

# Exam L6M3 Sample, Online L6M3 Bootcamps

L6M3 Global Strategic Supply Chain Management  
CIPS Exam Sample Questions - Learning Outcome 2  
Sample Exam Question 2  
At Cologer, using a integrated model, the internal and external  
responsibilities of Global Supply Chain identified within the case (11/12 2.1)  
Revision Notes

CIP- November 2013  
Evaluate the evidence to select the supply chain management strategy assessed  
by Q12 in the case study may be considered to be open within Q12 Q12  
2.4  
Revision Notes

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## CIPS Global Strategic Supply Chain Management Sample Questions (Q40-Q45):

### NEW QUESTION # 40

What is the difference between a goal and a strategy? Provide a definition of each, with an example. Describe three possible strategies of an organisation competing in the private sector.

#### Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for complete answer.

Explanation:

In accordance with the requirements at Level 6 for the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) Professional Diploma, a clear distinction must be drawn between a goal and a strategy.

Definition - Goal

A goal is a desired outcome or target that an organisation aims to achieve. It describes what the organisation intends to accomplish, often aligning with its mission or vision. It may be long-term and provides direction, but is not in itself the action plan. In strategic terms, it gives the endpoint. For instance: "Become the market leader in X by 2028." Definition - Strategy A strategy is the broad approach or plan the organisation adopts to achieve its goal. It defines how the organisation will reach the goal, taking into account the internal and external environment, and allocating resources accordingly. It is less granular than tactical plans, but more concrete than simply the goal. For example: "Expand through acquisition of smaller competitors in underserved regions, coupled with digital-platform investment to accelerate time-to-market." Example of each

- Goal: A private-sector manufacturing firm sets a goal: "Increase global market share of our flagship product from 15 % to 25 % within the next five years."

- Strategy: To achieve that goal the firm might adopt a strategy: "Focus on cost-leadership in lower-cost countries, develop strategic alliances with global distributors, and invest in product differentiation to enter higher-value segments." Three possible strategies for an organisation competing in the private sector

\* Cost-leadership strategy: The organisation aims to become the lowest-cost provider in its industry (or a key segment thereof). This might involve scaling up production, sourcing raw materials from low-cost regions, streamlining supply chain processes, leveraging automation, and negotiating favourable supplier contracts. By lowering cost base, the firm can offer competitive pricing or maintain margins.

Example: A consumer goods company shifts manufacturing to regions with lower labour and overhead costs, standardises its component platforms, uses lean-manufacturing methods and begins global sourcing to reduce unit cost, thereby enabling it to compete on price.

\* Differentiation strategy: The organisation seeks to offer unique products or services valued by customers that justify a premium price. This might involve innovation, branding, superior quality, service excellence, or exclusive features. The strategy is to build perceived value and make price less of the primary competition dimension. Example: A luxury car manufacturer invests heavily in advanced driver assistance, bespoke customization options and premium materials. It emphasises brand heritage and customer experience to differentiate from mainstream competitors and charge higher margins.

\* Focus or niche strategy: The organisation concentrates on a specific segment of the market (geographic, customer group, product line) and tailors its offering to the unique needs of that segment better than competitors who serve broader markets. This allows the organisation to specialise and build competitive advantage in that niche. Example: A software firm focuses exclusively on small financial institutions in emerging markets, offering a modular compliance and risk-management platform tailored to their regulatory environment. By specialising, the firm can outperform generalist software vendors in that niche.

In summary, the goal sets the destination, and the strategy charts the path. The three strategies above illustrate substantive ways in which a private-sector organisation might choose to compete: through cost efficiency, through differentiation, or by focusing on a defined niche.

### NEW QUESTION # 41

Describe Network Optimisation Modelling, explaining the advantages and disadvantages of this approach to Supply Chain Management.

#### Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for complete answer.

Explanation:

Network Optimisation Modelling (NOM) is a strategic analytical approach used to design, evaluate, and improve the structure and performance of a supply chain network. It uses mathematical, statistical, and simulation models to identify the most efficient

configuration of supply chain facilities - such as factories, warehouses, suppliers, and distribution centres - and to determine how materials and products should flow through the network to minimise total cost while meeting service-level objectives.

