replenishment (CPFR) have been already proposed. The key to ensuring that the supply chain partners are progressing on the right track of creating the best-in-class practice lays on their ability to choose the appropriate strategy.

The current paper proposes a framework, based on analysis grids and graphical representations, which help better characterizing these strategies. The analysis grids use several characterization criteria to express the collaboration nature and its extent. For a better understanding, this framework is then applied to the CPFR strategy.

Keywords: Supply Chain Management, Collaborative Strategies, Analysis Framework, CPFR, UML.

8. Conclusion

In supply chain management, relationships can be extended from the simple exchange of basic information to a more elaborate level of experiences, risks and profits sharing. Supply chain collaboration plays a crucial role in improving overall performance that benefits all the partners. Due to the confusion that still exists between the definition of collaborative strategies (or CSCS) and the difficulties to understand their limits, a critical study of some comparison works has been presented in this paper.

This study led us to propose a framework based on a comparison grid. This grid permits the projection of any CSCS according to some identified criteria. Moreover, this helps in understanding which collaborative context is addressed, who are the involved actors, how they are collaborating, what are their interactions, what are their collaboration needs, etc. A detailed use of the grid within the CPFR strategy case is given. It particularly shows how the nine steps of the theoretical CPFR are projected on the grid and permits to highlight the interactions between them.

The importance of such managerial/information system approaches is the potential to analyze each relationship between partners according to the strategic level and the operational level. The presented work is not a substitute for the existing information systems but just an efficient way to identify the shared objectives and information and their management modes. A future extension will be the definition of context sensitive ‘patterns’ to better manage the collaboration.

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Based on different kinds of analyses, our goal is to define some standard modes for collaboration (characteristics, sharing processes, organizational structures). This goal of standardized modes of collaboration must be in line on the one hand with the managerial approach and on one other with the context in which the supply chain is operating.

References


