

THE ROLE OF VALUE CHAIN MANAGEMENT AND ELECTRONIC COMMERCE IN THE BUSINESS CURRICULUM

**Lawrence Dandurand, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, College of Business,
Las Vegas, NV 89154-6010; (702)895-3591**

**Michael C. Mejza, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, College of Business,
Las Vegas, NV 89154-6010;(702)895-4906**

The key responsibilities of business schools are to develop theory that reflects and affects business practice, and to incorporate into university curricula the essence and details that characterize trends and applications in the world of commerce. In fulfilling the curricula responsibility, business colleges should establish frameworks for course development that are relevant to the dynamic business environments that their graduates will experience upon launching or continuing their careers.

Two applications in the contemporary business environment that are growing in scope and sophistication, and receiving increased acceptance are value chain management and electronic commerce. They are concerned with dynamic activities that are inter-organizational, cross-functional, and often multi-national in nature and scope. These activities as practiced by many firms frequently involve component areas of marketing, production, human relations, and finance on a global scale. Practitioners have led the progress made in developing and utilizing the precepts of value chain management and electronic commerce. This situation raises questions regarding business curricula. Should these precepts and experience be incorporated into business curricula? To what extent are they being incorporated into curricula? To what extent should they be incorporated? What are the different approaches to incorporation? Which approach to incorporation is preferable? What factors influence the incorporation process?

The primary objectives of this paper are to invoke discussion and provide literature findings and field research that address the principal curricula concerns of whether to incorporate value chain management and electronic commerce into curricula, to what extent to incorporate, and which approach to incorporation is preferable. The analysis begins with a comprehensive conceptual model of supply chain management that incorporates Porter's notion of value chain and value system management, as well as roles for process management and cross-functional teams. Recent works by Lambert, Cooper, and Pagh (1997, 1998), as well as Porter's original thesis on the value chain provide much of the content.

The analysis then provides a framework for analyzing electronic commerce and incorporates that framework into the comprehensive model of supply chain management. The primary source of content for the model of electronic commerce is Riggins and Rhee (1999). Technology enhanced and technology facilitated relationships are considered in terms of the external or internal location of application user. For example, intranets are internal technology enhancements designed to improve coordination with internal business units, while extranets and supranets are external technology facilitations designed to facilitate information exchange with new team members across the value chain. Specifically, emphasis is placed on the role that electronic commerce, or better put, telecommunications network strategy, plays in supply chain management. It is shown that information structure and facility (i.e., supply chain operations) play an integral part in inter-organizational relationships. In other words, electronic commerce is an integral part of value chain management.

The analysis continues with findings from a content analysis of business college curricula based on a pilot study of major universities around the country and the world. The analysis focuses on the congruence between the nature of a college's overall curriculum (including programs, courses, and topics) and the nature of the combined supply chain management and electronic commerce model presented earlier in the paper. Assuming that comprehensive supply chain and electronic commerce management are genuine forces in today's business world, and that the general models presented are valid, one would expect to observe business colleges that incorporate the tenets of these practices in their curricula. The analysis concludes by considering implications that emerging views and applications of supply chain management and electronic commerce experience have for business school curricula. More specifically, the discussion centers on alternative strategies that business colleges might use to incorporate these emerging concepts and business practices into their curricula.