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WILL NEW GROWTH PATTERNS ENABLE
REAL-ESTATE DEVELOPERS
HIT THE RIGHT STROKES?



Shipper Speaks

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**WE HAVE BEEN
CONSTANTLY IMPROVING,
ENHANCING AND
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LAYERED SYSTEMS
THAT OUR BUSINESS
CONSTITUTES**

The buzz around supply chains has grown all the more intense. Supply chain leaders face fresh demands for sustainability, adaptability, and value creation—that can expose new risks as well as enhanced opportunities—all of which they expect to evolve alongside the technology curve. Organisations are starting to apply advanced technologies to fundamentally rethink their supply chains, enhance their real-time understanding of activity in complex supply networks, and leverage continuous scenario planning to optimise the balance of cost against risk and agility of their production capacity footprint. They have taken into consideration multiple dimensions: proximity to customer markets, diverse customer service requirements (including aftersales service and reverse logistics), sources of raw materials, proximity to key suppliers and ecosystem partners, availability of skilled labour, business disruption risk, laws and regulations—to name a few. But the payoff can be a more resilient supply chain, better prepared to weather future disruptions with fewer impacts to cost and service. That said, in this catalytic environment, companies like Biostadt India have rose to the moment and embracing higher-value supply chain strategies to distinguish themselves, their teams, and their value chain system through imperatives that encapsulate mandates to embrace, reimagine, and optimise the supply chain of the future. In a recent conversation **Nitiin R Sonar, Biostadt India's Executive Vice President—Operations and Supply Chain** opens up to **TWINKLE ROY**, about leveraging technology-infused workflows to become both predictive and proactive to anticipate issues and prepare for unpredictable ones and developing and expanding their use of real-time data and supply signals to build a more resilient supply chain.

Market Positioning with a Competitive Edge

Biostadt India is the world's largest company in seaweed-based plant biostimulants with multiple products and brands within its fold. Founded in 2003, the company has established itself as a well reputed and trusted brand in the agrochemical industry with a clear and strategic objective of delivering crop health-care products such as biologicals and crop protection chemicals that include insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, aquaculture inputs and hybrid seeds, contract manufacturing and international operations.

Today, Biostadt India is an INR 1,000 crore diversified agro-chemical organisation dedicated to serving the farming community by providing innovative and sustainable solutions to improve farm output through high quality seeds, novel crop care products and aquaculture inputs. Biostadt provides the farming community with superlative and research based products that enhance and ensure good quality yield. Its flagship and pioneering brand, Biozyme has made a significant mark as the largest selling plant growth stimulant for 35 years.

With its transparent, ethical and professional management systems and processes, and by offering high-quality products, Biostadt India has been empowering the country's agricultural sector as well as serving more than 20 countries across Asia, the Middle East, Africa and parts of Europe.

Managing the crisis across levels of supply chain governance

Biostadt India is firmly positioned to address the emerging local and global challenges by providing farmers with not just customised products but customised solutions. We continue to develop and evaluate products and processes for improving their satisfaction.

Since we are in the agricultural inputs sector, we are flexible enough to adapt to the situation – by DNA. Hence during the pandemic, we didn't face too many issues. We changed our supply chain strategies and converted our challenges into opportunities. We were able to start our factories within 10 days of the first lockdown as well as manufacturing facilities as per the available material rather than market driven or planned requirements. We also encouraged our suppliers to start the production and incentivised the people who were working with us, as per government guidelines. This strategy worked well for us and resulted in an increase in our sales by more than 25 per cent.

A proactive supply chain is vital for continuous engagement

The complete digitisation of our supply chain was a welcome approach that ensured continuation and smooth flow of our services. Even before the pandemic, Biostadt India had adopted a future-forward business approach through the initiation and implementation of a paperless supply chain model way back in 2010. Since then, we have been in the process of developing a transparent and digitised process that comprises all stages from demand planning to delivery of material to the end customer. With this method, the tracking of our shipments and delivery of goods within 24-48 hours to customers has now reached up to 95 per cent.

