Kate Vitasek:
Five Rules to Strategic Outsourcing

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ARTICLE Does Selling Recovered Product Negatively Impact New Product Sales: Lessons and Insights from 8 OEM’s
By Chris Cloutier, Director of Business Development and Sustainability, CoreCentric Solutions
As the volume of returned products continues to grow, the question and issues related to how to provide those products another life continue to be asked and re-considered. For many organizations – both OEM’s and retailers – there is a tension between their existing sale of new products and the potential sale of recovered products (recovered products being a refurbished or remanufactured product).

ARTICLE Steps to Identifying a Qualified Reverse Logistics Provider
By Mark Bentley, Chief Development Officer, Total Technology Results
Today, there are many companies offering reverse logistic services. Not all these organizations are adept at truly providing the value needed to be effective. It appears to be more of an add on to a core competency or the company is subcontracting parts of the reverse logistic work out to a separate entity, diluting the ability to qualify them as a good potential match for the services needed.

ARTICLE E-Commerce: The Circular Systems Opportunity
By Adrienna Zsakay, Circular Economy Asia
By 2050, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have forecast that seven out of the 249 countries (2.8%) in the world will hold 45% of global GDP and they are all located in Asia: China, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia and Thailand.1 Of course this is if the political, institutional, economic, governance and leadership requirements all fall into alignment and can rise up to the challenges that comes with growth heading towards advanced economy status.

ARTICLE Understanding How America is Approaching the Circular Economy
By Gina Wu Lee, Circular CoLab
The State of the Circular Economy in America delivers the first United States focused scan of the Circular Economy landscape. By providing an analysis of 202 United States based Circular Economy initiatives, this report offers concrete examples of Circular Economy solutions, as well as demonstrates the diverse array of stakeholders and industries that are already participating in the creation of the Circular Economy here in America.

ARTICLE Big Data, Data Analytics and Reverse Logistics
By Joe Walden, Supply Chain Management, The University of Kansas
For several years now the buzz word in business has been “big data.” From a Reverse Logistics perspective where does this data come from? How do we turn this “big data” into usable information? And what does the data tell us about our company and the handling of reverse logistics?
This is my favorite time of year as we prepare for our the RLA’s Conf & Expo in Las Vegas. I love to meet those I’ve been working with over phone and email in person at the show. We’ve had some great articles this past year from Reverse Logistics Industry Professionals, including stories from many RLA members. Thank you for your interest and content.

As we head into a new year, don’t forget to make sure you’re subscribed to the RL Magazine so you can get the emails when the magazine is released. Check out the ad space we have to offer your company to reach over 30,000 Reverse Logistics readers. Plus, we know you all have great content to share. Be sure to get in touch with me about articles that you can contribute to the magazine. We also have cover stories available for 2019! Imagine your company on the cover of the Reverse Logistics magazine - it’s a great source to get your brand and services made known to the Reverse Logistics world.

I look forward to meeting many of you!

Felecia Przybyla
RL Magazine Editor
Editor@rla.org
Industry Committees are set up to provide a standing forum for Reverse Logistics Professionals to meet on a regional and global basis and discuss common Reverse Logistics issues at the RLA Conferences and Expos. Industry Committees educate the industry on reverse logistics:

- “Best Practices”
- Consumer Satisfaction Issues
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Join today at www.RLA.org
The RLA 2.0 is about to launch and take the Reverse Logistics Association to a new level. Since I became the Executive Director of RLA in 2016, the focus has been to revitalize the association, rebuild the membership, and reset the Advisory Board with global companies who care about returns and reverse logistics issues. We have been successful and the 2019 RLA Conference is a culmination of efforts by an entirely new team within RLA who are committed to members and their needs.

At RLA 2.0, we will be launching an improved and updated RLA.org website that will be more interactive and provide more benefits to members in the future. There will be a limited access area for RLA member companies. The new site will help to organize committee meetings and webinars as we continue to provide a forum for solutions to some of the industry issues. The RL Quote system will be completely redone and activated for member use and connections. RL education and certification programs will be offered in conjunction with a new global partner. And there will be more.

The world has changed, and eCommerce has magnified the issues and the size of the returns and reverse logistics industry. There is no one solution to the increasing problems. The RLA can help members find the many different solutions offered by the 3rd party solutions partners.

Best regards,

Tony Sciarrotta

Tony Sciarrotta
tony@rla.org

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Jack Allen – Cisco is the worldwide leader in IT and networking, with $50B in revenues annually. Cisco helps companies of all sizes transform how people connect, communicate, and collaborate. As Sr. Director, Global Logistics, Supply Chain Operations, Jack manages logistics activities that support all of Cisco’s product revenue and returns. This includes forward and reverse logistics, export operations, transportation, warehousing, packaging engineering, customer logistics and logistics innovation practices. Jack’s team manages an end-to-end ecosystem of global partners consisting of the best and most innovative logistics corporations in the world.

Bob Arvin – Walmart, As Divisional Vice President, Bob is a Senior Level Supply Chain Executive with 35 years of experience in forward & reverse logistics, project management, engineering, transportation, Internet fulfillment, and Distribution Center operations. Bob is currently responsible for the Reverse Logistics Network at Walmart Stores, including National RTV & Secondary Market programs for Walmart Stores, Walmart.com, SAM’S Clubs, & SAMS.com. His past responsibilities at Walmart includes the Apparel Distribution Network - replenishment of apparel, shoes, jewelry & GNFR to all Walmart Stores & SAM’S Clubs in the US, plus fulfillment of on-line apparel sales for Walmart.com. In addition, Bob also has past responsibility for regional General Merchandise & Grocery Distribution Center operations.

Tim Brown – Georgia Tech Supply Chain & Logistics Institute, Tim Brown is Managing Director of the Supply Chain & Logistics Institute, an Academic Program Director in Georgia Tech Professional Education, and an instructor in the Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering at Georgia Tech. Mr. Brown has worked in the reverse logistics area for over twenty years; consulting with companies such as Philips Electronics, Apple, and IBM in the development of their reverse logistics and service operations strategies, infrastructure, and procedures. Mr. Brown was selected as a “Professional to Know” by Supply and Demand Chain Executive.

