How does a Successful Supply Chain Academy look like?

Hi All

I have been recently interviewed by Dustin Mattison, a renamed Supply Chain publisher, on How does a Successful Supply Chain Academy look like?

Dustin: Can you please give us a bit of background on your experience in developing and implementation Supply Chain Academies ?

Julio: Sure. I firstly got involved in 2005/6 with the subject, when at one of my previous employers, I was invited to implement the Supply Chain Academy at this top FMCG manufacturer, who is considered to be one of the best supply chains in the world (according to the Gartner ranking).

At the time, it had been identified a considerable gap in the Supply Chain skills and competencies globally, and we needed to develop a holistic solution to considerable raise the bar, and raise the ceiling, of over 20.000 SC professionals globally. Without that, the business would strong to deliver the expected top and bottom line results.

Over a couple of years, we developed and implemented a very comprehensive Supply Chain Academy solution, which included, for every Supply Chain area (Source, Plan, Make and Deliver), a detailed set of:

1. Skills Dictionaries
2. Job Skills Profiles
3. New Blended Learning Solutions (face to face courses, e-Learnings, virtual gatherings, etc)
4. Learning Frameworks
5. Certification Solutions
6. An integrated Career Path & Principles solution
7. an integrated global Supply Chain Portal
8. a Learning Management System solution
> among others

After this initial experience, I then moved into a top consultancy firm, with a remarkable Supply Chain Academy e-learning solution, where I worked as a Sr Manager for nearly 2 years, being in charge of global supply chain projects, among others, implementing Supply Chain Academies in various clients across the globe.

in 2009, I then founded Spin Consulting, a boutique SC Consultancy, and we further deployed these refined solutions in more than clients over the last 7 years, in different industries such as food, personal care, pharmaceutical and chemicals, among others.

Dustin: What are the typical benefits for the business?

Julio: That is a very good question. Ensuring that your people possess the right level of skills, knowledge and competencies is crucial for the success of any individua and business.

Organizations usually recognize that to a certain extend, but however, they allocate a very considerable budget ($$$) on training / learning solutions, which are utilized, in a considerably or even fully disconnected way when compared to the REAL business and supply chain requirements.

First and foremost, a well-oiled Supply Chain Academy can support the Supply Chain Leaders to lead their teams at a much higher level of performance, consequently delivering superior tangible results to the business. That in all imaginable dimensions of Supply Chain: safety, quality, service, costs, differentiated solutions, etc. You name it !

In addition to that, a learning & career integrated solution, fully aligned to the business needs, enable the HR teams to closely measure and monitor the Return on Investment of the ‘ big’ training budgets they own. It is about doing much more for their people with much less investment ! Simple like that!

There are some others less ‘ tangible’, and still very important benefits, such us moral, power of attraction of talents, a high performance culture, etc, etc… But in all honestly, at the end of the day is about DELIVER MORE RESULTS and SPENDING LESS MONEY, at the same time.

Unfortunately, I still see some quite big organizations that don’t get the point yet, and continue to ‘ burn’ money by having a sort of ‘ tick in the boss’ approach for their Supply Chain Academy.

Dustin: Can you go a bit more in details on that ?

Julio: Sure. Implementing a High Performing Supply Chain Academy goes well beyond of offering a portfolio of ‘ some courses’ on an annual basis. It is a cultural transformation whereby SC and HR work closely together in terms of:

1) understanding the REAL business and supply chain challenges
2) developing a fit for purpose SC Academy solution which encompasses the points 1 to 8of my answer to your 1st question
3) ensure that the gaps are identified on an INDIVIDUAL (not generic) basis and therefore the learning solutions are then ‘ customised’ based on each’s department / individual / geographic needs
4) implementing it through the entire S/Chain based on an unique approach, so professionals can develop their careers throughout the various SC areas (at the end, Supply Chain is a very integrative area!)
5) strongly linking it through the annual reviews, development plans and career progression tools from the HR teams
6) ensuring that the learning is always implemented back at work, with clear targets of improvement, and a clear measure of ROI (I like the Kirk Patrick model on that one)

Dustin: What are the Key Success Factors for a High Performance Supply Chain Academy ?

Julio: Well, I think it is a combination of all the above, which typically is a big change management programme, on top of the required technical solutions. Due to the degree of newness involved, usually organizations are supported by external consultancies like ourselves.

I have seen some trials of implementing an in-house solution, but in all honesty, it ends up most of the time, in the old and wrong mindset of having ‘a portfolio of few outdated and not relevant courses’ available and running a couple of times a year. A very bad investment the learning budget, overall…

in addition to that:

1. Sponsorship of the SC and HR leaders is crucial.
2. The understanding of the real TOP and BOTTOM line benefits (you would be surprised on how often I find professionals with over 10-15 years of experience that simply don’t get the point)…
3. Willingness to go through the required cultural transformation
4. SC Leaders able to progressively take ownership as Subject Matter Experts
5. A good tool / system able to collect / track / report data on a constant basis

Dustin: Thanks for that. Can you please provide a brief overview about yourself.

Julio: Sure. I am a Naval Engineer with a Master in Finance and a MBA at Rotterdam School of Management (top 5 in Europe). I have over 20 years of experience in Supply Chain, having spent ½ of my time as a Supply Chain executive in a FMCG manufacturer, running operations, and the other ½ of my careers as a Supply Chain consultant.

Currently I am one of the founding partners of Spin Consulting ([www.spinconsulting.net)](http://www.spinconsulting.net)), a specialized SC boutique who differentiates by deliver fast, tangible and sustainable results to our clients.

Thanks for having me here.