

Amazon beats Apple in battle for supply chain leadership

Global poll of over 1,000 executives reveals that the e-commerce giant is more admired than its Californian rival on all major supply chain attributes except innovation.

LONDON, 29 November 2012 –Amazon is more widely admired than Apple for supply chain excellence, according to research published today by [SCM World](#), the leading global community of supply chain practitioners.

In a poll of 1,136 executives, **58%** said they admired Amazon most overall for the way it operates its supply chain, compared with **37%** who picked Apple (5% said neither).

The Seattle-based retailer also came out top on three of the four supply chain attributes that survey participants were asked to rate the two companies on: agility, collaboration and execution.

Amazon is locked in a high-profile battle with Apple in the fast-growing market for tablet devices and the digital content – music, movies, apps and books – consumed on them. The companies' rival products, the Kindle Fire and iPad, are expected to be among the hottest purchases this Christmas.

The survey results are a reversal of Gartner's Supply Chain Top 25 for 2012, which placed Apple first and Amazon second. Its ranking was based on the votes of 173 practitioners and with half of the total score determined by companies' financial performance.

Kevin O'Marah, Head of Faculty at SCM World and co-author of a new report, *Apple and Amazon: Lessons for the Rest of Us*, said: "The purpose of our research was to establish which of these two leading companies is most admired by the global supply chain community for the way it manages its supply chain, and to understand what lessons they have to teach other companies.

"The results show clearly that the majority of supply chain professionals believe that Amazon – and not Apple – is the master of supply chain excellence," added O'Marah, a former Group Vice President for Supply Chain at Gartner and co-creator, in 2004, of the (then AMR Research) Supply Chain Top 25 annual ranking.

On **agility** (defined as *the ability to quickly and cost-effectively shift amounts and/or types of production and delivery to improve operational performance in*

volatile conditions), **62%** of practitioners in SCM World's poll voted for Amazon, compared with **33%** who picked Apple.

On **collaboration** (*the ability to work across organisational boundaries to solve systemic operational problems and create new value for both customers and partners*), **59%** chose Amazon, versus **31%** for Apple.

And on **execution** (*the consistent and reliable delivery against commitments and within budgeted expenses*), practitioners backed Amazon by **57%** to **38%**.

However, Apple won hands down on the fourth key characteristic of supply chain excellence – **innovation** – taking a massive **78%** of the vote, compared with just **19%** for Amazon.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About the research

A total of 1,136 supply chain practitioners completed an SCM World online survey between 26 October and 9 November 2012. They work in a wide variety of sectors – including hi tech, consumer goods, logistics & distribution and retail – and are based across the major regions of the world: 43% in EMEA, 41% in the Americas and 14% in Asia-Pacific.

About SCM World

SCM World is the leading global community and think-tank for senior-level supply chain executives. More than 150 companies from across multiple industry sectors use SCM World's programme of end-user-led webinars, live events and research reports to enhance supply chain learning and development. They include Nike, P&G, Unilever, Cisco, HP, Starbucks, Nestlé, GlaxoSmithKline, AT&T, Shell, DuPont, BASF, Philips and Intel. For more information, visit www.scmworld.com.

Further information

To request a copy of the report, *Apple and Amazon: Lessons for the Rest of Us*, or to arrange an interview with its author, Kevin O'Marah, please contact:

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