
Editorial

Introduction to the special section of *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing Contemporary Purchasing Practices*

Introduction

This special section provides an up-to-date collection of theories and research concerning how business practitioners manage purchasing, both their own purchasing and that of their suppliers.

Traditional research on purchasing practices was concerned with identifying the best portfolio of suppliers based on supply characteristics (Kraljic, 1983). This research helped shifting the focus of purchasing from supply management to supplier management. Bensaou (1999) further recognised that the key role of purchasing lies in managing relationships, not only between buyers and suppliers but also in the wider supply chain network. Based on these contributions, marketing and supply chain scholars have examined developments in purchasing with reference to relationship management and supply chain networks, respectively. With respect to measurement of purchasing performance, a recently developed framework provides a better awareness of how organisations relate to their supply markets (Lindgreen *et al.*, 2013a, 2013b). Additionally, purchasing and supply practices have been transformed in recent years by factors such as the increasing exposure of supply chains to risks, the development and adoption of information technologies and a growing attention of organisations to ethical practices (Lindgreen *et al.*, 2013a, 2013b).

The collection of papers in this special section, we believe, represents a useful contribution in better understanding integrated purchasing management issues, to provide a framework for future development. In their paper, Licentiate and Åge focus on the area of services sourcing, they use a qualitative and longitudinal grounded approach and present a “business streamlining” conceptual model to assist managers in strategic decision-making that captures key processes, including the critical social and “through life” factors of ongoing managed source relationships. Tate, Ellram and Schmelzle also consider the importance of purchasing in the service sector, choosing to focus on legal services. In this paper, a single case approach is made and turns attention to the internal organisation, rather than the more typical analysis

of inter firm and external interactions, to demonstrate how individual functions and roles can gain influence within an organisation. D’Amico, Mogre, Clarke, Lindgreen and Hingley consider purchasing and supply management practices in a complex and evolving industry context, the offshore wind industry. The authors demonstrate that innovative approaches can increase not only firm- but also industry-level performance. These practices affect the key success factors of the industry, namely, competition, capabilities and control. Ćorić, Anić, Rajh, Rajh and Kurnoga also explore buying decision factors and buying decision approaches in manufacturing. They come up with a set of influential factors that prevail in buying decision-making that allows the authors to create typologies of business buyers, with a view to helping organisations understand buying behaviour of manufacturing companies better and adapt their sales strategies accordingly. In their paper, Majd, Balakrishnan and Godazgar develop a framework to consider and predict buyer-seller interaction. They present a computational model to detect the “most reliable” supplier agent, and hence enhance the fulfilment of purchasing between buyers and suppliers. Finally, the special section is brought together in a concluding end-piece, by Mogre, Lindgreen and Hingley, in which the importance of integration of purchasing with other strategic functions is highlighted and suggestions for future purchasing and marketing practice are made.

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Martin Hingley

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