

## The Future of Purchasing, Logistics and Consultancy Firms

*More and more people are moving in to cities, social media has become part of our everyday life and natural disasters seems to become more common on the news. What are the effects of these phenomena on purchasing and logistics? What will consultancy firms be asked to do in the future? To answer this question you could use a crystal ball, ask a fortune-teller or continue to read this article.*

As the world and its people are changing, businesses are changing too. In turn, the services companies are buying from consultancy firms will change. If you ask purchasing and logistics managers, the concerns they have today are not the same as ten years ago. It is important for a consultancy firm to make sure that the services you are offering are actually what the industry will ask for to stay competitive. The thesis “The Future-Proofing of Supply Chain Management Consulting” took a look at what changes would most likely affect the industry, the next five to ten years. Through a content analysis of academic journals and interviews with managers and experts in purchasing and logistics, seven trends that will affect the manufacturing industry were found. These seven trends were:

*Future Scarcity of Talents:* New competences will be needed, there will especially be a lack of people with strategic experience and higher education.

*Globalization:* Businesses will continue to work internationally and in new countries. New competitors will also appear on the home market.

*Increased Focus on Risk Management:* Companies will work with handling unforeseen events or disasters.

*Increased Focus on Sustainability:* Environmental issues will become more important. It will be important to follow environmental and social regulations. Some companies will try to stay ahead and even use their environmental work as competitive advantage.

*Increased Need for Operational Tools:* Businesses

will need and use more advanced IT systems and in some cases these IT systems will be connected with suppliers’ systems.

*Increased Servicification of Products:* Leasing instead of buying products or services will be more common.

*More Distinct Supplier Segmentation:* Companies will develop strong relationships with some suppliers and only have little interaction with others. The difference between relationships to suppliers will become clearer and more thought through.

A comparison was also made between the consultancy firm ÅF’s offered services and the seven trends. This was done to find how prepared ÅF and similar consultancy firms were to the future changes. This investigation showed that ÅF did not offer services that had something to do with the trends *Future Scarcity of Talents* and *Increased Focus on Sustainability*. ÅF did well on offering services connected to the trends *Increased Need for Operational Tools* and *More Distinct Supplier Segmentation*.

The consultancy sector needs to prepare for the help that the industry will ask for in the future. The trends give an indication on what to focus on. However, what is most certain about the future, is that we do not know it.

### **Original title of master’s thesis:**

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