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# Выбор модели взаимодействия отдела логистики с другими подразделениями импортирующей компании

**Аннотация**

Одной из важных задач импортирующих компаний является сокращение непроизводительных затрат рабочего времени сотрудников отдела логистики, возникающих вследствие неэффективного взаимодействия закупочного подразделения с другими организационными структурными единицами. В статье рассматривается основной круг вопросов, которые затрагиваются в ходе взаимодействия отдела закупочной логистики с прочими подразделениями компании-импортера. Исследование детализирует состав циркулирующей между отделами документации, разделяя ее на две условные группы – входящую и исходящую – в зависимости от направленности движения в организации относительно отдельно взятого подразделения. Автором подчеркивается важность для налаживания внутриорганизационных коммуникаций выбора типа организационной структуры, посредством которой в компании будет осуществляться логистическое управление. В статье описываются базовые принципы, на основании которых могут выделяться внутренние структуры службы логистики, а также приводятся примеры сочетания нескольких принципов для отдельных логистических функций. Особое внимание уделяется формату взаимодействия между сотрудниками различных подразделений и основным проблемам, существующим в данной области. Исследование позволило выработать ряд предложений по разрешению выявленных затруднений. Среди предложенных мер – распространение на деятельность всех подразделений организаций базовых принципов логистического управления, оптимальное разделение полномочий по формированию характеристик материального потока между отделом логистики и отделом продаж компании-импортера, регламентирование бизнес-процессов в логистике и широкое внедрение информационных технологий в процесс делового общения.

**Ключевые слова:**

внутриорганизационные коммуникации, закупочная логистика, информационный поток, логистическое управление, организационная структура, регламентация бизнес-процессов.

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## Choice of cooperation model of the logistics department with other departments of an importing company

**Abstract**

One of the important challenges for importing companies is reducing of the non-productive work time expenditures of the logistics staff, which are created by inefficient order of interaction between the procurement department and the other organizational units. The article describes the basic range of issues that are addressed during the course of the interaction of the procurement logistics division with the other departments of an importing company. The research details the documentation circulating between the business units by dividing it into two indicative groups of the documents – incoming and outgoing – depending on the direction of its flow in the organization in relation to the logistics department. The author emphasizes the importance of the choice of the organizational structure type through which there will be performed the processes of logistics management in the company for better internal communication. The article provides the basic principles that could serve to allocate the internal structural sub-divisions of the logistics department, and also the specific examples of combination of few approaches for certain logistics functions. The special attention is paid to the format for interaction between the staff of different business units and to the main challenges that exist in this area. The research allowed to make some suggestions on addressing the identified problems. Among the measures proposed are spreading of the logistics principles on the activity of all divisions of the company, better distribution of the tasks relating to the generation of material flow parameters between the logistics department and the sales department of an importing company, regulating of business processes in logistics and wider deployment of the information technologies in the business communication.

**Keywords:**

corporate communications, procurement logistics, informational flow, logistics management, organizational structure, regulation of business processes.

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Nowadays almost all companies that set the goal of making a profit face the necessity of resolving different logistics problems. Literally all the economic branches have the demand for solving issues relating to the logistics sphere. There are all main function areas of lo-

gistics represented in one form or another in majority of commercial organizations – procurement, warehousing logistics, transport logistics and distribution logistics, – to which the production logistics also adds in manufacturing companies, and in companies carrying out

export – import operations – the foreign trade logistics. In spite of the fact that the Russian economy has made the import substitution its policy for most of the economic sectors, importing of raw and other materials and consumer goods still keeps its critical importance. For example, in 2016 the imports decreased less than by 1 % in dollar terms in comparison with 2015, and the annual increase in import in the product category «Machinery, equipment and transport means» reached more than 5 % [2]. In the meantime, the import firms have to perform procurement activities amid advanced risks that are associated with foreign exchange fluctuations and complicated political situation in the world.

In this case the optimization of logistical costs of importing companies is getting more and more important. In the first instance, it is necessary to focus on curtailment of the dead expenses which are connected to logistic management in organization itself, which include loss of working hours of logistics specialists and, consequently, company's financial losses caused by inefficient order of interaction of the supply department with other corporate structural units.

The interaction areas between the department that is responsible for carrying out of procurement with principal business departments of a company are represented in the table 1.

