

Supply Chain Digitization: New Opportunities for Leveraging Relationships with Small Buyer Firms

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Abstract

Increasing supply chain digitization drives business-to-business buyers' demand for more collaborative buyer-supplier relationships. Extant literature, however, falls short to investigate which types of collaborative relationships suppliers can build with buyers in digitized supply chains. In addition, the role of buyer firm size with regard to buyer-supplier relationships in digitized supply chains has received limited academic attention. Drawing on 42 interviews with B2B suppliers and buyers, our work in progress shows that in digitized SCs, suppliers can build two different types of collaborative relationships with buyers, i.e. high tech relationships and high touch relationships. More important, we further delineate that, against prior assumptions, increasing supply digitization leverages relationship building with small buyers. We discuss implications for supply chain and key account management literature as well as for managerial practice.

Keywords: *buyer-supplier relationships; supply chain management; digitization*

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