



Connected Corporation: How Leading Companies Manage Customer-Supplier Alliances

Jordan D. Lewis

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Until now, the relationship between a company and its customers or suppliers has consisted of arms-length haggling over the price of a part or a service. Today, reveals alliance expert Jordan D. Lewis, customers and suppliers are actually embracing each other—sharing data, design work, and even research and development. The result, Lewis finds, has been a dramatic improvement in each firm's costs, quality, cycle times, and customer satisfaction—*without added expense*. Building on his groundbreaking work, *Partnerships for Profit*, Lewis shows managers how to maximize the potential of these new customer-supplier alliances—described by the *Wall Street Journal* as a "revolution"—by drawing upon his hands-on experience and research with best-practice firms worldwide such as Motorola, Chrysler, and Marks & Spencer.

Although more and more firms now recognize the importance of customer-supplier alliances, few actually know how to make them work. Using interviews with employees ranging from top executives to purchasing and sales people, Lewis takes the reader inside these leading-edge companies and their top suppliers to show precisely how the "connected" corporation can *double* its competitive resources by forging customer-supplier relationships for greater financial strength, higher market share, more value, and increased operating flexibility.

Lewis provides the tools managers need to structure and manage effective and successful alliances. He discusses all of the initial questions on how to get started—when to use alliances, how to choose the best partners, and how to set clear objectives targeted on high performance. Specific techniques are presented to foster joint creativity—from building interfirm teams to systems-based thinking—as well as methods for monitoring alliance performance and progress. Lewis also shows ways to develop the foundation of cooperation, negotiation, and trust between partners which is so crucial in achieving optimum competitive advantage.

By capitalizing on the new customer-supplier alliances, any firm can increase its competitiveness regardless of industry, company size, or whether its focus is on goods or services. Lewis provides managers of all types with the framework they need to avoid the pitfalls and enjoy the full benefits of the connected corporation.

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