In essence, network optimisation modelling seeks to answer key strategic questions such as:

- \* Where should production and distribution facilities be located?
- \* How much capacity should each site have?
- \* Which suppliers and transport routes are most cost-effective?
- \* What is the optimal balance between cost, service, and risk?

For a global manufacturer or retailer, this approach provides the foundation for achieving cost efficiency, responsiveness, and resilience in supply chain design.

#### 1. Key Features of Network Optimisation Modelling

- \* **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** NOM relies on quantitative data such as demand forecasts, transportation costs, inventory levels, service times, and capacity constraints.
- \* **Scenario and Sensitivity Analysis:** It allows managers to model "what-if" scenarios - for example, the impact of new suppliers, trade tariffs, or changes in customer demand - and evaluate how different network configurations affect cost and service.
- \* **Holistic View of the Supply Chain:** NOM considers the end-to-end network, including suppliers, production sites, warehouses, and customer locations.
- \* **Multi-Objective Optimisation:** It balances competing objectives such as cost reduction, service-level improvement, carbon minimisation, and risk reduction.
- \* **Use of Advanced Tools and Techniques:** Network optimisation models are typically supported by tools such as linear programming, mixed-integer optimisation, geospatial mapping, and simulation software (e.g., Llamasoft, AnyLogistix, or SAP IBP).

#### 2. Advantages of Network Optimisation Modelling

##### (i) Cost Reduction and Efficiency

By identifying the optimal number, location, and role of facilities, NOM minimises transportation, warehousing, and production costs. For example, consolidating underutilised warehouses can reduce fixed costs while maintaining service levels.

##### (ii) Improved Service Levels

Optimisation models ensure that customer demand is met from the most efficient locations, reducing lead times and enhancing delivery reliability.

##### (iii) Enhanced Strategic Decision-Making

NOM provides fact-based insights to support major strategic decisions - such as site relocation, outsourcing, or capacity expansion - reducing reliance on intuition.

##### (iv) Risk Management and Resilience

Through scenario modelling, companies can anticipate the impact of disruptions (e.g., port closures, supplier failures, or geopolitical shifts) and design contingency plans to maintain supply continuity.

##### (v) Support for Sustainability and Carbon Reduction

Modern network models incorporate sustainability objectives, helping firms reduce transport miles, optimise loads, and lower carbon emissions, aligning with ESG goals.

##### (vi) Alignment of Global and Local Operations

For multinational organisations, NOM ensures consistency between global strategy and regional operations by identifying the best trade-offs between global efficiency and local responsiveness.

#### 3. Disadvantages and Limitations of Network Optimisation Modelling

##### (i) Data Intensity and Complexity

Accurate modelling requires large volumes of detailed and reliable data - on costs, lead times, demand, and capacities. Poor-quality or outdated data can lead to flawed conclusions.

##### (ii) High Implementation Costs

Developing, validating, and maintaining network optimisation models requires specialised software and skilled analysts, which can be costly for smaller organisations.

##### (iii) Static Assumptions

Models are often based on assumptions that represent a single point in time. In dynamic markets, these assumptions can quickly become obsolete, reducing model accuracy.

##### (iv) Oversimplification of Real-World Variables

While mathematical models capture many factors, they may struggle to account for unpredictable elements such as political instability, natural disasters, or human behaviour in the supply chain.

##### (v) Change Management Challenges

Network redesigns can require major operational and cultural adjustments - such as facility closures or changes in supplier relationships - which can face internal resistance.

##### (vi) Potential for Short-Term Focus

If used solely for cost optimisation, NOM may neglect long-term strategic objectives such as innovation, customer experience, or ethical sourcing.

#### 4. Strategic Implications of Network Optimisation Modelling

For an organisation like XYZ Ltd (a car manufacturer) or a large retailer, implementing NOM has significant strategic value:

- \* It aligns supply chain design with corporate objectives such as cost leadership or customer proximity.

- \* It supports strategic sourcing decisions by identifying optimal supplier locations and logistics routes.
- \* It enhances global competitiveness by enabling fast adaptation to changes in demand, regulation, or cost structures.
- \* It contributes to sustainability goals through reduced emissions and resource optimisation.

