International Journal of Academic Management Science Research (IJAMSR)
ISSN: 2643-900X
Vol. 4 Issue 10, October - 2020, Pages: 8-15

The Role of Outsourcing Supply Chain Management: A Study of Nigerian Breweries PLC

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Abstract: *Globally, business organizations give out part or whole of their non-core components of operations to service providers in order to focus attention on their core business activities. It has become an increasingly strategy especially in competitive business environment. This paper discusses the role of Outsourcing Supply Chain Management with particular focus on Nigerian Breweries PLC. Theoretically, the study is predicated on the Network Theory. Methodically, the study applied a combination of historical and descriptive research design methods. The sources of data collection were secondary and data was analysed qualitatively. One of the findings of the study is that supply chain in Nigerian Breweries starts from agriculture, that is, the raw materials source, then the malting, brewing, packaging, distribution to their customers and finally to the consumers. The study concludes that regardless of the reason, outsourcing succeeds when it is well thought out and done properly. It is recommended among other things that Nigerian Breweries should implement outsourcing supply chain by using a process-driven approach when outsourcing provides a systematic look at the 'how-to' details of developing an outsourcing plan.*

Keywords: Outsourcing, Supply Chain, Supply Chain Management, Brewery Industry, Nigerian Breweries PLC.

1. Introduction

Supply chain of various business entities which contain suppliers (acquire raw materials), manufacturers (creation of these raw materials to finished goods), distributors (circulate the finished goods to retailers) and retailers (sell it to final customers). These business entities are connected by transportation, storage facilities and they are incorporated through information, planning and integrated activities (Folorunso, 2013). Outsourcing is the strategic use of outside resources to perform activities traditionally handled by internal staff and resources (Baily et al., 2008). Outsourcing is a strategy by which an organisation contracts out major functions to specialised and efficient service providers, who become valued business partners (Griffiths, n.d.).

Outsourcing is done for various reasons. Generating cost reductions and downsizing has been a traditional reason for outsourcing. But there are others, such as gaining capabilities that are not available internally, implementing lean programs, streamlining operations, strategically positioning the company, or improving or adding capabilities to gain competitive advantage. Regardless of the reason, outsourcing succeeds when it is well thought out and done properly (Craig, 2003).

The Nigeria's Brewery industry is regarded as the second most competitive beer market in Africa, after South Africa (Sterling capital research, July 2010). The historical development of the brewery industry in Nigeria pre date the colonial era, but formally started as a result of the establishment of Nigerian Breweries Limited in 1946 (Nig. Brewery sector report, July 2014).The Nigerian brewing industry is dominated by Nigerian breweries PLC and Guinness Nigeria PLC controlling about 90% of the market, while other marginal players are Pabod Breweries and International Breweries, which control a small segment of the market apart from Nigerian Breweries and Guinness (Igwe, Robert. & Chukwu, 2016).

Outsourcing and Supply Chain Management (SCM) has both been recognised as alternative strategies to gain higher competitive advantage, other than to achieve greater organizational performance. Outsourcing contracts secured with Service Level Agreement (SLA) is an instrument to ensure that an organization's needs from the outsourced functions are satisfactorily met by the service provider. It allows organisation to use the expertise from outside of the company for its own benefits. SCM, as strategy is practiced also to satisfy organizations' needs. In comparison to outsourcing, it could have a bigger impact, thus signifies a higher degree of direct involvement and effort from internal parts of an organisation, as well as from its external parties. This is further to the need of a more complex and complicated arrangements prior to its implementation (Mazlan, & Ali, 2006).

SCM and outsourcing have both been given increasing attention since their applications were recognised by many as significant profit and performance enhancers. Every business is a part of a big SC and supply network (Handfield & Nichols, 1999). Nevertheless, the management of a company could choose to either; (a) implement only SCM, or (b) implement only outsourcing or (c) implement both outsourcing and SCM (Mazlan, & Ali, 2006).