Lisa Cotter – Best Buy, Lisa Cotter has over 20 years experience leading all areas of Supply Chain including Distribution Management, Inventory Management, Process and System Design, and Supply Chain Network Design. Lisa is in a newly created role of Sr. Director of Reverse Logistics for Best Buy. She is responsible for the end to end total company process and system road map as well as managing the 3rd party reverse program for mobile phones.

Jeff Elliott – FedEx. As Managing Director of Sales in Technology Solutions at FedEx Supply Chain, Jeff Elliott spearheads the company’s strategic approach to expanding the customer portfolio within the technology vertical, while fostering the existing customer base. In this position, Elliott serves a vital role in driving lead generation, prospect engagement and relationship management for the Technology Solutions business unit. FedEx Supply Chain helps technology customers streamline operations, optimize their logistics networks and drive continuous improvement with its innovative, industry-leading solutions.

Ryan Holden – The Home Depot, Ryan started with The Home Depot in 2003 as a store sales associate. He has held roles of increasing responsibility including bulk distribution center Operations Manager, Manager of Return to Vendor Contracts, and currently Director of Returns and Repair Business. In Ryan’s current role, he is responsible for secondary market goods, company repair programs, and return to vendor business functions.

Chuck Johnston – goTRG, Chuck is COO at goTRG, a global leader in the implementation and execution of omnichannel and supply chain solutions. He was formerly the Director of Reverse Logistics for The Home Depot, responsible for all return and repair operations. Prior to that he oversaw the Reverse Logistics operations for Wal-Mart Stores Inc. Chuck has been involved
in the Reverse Logistics industry for over 20 years and is considered the foremost expert in the field. He is a sought after speaker and considered one of the most innovative thinkers in the industry. In addition to his experience in the reverse space, he has led numerous Specialty Distribution Operations in his 23 years with Wal-Mart. While at Wal-Mart, Chuck was responsible for the development of a profitable, “best in class” Reverse Logistics organization that is still the benchmark for all other retailers.

**Thomas Maher – Dell**, Tom Maher joined Dell in 1997 and is the Senior Vice President for Global Service Parts. Mr. Maher is responsible for service parts life cycle support in over 100 countries. Mr. Maher’s global service parts responsibilities include: planning, procurement, distribution, returns, repair, inventory management, supplier management and parts disposal. These operations support 100% of Dell’s warranty customers across all Business Units and all Product Lines.

**Bernard Kiernan – Intel**, Bernard Kiernan has been with Intel Corporation for over 20 years in a variety of roles from Quality Management, Services Management, Project and Program Management. Most of this time has been in the Reverse Logistics organization in the design, deployment and management of Reverse Logistics solutions across Intel’s broad spectrum of products. Senior Program Manager within Intel Corporation’s Global Reverse Logistics (GRL) group with responsibilities for identifying the current and future Reverse Logistics requirements of Intel Business Units and the development of Business Solutions which delight the customer and deliver value add Reverse Logistics services.

**Steven Nickel – Google**, Steven currently leads Google’s global reverse logistics operations and value added support services development for all of its consumer hardware products. He’s been with Google for nearly five years, but brings 20+ years of experience in consumer technology-building amazing teams, growing profitable businesses, and improving customer experiences.

**Julie Ryan – HP, Inc.** Julie Ryan joined HP (Compaq) in 1986 with over 22 years of experience in various reverse logistics capacities for US, Canada and Latin America. Julie currently leads the Americas Returns & Remarketing organization responsible for end to end reverse logistics which includes channel return approvals, physical claims and disputes, returns receiving, credit issuance, disposition management, remanufacturing, remarketing as well as planning, forecasting and reporting.

**Jim Rallo – The Retail Supply Chain Group** The Retail Supply Chain Group helps hundreds of the world’s top retailers and consumer OEMs maximize return for overstock and returned inventory while enhancing and protecting their brands through multi-channel remarketing, return to vendor outsourcing, and product refurbishment. Under his leadership, the team provides clients with better service, scale, and results than any other provider, ensuring the full value of their surplus is captured. Jim previously served as Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer of Liquidity Services from 2005 to 2015.

**Tony Sciarrotta – Reverse Logistics Association, Executive Director**, In 2016, Tony took over and became the Executive Director of the RLA after 12 years of active involvement on the Advisory Board and Committees. In over 35 years in the consumer products industry, Tony held various positions including 15 years in returns management at Philips where he developed new reverse logistics strategies. He worked with retail partners and industry groups to implement returns initiatives still in use. Tony has been an evangelist for improving the customer experience to reduce returns and their associated costs. Today, Tony is considered a subject matter expert in reverse logistics, and speaks for the industry at conferences all over the world.
All too often companies that outsource experience what University of Tennessee researchers call the Watermelon scorecard: SLAs (service level agreements) are green on the surface, but often neither the buying company nor the service provider are happy with the outsourcing relationship.

In 2003, the University of Tennessee (UT) began research into some of the world’s most successful strategic outsourcing partnerships—including those at P&G, McDonald’s and Microsoft—to see if they could crack the code into why a few outsourcing relationships were racking up supplier of year awards and industry accolades. What enabled these “winning” relationships to deliver success and win more than the usual outsourcing relationships?

What emerged from the research and field work was the Vested Outsourcing (or Vested) business model and methodology. The researchers learned powerful lessons, including how following five simple ‘rules’ and 10 contractual ‘elements’ could spur collaboration and innovation in an outsourcing relationship. Today the Vested business model is catching on – thanks to companies like Dell/FedEx Supply Chain (FSC) and Intel/DHL who have successfully used the Vested model to drive transformational success in their reverse logistics operations.