Being in the business of having seasonal and limited shelf-life driven products, our supply chain has to be necessarily proactive to maximise product availability, through absolute optimisation of inventory levels.



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Optimising the supply chain means more efficient and less riddled with flaws

In my opinion, the implementation of advanced technologies and solutions to systems and processes are part of a continuous improvement cycle. With changing dynamics in technology, environment and a multitude of other factors, the strengthening and success of supply chain processes can be determined on the basis of what can be adapted to the business depending on the situation or task at hand. Through the experience we have garnered over the years, as well as by adapting to technologies such as SAP-ERP, DRP, transport module, MRP, QR Code, DMS, etc., we have been constantly improving, enhancing and ameliorating the layered systems that our business constitutes.

The need for smooth coordination in SCM

The smooth functioning of any discipline is based on the seamlessness and proper communication channels that are implemented using the advantages of technology combined with a human touch. Our paperless/digital purchase framework has ensured that our generation of purchase orders was done by the mandatory use of our digitalised purchase requisition model generated by the MRP process. Through the process of digitisation, the authorised personnel can approve the purchase orders (POs) digitally. Upon approval of these POs, an SMS and email is sent auto-

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matically to suppliers and we get the acknowledgement for the same. In addition to this, a follow up with suppliers is done so as to ensure the material is delivered as scheduled.

Additionally, to ensure a smooth communication flow, video conferences are planned on a weekly basis between the teams at factories and the purchase and planning departments. Besides, with regard to vehicle telematics, our trucks/consignments in the field are monitored through GPS tracking systems.

An effective logistics strategy is essential to ensure high performance of the supply chain

Logistics is extremely important to make sure customers are getting the material in the shortest time possible. Our fast and zero-defect deliveries are monitored by our customer service centers/carrying and forwarding agents (CFAs).

Talking about distribution and logistics, 50 per cent of our warehousing is outsourced and managed by CFAs. Transporters, CFAs, Customs House Agents (CHAs) are all part of our logistics value chain. Zero-defect deliveries of material within stipulated time coupled with a transparent business model are the most important factors we expect from our logistics partners.

Taking advantage of the individual strengths of different modes while reducing costs

Alternate transport modes and routes are required in a large country like India. Rail and water transport routes need to be further developed to ease the pressure on surface transport and also to reduce the cost which is increasing due to high diesel prices. At Biostadt India, we have a robust distribution network that ensures maximum utilisation of all three – road, rail and sea transport modes. Streamlining of the transport system is accomplished through an efficient and round-the-clock network of teams that work together seamlessly.

Leveraging channels to maximise distribution performance

After the GST regime, warehousing became an important function which ensures we can deliver goods across any part of India. To ensure further seamlessness in delivery, we are in the process of adopting measures to bring our inventory closer to customers by implementing a QR code based technology model, which will prove helpful in tracking the goods from the factory directly to our customers. Furthermore, the efficiency of the transporter's service will be measured live.

We at Biostadt India continue to extend our reach across the length and breadth of the country. Our manufacturing operations are supported by our five manufacturing facilities located in Bhavnagar, Jammu, Aurangabad, Baroda, and Hyderabad. Since we have a wide distribution network with 30 CFAs and one mother depot, it becomes very important for us to ensure maximised efficiency and access to timely deliveries as desired by the customer.

Innovations substantially transforming the supply chain in a very positive way

The future will be largely driven by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Blockchain-based technologies. Automated warehousing with intelligent warehouse robots and automated material handling systems will be the new normal. Managers will also need to upgrade their skills to be able to remain relevant in this fast-changing world towards automation and digitisation. Most businesses will be driven by digital supply chains rather than a sales force. Manufacturers will utilise online retail and sales platforms more efficiently and frequently than existing sales force models. AI, Blockchain, QR code and many more upcoming technologies will bring in groundbreaking innovations that will transform the future of supply chain and logistics management. 

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