Traditionally, outsourcing is an abbreviation for 'outside resource using' (Arnold, 2000). Currently, in the simplest of forms, outsourcing takes place when an organisation transfers the ownership of a service or function that used to be done in-house to a supplier. The degree of transfer of control is the defining characteristic of outsourcing. It concerns the transfer of routine and repetitive tasks to an outside source; having an outside vendor provides a service that you usually perform in-house'; and 'paying other firms to perform all or parts of the work (Zineldin & Bredenlow, 2003).

The broad objective of this paper is to discuss the role of outsourcing process in a supply chain management in brewery industry with focus on the Nigerian Breweries PLC. Specifically, the paper discusses the role of outsourcing in the supply chain management. The paper will also briefly discuss historical background of Nigerian Breweries, and supply chain activities in Nigerian Breweries.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Conceptual Review

2.1.2. The Concept of Outsourcing: Outsourcing is an abbreviation for 'outside resource using' (Arnold 2000). Outsourcing is a complex term as it embodies several descriptions and generally refers to the relocation of jobs (Cubides, 2006). Outsourcing is defined by Fiona (2006) as a business strategy that occurs when a business purchases services or products from another or when a business pays another company to provide services that the business might otherwise have employed its own staff to perform. It is referred to as the process of one company contracting with another company to provide services that might otherwise be performed by in-house employees (Sako, 2006).

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Nowadays there are two main types of outsourcing: total outsourcing and selective outsourcing. *Total outsourcing* happens when companies outsource all the activities within the selected function or service of the company. *Selective outsourcing* on the other hand can be done in four separate and distinct ways. The first is outsourcing on the individual level. It involves moving specific positions out of the organisation, for example the management of a poorly performing function or service. The second type is outsourcing on the functional level. The next type of selective outsourcing is the process level. The final level is outsourcing on the component level, which involves outsourcing the manufacture of component parts or sub-assemblies (O'Riordan & Sweeney, 2007).

2.1.2. The Concept of Supply Chain

The supply chain is the network of businesses and business processes involved the creation and selling of a product, from suppliers that procure raw materials through retail outlets and customers. The manufacturer also has internal supply chain processes for transforming the materials and services furnished by suppliers into finished goods and for managing materials and inventory. The supply chain not only includes the manufacturer and its suppliers, but also (depending on the logistics flows) transporters, warehouses, retailers, and consumers themselves. It includes, but is not limited to, new product development, marketing, operations, distribution, finance, and customer service (Chopra & Meindl, 2001).

A supply chain is a network between a company and its suppliers to produce and distribute a specific product to the final buyer. This network includes different activities, people, entities, information, and resources. The supply chain also represents the steps it takes to get the product or service from its original state to the customer. A supply chain involves a series of steps involved to get a product or service to the customer. The steps include moving and transforming raw materials into finished products, transporting those products, and distributing them to the end-user. The entities involved in the supply chain include producers, vendors, warehouses, transportation companies, distribution centers, and retailers (Kenton, 2020).

2.1.3 The Concept of Supply Chain Management

Supply chain management (SCM) can be defined as the configuration, coordination and continuous improvement of a sequentially organized set of operations. The goal of supply chain management is to provide maximum customer service at the lowest cost possible. A customer is anyone who uses the output of a process. Therefore, the customer's customer is important to any organization that is focused on customer service (Chima, 2007).

Supply chain management has been "The delivery of enhanced customer and economic value through synchronised management of the flow of physical goods and associated information from sourcing to consumption" (LaLonde & Innis, 1994, p. 78). According to Supply Chain Resources Cooperative (2017), SCM is the active management of supply chain activities to maximize customer value and achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.

In a supply chain, a company will link to its suppliers upstream and to its distributors downstream in order to serve its customers. Usually, materials, information, capital, labour, technology, financial assets and other resources flow through the supply chain. Since the goal of the firm is to maximize profits, the firm must maximize benefits and minimize costs along the supply chain. The firm must weigh the benefits versus the costs of each decision it makes along its supply chain. Supply chain management is therefore an extension of the focus on customer service (Chima, 2007).

2.2. Theoretical Review: The Network Theory (NT)

According to Gichuru, Iravo, and Iravo (2015) the performance of a firm depends not only on how efficiently it cooperates with its direct partners, but also on how well these partners cooperate with their own business partners. The Network theory can be used to provide a basis for the conceptual analysis of reciprocity in cooperative relationships (Oliver & Webber, 1982).

