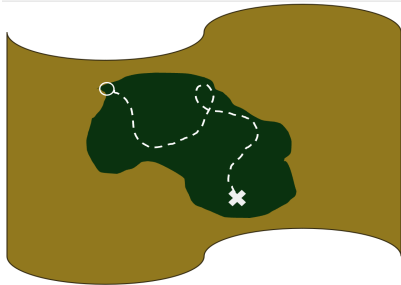


Navigating the ever-changing Sales and Operations Planning landscape

By Emma Rydén & Tim Engrenius (Lund, 2024)

It all starts with balancing supply and demand. Now, try adding 70,000 grocery goods, over 200 new product introductions per year, and 3,000 plus employees. Where do you begin? What is vital to know? We have a suggestion.

Imagine being handed a treasure map, but instead of a clear path, it's an intricate spiderweb of directions, symbols, and cryptic notes. Trying to navigate one's surroundings using complex maps, models or frameworks can be daunting, even for large companies. Furthermore, if you have yet to identify your starting position, how can you strike gold using this map?



Just like that treasure map, the body of literature on sales and operations planning (S&OP) has developed into a difficult-to-use map of truly great ideas, dos and don'ts, and suggestions on where to look next. While some might be ready to dive head first and decode this very rewarding treasure that is S&OP, others might hear of it for the first time.

S&OP is a strategic business process that aligns an organization's sales and

marketing plans with its supply chain operations. The primary goal is to ensure that the company can meet demand while securing inventory levels, and optimizing resource utilization.

So, what if you are a large grocery wholesaler that has lost your way following the S&OP treasure map? Could some initial clues on vital parts, steps, and expected output help you back on track? We certainly think so! Not only do we believe that this helps lost companies find their way, but we also think that it's the first step in reaping the vast benefits of a successful S&OP process.

Studies show that a successful S&OP process will improve cross-functional alignment and enhance process management. Therefore, S&OP can be used to identify problems in cross-functional processes and to draft a recommendation on how to solve them.

While hunting for S&OP treasury might sound like an exciting experience for your company, maybe you want to skip the part where you have to devour the smorgasbord of findings and insight in S&OP built over the last 20 years. Perhaps by following the trail and recommendations given to others, you will find a great understanding of where you are and your starting position.