The interaction areas represented in the table 1 are not the only possible for an importing company, and the list of the departments is defined by the organization structure existing in a specific company. Several organizational units which are minimally involved in direct performing of logistics function, such as personnel department and secretariat, have almost the same interaction area with the other business units: for example, in the case of personnel department such an area is employment and discharge of the staff, business travel authorization form execution and other contact points common for all the structural units.

The areas of interinfluence involve all the levels of management – strategic, tactical and operational. That regrouping of various tasks between the horizons of management in different balance would be one of the measures to optimize the expenditure of all resources for implementation of the logistics management.

There is a flow of documentation – both strictly regulated and of no particular form for internal use – circulating constantly between the departments and relating to the logistics management (see table 2).

The documentary forms relate to the specific areas of the interaction that are mentioned in the table 1 clearly enough. Strictly regulated forms of the documents include original shipping documents of the delivery, the

Table 1

#### **The interaction areas between the supply logistics department and the other departments of an importing company**

<b>Department or designated person</b>	<b>Range of questions that are solved in cooperation or under coordination of the logistics department</b>
General director, CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– specification of the product range structure for procurements;</li> <li>– identification of supplier base for procurements;</li> <li>– coordination of delivery of goods for the biggest or the most significant projects;</li> <li>– development of the strategy of interaction with suppliers;</li> <li>– determination of the price setting course</li> </ul>
Sales department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– specification of the product range structure for procurements;</li> <li>– price setting;</li> <li>– development of the inventory management system;</li> <li>– arrangement of delivery terms – time of delivery, transport and technological pattern, packing and wrapping materials, and sometimes also choice of an agent for realization of delivery (transport and forwarding companies, logistics operators, customs brokers, insurance companies);</li> <li>– current cooperation relating to processing by the logistics department of the requests that concern calculation of the purchase cost of the goods;</li> <li>– development of the service level of «from door to door» cargo delivery organization</li> </ul>
Finance department, accounting department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– drawing up of the purchasing budget in the short and medium terms;</li> <li>– statement of reference of purchase costs reduction for the certain product groups;</li> <li>– current cooperation relating to processing of the payment requests that refer to merchandise payments and payments for logistic services;</li> <li>– current cooperation relating to the interchange of original documents (letters of attorney, shipping documents);</li> <li>– reconciliation with the suppliers and the other partners of an importing company</li> </ul>
IT department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– logistic software adjustment</li> </ul>
Quality department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– quality assurance;</li> <li>– admission to sale of the articles, the parameters of which exceed tolerances</li> </ul>
Warehouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– coordination of acceptance at stock and ex-stock delivery;</li> <li>– communication of the information about the exact amount and condition of the cargo (goods) arrived at stock and its package;</li> <li>– making decision on repacking of the cargo (goods) in case of delivery according the scheme «supplier → warehouse of an importer → warehouse of a consumer»</li> </ul>

*The table 1 has been drawn up by the author on the material of the research.*

Table 2

## The document flow between the logistic department and the other departments of an importing company

Department or designated person	Outgoing documentation, which is sent to the logistic department	Incoming documentation, which is sent by the logistic department
General director, CEO	Requests that concern calculation of purchase cost of the goods and receiving the detailed information from suppliers and transport companies	- responses to the requests that concern calculation of purchase cost of the goods and provision of the detailed information from suppliers and transport companies; - notification of arrival of the cargo (goods) in stock; - notification of the target dates of shipment of the goods from supplier's warehouse and arrival in stock of the company
Sales department	Requests that concern calculation of purchase cost of the goods and receiving the detailed information from suppliers and transport companies.	- responses to the requests that concern calculation of purchase cost of the goods and provision of the detailed information from suppliers and transport companies; - notification of arrival of the cargo (goods) in stock; - notification of target dates of shipment of the goods from supplier's warehouse and arrival in stock of the company
Finance department, accounting department	- Information about the maximum budget available for payments for goods to suppliers and for transport services to logistic companies - Information about the state of mutual settlements with suppliers and transport companies - Attorney letter on receipt of goods and materials	- payment requests that refer to merchandise payments and payments for the services provided by the partners of the company that take part in supply maintenance (transport companies, customs brokers, insurance companies); - reconciliation reports and bills received from suppliers and the partners of the company that take part in supply maintenance; - original shipping documents and original documents confirming service delivery by the partners of the company that take part in supply maintenance
IT department	Instructions for working with the software	- applies for the software adjustment; - applies for development of the software; - applies for repair/replacement of the office automation equipment
Quality department	- information on the results of quality control of the delivery - submission about the possibility of realization of the goods the parameters of which exceed tolerances; - reports on quality of lots of the goods.	- applies for quality assurance of the goods delivered or the samples of products; - applies for admission to sale of the articles the parameters of which exceed tolerances
Warehouse	- original shipping documents; - copy of acceptance report.	Precise up-to-date information about the date of arrival of the cargo (goods) in stock, about the driver and the truck

