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BOOK REVIEWS

THE MANAGEMENT OF BUSINESS LOGISTICS, 4th Edition,
by John J. Coyle, Edward J. Bardi, and C. John Langley, Jr.,
(St. Paul: West Publishing Company, 1988). Pp. xxi, 631.
\$36.50. ISBN 0-314-65263-9.

Maintaining a current working knowledge of logistics is an ongoing challenge for both the practitioner and academician. Globalization of American business, changes in government regulations, advancing technology, new directions in both strategic and operational management techniques, and the search for differential advantage all combine to make logistics one of the most dynamic disciplines in business today. The 4th edition of Management of Business Logistics meets this challenge or change by presenting an expanded discipline in a practical, readable, current, and comprehensive introductory textbook.

The fourth edition is almost 90 pages longer than the previous edition and contains 17 chapters (2 more than previously) divided into four parts. Part I (Chapter 1-4) provides the conceptual background around which the activities of logistics revolve. The authors retain their link-node approach to logistics as a framework for the solving of temporal and spatial problems. Chapters 1 & 2 provide an overview of the logistics discipline along with the role of logistics in the firm. An appendix has been added to Chapter 2 covering the basic concepts of distribution channels. Such an addition is appropriate in light of the continuing trend toward integration of marketing and logistics. Chapter 3 discusses the establishment of Customer service in achieving buyer satisfaction while Chapter 4 examines the supply side of logistics and materials management.

Part II (Chapters 5-8) examines the functions which take place at the nodes of a logistics system. The nature of inventory management and specific inventory decisions are covered in Chapters 6 & 7. Improvements have been made in the discussion of both MRP and JIT while an appendix dealing with special applications of EOQ remains for those wishing a little more depth. Warehousing decisions are covered in Chapter 8 including a new section on third party warehousing. Materials handling and packaging, discussed in Chapter 9 could be improved with a more expanded coverage of unitization. Part III (Chapters 9-11) examines the transportation (link) element of logistics. Chapters 9 and 10 present an overview of transportation modes and traffic management, including rates and documentation. Much of the information from a separate chapter on rates and tariffs in the third edition has been incorporated into the chapter on traffic management. Chapter 11 is a new chapter entitled "Strategic Transportation Decisions". While some of the material contained in this chapter is not new (e.g. private carriage), there is a good coverage of important general transportation strategies (e.g. reducing the number of carriers to build volume).

Part IV covers the broader decision areas of logistics. Chapter 12 is a new chapter which provides an expanded coverage of international logistics including intermediaries, terms of sale and documentation. Chapter 13 provides an introduction to the role of logistics in making location decisions. The other new Chapter (14) introduces logistics information systems and contains a good discussion of innovative information techniques (e.g. expert systems). Chapter 15 and 16 examine logistics organizational structures and strategic logistic planning. The text ends with the obligatory Chapter (17) on future directions for logistics. Features retained from the third addition include On-the-Line application examples (all new), end of chapter questions, topic summaries within each chapter, short cases for each chapter (about one half new), comprehensive cases (all new), a bibliography following each part, a comprehensive table of contents, and a glossary of terms. The short cases lend themselves to some discussion but not to any formal case analysis.

The four comprehensive cases do not deliver a promised opportunity to "view the entire logistics system". Perhaps one or two longer, more integrative cases would be more appropriate. An instructors manual is available which contains chapter objectives, outlines, and answers to end of chapter questions along with examination questions and additional cases. Finally, there is a bibliography of logistics topics and a list of logistics information sources. As is true with most "support" materials found for principles of logistics texts, while adequate, it does little to help the instructor enhance the presentation of the subject. For example, the case noted for all four comprehensive cases are less than two pages long.

Introductory text books can always be criticized for their lack of depth on any particular topic. For example, this text might be improved with a discussion of forecasting and "partnerships" or strategic alliances in logistics. However, the value of these texts lies in their ability to provide an appreciation for the important role played by a particular discipline (e.g. logistics) in the success of a firm. From this perspective The Management of Business Logistics succeeds in providing a well written overview for business students in general and a good starting point for those wishing to pursue a career in logistics.

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TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT: PLANNING, OPERATIONS, AND CONTROL; by John E. Tyworth, Joseph L. Cavinato, and C. John Langley, Jr. (Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1987); pp. xiii, 514. \$41.55. ISBN 0-201-06504-5.

