Title of Session: The Learning Supply Chain

Name, Title and Affiliation of Chair: Dr. Susan B Grant, Brunel University

Details of Session (including aim and scope): As markets experience higher levels of turbulence and uncertainty, firms are increasingly recognising the importance of knowledge sharing, organisational learning and wider supply chain learning, as a means to sustainability. Indeed, knowledge sharing within a company has always been considered pivotal in reaping competitive advantage (Tohidinia and Mosakhani 2010), and a learning supply chain can offer significant benefits including improved forecasting, reduced inventory levels, enhanced planning and decision making (Sahin & Robinson 2002) improved long term relationships (Lambrechts 2012) and a better understanding of customer preferences and needs, (Collins et al 2002; Spekman et al., 2002; Hernandez-Espallardo et al 2010). Learning across supply partners additionally can lead to tighter co-ordination among member firms facilitated by knowledge management practices that support market place responsiveness (Peterson 2002) and higher innovation capability than a network with less effective knowledge sharing (Von Hippel 1988). However, finding the right mechanisms for sharing knowledge (and subsequent learning) within organisations and increasingly across supply chains, has been a major issue for both organisations, and supply chain research (Grant 2016, Kembro and Selviardis 2015).

With the rise and success of complementary technologies such as social media, digital technologies, and big data (plus big data analytics) (Chae 2015, McKinsey 2016), the potential to effectively connect all types of supplier to a knowledge sharing network, and generate new and useful insights to drive wider supply chain learning, is an exciting and necessary area for development in the field of Supply Chain Management (Grant 2016). Indeed, recent evidence shows knowledge intensive companies’ are beginning to consider web based complementary technologies such as ‘social networking’ as community-building platforms (Annabi et al 2012) primarily “behind the firewall” (Yardi et al 2008; Kim et al 2008) to facilitate communication and group processes, but also to improve cross functional collaboration and effectively share vital corporate knowledge across a range of business processes and people (Janes et al 2014; Annabi et al 2012, Grant 2016). Similarly, the application of big data in supporting supply chain operations, knowledge sharing and learning is a relatively new area, with some early discussions of its value in generating new product development ideas; optimisation of supply chain processes, a better understanding of customers' preferences and needs and the generation of new products in the most cost effective way (Cecere, 2013; Zhou et al., 2014).

As social media platforms, digital technologies and the use of big data become more commonplace, it would appear particularly timely to invite critical discussions into this emerging area of research and practice in relation to the learning supply chain.

We seek submissions featuring conceptual case based or empirical papers using a wide range of methodological and research frameworks, and presenting new insights into the following (but not limited to) topics:

- How social networking tools improve the opportunities for diverse models/processes of learning across different stakeholders within a supply chain.
- Enablers and barriers to knowledge networking across virtual supply chain communities.
- The role of social capital in a supply chain network’s absorptive capacity.
- Examining the interaction between technologies, techniques, and people in knowledge networks.
Building relational assets across social networks to support learning across supply chains
Challenges affecting learning in the extended supply chain.
Using Digital technologies to generate new supply chain knowledge: Opportunities and challenges
The impact of Big data on supply chain learning

Proposed Schedule
Submission deadline: End of November 2016

Cecere L (2013) Big data handbook: How to unleash the Big Data opportunity. Supply Chain Insight LLC Maryland

Main Contributing Researchers / Research Centres (tentative, if known at this stage):

Website URL of Call for Papers (if any):

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