

**Textile and Apparel Supply Chain Management Technology Adoption
*The Burlington Industries Case and Beyond***

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ABSTRACT

The term supply chain management first appeared in the literature in 1982 with credit to Oliver and Webber (12). However, it can be argued that modern supply chain management began in the mid 1960s with the marriage of some basic, best-practice concepts of production-distribution processes and the 3rd generation of IBM computers; S/3 60 systems. One of the chief players in the early development of supply chain design and management philosophy was a textile and apparel company; Burlington Industries.

Much of the accumulated knowledge about textile and apparel firm contribution in this area has been lost or forgotten with the fall of the US domestic giants of the 1970s and 80s. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to establish a historical document that points to the important role that was played by the firm to the supply chain body of knowledge before the formal development of the "supply chain" term in the 1980s and 90s. It is the author's belief that an understanding the early work in developing large vertically integrated supply chain designs and strategies for textile and apparel firms can give the reader significant insight into global textile and apparel supply chain designs of the future.

A case study involving Burlington Industries and the supply chain information system enabler of the time, IBM, that is not to be found in the academic literature, is chosen as the core of the paper. The paper draws on the development and adoption of a supply chain management strategy for its separate businesses that was an important part of a massive 10-year, \$2 billion (1975-85 dollars) capital expenditure program that was launched by Burlington Industries in 1975; a project scope unprecedented in the history of the world's textile industry.

Keywords: Supply chain, database designs, client-server information systems, ERP, MRP global economy, IBM, information technology, employment, Wal-Mart

Introduction

Today, global supply chains and the management of these chains have become an integral part of both popular and academic discussions of the world's political, economic and social problems. Graduate schools of business provide in-depth courses

concerning supply chains and the vast amount of technology that is now available to manage these supply chains.

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