

# SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE HEALTH SUPPLY CHAIN PROFESSIONALS

## (1) IS PROACTIVE

*Anticipating the future and doing whatever possible to improve the situation.*

A highly effective supply chain (SC) professional will quantify and flag imminent or probable risk to relevant stakeholders in order to avoid it. He/she will also monitor and report on performance and feedbacks into supply chain. A good supply chain practitioner should have interest in collecting good quality data (where possible) and use this data to make informed decisions and improve the system.

## (2) STARTS WITH THE GOAL IN MIND

*A customer or patient focused framework of mind.*

A highly effective SC professional is guided by an overall supply chain strategy, aware of the best supply chain practices and is not trying to copy other sectors'/individuals'/or countries' performance but endeavouring to identify and apply SC management techniques and practices particularly suited to the supply chain environment (cultural, geographical, political, infrastructure, etc.).

## (3) LISTENS FIRST

*In order to influence and help others, you must first actively listen to them and understand their concerns, while remaining humble and approachable.*

Set up a weekly meeting with key focal personnel of the supply team to receive updates on project progress, issues, challenges, and recommended solutions, i.e. purchasing, warehouse, finance, distribution and HR. Also, having knowledge of supply chain tools is quite important. The capability of affecting change with internal and external stakeholders will make good use of such tools.

## (4) PLANS AND PRIORITISES

*Decide which of the roles and goals are most important, then determine what steps will help best to achieve those goals. Be bold, move fast, stay flexible and have courage to change the plan if it does not work.*

The important steps in planning and prioritising:

- ensure that commodities are issued while working to maintain stock levels between max. and min. inventory levels;
- monitor speed and quality;
- ensure formulation and dealing with an *Essential Drug List*;
- check dashboard daily on key areas of importance which are relevant to your political environment.

Make decisions on the following trade-offs:

- centralization of stock vs. delivery frequency/quantity to be delivered;
- delivery frequency vs. cost of logistics/distribution;
- computerization vs. user-friendly system and staff expertise;
- data availability and accuracy vs. decision making enabling;
- Unloaded stock size/delivery frequency vs. local storeroom space capacity.

## (5) EMBRACES INNOVATION

*Balance experience with innovation.*

In order to achieve consistently good results, it is essential to keep abreast of the SC management developments and understand the supply chain context. Additionally, there should be a structure of continuous education through refresh training and supervision.

## (6) ENCOURAGES DIVERSITY AND COLLABORATION

*A team oriented focus, fair-mindedness and emotional openness to work with other people and build up a strong team spirit.*

Important factors for health supply chain:

- a good communication strategy and channel with stakeholders impacted by your services;
- focus on human resources involved in SC activities with continuous motivation and encouragement;
- effective collaboration inside and outside the organization, a good knowledge of the target audience;
- the skill to attract attention of the key stakeholders at any opportunity.

## (7) CONSIDERS THE NEEDS OF STAKEHOLDERS

*Seek solutions that help everyone.*

It is important to develop and sustain a high emotional intelligence, to have an eye for quality and promote the use of secure channels for data safety. Present data to the decision makers in such a way that grabs their attention and moves them into action.

*Based on the contributions of IAPHL members to a discussion on the habits of successful health supply chain professionals held in July 2014 and moderated by Pamela Steele (PSA Director).*