When supply chain network is fully optimized, the risks involved will be reduced and easily managed. Risk factors can be strategic and tactical in nature. Network optimization enables the company to model and evaluate the impact of potential unplanned events, understand their impact, determine the costliest effective strategies and formulate contingency plans (Folorunso, 2013). The firm's continuous interaction with other players becomes an important factor in the development of new resources and in situation where the resources of two organizations are combined they tend to achieve more advantages than through individual efforts (Haakansson & Snehota, 1995; Haakansson & Ford, 2002).

Network theory helps to develop and apply a strategic way of designing the whole supply chain network. It includes the evaluation of supply network from the supplier to the customers. It balances the flow of goods and enables the company to compete successfully. Reducing the supply chain cost implies optimization of network theory takes into account all the excessive costs and design that deals with the network design and allow you to decide most optimal network configuration for the business (Folorunso, 2013).

Network Optimization provides value with its flexible and easy to model conditional (what-if) simulation capabilities that enable powerful decision support for making tough strategic business decisions. It enables you to answer tough trade off questions such as inventory pre-build versus overtime, or single source vs. multi-source. You can also perform quick and comprehensive what-if analysis against multiple demand scenarios, evaluate currency fluctuations, acquisitions to your distribution and supply network (Folorunso, 2013, p. 34).

2.3. Empirical Review

2.3.1. The Role of Outsourcing in Supply Chain Management

Outsourcing is a corporate decision that lies in the policy and business strategy of an organisation, as it modifies the firm's boundaries as a legal entity and generally involves corporate decision makers at different levels of the supply chain both locally and internationally. It affects company-wide resource allocation policies and asset management practices, as these outsourcing decisions often involve several divisions in large, diversified companies (Rodrigo, 2016). It is also evident that the outsourcing of supply chain activities conventionally is an internal affair of firms to third party partners. It has become increasingly important in recent years. While in the past outsourcing was primarily relegated to the procurement of non-core components and services, today the outsourcing trend has expanded to include virtually every activity of a firm, including core and non-core components, business processes, information technology processes, manufacturing and distribution activities, and customer support activities (Chamberland, 2003; Gottfredson, Puryear & Phillips, 2005; Holcomb & Hitt, 2007).

Supply chain management (SCM) and outsourcing have been widely recognised as important tools to enhance organisational performance. Outsourcing and SCM have both been recognised as alternative strategies to gain higher competitive advantage, other than to achieve greater organisational performance. Outsourcing contracts secured with Service Level Agreement (SLA) is an instrument to ensure that an organisation's needs from the outsourced functions are satisfactorily met by the service provider. It allows organisation to use the expertise from outside of the company for its own benefits. SCM, as strategy is practiced also to satisfy organisation's needs. In comparison to outsourcing, it could have a bigger impact, thus signify a higher degree of direct involvement and effort from internal parts of an organisation, as well as from its external parties. This is further to the need of a more complex and complicated arrangements prior to its implementation (Mazlan & Ali, 2006).

Outsourcing strategy is adopted by companies so as to be more cost effective in its operations, the needed for the company to improve the quality of the services, and to acquire the expertise required. Through outsourcing the company is able to improve on service delivery and efficiency, improve responsiveness to needs of clients and improve company focus (Wabwile & Namusonge, 2015). Increasing number of companies however has adopted a strategy which led to the outsourcing of more activities to suppliers (McIvor, 2003).

According to Mazlan & Ali (2006), this strategy has resulted in the company becoming a 'systems integrator', in which it manages and coordinates a network of best production and service providers. Such strategy is based on the premise that the company should outsource those activities (both production and service) where it can develop no strategic advantage, with the supply base comprising a network of specialist focusing on their distinct area of competence delivering products and services to the systems integrator. Therefore, it may be seen that the growing practice of outsourcing by a company could in the end lead to the implementation of SCM. This could be further encouraged by the intensifying competition among industry players, and the widening trend of supply network competing against other supply networks rather than single entity or company against others.

