

College of Business Review by Michael Smith
Title: "The Supply Management Handbook" (7th Edition)
Editors: Joseph L. Cavinato, Anna E. Flynn and Ralph G. Kauffman
Publisher: McGraw-Hill
Publication Date: 2006
Length: 945 pages
Reading time: Not Applicable
Reading rating: 7 (1 = very difficult; 10 = very easy)
Overall rating: 4 (1 = average; 4 = outstanding)

The needs of practicing managers for a reference that covers the essentials of their business function are generally not well served by the traditional textbooks or by the standard trade books. The seventh edition of "The Supply Management Handbook" addresses these needs in the realm of supply management. As with earlier editions that sit well-used on my book shelf, the current edition does an excellent job of providing coverage of the myriad challenges faced by supply management professionals, although each topic is covered in condensed form. The great advantage that I find in the handbook is that it provides a single source that I can keep readily available to grasp and review current wisdom with respect to this diverse and rapidly changing discipline.

This is not the book for someone who wants to sit down and learn about supply management. As an edited handbook, it consists of 42 chapters, each of which is written by experts from business and academia. The treatment of each topic is presented from the perspective of what a manager needs to know to understand best practice and address business needs with respect to the area covered by the chapter. This emphasis means that the individual chapters are substantially self-contained units of practical information (although cross references are provided when information from other chapters might be useful in further exploring practical implications), instead of arcane presentations of theory. The text, independent of the front matter and index, covers 916 pages, and concludes with a resource listing for further exploration. Clearly, a tome of this size better lends itself to service as a reference than to traditional reading.

As a reference, the new edition has been both updated and refocused to reflect the dynamic nature of the supply management profession. Many of the chapters retain the subject-matter focus of previous editions, but frequently under new authorship and with a more strategic concentration. The new edition also contains a number of new chapters that serve to point up the leadership role of supply management professionals, and emerging issues and opportunities in the profession. I find the balance between an increasingly strategic focus and retention of coverage of the basics of supply management to be a particular strength in the current edition.

The handbook is divided into seven parts. The first four parts consist of a total of 20 chapters that range from overviews of supply management and its expanding organizational role, to coverage of the crucial imperatives faced by professionals, the core elements of supply chains, and the emergence of new professional challenges that in turn represent opportunity for attuned professionals. Parts five and six are comprised of 22

chapters that deal with the conduct of supply chain management from the perspective of components and capabilities and item and industry practices. Part seven consists of the information resource listing.

In short, this book represents a solid resource for the growing number of managers who are finding themselves engaged in supply chain management. The seventh edition of “The Supply Management Handbook” will help these managers accomplish and gain recognition for contributions to organizational success.

Michael E. Smith, Ph.D. is associate professor of management and international business at Western Carolina University, where he directs the MBA Program. Dr. Smith’s research interests are in supply chain management and strategy. He serves as the chair of the Institute for Supply Management’s Indirect-MRO Sourcing Group. Dr. Smith co-authored, with Lee Buddress from Portland State University, two of the chapters in the current edition of “The Supply Management Handbook.” For previously reviewed books visit our Web page at www.wcu.edu/cob/.