

## Foreword

It is the nature of human innovation that people create things before they know why or how their invention works. For example, the pyramids of Egypt are an engineering marvel that existed long before there was a theory of engineering. Indeed, it was not until the 1800's that schools of engineering were created and a rigorous foundation for the profession of engineering began to emerge. But once this foundation was in place, it vastly accelerated the rate of engineering innovation.

We are now in a time of great innovation in supply chain management. Developments in information technology have made communication cheap and easy, thereby enabling an 'unbundling' of supply chains. All the steps for designing, producing and distributing a product that used to reside under a single corporate roof are now done by dozens of companies. This complicates supply chain design, as each of the dozens of companies in the unbundled supply chain ponders what its new footprint should be, with whom it should partner and with whom it should compete. Coordination becomes both more important and more complicated as the activities of many independent firms must be orchestrated.

It is therefore extremely timely to have a book such as this that lays a theoretical and scientific foundation of supply chain design and coordination. The editors are to be commended for creating an excellent collection of papers that will serve as an indispensable foundation to both theory and practice in supply chain management. I am honored that they also saw fit to reprint a paper of my own as part of this significant volume.

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