

## BOOK REVIEW

### **'Supplier Relationship Management: Unlocking the Hidden Value in your Supply Base'**

Author: **Jonathan O'Brien** 2014

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Supply chain management has come a long way since its beginning in distributive logistics. The basic concepts become more sophisticated, with richness of depth and range. So it is with the supply segment of chains.

Suppliers, once the supine poor relations of the buying companies, were content to try to meet procurement specifications, and hope to be paid on time. It was a mechanical arrangement. Some procurers even regarded suppliers as enemies, necessary but to be outwitted. That changed, as buyers realized, surprise, surprise, that building a collaborative relationship with suppliers is a strategy that can release benefits to both. Supplier relationship management (SRM) became another item in the toolbox. The social interaction involved is another example of how human software can be so significant in this computerized age.

As its sub-title says, this book tells us that some suppliers have a wealth of opportunities available to you purchasers out there, especially in value, innovation, efficiency, reduced cost, and increased security of supply, and could even help to grow your business or improve your competitiveness. But this wealth is present in only a limited number of suppliers; it needs finding and unlocking, with most energy devoted to these few possibilities of a truly deep strategic relationship.

To engage in such a relationship needs an understanding of a collection of complementary supply base interventions, which fit within your corporate aims and objectives. When these interventions are combined, the author says that they form the 'orchestra of SRM'.

Although this book makes a valuable textbook for universities around the world, it is practical; very useful to interested practitioners. It adopts a non-linear organic approach, dipping and weaving, picking and using, to find a fit for your firm and the chosen supplier. Most of the book's concepts and models are new and original, even groundbreaking. Each chapter is arranged and explained in a way that makes understanding easy, and how each is part of the whole. Maybe it will create a breed of musician-managers, who learn to wave a conducting baton over the SRM instruments! And some suppliers who read this book could boldly suggest to some purchasers that they could join to form an SRM orchestra!

Jonathan O'Brien is an established author in the supply chain field. This is his third book in what will be a suite of books for purchasing practitioners. His practical experience is extensive. He is an electronics engineer who became involved in a career in purchasing, and acquired a deep understanding of how organizations work. He is now CEO of an international purchasing consultancy and training provider. He holds academic degrees and professional qualifications.

**Reviewer:** Asst. Professor Brian Lawrence, Assumption University, Bangkok