NOM therefore becomes a decision-support tool that enables leadership to test alternative strategic configurations before committing resources.

## 5. Example Application

In an automotive company such as XYZ Ltd:

- \* The model could assess the trade-offs between manufacturing in the UK versus Eastern Europe or Asia.
- \* It could simulate the effects of Brexit-related tariffs or shipping disruptions.
- \* It could optimise inventory levels across plants and dealerships to balance working capital and customer responsiveness.

Such insights allow the CEO and supply chain leaders to make data-driven strategic decisions that improve efficiency, resilience, and sustainability.

## 6. Summary

In summary, Network Optimisation Modelling is a powerful analytical approach that supports strategic supply chain design by identifying the most efficient, resilient, and sustainable configuration of the network.

Its advantages include cost reduction, improved service, strategic agility, and sustainability alignment.

However, it also presents challenges such as data dependency, complexity, and high implementation cost.

When implemented effectively, NOM enables organisations to transform their supply chain into a strategic asset- one that delivers value, resilience, and competitive advantage in an increasingly uncertain global environment.

## NEW QUESTION # 42

Describe seven wastes that can be found in the supply chain and explain how a company can eliminate wastes.

### Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for complete answer.

Explanation:

In supply chain management, waste refers to any activity or resource that does not add value to the product or service from the customer's perspective.

The concept originates from the Lean philosophy (specifically the Toyota Production System) and identifies seven classic types of waste, known in Japanese as "Muda." Eliminating waste is essential for achieving efficiency, reducing costs, improving quality, and enhancing overall value creation in the supply chain.

### 1. The Seven Wastes in the Supply Chain (The '7 Muda')

#### (i) Overproduction

Definition: Producing more than is required or before it is needed.

Impact: Creates excess inventory, storage costs, and potential obsolescence.

Example: A supplier manufacturing paper products ahead of actual demand, leading to warehouse overflow.

Elimination Methods:

- \* Implement Just-in-Time (JIT) production systems.
- \* Improve demand forecasting accuracy.
- \* Use pull-based scheduling driven by actual customer demand.

#### (ii) Waiting

Definition: Idle time when materials, components, or information are waiting for the next process step.

Impact: Reduces process flow efficiency and increases lead time.

Example: Goods waiting for quality inspection, transport, or approval.

Elimination Methods:

- \* Streamline process flow through value stream mapping.
- \* Balance workloads to minimise bottlenecks.
- \* Improve coordination between functions (procurement, production, logistics).

#### (iii) Transportation

Definition: Unnecessary movement of materials or products between locations.

Impact: Increases fuel costs, carbon footprint, and risk of damage.

Example: Shipping goods between multiple warehouses before final delivery.

Elimination Methods:

- \* Optimise distribution networks and warehouse locations.
- \* Use route planning software to reduce mileage.
- \* Consolidate shipments and use cross-docking.

#### (iv) Excess Inventory

Definition: Holding more raw materials, work-in-progress (WIP), or finished goods than necessary.

Impact:Ties up working capital, increases storage costs, and risks obsolescence.

Example:A retailer keeping surplus seasonal stock that becomes outdated.

Elimination Methods:

- \* Apply Kanban systems to control stock levels.
- \* Use demand-driven replenishment strategies.
- \* Improve supplier lead-time reliability and forecasting accuracy.

(v) Over-Processing

Definition:Performing more work or adding more features than the customer requires.

Impact:Increases cost and complexity without adding value.

Example:Applying unnecessary packaging or inspections that don't affect customer satisfaction.

Elimination Methods:

- \* Use Value Stream Mapping to identify non-value-adding steps.
- \* Standardise processes to match customer requirements.
- \* Implement continuous improvement (Kaizen) to simplify workflows.

(vi) Motion

Definition:Unnecessary movement of people or equipment within a process.

Impact:Reduces productivity and can lead to fatigue or safety risks.

Example:Warehouse staff walking long distances between pick locations due to poor layout.

Elimination Methods:

- \* Optimise workspace and warehouse layout.
- \* Introduce ergonomic and automation solutions (e.g., conveyor systems, pick-to-light technology).
- \* Train staff in efficient work practices.