This article is a primer on the Vested model and shares the highlights from Dell and Intel case studies – both are which are public case studies.

**THE FIVE RULES OF VESTED**

The Vested model is centered on Five Rules (*Figure 1 pictured above*) that - when followed - enable a buyer and service provider to create a true win-win contract. Rather than sit on opposites sides of the negotiating table, the parties jointly follow a structured step-by-step methodology to architect a win-win contract where the service provider’s success is directly tied to their ability to drive success for their client. Ergo, the parties are vested in each other’s success because a ‘win’ for the buyer is a ‘win’ for the service provider.

The Vested Five Rules work in conjunction with 10 contractual Elements to create a strategic outsourcing agreement that takes the parties away from the traditional buy-sell, “what’s in it for me” (WIIFMe) sourcing philosophy to a highly collaborative “what’s in it for we” (WIIFWe) mindset in which the parties’ interests are tightly aligned.

A key part of the Vested methodology is the buyer and service provider collaboratively work together to craft their physical contract around each of the Elements, as outlined in the table (*Figure 2 see page 12*)
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VESTED FOR SUCCESS: DELL/FEDEX SUPPLY CHAIN (FSC)

Dell had worked with the reverse logistics provider Genco since 2005 (Genco was acquired by FedEx in 2015 and rebranded as FedEx Supply Chain in 2017). Dell was one of the first companies to pilot the Vested methodology.

The relationship was strategic. But the actual contract was highly transactional in nature with 19 transactional billable line items. If FSC performed a task, Dell got charged. FSC assumed the risk of meeting a set “price per transaction” while maintaining service levels. The agreement worked reasonably well for a time, but Dell’s leaders continued to face cost pressures, insisting on an “every dollar, every year” procurement principle — despite FSC assuming much of the risk under the contract terms. FSC warned further price pressure would harm service levels. And the short term nature of the contract coupled with a termination for convenience meant FSC’s finance executives were far from excited about investing in any improvements or innovations for Dell.

By 2011, the honeymoon was over and the relationship was in danger of falling apart.

A Dell executive heard about UT’s research on Vested and sent two team members to UT’s Executive Education course to learn more. The question was, could they turn the theory into practice to drive innovation?

The answer was yes. In 2012 Dell and FedEx succeeded re-structuring their outsourcing agreement to embody Vested’s “what’s in it for we” mindset and Five Rules. Here is how.

Rule 1: Outcome-Base vs. Transaction-Based Business Model. Dell and FSC started by creating a joint shared vision and six Desired Outcomes to refocus the relationship. This helped the parties avoid the “activity trap” in which FSC was paid for performing a task or activity — regardless of whether it is needed.

Rule 2: Focus on the “What,” not the “How.” Dell learned how to let go and trust FSC’s expertise when they replaced their detailed SOW with a jointly created and significantly shorter taxonomy and workload allocation that clearly showed how the parties would work together to achieve their shared vision and Desired Outcomes.

Rule 3: Clearly Defined and Measurable Desired Outcomes. In a Vested agreement, metrics are aligned to Desired Outcomes. For Dell and FSC, this meant reducing the number of metrics from over 100 to 20 clearly-defined metrics using a Requirements Roadmap tool. Importantly all of the metrics they used aligned to the six Desired Outcomes.

Rule 4: Pricing-model with Incentives that Optimize the Business. The economics of the relationship also needed to change. Gone was the “price per box” and in its place was a transparent pricing model that incentivized FSC to make strategic investments in processes that would help reach the Desired Outcomes. The more effective FSC was at achieving the Desired Outcomes, the more incentives (or profits) they earned. A win-win economic model with a “grow-the-pie – share-the-pie” logic.

Rule 5: Insight vs. Oversight Governance Structure. As part of the Vested methodology, the Dell/FSC Core
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Team set up a Vested governance structure that ultimately helped the parties navigate their relationship well past contract signature. From executive levels to frontline working levels, everyone is aligned. The responsibility of managers for specific areas is clearly outlined to keep the companies' program and account managers informed.

The results were nothing short of transformational (Figure 3).

Rob McIntosh now the Senior Vice President, Dell Global Fulfillment, Logistics and Trade, referred to transformation to a Vested model as a “fairy tale” in a Supply Chain Brain video.

But true to the Vested model - FSC also was a winner. A key part of the contract were incentives to drive transformational results, including bonus checks and automatic contract extensions.

Six years later, the parties decided to “refresh” and update their agreement to address “lessons learned” and address changing a business environment.

This was key because the move to refresh was a recognition that Vested is not a “one and done” contracting process, but rather a methodology to seek continual alignment under a flexible governance framework. John Coleman, FSC general manager of operations for Dell's reverse logistics business, said, “The refresh process was a necessary exercise: It allowed us to revisit our Desired Outcomes. But more importantly, it allowed us to reflect on areas where we had grown apart and helped us rework key governance mechanisms such as onboarding, executive churning and buy-in.”

Dell and FSC learned an important lesson on how to sustain a Vested agreement, especially because people come and go and the nature of the business is dynamic and changes over time.

VESTED FOR SUCCESS: INTEL/DHL SUPPLY CHAIN SERVICES

A natural consequence of building the future is changing priorities and letting go of the past. In 2012, Intel exited from its desktop motherboard business to focus on artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and other emerging and transformative technologies. Intel informed DHLSC and sought to renegotiate the pricing based on the new demand projections. This was not good news for DHLSC, since Intel procurement spend is DHLSC's income. The decline in demand posed a severe challenge to the sustainability of DHLSC's business model and the viability of its operations managed out of The Netherlands.

John Hayes and Ruud de Groot were the Intel and DHLSC leaders for the reverse logistics being managed out of DHLSC's Beringe operations in The Netherlands. Both Intel and DHLSC had experience with a Vested pilot project in Costa Rica that had transformative results in the forward logistics space. Could making the switch to a Vested business model be the answer to their reverse logistics situation?