The table 2 has been drawn up by the author on the material of the research.

forms regulated on the level of an organization involve different reports, submissions and instructions. In practice, the most numerous group of the forms that circulate between the departments of the company are non-regulated and often unstructured requests, inquiries, applies and responses to it. Regulation of these forms involving its structuring and determining of the list of data that it should contain represents one of the optimization directions for business interaction between the logistic department and the other structural units of the company.

The main side of the problem of proper interaction between the business units of the company consists in the organizational design chosen for implementation of the logistics management. As many of logistics tasks are closely intertwined with activities of the other structural departments, so the decision on centralization or decentralization of the logistics function in the company acquires much importance. The traditional centralized system of the logistics management implies «diffusion» of such areas of responsibility as procurement, organization of transport to clients,

warehouse management – with no logistic department formally established as a structural division – between sales department, finance department, accounting department, warehouse and other business units. As a general rule, centralization of logistic function is reflected in assignment of a special unit in the organization structure of the company, whose responsibility includes all the stages of material flow management – from initial contacts with suppliers to goods delivery to clients.

However, determination of the logistics function organizational aspect in a company is not confined to taking the decision on assignment of a separate department in its structure. Beside this, firstly, it is necessary to determinate the internal structure of the logistics department and, secondly, to regulate the range of the effects that the logistics department has on the other business units of the organization.

In the determination of internal structural divisions of the logistics department there are the following basic principles, which could be advanced as grounds.

1. Functional approach, which provides the performance of the whole cluster of logistics tasks that covers several or only one functional area of logistics by all members of the department. With this type of logistics unit structure every member of logistics staff is engaged in all the issues of these functional areas or one of them. Such approach is widely applicable in small enterprises and also in medium-sized business operating reasonably small number of items of materials and supplies and also goods. This approach, moreover, is suitable for the companies that do not have geographically remote business units of strategic importance.

2. Geographical approach reflected in the assignment in the logistics department several substructures or working groups serving particular regions, where the company performs logistics activity. This approach is most typical for the organizations that have the branches network in different geographical areas of the country or the world. The limiting factor in this case is measurable territorial diffusion of suppliers and also warehouse spaces, which could complicate the work of some particular logistics substructure detached according to the geographical principle. The choice of a matrix structure for the logistics department, which would solve the problem of controlling actions coordination in logistics area inside the division of logistics, could become the way out.

3. Assortment approach, which is realized by forming in the logistics department of separate substructures or working groups that are responsible for logistics execution of particular kinds of materials, supplies and goods or for interaction with particular group of suppliers or clients. This approach is optimal for organization of performance of the logistics department of the companies purchasing and realizing thousands of nomenclature units, and also for the companies that give priority to the development of long-term mutual beneficial relationships with suppliers and clients, each of which provides prominent procurement or sales volume respectively.

Using only one of the above-mentioned approaches in the activity of an organization is not a single option. In fact, a combination of different approaches for particular logistics functions in the company in some cases becomes an efficient solution to improve the logistics management. For example, in a procurement department, the structure of which bases on the geographical approach of dividing all suppliers into the zones «Russia», «China», «Southeast Asia» and «Europe», could be set up a position of a logistics specialist responsible for purchasing on clients' demand of the higher price segment regardless of the country of origin. The same combined principle can underlie the warehousing management: warehouses could be organized separately for storage and consolidation

of consignments of certain goods (assortment approach), but there is a position of warehouse organized in the stocker system, which involves handling of shipments in specific regions (geographical criterion) recognized for its great particularity.

The connection of the logistics department with other business units of the company from the point of view of administrative actions realization can be reflected in a few principal, the most effective forms of organizational structure.

A) The logistics department performs coordination function. In such type of the structures the logistics unit coordinates work of "horizontal" and "vertical" structures by interacting with them and taking responsibility for specific decisions and actions in logistics that relate exactly to these departments.