3. Research Methodology

The methodologies of the paper are historical and descriptive research design, and the method and sources of data were from secondary (indirect) sources through an extensive study and review of textbooks, newspapers, magazines, journals, periodicals, the internets-based materials, archival materials, bulletins, and other documented materials that have treated the subject matter of this study or/and other related topics. It is purely non-statistical research based. Data were analysed qualitatively based on their relevance on the synergy between the outsourcing and supply chain management with focus on Nigerian Breweries PLC.

4. Discussion

4.1. Brief Historical Background of Nigerian Breweries

Nigerian Breweries Plc, a subsidiary of the Heineken N.V. Group (the second largest brewing company in the world by volume with operations spanning over 70 countries), is the pioneer and largest brewing Company in Nigeria. Nigerian Breweries Limited was incorporated in 1946 as a limited liability company and produced the first bottle of Star lager beer at the Lagos Brewery in June 1949 (Agusto & Co., 2019).

Globally, Heineken commenced operations in 1864 when 22-yearold Gerard Adriaan Heineken bought the Haystack Brewery based in Amsterdam (Heineken International, n.d. as cited in Akinyoade, Ekumankama & Uche, 2016). The company, which is now the third largest beer producer in the world, has operations in 178 countries and employs 81,000 persons worldwide (Heineken Annual Report, 2014). The advent of Heineken in Nigeria, however, dates back to 1900 when the company started exporting beer through the United Africa Company (UAC) to West Africa. First established in 1879, UAC was essentially a trading (Flint, 1974; Abdulkadir (Abdulkadir, 1996, as as cited in Akinyoade, Ekumankama & Uche, 2016). Industrialization was therefore not its focus. By the mid-1930s the company was shipping 6000hL of beer to Nigeria and Ghana. Earlier, UAC considered the possibility of establishing a refinery in Nigeria. Nothing came out of this, however. Developments in Gold Coast caused the company to rethink its trading position (Akinyoade, Ekumankama & Uche, 2016).

The Nigerian Breweries later became a public limited liability company and was listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) in 1973 (Agusto & Co., 2019). In 1993, the Company acquired its fifth brewery in Enugu and in 2003, a sixth brewery (Ama Brewery), sited at Amaeke Ngwo in Enugu State was commissioned. Operations in the old Enugu Brewery were discontinued in 2004 following the completion of Ama Brewery. An ultra-modern malting plant was acquired in Aba in 2008 (Nigerian Breweries PLC., 2019).

In October 2011, the Company acquired majority equity interests in two companies, Sona Systems Associates Business Management Limited (Sona Systems), with two breweries in Ota and Kudenda, Kaduna, and Life Breweries Company Limited (Life Breweries) with a brewery in Onitsha (now a Distribution Centre). Another malting plant located in Kudenda Brewery, Kaduna was acquired as part of the Sona Systems acquisition. Sona Systems and Life Breweries were merged with the Company in the middle of 2012. At the end of 2014, an enlarged Nigerian Breweries Plc emerged from a merger with Consolidated Breweries Plc. Three breweries at Imagbon, near Ijebu Ode, Awo-Omamma, near Owerri and Makurdi (now a Distribution Centre) were added to the existing eight breweries as a result of the merger (Nigerian Breweries PLC., 2019).

Nigerian Breweries Plc has a rich portfolio of high quality brands: Star lager beer was launched in 1949, followed by Gulder lager beer in 1970. Maltina, the nourishing malt drink, was introduced in 1976, followed by Legend Extra Stout in 1992 and Amstel Malta in 1994. Heineken lager beer was re-launched into the Nigerian market in 1998. Maltina Sip-it, packaged in Tetrapaks was launched in 2005, while Fayrouz, the premium non-alcoholic soft drink, was launched in 2006. Climax, an herbal energy drink was launched in 2010. Following the acquisition of Sona Systems and Life Breweries in 2011, Goldberg lager, Malta Gold and Life Continental lager, were added to the brand portfolio. As a major brewing concern, Nigerian Breweries Plc encourages the establishment of ancillary businesses. These include manufacturers of bottles, cans, crown corks, labels, cartons, plastic rates and service providers such as hotels/clubs, distributors, transporters, event managers, advertising and marketing communication agencies amongst others (Nigerian Breweries Plc, 2014).