The parties started by reviewing their existing relationship and business in an objective manner to understand if the Vested Five Rules might apply to their situation.

For Intel, Vested appealed to Intel's desire for transformational results. The formalized and systematic manner of Vested also aligned well to Intel's culture of promoting process rigor. For DHLSC, Vested represented the opportunity to demonstrate an innovative approach for managing the entire supply chain. DHLSC also welcomed how the methodology enabled them to be an equal partner in leadership and participation, ultimately enhancing success for Intel.
You focus on your customer experience and we will handle the returns.

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The choice was made. Rather than negotiate, the parties would apply the Vested methodology to restructure their reverse logistics contract. They immediately set out to adopt the Vested principles of trust, transparency, collaboration, and fairness, which ultimately led to a true win-win agreement for both companies.

The companies found the non-adversarial nature of Vested refreshing, helping them move away from the “zero-sum” game usually employed in conventional buyer-supplier relationships. They moved away from “us vs. them” and risk avoidance thinking.

The Vested methodology not only helped the companies mitigate the impact of volume reductions on cost, but led to much, much more as it also enabled the parties to achieve improvements across the board on virtually all aspects of the business. (see Figure 4).

Both Hayes and de Groot believe the shift to Vested saved what likely would have been a failed business relationship due to reduced volumes and changing business circumstances caused by Intel's exit of the desktop motherboard business. As John Hayes, a Supply Chain Architect for Intel's Global reverse logistics group, explained, “The old contract promoted an us vs. them culture that could have led to perverse incentives and opportunism. With Vested, our interests are truly aligned through mutually defined Desired Outcomes and economics that reward DHLSC for achieving the Desired Outcomes. Vested helped us move from trying to shift risk to one where we win together. A win for DHLSC is a win for Intel.”

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How did Vivitech find RLA?
Vivitech Solutions has been a member of RLA for many years, having been a member since one of its members turned us on to the value of working within the RL industry to increase business and learn new practices.

Why did your company decide to become a member?
RLA offers members various opportunities to increase business opportunities and education about the RL marketplace. This is evident by the monthly web meetings available for members and potential members (to audit). We had interest in packaging solutions, and after one of the consumer products monthly meetings contacted Aeris packaging to see if their solution would work for our Brand Protection products.

How has being a Member been beneficial to your company?
Being a member has been helpful as it allows for advanced networking at the monthly member meetings on specific topics that increase industry knowledge. The availability to get members on the phone for opinions and direction on additional resources and opportunities is a major plus.
What parts of the RLA Membership do you find most beneficial?
The Annual RLA conference, the monthly committee meetings, Networking opportunities, Member one-on-one discussions are all beneficial. Meeting one-on-one with others within the RL industry striving towards an overall common goal is a win-win for everyone.

Why does your company attend our seminars/conferences, not just as an attendee, but as a participant/exhibitor/speaker?
We attend and participate to learn new ideas to implement as the industry grows, and to share our experience and knowledge with other RLA members. You never know what information or idea you can get from a brief one-on-one networking meeting during breakout sessions or even on the many webcasts.

Tell us about one opportunity your company has benefited from and grown because of RLA.
In our endeavor to promote brand protection for Reverse Logistics, we are able to discuss the advantages of a single return center that many companies have not realized the potential as an added revenue stream under their control.
As the volume of returned products continues to grow, the question and issues related how to provide those products another life continue to be asked and reconsidered. For many organizations – both OEM’s and retailers – there is a tension between their existing sale of new products and the potential sale of recovered products (recovered products being a refurbished or remanufactured product). Frequently this tension can be a key inhibitor to organizations being willing to explore the opportunity these recovered products represent.

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation recently published a White Paper that CoreCentric Solutions completed. This White Paper explores the experience and lessons learned by 8 different OEM’s in their journey to selling recovered products. The White Paper focused on answering the question, “Does selling recovered product negatively impact the sale of new products?” but given that “No” makes for a very short White Paper, the Paper explores a variety of other issues and benefits these OEM’s experienced.

In every instance, all 8 of the OEM’s were very clear that selling recovered product did not negatively impact new product sales. In fact, it did the opposite – it grew their business. In the interviews each of the manufacturers made it clear that selling recovered products allowed them to reach new markets and sell to consumer – both individual and institutional – that they were not reaching before.

These consumers – whether they were budget-restricted or bargain-hunter – wanted the brands in question but were not willing or able to pay full-price for the products. By offering a recovered product with a price reduction of somewhere between 15 – 30%, these OEM’s were able to sell to consumers that wanted their products but had previously not purchased their product.

One OEM noted that by selling recovered products it opened markets for government contracts. These government contracts include requirements for recycled-content that the OEM was not able to meet with new product, but the recovered product met the recycled-content requirements the OEM was able to expand its business to public-sector clients.

Additionally, and this focuses more on institutional purchasers, OEM’s noted that by selling recovered products some of their institutional clients were able to buy more product than if they only purchased new.

The sale of recovered product also was an opportunity to sell companion service support for that product. In addition to another revenue stream, this service support creates a long-term relationship with the customer.

In the end, all eight OEM’s reported the same outcome: selling recovered products expands sales without having a negative impact on new product sales.
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But the benefits of selling recovered products went beyond expanded markets and sales. These include:

- Avoiding failure. By recovering returned/failed/lease-return products, the OEM’s were better able to understand why the products were failing and make the appropriate changes to the product design to mitigate those failure modes.

- Product design. Because these products were now being designed to be recovered, new design features were considered and built-in, including: re-designing the product to maximize the recovery of parts and minimize time needed to recover those parts; building in modularity to make it easy to remanufacture the product in its next life; and, critically, focusing on quality so that the product was able to have multiple – rather than one – life.

- Business optimization. The business of capturing old products, doing the necessary inspections and value-added work to the product was not a regular business process for many of these OEM’s. In building out these new business units, they were able to re-think their existing supply chains; develop new business capabilities; and even re-think their sales compensation. While different OEM’s reported different benefits, all of them indicated that the process of developing the new capacity helped improve their overall business operations.