B) The logistics department is given the role of acting as a conduit between, on one hand, the business-units formulating targets and, on the other hand, the departments delivering services.

In this case the logistics department converts performance targets (planned cost-effectiveness, volume of sales, purchase cost), which it receives from the key management personnel and such business units as the sales department, the finance department and the accounting department, into the concrete list of tasks and directives that is forwarded to the divisions and independent contractors directly involved in logistic operations – to the warehouses, transport companies – partners and, on several occasions, the suppliers.

C) The logistics department performs consulting and control functions.

If non-logistics staff of the company have enough knowledge of management of material flows in the part of logistics chain that they are directly or indirectly responsible for, then the activity of the logistics department is limited to consulting, regulation of carrying out logistics functions by different subdivisions of the company and monitoring of the implementation of such regulations.

Apart from the above-mentioned forms of interaction for project work and better logistics management in the company on the whole there are cross-function teams organized. The distinct advantage of such teams – to a greater extent – and performing by the logistics department of the coordination function, the role of a conduit between the business units formulating targets and the department delivering services, the consulting and control functions – to a lesser degree – consists of prominent flexibility and adaptability, which are not typical for the place of a logistics department in traditional, line, functional and line-functional organizational structures [4].

Particular attention should be given to the format for cooperation of the colleagues from different

departments. For example, provided that the departments are placed in the neighboring rooms inside one building in some cases – for meetings and for communication of information at the same time with providing of original documents – verbal communication is acceptable and positive, because it makes a contribution to cultivation of the comfortable psychic atmosphere of collegial collaboration in the collective. However, the transfer of a main role to verbal communication in the process of internal collaboration is inadmissible for a range of the following reasons.

1. Impossibility of daily direct communication of the staff that work in the departments situated in different geographical places.

2. Growth of wasteful time expenditure relating to physical moving of the personnel between the departments in order to pass information along to colleagues from the other business units.

3. Increased risk of misrepresentation of information during its verbal communication to the other person.

4. Increased risk of partial loss of information during its receiving by the person verbally.

5. Absence of a physical evidence of the fact of passing and receiving information.

6. Diminished accountability of the staff for taking decisions based on verbal directives of the senior staff.

It is important to note that corporate communications via telephone have almost the same disadvantages as live interaction except for the necessity of physical presence in the immediate area of an interlocutor.

In that regard, the question of organization of the flow of information between the logistics department and the other business units of the company: it is necessary to introduce in the organization the centralized information system for reporting a current status of the material and financial flows, which would accelerate and simplify the decision-making process in the logistics division. Using messengers and other supplementary software for internal and external communication of the staff with the partners could become an addition to incorporation of the integrated ERP-system. One of the important tasks is to spread as wide as possible e-mail correspondence and messaging for the issues of corporate interest.

In the light of the pointed interaction and communication aspects that exist between the logistics department and other business units of the company, it is practical to mark out the main problems emerging in this area.

1. Absence of clear separation of the problems and issues between departments, which deepens a seeming conflict of objectives between, on one hand, the logistics department and, on the other hand, the finance and accounting departments on such subjects as the following:

- determination of assortment of the goods for purchases;
- determination of special transportation and storage conditions;
- selection of transport and consumer packaging;
- development of distribution system;
- implementation of measures for sales promotion;
- sales forecasting and stock management.

2. Impractical organization structure of the logistics department itself.

3. Rigidity in interaction of the logistics department with other business units and in the process of addressing problems inside the subdivision.

4. Overrepresentation of unregulated verbal interaction in the structure of corporate communications.

For the complex solving of the challenges emerging in the area of the logistics management it is necessary to develop a single approach to implementation of logistic function within existing organizational chart or simultaneously with its transformation.

An option might be a balanced system of intra-organizational relations based on such principles of the logistics management as total quality management, optimizing total costs and systematic approach. The main objective of functioning of such a balanced system becomes collaboration of all business units of the company over satisfying both goals at the same time – meeting to the utmost the needs of the clients and optimization of the company's costs in its pursuit [1]. In this case the allocation of responsibility between two divisions setting parameters of the material flow – the logistic department and the sales department – is increasingly important [5] (see table 3).

The allocation of the tasks between the logistics department and the sales department that is represented in the table 3 has a number of advantages over other alternatives for several reasons.

