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The Significance of 'Relationship Management' as a Driver of Retention of Clients in Third Party Logistics (3PL): A Case Study in New Zealand.

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Logistics and Supply Chain Management

At Massey University, Albany, New Zealand.

## **ABSTRACT**

The principal objective of this research was to explore the trend and the role relationship management plays in keeping the Third Party Logistics (3PL) outsourcing businesses together. This research also aimed at highlighting the underlying factors in the business relationships among parties involved in Third Party Logistics (3PL) business, specifically in the New Zealand logistics industry. A literature review was conducted on a significant number of related articles to justify the research objective. This multi-case study has eight participant companies who were selected as representatives of the industry; a majority of them either market leaders or have a significant role in their business category. The eight case participants were classified into two groups: logistics service provider and logistics clients. Due to their unique operational and logistics activities, some participants fell in both categories. In-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted using semi-structured questionnaires with open-ended questions to tap into the vast industry knowledge and logistics expertise of the participants. Given the infrastructure of the Australasian logistics outsourcing industry, the result of this multi-case study has supported the results, finding, and theories of the previous researchers and academics that relationship management is the key to retaining a loyal customer base and a successful business arrangement between 3PL service providers and their clients.

**Keywords:** Supply Chain Management, Logistics Management, Logistics Outsourcing, Relationship, 3PL, Third Party Logistics, Customer Retention, Trust, Loyalty, Flexibility, Communication, Commitment, Capability, Collaboration, Customer Satisfaction, Service Accuracy, Cost Saving, Profitability, Literature Review.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who had a role to play in bringing this research into light. First, I would like to thank my wife for her patience and for her sacrifices to allow me to concentrate on my thesis and carry on continuing the other roles, which normally would be my responsibility in the first place. Then I would like to thank my boys Josh and Noah, who has been very understanding and making things lot easy for me by sacrificing many of their activities to make time for my thesis and Irene Peterson for being there for me. I would like to thank my Supervisor Alan Win, who has been very understanding with my situation and at times agreeing to meet me half ways on his travel route to help save me time. Moreover, also being a mentor, guiding me through every step of this thesis, and helping me with his feedback, resource materials and on top sharing his vast logistics experiences and making this thesis a resourceful material. Then I would like to thank Dr. Paul Childerhouse for his kind decision to help me complete this research. I would also like to thank Elina Lechtchinski for her help with reviewing the complete thesis. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Kathy Hamilton for her help with issues with my enrolments. I would also like to thank Helen Murray for being a friend, a mentor and for injecting this idea to carry out my logistics career further with this degree and helping me by organizing some important interviews to make this thesis a success. I would also like to convey my special thanks to my good friend Kamrul Ahsan Ph.D., for his input and advice and help to proofread of this thesis and for his valuable advice and feedback. Finally, I would also like to thank all the interview participants and special mentions to David Spencer, Katrina Cibilich, Tony Wakelin, Allan Kumar, Scott Dormer, Wayne Crabb, Barv Soma, Rivka Thomas and Mark Partridge for not worrying about the time frame and helping me with my thesis with their time, experience and industry knowledge.

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