In the end, there were six key lessons that the White Paper identifies for being successful in selling recovered product. These are:

- Brand is King. The recovered product must be affiliated to the OEM’s brand as the consumers were frequently shopping for the brand and brand experience.

- Own the recovered product aspect. Consumers are open to buying recovered product, but they must know it is recovered. Some OEM’s also go so far as to telling the consumer all the quality checks and inspections the product received – not only owning the recovered aspect but being transparent about it.

- Quality is required. The recovered product must perform like new. As one OEM said, “These consumers are looking for value, and that includes performance. If it doesn’t perform, it won’t sell.”

- Price for value. The discount for the recovered product compared to new ranged from 15 – 40%; while there was no agreement on how much the product should be discounted, all OEM’s agreed it must be discounted.

- Guarantees add credibility. The product must have a warranty. It doesn't have to be the same as a new product, but a warranty offers consumers peace-of-mind and tells the consumer that this is a quality product.

- Consider separate channels. While there was not unanimity on this issue, most of the OEM’s interviewed had created separate channels to market and sell their recovered products.

In a recent RLA magazine article, Varun Thakar from Amazon wrote that, “…the increased awareness of consumer is making them open to purchasing refurbished, cameras, audio devices, home and kitchen appliances, office products, pre-owned watches and even open-box products. Customers are willing to purchase brands they would like to own at prices they can afford.”

The White Paper not only supports this conclusion, it finds that this conclusion creates new opportunities for businesses willing to sell to these consumers.

The White Paper includes contributions from the following OEMs: Bridgestone, Dell, ecobee, GE Medical, HP, Lexmark, Philips Medical and Renault. To get a full copy of the White Paper, entitled, “Remanufactured and Refurbished Products and Parts: Busting myths surrounding their impact on new product sales” go to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation web site or contact Chris Cloutier at CCloutier@corecentricusa.com.

Chris Cloutier has worked at the intersection of economic growth and environmental improvement for the past 20 years. His work has helped Best Buy, Sears, Whirlpool, WW Grainger, CoreCentric Solutions and others turn environmental challenges into economic opportunity. With a deep background in waste and recycling, energy and energy efficiency, product and technology development and sustainability. Chris was most recently the Director of Business Development and Sustainability for CoreCentric Solutions.
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Today, there are many companies offering reverse logistic services. Not all these organizations are adept at truly providing the value needed to be effective. It appears to be more of an add on to a core competency or the company is subcontracting parts of the reverse logistic work out to a separate entity, diluting the ability to qualify them as a good potential match for the services needed. The purpose of this article is to give you the reader some insight and help avoid some of the dangerous pitfalls that could prove to be costly in choosing a reverse logistic partner.

The term reverse logistics wasn’t really known in the beginning of my career however there were companies out there offering services closely related. I attended the 1st RLA show back in 2002 and to see how the industry has evolved today is enlightening. The addition of recycling and the go green initiatives have certainly been a major change for the better. Seeing the inception and development of web-based auction sites underscored changes in how excess inventory was being dispositioned. The web in general created a completely different sales and information platform adding tremendous velocity. The internet greatly increased inventory visibility and created misinformation as well. During the 1980s and 1990s the barrier for business entry was considerably less complicated. I call this time period the “wild west”, the back end of a products life cycle did not command a high level of visibility with OEM executives. Mid-level managers at this time appeared to be making most of the decisions. The recovery rates and the market impact didn’t receive as much scrutiny as today.

The reverse logistic business function today is viewed much differently. Reverse Logistic providers now must abide by a number of qualifications such as R2, E-steward and ISO14001 certifications in most cases to win business. This has helped businesses add improved processes and quality control, however at a cost.

I highly encourage companies that are looking for a qualified reverse logistics provider to look beyond a shiny looking website. It is imperative to know and understand the executive team directing the operations of the R/L provider. Unfortunately, there are a number of unscrupulous people and businesses conducting bad practices. I suggest looking up the names of the managing executives on google and industry websites such as http://www.erai.com/. A few key issues that exist today are counterfeit products, used inventory being sold as new and cooking the books. It is imperative to understand and gain as much knowledge as possible to make the best educated decision.

The future of reverse logistic I believe will encompass the use of technology disruptors such as highly advanced sensors to help speed up work flow and make better decisions. We can see innovators start to incorporate this. The use of sensors will help plan and schedule
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freight more efficiently. Time to market is imperative when it comes extracting the desired financial results from consumer returns. One of the biggest mistakes I see from manufactures trying to obtain the best solution is failing to capture and understand the solution providers plan to incorporate improved technology. Process automation in many cases will benefit both the vendor and manufacturer. Reverse Logistics is not a cookie cutter business. It involves multiple nuances and differences that require in-depth analysis.

Transportation centric reverse logistics companies are typically closer related to a third-party logistics provider with some value-added services however they are usually missing some core strengths that may or may not be needed. If your needs are more transportation centered, this could be your best choice. It is critical to be able to decipher the core discipline of the provider.

We can also see that recycling centric organizations are now offering reverse logistic services as well. I advise people to be cautious, as many of these services are not the core competencies of the recycling company. I always encourage people to do as much homework as possible and gain a solid understanding of the experience related to the services desired. It all comes down to the people navigating the operations.

Re-marketing centric reverse logistic companies are typically focused on monetizing the returned assets and brand protection which is critical for many of the OEM’s in need of a provider. The financial returns on selling returned assets is directly tied to the quality of the distribution channels set in place. This is not easy and takes a considerable amount of expertise to develop, cultivate and manage. I encourage people to dig in deep and gain a thorough understanding of the people managing the sales process. To be successful in the re-marketing side of the reverse logistics business, it is imperative to have a developed portfolio of sales channels ranging from the end user such as Amazon to international wholesalers. This gives a client much more channel flexibility.