(vii) Defects

Definition:Products or services that do not meet quality standards, requiring rework, repair, or disposal.

Impact:Increases cost, delays deliveries, and damages reputation.

Example:Incorrectly printed paper batches requiring reprinting and re-shipment.

Elimination Methods:

- \* Implement Total Quality Management (TQM) and Six Sigma.
- \* Conduct root cause analysis (e.g., Fishbone or 5 Whys).
- \* Improve supplier quality assurance and process control.

2. Additional Waste in Modern Supply Chains (The "8th Waste")

Many modern supply chains also recognise an eighth waste - underutilisation of people's talent and creativity.

Failing to engage employees in problem-solving and continuous improvement can limit innovation and performance.

Elimination Methods:

- \* Empower employees to suggest improvements (Kaizen culture).
- \* Provide training and recognition programmes.
- \* Encourage cross-functional collaboration.

3. How a Company Can Systematically Eliminate Waste

To effectively eliminate waste, an organisation should adopt a structured Lean management framework that integrates tools, culture, and measurement.

(i) Value Stream Mapping (VSM)

- \* Map the end-to-end supply chain process to visualise value-adding and non-value-adding activities.
- \* Identify and prioritise areas for waste reduction.

(ii) Continuous Improvement (Kaizen)

- \* Involve employees at all levels in identifying inefficiencies.
- \* Encourage small, frequent improvements that lead to long-term gains.

(iii) Standardisation and 5S Methodology

- \* Apply 5S (Sort, Set in order, Shine, Standardise, Sustain) to maintain order, cleanliness, and process discipline.

(iv) Demand-Driven Planning

- \* Implement JIT and pull systems based on real-time customer demand to reduce overproduction and excess stock.

(v) Supplier and Partner Collaboration

- \* Work with suppliers to align deliveries, share forecasts, and reduce unnecessary transport or packaging.

(vi) Performance Measurement and KPIs

- \* Use Lean performance metrics such as Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE), Inventory Turnover, and On-Time Delivery to monitor and sustain improvements.

4. Strategic Benefits of Waste Elimination

- \* Cost Reduction:Lower operational and logistics costs.
- \* Improved Lead Times:Faster flow from supplier to customer.
- \* Quality Enhancement:Fewer defects and higher customer satisfaction.
- \* Employee Engagement:Empowered workforce contributing to innovation.
- \* Sustainability:Reduced waste and emissions align with ESG objectives.

\* Competitive Advantage: A lean, efficient supply chain delivers superior value at lower cost.

## 5. Summary

In summary, these seven wastes—overproduction, waiting, transportation, inventory, over-processing, motion, and defects—represent inefficiencies that do not add value for customers.

By systematically applying Lean tools such as Value Stream Mapping, JIT, Kaizen, and 5S, companies can identify and eliminate these wastes, creating a supply chain that is faster, more efficient, and customer-focused.

Eliminating waste not only reduces costs but also strengthens the organisation's resilience, quality, and sustainability, thereby improving overall strategic performance.

## NEW QUESTION # 43

What is meant by effective supply chain management? What benefits can this bring to an organisation?

### Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for complete answer.

Explanation:

Effective supply chain management (SCM) refers to the strategic coordination and integration of all activities involved in the flow of goods, services, information, and finances from suppliers to the final customer. It ensures that all elements of the chain—including procurement, production, logistics, inventory, and distribution—operate in a synchronised, cost-efficient, and value-adding manner. At a strategic level, effective SCM focuses on creating competitive advantage by aligning supply chain objectives with corporate goals, enhancing collaboration among partners, and optimising total value rather than minimising isolated costs.

### 1. Definition and Key Characteristics of Effective SCM

Effective supply chain management involves:

- \* **Integration:** Seamless coordination between internal departments (procurement, operations, finance, marketing) and external partners (suppliers, logistics providers, and customers).
- \* **Visibility:** Real-time information sharing and data analytics across the supply chain to support accurate decision-making.
- \* **Agility and Responsiveness:** The ability to adapt quickly to changes in demand, market conditions, or disruptions.
- \* **Collaboration and Relationship Management:** Building long-term partnerships and trust with key suppliers and customers to achieve mutual value.
- \* **Sustainability and Ethics:** Ensuring that supply chain practices support environmental, social, and governance (ESG) goals, in line with corporate responsibility principles.
- \* **Continuous Improvement:** Using performance metrics and lean practices to drive efficiency and innovation.

