Business Process Context: ‘Magic Quadrant for Multienterprise Supply Chain Business Networks’

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Initiatives: Supply Chain Technology Strategy and Selection

Some MESCBN vendors have specialized and unique capabilities for dedicated process and/or supply chain domains such as freight, spend or specification management, or contract manufacturing. Supply chain technology leaders can use this research to gain insight into this specific MESCBN market.

Get the full story

This content is part of a larger body of research on this topic.

Magic Quadrant for Multienterprise Supply Chain Business Networks

Market Differentiators

Multienterprise supply chain business networks (MESCBNs) support a community of trading partners that need to work, communicate and collaborate on business processes that extend across multiple enterprises, with an end-to-end/shared focus. Such networks are owned and managed by third-party software vendors, and provide their community of buyers, sellers and partners with multienterprise functionality, services and security. It is the shift from an enterprise-centric mindset to a real multienterprise, outside-in approach.

The MESCBN market recognizes the need for specialty networks in support of unique process capabilities, offering a dedicated group of business partners’ similar, but narrow, capabilities. This research highlights this subsegment with a set of vendors, recognizing the following differentiating factors:

- **Community** — Group of business partners serving a dedicated specialty segment (process capabilities as listed below)

- **Functionality** — Core supply chain applications serving specific processes and best practices

Based on customer demands, certain process-focused capabilities have been developed and served by process-specific MESCBNs across a variety of industries (so not industry-specific, such as aerospace and defense, food and beverage, life sciences/healthcare, or specialty retail), supporting:
Considerations for Technology and Service Selection

Recommended assessment criteria are:

- **Freight management**: Integrated solutions for transportation management and freight marketplaces with a broad set of business partners of different types — shippers/brand owners, suppliers, service providers — connected.

- **Spend management**: A solution for integrated, intelligent and direct procurement activities, connecting business partners and allowing upstream collaboration.

- **Contract manufacturing and co-packing**: A solution relevant across industries for serving contract manufacturing and co-packing operations, connecting shippers/brand owners with their relevant upstream business partners for collaboration on customized products.

- **Specification management/product launch**: A solution for new program launch initiatives, connecting shippers/brand owners with their upstream partners for all project phases until product launch, and within specification management, digitization of specifications to enable business partners to collaborate through visibility and utilization of relevant data.

- **Relevant process experience** — Providers that focus on specific processes across industries bring several additional valuable benefits, including:
  - Functionality specifically tailored to your needs (process and domain focus)
  - Industry domain knowledge
  - Network connectivity to business partners
  - Additional insights from the data created by a multienterprise environment

- **A suitable geographic footprint** — A vendor’s ability to support a specific buyer depends on the availability of local support personnel, suitable support hours and appropriate multilingual support.

- **Application platform as a service (aPaaS) functionality** — Clients might want to leverage and extend the data contained in the platform. An aPaaS provides the means to build custom applications on top of a suite (aka open-development environment).

- **Vendor reputation** — Described offerings are multienterprise by nature. Prospective buyers should canvass a representative group of brand owners and suppliers for their opinions of the suitability, cost and user-friendliness of the solutions under evaluation.

- **Financial viability** — Use one of the many services (e.g., Dun & Bradstreet, RapidRatings and Thomson Reuters) or insights directly from the vendor to assess the financial performance. Market pressures toward consolidation are strongly affecting this market, so financial viability is critical to ensure that
the vendor has the resources to continue serving clients and growing the business. Look for revenue growth and positive cash flow as evidence of financial strength.

- **Evidence of innovation** — Business networks are evolving rapidly in response to buyer demand. Examples include ease of use and ease of upgrade, an open-development platform for add-on developments, embedded innovative capabilities like artificial intelligence/machine learning, or also mobile device support. This includes the evidence of a strategic vision aligned to the specific market trends and dynamics of that sector, provided by the vendor's product roadmap. Successful niche vendors will keep up with these broader advances.

**Notable Vendors**

*Vendors included in this Magic Quadrant Perspective have customers that are successfully using their products and services. Selections are based on analyst opinion and references that validate IT provider claims; however, this is not an exhaustive list or analysis of vendors in this market. Use this perspective as a resource for evaluations, but explore the market further to gauge the ability of each vendor to address your unique business problems and technical concerns. Consider this research as part of your due diligence and in conjunction with discussions with Gartner analysts and other resources.*

**Freight Management**

**Alpega Group**

Alpega Group, headquartered in Vienna, Austria, is a logistics software provider. It has two main solutions: Alpega TMS and Alpega's freight exchange network. Alpega TMS is broadly focused on supply chain operations, providing different solution bundles with capabilities that scale depending on the operation complexity. Alpega's freight exchange network gives shippers access to a network with over 80,000 carriers across the different transportation modes. The freight exchange network is made up of marketplace applications enabling cross-company and cross-industry transportation collaboration. The platform uses APIs to integrate partners and platforms to enable horizontal collaboration. Alpega Group operations are geographically diversified with the bulk of its customers in Europe. Alpega is mainly active in industries like automotive, manufacturing, consumer packaged goods and retail.