We are now seeing repair centric company’s offer additional reverse logistic services. If repair is the primary need for your organization this could be a fit. I highly suggest taking a thorough look at the competencies outside the repair operations and ensure they are a match for the entire process. Many company’s over promise and can’t be a solution for everything.

Software is a huge differentiator in the reverse logistics industry. Unfortunately, many in the industry have not adopted process automation software. Please take note I am using the word adopt. Software is only as good as the company decides to use it. The use of technology
such as software can greatly collapse time and help reverse logistic providers make informed decisions. I encourage people to look at the software in place to keep operations running smoothly.

The labor and human resources side of the reverse logistics equation is critical. The experience of the technicians, staff and the ability to retain top tier talent are all paramount. It is important to gain a fundamental perspective relating to the quality of the staff on board. I highly encourage people to obtain a top down organizational chart of the team that will be involved with processing inventory and take some time to interview them.

Another key area to consider are the locations of the provider. Do the geographic locations or location make viable financial sense? If the reverse logistics provider has multiple locations it may help save on shipping costs however it will indeed have an impact on the overall overhead, raising costs. There are multiple perspectives to consider with this.

I also encourage people to look for reverse logistic service providers that have a road map to incorporate new technology such as hydrogen engine trucks coming from Nikola Motors. This is some amazing technology that will truly be a game changer related to transportation costs. https://nikolamotor.com/

There is a considerable amount of data to process when trying to identify a good match for your requirements. Using an RFP format is good however it can in many cases leave out the ability to decipher the unique differentiators of a provider. I really think extensive live conversations are critical to the decision-making process. To keep it as simple as possible I suggest creating a basic RFP, prioritize the best choices, interview each provider and ask open ended questions to better help understand the unique differentiators. Each matched vital requirement needs to be verified. A good example of verification would be to obtain copies of the certifications needed such as R2 or ISO 14001. These types of certifications only show that a defined process has been documented, not verification of competency. To verify company competencies, I suggest obtaining references. Another key factor to consider is the longevity of the company, which shows consistency, however it could also be an organization with outdated technology. A company that stays ahead of the technology curve should also be more efficient, that is if the technology is being adopted properly. The last action item I recommend is researching the prospective company to see if the reverse logistics provider has been involved in any lawsuits. I hope this article helps you in your search for a reverse logistics provider. Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Mark Bentley it the Chief Development Officer for Total Technology Results. Mark Bentley has been an executive serving the technology industry for over 20 years. He is a proud father and friend. Mark started in the reverse logistics industry when it began, working for one of the largest providers. Mr. Bentley became aware of many key deficiencies and areas that needed improvement in the industry. His goal as an executive is to bring new and advanced technology to the industry while leveraging Mark’s in-depth historical experience. Mr. Bentley has been a speaker at the RLA shows for many years and is considered an expert in the industry. Please feel free to reach out to Mark if you would like some more information. sellingceo@hotmail.com
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Day One – Tuesday, February 5, 2019

8:00 AM  Event Registration

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM  **R2 Certification: A Powerful Partner for the Reverse Logistics Industry**
by seri, Home of the R2 Standard

11:00 AM – VIP Luncheon by RLA Invitation: Women in Reverse Logistics
12:30 PM  Hosted by Nelly Ramirez, Vice President New Business Development – PowerOn
Special Guest Speaker: Patricia Daugherty, Ivy Chair in Business/Professor of SCM- Iowa State University

1:00 PM  **Welcome Remarks from our RLA Executive Director**
Tony Sciarrotta, Executive Director, The Reverse Logistics Association

1:05 PM  **Chairperson’s Opening Address**  Paul Baum, CEO

1:15 PM  **Keynote Presentation:** The Year Ahead, CES 2019 Trends and Implications for Returns
Steve Koenig, Vice President of Research, CTA/CES

1:45 PM  **Q&A Session**

2:00 PM  **Panel Discussion:** Equity Investments in the Secondary Market

2:45 PM  Afternoon coffee/networking break and raffle drawing

3:15 PM  **Case Study Presentation:** Asset Recovery
**Moderator:** B-Stock
**Guest:** Whirlpool

4:00 PM  **Panel Discussion:** Apparel – What is Being Done to Address Intentional Returns

4:45 PM  **Panel Discussion:** Next Practices in Circular Economy - Innovation in Sustainability

5:30 PM  **PC-Doctor Presents Fireside Chat**
Tom Maher, SVP Global Service Parts- Dell
Aki Korhonen, Founder and CEO, PC -Doctor

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM  **RLA Industry Awards Presented by:** Chuck Johnston
**Drawing and Evening Networking Reception Hosted by:** RLA Sponsor
# Day Two – Wednesday, February 6th, 2019

## 7:00 AM  
**Breakfast & Event Registration**

## 8:00 AM  
**Welcome Remarks from our Executive Director**  
Tony Sciarrotta, Executive Director, The Reverse Logistics Association

## 8:05 AM  
**Panel Discussion: Measuring Customer Experience**

## 8:50 AM  
**Chairperson Opening Address** – Darren Krantz, President & CEO

## 9:00 AM  
**Keynote Presentation: Vested Outsourcing**  
Kate Vitasek, Faculty, Graduate & Executive Education, University of Tennessee  
Author: Vested Outsourcing

## 9:30 AM  
**Q&A Session**

## 9:45 AM  
**Case Study: Vested Outsourcing In Practice**  
Moderator Kate Vitasek with Philips, FedEx, and DELL

## 10:30 AM  
**Morning Coffee/Networking Break and Raffle Drawing**

## 11:00 AM  
**Panel Discussion: The Global Secondary Market – Offshore, Nearshore, Home**

## 11:45 AM  
**Panel Discussion: Brand Protection in the World of Returns**

## 12:30 PM  
**Luncheon and Networking for All Attendees**

## 1:45 PM  
**Panel Discussion: Creating a Win-Win in Socially Responsible Secondary Market**

## 2:30 PM  
**Panel Discussion: Analytics and Big Data in Returns**

## 3:15 PM  
**Afternoon Coffee/Networking Break and Raffle Drawing**

## 3:45 PM  
**Panel Discussion: Social Media – Impact to Returns**

## 4:30 PM  
**Keynote Presentation: The Endless Impossibilities of Quantum Computing**  
William (Whurley) Hurley, CEO/Co-founder Strangeworks