In essence, effective SCM is not only operational excellence, but a strategic enabler of competitive differentiation, ensuring that the right products are available, at the right time, cost, and quality.

### 2. Benefits of Effective Supply Chain Management

#### (i) Cost Reduction and Efficiency Gains

An effective supply chain minimises waste, reduces transaction costs, and optimises inventory levels.

Through lean operations, just-in-time systems, and supplier integration, organisations can significantly reduce operating costs and improve profitability.

Example: Streamlining logistics routes and consolidating shipments can lower transport and warehousing expenses.

#### (ii) Improved Customer Satisfaction

By enhancing reliability, product availability, and delivery performance, effective SCM strengthens customer trust and loyalty.

Meeting or exceeding service-level expectations improves market reputation and customer retention rates.

Example: Accurate demand forecasting and responsive fulfilment ensure on-time delivery and consistent product quality.

#### (iii) Enhanced Competitive Advantage

Effective SCM allows an organisation to respond faster to market changes than competitors, differentiate through service levels, and leverage supplier capabilities for innovation. It also supports strategic positioning—whether cost leadership, differentiation, or focus.

Example: A consumer goods company using agile supply chains can introduce new products faster than competitors.

#### (iv) Greater Collaboration and Innovation

Strong supplier relationships and transparent communication lead to co-development opportunities, access to new technologies, and improved product design. This collaborative innovation can shorten lead times and improve sustainability performance.

#### (v) Risk Reduction and Supply Chain Resilience

Effective SCM identifies potential vulnerabilities early and establishes contingency plans. This reduces the likelihood and impact of disruptions from supplier failures, geopolitical events, or natural disasters.

Example: Dual sourcing and risk monitoring systems enhance continuity of supply.

#### (vi) Sustainability and Corporate Reputation

Integrating environmental and social considerations within SCM enhances compliance and brand image.

Sustainable sourcing and ethical procurement support long-term business viability and stakeholder confidence.

### 3. Strategic Impact

At the strategic level, effective supply chain management aligns operational activities with corporate goals such as growth, profitability, and sustainability. It transforms the supply chain from a cost centre into a strategic value driver.

For a global organisation like XYZ Ltd, effective SCM can:

- \* Support market expansion through reliable global sourcing.
- \* Enable cost-efficient operations across multiple countries.
- \* Build brand reputation through ethical and sustainable supply practices.
- \* Improve agility in responding to global market volatility.

#### Summary

In conclusion, effective supply chain management is the strategic integration of all activities and partners in the value chain to optimise performance, enhance responsiveness, and deliver superior customer value.

Its benefits include cost efficiency, improved service, risk mitigation, innovation, and sustainability- all of which contribute directly to achieving organisational objectives and long-term competitive advantage.

### NEW QUESTION # 44

What is meant by strategic alignment? How can a company ensure strategic alignment and what are the advantages of this? Describe 3 reasons why a company may find it difficult to become strategically aligned.

#### Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for complete answer.

Explanation:

Strategic alignment refers to the process of ensuring that all functions, resources, and activities within an organisation are coordinated and directed toward achieving the overarching corporate objectives.

In a supply chain context, it means aligning procurement, logistics, operations, marketing, and finance with the organisation's long-term goals and competitive strategy - whether that is cost leadership, differentiation, or innovation.

Effective strategic alignment ensures that every decision and process contributes to the same strategic purpose, avoiding internal conflict, duplication, or inefficiency.

#### 1. Meaning of Strategic Alignment

At its core, strategic alignment ensures that:

- \* The corporate strategy (vision, mission, and long-term goals) cascades down through functional strategies (supply chain, procurement, operations, HR, etc.).
- \* Every department and employee works in a way that supports enterprise-wide objectives.
- \* Resource allocation, key performance indicators (KPIs), and performance measures are consistent with the organisation's priorities.

Example:

If a company's corporate goal is "to achieve sustainable growth through innovation," its procurement and supply chain functions must align by sourcing ethically, supporting innovative suppliers, and adopting sustainable logistics solutions - not merely focusing on short-term cost savings.