**BluJay**

BluJay, based in Manchester, U.K., is a supply chain and logistics software provider that offers a wide range of products, including a transportation management system, global trade management and managed transportation services. BluJay combines applications, network and data in a multitenant single-network environment. BluJay's TMS leverages the supply chain network of carriers and suppliers created under its global trade network (GTN), enabling its customers to optimize their supply chains with BluJay's applications while participating in a collaborative network, sharing data among its participants. BluJay's TMS offers a carrier network with more than 31,000 carriers across transportation modes. BluJay is mainly active in consumer packaged goods, retail and logistics industries.

**Blume**

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Blume Global, headquartered in Pleasanton, California, U.S., provides an artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled, data-driven digital platform and solutions for asset management, transportation management, logistics control tower, visibility, optimization and financial settlement. Blume’s solution capabilities allow end-to-end visibility with dynamic predictive arrival times of shipments, orders and inventory along a digital twin of the customer’s supply chain (estimating how long it will take for a shipment to reach the destination). It covers all modes of transportation, including rail, road, air, ocean and barge. Blume Global offers its products in more than 130 countries and 24 languages. Blume has customers mainly in the transportation, export and retail industries.

Descartes

Descartes, headquartered in Waterloo, Canada, is a global logistics-centric technology vendor with the goal to unite businesses in commerce by providing cloud-based logistics and supply chain solutions. Descartes offers a set of solutions across all modes of transportation and geographies, including transportation planning, parcel management, global trade management, transportation visibility and freight settlement. Lately, it added capabilities in real-time transportation visibility (MacroPoint) and air cargo (Core Bluetooth Low Energy [BLE]). The Descartes Global Logistics Network (GLN) manages the real-time flow of commercial, logistics, customs and product information. It connects hundreds of thousands of logistics and transportation, manufacturing, distribution, retail, government, and e-commerce businesses in over 160 countries.

Transporeon Group

Transporeon, headquartered in Ulm, Germany, is a transportation technology vendor that offers solutions for intelligent, data-driven transport logistics. Its preliminary focus is on transportation execution, transportation sourcing and carrier connectivity. Its large carrier network has more than 120,000 carriers and suppliers integrated in its transportation cloud. Transporeon offers capabilities such as strategic transport sourcing, benchmarking, spot tendering, rate management, transport assignment, dock scheduling, track and trace/visibility, control tower, electronic proof of delivery, freight audit and payment, and analytics. Transporeon serves customers in many industries, with its main focus in the fast consumer goods, construction, paper and wood, and chemical industries.

Spend Management

JAGGAER

JAGGAER, based in Morrisville, North Carolina, U.S., offers end-to-end spend management solutions, bringing embedded procurement intelligence to organizations. It supports the source-to-pay (S2P) process for a wide breadth of spend categories. In supply chain management, JAGGAER supports S2P for direct materials for manufacturing organizations, providing tools for collaboration, logistics, NPI and quality management. The JAGGAER ONE platform represents an integrated application architecture, deployed as predominantly multitenant SaaS. Customers are using JAGGAER not only with their core S2P apps but also with specialized capabilities (like inventory and quality management, packaging and labeling, or vendor-managed inventory [VMI]), allowing a seamless process for business workflow, data analysis and collaboration with suppliers.
Contract Manufacturing and Co-packing

Nulogy

Nulogy, based in Toronto, Canada, offers a collaborative supply chain network that targets consumer packaged goods brand owners and their extended networks (including contract manufacturers, contract packagers and value-added third-party logistics providers) for collaborating and automating processes in support of production planning and management, capacity management, materials and order management, inventory, and quality control. By leveraging a single source of truth, the solution helps streamline multiparty workflows and KPI measures, drives greater agility and resilience within the multiparty network, and provides audit trails for inventory movements and real-time order status. Customers use Nulogy's multienterprise platform to optimize contract packaging, manufacturing operations and enhance collaboration for bringing products to market faster and more securely.

Specification Management/Product Launch

LiveSource

LiveSource, based in Atlanta, Georgia, offers a cloud-based business network used by discrete manufacturers as a product launch portal, coordinating the exchange of launch information between sales, engineering, program management, advanced sourcing, supplier quality management, purchasing and quality along with external suppliers. Modules leveraged include idea management, strategic sourcing, supplier and quality management, order management, and end-to-end analytics. Customers are using the LiveSource solution to coordinate internal (program teams, engineering, purchasing and quality) and external (suppliers and providers) supply chain participants. The solution helps take hidden risk out of the upstream supply chain and bring new products to market on time and within budget.

Specright

Specright, based in Irvine, California, U.S., offers a cloud-based specification management platform that enables the digitalization of specifications — from raw materials, ingredients and formulas, to packaging and finished goods — in a single source of truth for leveraging the insights in a network of brands, retailers and suppliers. It enables business partner collaboration on standardized specifications across functions, including new product development, packaging, operations and quality management, and emerging areas such as sustainability tracking. Customers use the platform to drive supplier collaboration, enable faster and more intelligent product and packaging development, ensure compliance, and drive traceability and visibility across their networks. Also, when implementing such a platform, downstream systems become more accurate, enabling better decision making.