

RELEVANT BUSINESS PRESS REFERENCE ARTICLES

“The Challenge of Customization: Bringing Operations and Marketing Together.” *strategy+business*, July, 2004

Excerpts from the article’s opening paragraphs:

“Today’s companies are under greater pressure than ever to be “all things to all customers” – to produce increasing variety and customization of products and services, and keep their costs under control so they can deliver at competitive prices.

“Unfortunately, most companies struggle with the rising costs to serve customers who are demanding more and more variety, customization, and personalization. Indeed, companies frequently find themselves introducing the wrong variations at the wrong prices – giving customers value that they don’t really want at a price that the company can’t really afford to pay.

“Such errors don’t occur because of incompetence On the contrary, marketers often know their customers and their distribution partners in astonishing detail, and operations engineers can follow their products in real time from the factory to the warehouse to the store. The real problem, they say, is systemic.

“. . . In this paper, consultants from Booz Allen and faculty from Wharton conclude that failure to communicate and coordinate among functions, particularly between marketing and operations, significantly raises the costs and difficulty of executing customization strategies. They explain the structural and cultural reasons that make it tough for marketing and operations to work together”

“Developing First-Level Leaders.” *Harvard Business Review*, June, 2005

The article’s title-lead:

“How can you make sure that your company’s frontline managers – the backbone of the organization – feel committed and involved? Here’s how one of the world’s largest corporations answered that question.”

The article’s opening paragraph:

“When it comes to translating a company’s strategy into results, there’s no denying the importance of first-level leaders – those who manage others who do not manage others. At BP Group, these leaders oversee operations at retail outlets, manage work crews at chemical plants or refineries, and handle operations at drilling platforms. Some supervise more than ten people; others work with few subordinates in R&D, marketing, or human resources. First-level leaders are the ones who are most responsible for a firm’s day-to-day relationships with customers and the bulk of employees. As Harvard professor Linda Hill wrote in *Becoming a Manager*, “. . . managers on the front line are critical to sustaining quality, service, innovation, and financial performance.”