#### 2. How a Company Can Ensure Strategic Alignment

A company can achieve strategic alignment through several key approaches:

##### (i) Cascading Strategic Objectives

Corporate objectives must be translated into clear functional and departmental goals. This ensures that every business unit understands its contribution to the overall mission. For example, a cost-leadership strategy must translate into supply chain objectives such as lean operations, supplier consolidation, and efficient logistics.

##### (ii) Cross-Functional Collaboration

Strategic alignment requires open communication and coordination across departments. Supply chain, marketing, finance, and operations must share information and make joint decisions to avoid siloed behaviour.

Mechanisms such as cross-functional teams, strategic steering committees, and integrated planning systems facilitate this alignment.

##### (iii) Consistent Performance Measurement

KPIs should be aligned across the organisation. For example, procurement savings, service levels, and sustainability metrics should directly support corporate profitability, customer satisfaction, and ESG goals.

##### (iv) Leadership and Vision Communication

Senior management must articulate a clear vision and reinforce it through culture, values, and consistent messaging. Leadership commitment ensures that employees at all levels understand and support the strategic direction.

##### (v) Integrated Planning and Technology

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, balanced scorecards, and strategic dashboards help align decisions by providing shared visibility of goals, performance, and data across all business functions.

### 3. Advantages of Strategic Alignment

#### (i) Organisational Cohesion and Clarity of Purpose

Strategic alignment ensures that all departments work toward the same objectives, improving cooperation and reducing internal conflict. It creates unity of direction and purpose.

#### (ii) Improved Performance and Efficiency

Aligned processes and goals eliminate duplication, reduce waste, and ensure that resources are focused on value-adding activities. This enhances productivity and cost-effectiveness.

#### (iii) Better Strategic Execution

Alignment ensures that strategies are implemented consistently across functions. Execution gaps - common when departments pursue conflicting objectives - are reduced.

#### (iv) Enhanced Responsiveness and Agility

When all functions share a common strategic framework, the organisation can adapt quickly to external changes (such as market shifts or supply chain disruptions) without losing focus on its strategic priorities.

#### (v) Strengthened Competitive Advantage

A well-aligned organisation is better positioned to deliver on its value proposition - whether through superior cost efficiency, innovation, or customer service - thereby sustaining long-term competitiveness.

4. Reasons Why a Company May Find It Difficult to Achieve Strategic Alignment Despite its benefits, many organisations struggle to become strategically aligned due to internal and external barriers. Three key reasons include:

#### (i) Organisational Silos and Conflicting Objectives

Departments often operate independently, with their own targets and KPIs that conflict with overall corporate strategy. For example, procurement might focus on lowest cost while marketing emphasises premium quality - resulting in misalignment. Overcoming functional silos requires strong governance and shared accountability.

#### (ii) Poor Communication and Lack of Strategic Clarity

If the corporate strategy is not clearly communicated or understood across all levels, employees may pursue short-term or localised objectives. Misinterpretation of strategic intent often leads to inconsistent decision-making and wasted effort.

#### (iii) Rapid Environmental Change

External changes - such as technological disruption, regulation, or shifting market dynamics - can make it difficult to maintain alignment. Strategies may become outdated faster than organisational structures can adapt, resulting in misalignment between planned goals and operational realities.

#### (iv) Cultural Resistance to Change (additional relevant point)

Employees and managers may resist changes that threaten established routines or power structures. Without a culture that supports strategic flexibility and innovation, alignment efforts may fail.

### 5. Summary

In summary, strategic alignment ensures that all parts of the organisation - from top-level strategy to day-to-day operations - work cohesively toward the same corporate goals.

It can be achieved through clear communication, cross-functional collaboration, aligned KPIs, and strong leadership.

The advantages include improved efficiency, stronger performance, and a sustained competitive edge.

However, alignment may be difficult to achieve due to siloed functions, poor communication, and environmental change.

A strategically aligned organisation is one where every decision - in procurement, operations, and supply chain - directly supports the overall mission and vision, driving both profitability and long-term resilience.

### NEW QUESTION # 45

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