4.2. Supply Chain Activities in the Nigerian Breweries

International Journal of Academic Management Science Research (IJAMSR)
ISSN: 2643-900X
Vol. 4 Issue 10, October - 2020, Pages: 8-15

Nigerian Breweries Plc supply chain begins from the purchasing of their main raw materials (Sorghum and Maize), which covers about 67% cost value of their total materials from indigenous farmers while the remaining 33% are imported. These materials are transported by trucks to their manufacturing plants locations where the manufacturing processes take place. After production, the beverages are transported to their warehouses. The beverages are distributed from their warehouses to sale offices or depots where retailers come for purchase (Folorunso, 2013).

Nigerian Breweries has made efforts geared towards reducing cost. The company has recorded some success in reducing costs following the implementation of its Total Cost Management (TCM) programme in line with the Heineken group's global cost reduction strategy. Some of the key steps implemented have included: outsourcing non-core functions like security and forklift driving, haulage, implementation of SAP (an enterprise resource planning software) and switching to a Defined Contribution Pension scheme from the Defined Benefit Scheme (Vetiva Capital Market Limited, 2010).

The supply chain in Nigerian Breweries starts from agriculture i.e. the raw materials, then the malting, brewing, packaging, distribution to their customers and finally to the consumers. The supply chain of Nigerian Breweries Plc aided with Nigeria's weather condition has boosted the growth of Nigeria brewing industry. At the same time, Nigeria brewing industry helped the growth of the Nigeria agriculture sector by using locally cultivated raw materials by farmers. Supply chain network in Nigerian Breweries includes all cost of transportation, manufacturing, sourcing, storage and labour. It also rationalizes capital assets, optimizes product and customer mix therefore improving the company's profit (Folorunso, 2013, pp. 33-37).

Outsourced supply chain in Nigerian Breweries has evolved over the years from simple, linear connections between its businesses and suppliers to an interconnected network spanning continents, departments and functions. It has consisted of several elements and functions ranging from product development, operations and marketing to finance, distribution networks and customer service. Managing and optimizing these different elements and functions requires skill, expertise and access to best-in-class resources.

Due to insufficiency of raw materials for production of the products made the company to outsource even beyond the shore of Nigeria because the quantity that can be gotten within the country is always small. The requisite expertise skills required to produce these products is another reason for outsourcing. These two factors are the first reasons that necessitated outsourcing by Nigerian Breweries PLC (Ayantoyinbo & Adepoju, 2017). Similar to these are; the patient rights and the ability to focus on the main production activities. The ingredients used in producing the different products of the company are usually mixed with various formulae which need to remain the secret of the company.

In order to focus on the main activities of the company, the company contracts out her logistics to third party logistics service providers. The next thing there is the equipment that is being used to mix and brew the ingredients. Although, thes are located across almost all the sites of the company, it is a technical area where the company source for technically special skills to operate the equipment. The company also outsources non-core services and procures certain ingredients for security reasons. From all indication, capital is the least factor that made the company to outsource (pp. 42-43).

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Outsourcing is done for various reasons. One of the reason can be generating cost reductions and downsizing, which has been a traditional reason for outsourcing. But there are others, such as gaining capabilities that are not available internally, implementing lean programs, streamlining operations, strategically positioning the company, or improving or adding capabilities to gain competitive advantage. Regardless of the reasons, outsourcing succeeds when it is well thought out and done properly.

Done right, supply chain management results in smooth business operations and happy customers. This is because SCM is essential to maintaining healthy inventory levels, ensuring fast and reliable delivery of customers' orders and healthy profit margins for businesses.

It is recommended that Nigerian Breweries should implement outsourcing supply chain by using a process-driven approach when outsourcing provides a systematic look at the 'how-to' details of developing an outsourcing plan. The steps in the process need to be followed to ensure that the company is being thorough in the management of the outsourcing relationship.

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