## 5:00 PM  
**Q&A Session**

## 5:10 PM  
**Raffle Drawing**: Darren Krantz, President & CEO

## 5:15 PM  
**Interactive Champagne Roundtables Sponsored By**  
Plan to attend and ask questions. Interact directly with the industry’s brightest minds and continue the dialogue while sipping champagne!  
**Reverse Logistics Challenges and Successes through the eyes of RLA Advisory Board Members**

## 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM  
**Evening Networking Reception** Hosted by RLA Platinum Sponsor

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**Reverse Logistics Magazine | Edition 98**  
www.RLmagazine.com
### Day Three – Thursday, February 7th, 2019

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<td><strong>Breakfast &amp; Event Registration</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td><strong>Welcome Remarks and 2018 overview of RLA Activities</strong></td>
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<td>Tony Sciarrotta, Executive Director, The Reverse Logistics Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:35 AM</td>
<td><strong>Panel Discussion: Leading Edge Technology in Reverse Logistics</strong></td>
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<td>9:20 AM</td>
<td><strong>Keynote Presentation: Collaborating with the Industry, Defining Grading Scales</strong></td>
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<td>Michelle James, Vice President, Strategic Industry Programs, CTIA - The Wireless Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:50 AM</td>
<td><strong>Q&amp;A Session</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
<td><strong>Panel Discussion: A View of Global Dynamics in Mobile Returns – Where has your Phone Been?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45 AM</td>
<td><strong>Morning Break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
<td><strong>Selling on Amazon Renewed</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eileen McKeown, Head of Business Development - Amazon</td>
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<td>Ryan Moss- Account Executive - Amazon</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:45 AM</td>
<td><strong>Fireside Chat with Members of the RLA Advisory Board</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Host:</strong> Tony Sciarrotta, Executive Director, Reverse Logistics Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30 PM</td>
<td><strong>Close of the RLA Conf &amp; Expo - Boxed Lunches Provided</strong></td>
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The 16th Annual Reverse Logistics Association Conference & Expo
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Service Desk

ENTRANCE TO PRESENTATION ROOM

ENTRANCE TO EXHIBIT HALL

Food Tables

charging station

Evening Reception
Night 1 Bar Location

Event 1 Bar Location

203 – PlanITROI
209 – Truffoire
211 – XPOLogistics
213 – Liquidity Services, Inc.
221 – United States Postal Service
223 – Inmar
225 – Recommerce
300 – Softthinks
303 – Aeris Packaging
305 – Blancco
311 – goTRG
313 – TSC
321 – goTRG
323 – Tekovery
326 – SourceAmerica
399 – The Surplus Company
400 – RLA Standards Committee
404 – Belmont Trading
406 – Chicago Tag & Label
410 – B-Stock Solutions
412 – DM Transporation Management Services
420 – PC Doctor, Inc.
425 – Cokeva
500 – Alliance Partners
505 – COSPhones
509 – JKA Logistics
511 – PowerON
519 – Airfill
521 – HMR
525 – Funai
526 – ERI
599 – Pilse
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614 – Back Market
616 – Re-Teck
620 – NPI
622 – Cell Phone for Soldiers
625 – Mainstream Global
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who is seeking value, name brand, warranty and support from a retailer they can trust.

CONSUMERS...UNCOVER & RECOVER...
The value and peace-of-mind of buying affordable technology
that is warranted and supported with a brand they trust.
It is well-understood in retail that some products are more amenable to online sales channels than others. On one hand, consumers are comfortable with digitally assessing products whose attributes are well-known or can be fully understood without any physically interaction (e.g. batteries). On the other hand, for many products a digital assessment does not remove all uncertainty. Apparel is a classic example of such a product, since consumers might be hesitant to buy a clothing item without first physically trying it on.

In their recently published paper, Professors Santiago Gallino and Antonio Moreno (of Dartmouth College and Harvard University, respectively) investigate an emerging technology that is intended to address this consumer uncertainty: virtual fitting rooms. With this technology, a consumer can digitally replicate the in-store try-on experience by creating a virtual model of themselves, including key body measurements as well as skin tone and hairstyle. The idea behind such technology is to provide better information to consumers, which could lead to a number of better outcomes for the retailer. Of particular interest to the reverse logistics community, the authors test whether virtual fitting rooms reduce the probability of returns, as well as the probability of consumers ordering multiple sizes of the same product (a “home try-on” approach that is likely to include an unequivocal intention to return some items). They investigate their research questions using a series of carefully designed, randomized A/B tests, implemented by a large online apparel retailer in Latin America. Their findings have real implications for online retailers struggling with the problem of returns. Specifically, in one of the studies described in their paper, the authors show that, all else equal, the online fitting room technology reduces the probability of an item being returned by about 5%. In a subsequent study, they find no less than a 25% reduction in “home try-on” behavior when the virtual fitting room is utilized. The magnitude of these reductions is remarkably high, translating into substantial potential savings in returns processing costs for online retailers.


1 This recurring series provides plain-English summaries of leading academic research in the area of consumer returns. It is co-produced by Mark Ferguson (Univ. of South Carolina), Michael Galbreth (Univ. of Tennessee), and Guangzhi Shang (Florida State Univ.).
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By 2050, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have forecast that seven out of the 249 countries (2.8%) in the world will hold 45% of global GDP and they are all located in Asia: China, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia and Thailand. Of course this is if the political, institutional, economic, governance and leadership requirements all fall into alignment and can rise up to the challenges that comes with growth heading towards advanced economy status.

