

THRIVING IN A SHIFTING MARKETPLACE

by Torrie Ward, Communication and Marketing Specialist, Center for Food and Agricultural Business

Consolidation, tight margins, increasing consumer demand and price transparency are just a few of the challenges currently facing the agricultural retail supply chain, forcing leaders to adapt and adjust. These challenges have made continuous improvement in supply chain and operations management more important than ever before to maintain a competitive position.

To thrive and overcome future challenges in this shifting landscape, sharp business acumen and advanced leadership skills are essential.

The increasing role of technology in the food and agricultural business marketplace, as well as how customer interactions shape an organization's success are just a few key topics that managers should understand.

Beyond knowledge about these concepts, managers should also be equipped to react and respond to disruptions in these areas whether it be a new technology or competitor innovation.

These rapid-fire changes happening in technology, consumer demand and new target demographics require long-term strategic thinking as competitors change the rules of the marketplace every day.

Previously, supply chains were focused solely on delivering standardized products at the lowest cost, but numerous disruptions are causing organizations to examine how to realign differentiated customer needs with their organization's value proposition.

INNOVATIONS IN TECHNOLOGY

Technology is revolutionizing the farmer-supplier relationship. Growers now have a wealth of knowledge and information at their fingertips and are continuously considering high-tech investments that promise large payoffs. Many ag retailers are striving to keep up with farmers' technological demands as

disruptions that stem from the ag tech marketplace have the potential to impact ag retailers' daily operations and influence the industry on a global scale.

These innovations create an opportunity for firms to reposition, gain advantage over competitors and analyze the organization's ability to succeed. In order to do this, managers need to adjust and become more adept at assessing the balancing act of reacting to disruptions.

Today, organizations have the opportunity to either be disrupted or be the disrupter, and the strategic decisions based on technological innovation can play a key role in the deciding factor.

SERVICE BLUEPRINTING

Along with technological innovations, consumer demand and transparency are on the rise. For this reason, providing customers with a positive experience is becoming more important than ever. Every customer interaction within an organization holds the potential for either a customer pain-point or something incredibly positive.

Service blueprinting is a tool that allows organizations to define excellence in a specific area of customer service and establish a plan to meet or exceed customer expectations.

This tool provides a chance to dive deeper into an organization's issues and understand what modifications need to be made in order to increase efficiency and reduce customer pain-points.

Service blueprinting places an emphasis on the importance of each task along the route to a positive customer experience, easily pin pointing areas along the chain hindering the end goal. Service blueprinting is all about identifying



potential gaps and planning next steps to bridge them while driving improvement in today's quest to satisfy customers.

ARA MANAGEMENT ACADEMY

Marketplace disruption, service blueprinting and more will be discussed in depth at the ARA Management Academy on January 28-30, 2020 in Tempe, AZ.

Offered in partnership by the Center for Food and Agricultural Business, Agricultural Retailers Association and Arizona State University, the academy will focus on how managers can contribute to the success of their organization and customers in an ever-evolving industry.

More information and the registration form can be found online at: <https://agribusiness.purdue.edu/program/ara-management-academy/>. For additional questions or information, please contact **Betty Jones-Bliss**, Center Associate Director, at bettyso@purdue.edu. **AM**

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