

Improving a complex and internal process through process mapping

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Within supply chain management optimizing elements essential for the offering and value creation is crucial. External perspectives of procurement are often emphasized over internal, while for a global and complex company, both are relevant to investigate.

Internal testing is essential at Tetra Pak as it is crucial in the development process of new solutions and is required to ensure high quality before delivery to customers. Through mapping the process of coordinating packaging material for this testing, the visibility of the process has greatly increased. Further, it is concluded that several improvements can be made by redesigning the current process.

This result and conclusion have been valuable for the company as the need for the study arose due to lack of visibility and problems in the current process. From a broader perspective, improving this vital process in their offering helps the company remain competitive in the market, increase profitability and overall performance.

The method used to coordinate packaging materials at Tetra Pak today is complex and involves several functions. Historically, the company has made efforts to improve the coordination of this flow, but still there is a high effort on coordination with several interfaces and handovers. Additionally, loss of information and knowledge, shortcomings in collaboration as well as waste of material is common. Lastly, the actual performance of the process investigated is often not measured, while other equally important processes within the company are.

By creating an understanding of the current process, gaps have been identified and eliminated to develop the process to be executed in a more efficient way. The

analysis yielded in a few general recommendations: implement instructions and training material, increase the visibility, strive towards a proactive approach rather than reactive, increase communication and collaboration, improve the accuracy of information and implement a comprehensive performance measurement system to determine how a potentially improved process can be maintained.

Besides giving guidance for the case company in improving the work process, external actors can also find benefits by taking part in this study. Based on current research it can be difficult for practitioners to navigate within the concept of supply chain management and find applicable and concrete frameworks for one's specific business. Especially, the internal processes, which are in scope of this study, are often not emphasized in literature today. This study counteracts these identified gaps through bringing clarification for the company, as well as practitioners on a general level. This single case study with a predominant focus on a deductive approach uses existing theory to investigate the phenomenon. Qualitative and quantitative data is collected to then be structured and analyzed through the process mapping tool Makigami, developed within lean management, used to visualize the flow and identify shortcomings. The work was then compiled in a report with a clear structure and transparency in terms of the approach. This contributes to clear guidance for Tetra Pak, as well as other organizations with a goal of improving their essential work process.

This popular scientific article is derived from the master thesis: Improving the packaging material availability for internal testing – A case study at Tetra Pak, written by Madeleine Karlsson and Jennie Jönsson (2023). Division of Engineering Logistics, Lund University.