Here at last is a textbook treatment that brings the traffic manager out of the cloistered world of rates, tariffs, and legal jargon and places him/her in the modern corporate setting as a manager planning, organizing and controlling major logistics functions from a total cost perspective. Such a treatment is long overdue.

This is the first book of its kind to organize an examination and analysis of traffic management around the broader conceptual framework of the three basic functions of management: planning, organizing, and controlling. Recognizing the legitimacy and the importance of the traffic/transportation function and its management in the modern industrial setting, this treatment seems to be quite deserved and long overdue. Accordingly, the subject matter content is logically divided into three basic parts, roughly corresponding to these three key management functions. Moreover, this conceptual approach lends itself quite well to the task of presenting traffic management as a challenge to management creativity within the dynamics of the current environment as opposed to traditional traffic management as the conduct of a set of highly routinized, legalistic duties in a more static environment. These authors have successfully accomplished this task.

In the past, the relatively few books devoted to the subject of industrial traffic management have stemmed largely from the perceived demand for a compendium of information on procedure and practice in traffic management which could serve as a handbook for practicing traffic managers. Consequently, these books were directed principally toward that purpose and tended to be merely improvisations when an attempt was made to accomplish the instructional objectives of a course in traffic management as a part of a college curriculum in transportation and distribution studies. From

this standpoint, the Tyworth, Cavinato, and Langley book comes almost as a "breath of fresh air" to those seeking an effective instructional tool for the more academic approach to traffic management as well as to nonacademic professionals who wish to more accurately perceive the modern traffic management function in the integrative systems perspective.

Another plus for those academicians looking for a better teaching tool for courses in traffic management is the fact that the authors have provided a comprehensive instructor's manual containing subject matter outlines, examination questions with answers, and a packet of transparency masters for classroom visual presentation of key concepts and relationships. This obviously has resulted in a more effective teaching instrument. The most important qualification here, perhaps, is the fact that the depth of the treatment is pitched at a relatively elementary level for some college classroom use. This, no doubt, reflects the intent of the authors to give the book greater versatility and acceptability across a wider range of curriculum designs in transportation and distribution studies and need not be construed as a weakness. Those using the book in curricula with greater depth of transportation and logistics offerings may wish to upgrade the course content with supplementary materials.

Significantly, this book gives far better balance in meeting the dual objectives of the student and the practitioner than previous books and is far more reflective of the appropriate concerns and the relevant approach to traffic management in the current environment. In Part One, the authors pay due tribute to the legacy of traditional traffic management by placing into proper perspective the continuing significance of the remaining vestiges of such institutional elements as legal and regulatory parameters and tariff pricing systems. At the same time, this section opens a new vista by setting into juxtaposition with the traditional the modern corporate role of the traffic manager as it has evolved in the much more dynamic environment following regulatory reform.

In Part Two one finds the real "meat" of this work as the authors present the management tasks of planning and organizing the shipping firm's operations directed toward accomplishment of effective and timely shipment. Not only are the traditional areas of importance in traffic operations such as liability, claims management, accessorial services, and terms of sale adequately dealt with, but appropriate and timely attention is given to contract negotiation and costing, shipment planning, fleet management, and international shipping in keeping with the changed shipping environment.

Part Three with only two chapters dealing with management control considerations is, perhaps, the weakest section of this book. In regard to the subject matter presented here, though timely and relevant enough, the scope and depth, nonetheless, hardly fulfills the purpose that the book's auspicious layout might claim. The information and electronic data transmission revolution with the resulting opportunities and potential for facilitating the control function in traffic management would seem to warrant broader, more comprehensive treatment of this section.

Perhaps, the major distinction of this treatment, as compared with the previous works in the area, is that the authors have succeeded in portraying the traffic responsibilities in the modern firm as comprising functions to be managed--not merely an array of duties to be performed. Thus, if there were nothing more to recommend it, the fact that this book has succeeded, through accurate portrayal of the traffic management function in the modern logistics system context, in deservedly elevating the traffic management function to its proper status in today's corporate setting is sufficient credit to the effort and intent of the authors. This should serve to enhance the attractiveness of traffic management as a career objective for students of transportation and distribution.

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