1. Respect for the principle of cost minimization.  
2. Optimization of the stock management costs, which is achieved by concentrating of this function almost entirely in the logistics department.

3. Basic providing of profitability of the company's activity by designation of the target rentability on the planning stage of procurement.

However, the concept described has also some disadvantages. Firstly, the handover of a full range of subjects related to the goods transportation requires the staff of the logistics department to be highly qualified, which means having a firm grasp of the methods of settling of all possible off-nominal situation, which might emerge during the delivery of the goods. The special attention should be paid, among other things, to the psychological preparation of logistics specialists for the

Table 3

**Possible allocation of tasks for development of the material flow parameters between the logistic department and the sales department of an importing company**

Functional area of logistics	Logistic department	Sales department
Procurement logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– determination of admissible delay of payment to a supplier;</li> <li>– identification of a list of strategically important suppliers;</li> <li>– calculation of acquisition cost (a price that is set by a supplier + logistics costs for delivery and customs clearance);</li> <li>– identification of the product range for procurements;</li> <li>– determination of admissible range of acquisition costs;</li> <li>– selection of the transport packaging suitable for the suppliers, and also transport vehicles for the delivery and lift-on lift-off machines for logistic processing of the cargo;</li> <li>– receiving information on productive capacities of the suppliers;</li> <li>– search for new suppliers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– development of assortment policy of the company;</li> <li>– identification of a list of accessories and complementary parts going after the basic orders</li> </ul>
Warehouse logistics and stock management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– choice of the type of inventory management system;</li> <li>– formation of a technologic type of the warehouse and a scheme of organization of its functioning;</li> <li>– determination of the order point;</li> <li>– identification of the surplus stock</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– establishing policy of the company in the context of back orders and follow-up orders, and as a consequence, maintenance service level in the area of stockpile;</li> <li>– organization of clearance sales of unsaleable goods from the stock</li> </ul>
Distribution logistics	Organization of delivery of goods to the clients from the warehouse of the company or directly from the supplier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– establishing of the price policy of the company;</li> <li>– designation of the target profitability;</li> <li>– determination of service level in the area of quality of the goods;</li> <li>– selection of the transport packaging suitable for the clients;</li> <li>– search of new distribution channels</li> </ul>
Transport logistics	Organization of delivery of goods from door to door	–

The table 3 has been drawn up by the author on the material of the research.

direct communication via telephone with representatives of the clients in the case of delivery delay, deterioration or breakage of the goods. Secondly, the successful functioning of the interaction system with such a division of responsibilities that means in fact almost total referral of the transport logistics at the disposal of the logistics department requires building the organizational structure and the work of logistics unit in a manner that would provide full exchange of information on the delivery process with the sales department in real time.

As mentioned earlier, the important stage of the logistics management in a company is specification of internal structure of the logistics department. The most appropriate is application of the combined approach to allocation of substructures of the logistics department with consideration for the character of business activity of a particular enterprise. It is also important to perform building the regulated processes that describe the format for interaction between the business units, the development of procedures of allocation of responsibility and distribution of powers inside the logistics division, the order of cross-function communications.

Regulation of business processes in logistics is the central aspect of the logistics management whether different departments of the company interact or it

is a case of any communication inside the logistic department. The key processes should be reflected and established in the specially developed instructions – regulations, in preparing of which different business units of the company can take part in so far as their area of responsibility is affected by these regulations. In the implementation of the procedures and patterns described in the instructions using of electronic means of communication – first and foremost, e-mail and messengers – plays a major role, because such type of communication technologies makes it possible to record and save the information about delegation of tasks and its progress. It is also worth noting the importance of using support software intended for planning and allocation of tasks between the employees. Nevertheless, even regulated written communication can't replace scheduled meetings of the staff, which give the opportunity of discussion of new ideas and projects and also development of programs of joint actions. The most effective way to structure the process of exchange of the information during meetings is its recording with subsequent monitoring of implementation [3].

The primary objective of optimization of the interaction between the logistic department and other divisions of the company is rational organization of the information flows for the efficient material flow

management as well as the financial flow management. A key part in achieving of this objective, regardless of chosen interaction model, should be played by the development of the system of procedures structuring the process of exchange of information inside the company. Another advisable significant element of the

suggested communication model is widespread deployment of information technologies in the business communication process of the logistics department and other divisions and business units of the organization.

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