Asian cities will become centres of higher education, innovation and technological development from massive urbanisation fueled by a population increase from 1.6 billion to 3.1 billion which will be truly staggering. These cities already account for 80% of economic output and the anticipated three billion additional Asians will put tremendous pressures on - and create - intense competition for Earth’s finite natural resources.

In the last several months, Chinese tech giants have all released information on their expansion plans across the region, particularly South East Asia. They, too, have been keeping a watchful eye on the growth numbers and potential business opportunities that will come from Asia’s massive urbanisation and raise in incomes. What is not clear is if they are heeding the warning signs that this will not be the Asian century unless the drain and competition for natural resources is addressed. Nor is it clear that they could, through the power of their logistical operations, precisely reverse logistic, ensure much of these secondary raw materials are returned for reprocessing.

To recap some of the highlights of 2018:

1. Alibaba stated it would double its investment into the Singapore-headquartered regional e-commerce company Lazada to a total of US $4 billion.

2. Tencent Holdings invested into Singapore-based Sea which operates the e-commerce site Shopee, Garena gaming and esports platforms.

3. JD.com has completed a joint venture with Central Group in Thailand.

In a statement issued in May 2018, Lucy Peng, co-founder of Alibaba, stated “With a young population, high mobile penetration and just 3% of the region’s retail

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2. Ibid
5. Ibid
ITAP is a leading global technology company in the reverse logistics industry, providing Fortune 1000 partners with innovative repurposing solutions that transcend the term "recycling" and redefine value.
sales currently conducted online, we feel very confident to double down on Southeast Asia. We are excited about the incredible opportunities for supercharged growth."6

Money does not seem to be much of an issue either as financing for Southeast Asia’s technology sector totalled US$6.3 billion across 422 deals in 2017, up from about US$300,000 for 100 deals in 2012, according to data from venture capital research service CB Insights. And logistics, both forward and reverse, will be the enabler to make all this economic activity as seamless an experience as possible.

While there are a variety of different logistic models currently around Alibaba is already into the 2nd phase of its logistic hub in Malaysia and sweetening its investments by developing technologies, such as traffic management solutions via big data analytics, and building skills capabilities of Malaysian entrepreneurs.

However none of these activities offer any insight into the returns management and reverse logistics required to coordinate the millions of dollars of growth that must come to turn these investments into profits. According to Inside Retail Asia “Retailers who may have innocently thought that offering another channel, Click & Collect, and a wider choice for customers was just another box to tick-off have been caught out by the fact that the omni-channel reality has meant a change in customer mindset, which means they have to deal with the complexity of more returns. Reverse logistics has become an increasing challenge.”7

Yusen Logistics, a Japanese logistics company, has a dedicated page on their website especially for Reverse Logistics “Yusen Logistics has developed a Reverse Logistics program that manages your product returns and allows you to generate revenue from them while limiting your environmental impact. We provide a complete end-to-end service that offers you a system for managing product returns, including a zero-landfill solution.”8

Yusen does not specifically state if their reverse logistics operations is in every market they service, as a zero-landfill solution claim may be hard to live up to given the weaknesses in many local markets in Asia of a robust remanufacturing, refurbishing and recycling industry.

The last words come from the Singapore government’s Economic Development Board “How e-commerce companies are changing the logistics business”. While their article focuses on forward logistics solutions, there are three sentences devoted to reverse logistics “Equally important is improving customer experience to stay competitive by investing in initiatives such as reverse logistics and improving last-mile access for the customer. UPS Access Point is one such example of an efficient delivery and a returns management model. The model allows consumers to pick up parcels – or return a parcel – from a retail outlet such as a newsagent or grocery store.”9

Over the last several months Circular Economy Asia has been watching this space carefully. Asian online shoppers are no different to western online shoppers. They want a fast delivery service and a convenient returns experience. The infrastructure to manage the growth of returns, a viable secondary market and outlets, plus the skills and business acumen to remanufacture, refurbish and reprocess products does not exist yet.

If Alibaba’s market modus operandi is to use its might to also educate and inspire the next generation of Asian entrepreneurs it may well be advised to consider the huge opportunity that will come from the returns market. Here is where circular systems will thrive and have its place.

Ms Adrienna Zsakay is the Founder of Circular Economy Asia Inc., an Australian NGO working on implementing Circular Systems across the Asia Pacific region with its Asian office in Malaysia. Ms Zsakay has invested a large portion of her adult life in Asia and holds an Asian studies degree from the University of Western Australia.

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<th>Revenue</th>
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<th>Inventory</th>
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<td>• Order Management</td>
<td>• Total Logistics Cost</td>
<td>• Forecast Accuracy</td>
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<td>• Online Sales</td>
<td>• Warehousing Process</td>
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The State of the Circular Economy in America delivers the first United States focused scan of the Circular Economy landscape. By providing an analysis of 202 United States based Circular Economy initiatives, this report offers concrete examples of Circular Economy solutions, as well as demonstrates the diverse array of stakeholders and industries that are already participating in the creation of the Circular Economy here in America.

The goals of this report are threefold:

1. Provide concrete examples of Circular Economy solutions to drive understanding of the Circular Economy
2. Highlight trends and opportunities in the US Circular Economy landscape
3. Catalyze further collaboration around Circular Economy solutions

Key Findings include:

- **Circular Economy solutions are here in America, just don’t call them that.** There are many organizations, including for-profits, social enterprises, non-profits and government entities that are currently taking action in America to promote Circular Economy principles. Many of these initiatives, such as Caterpillar since 1973 with their Remanufacturing program and Goodwill since 1902, may not explicitly cite the Circular Economy in their mission and were operating long before the term Circular Economy entered the mainstream.

- **More focus is needed on closing the loop for goods and materials.** Less than 8% of companies included in the report which sold physical product offered take back options. Even for companies whose business models rely on the secondary markets such as secondhand goods, remanufacturing, and repair, the majority only extended product life by one life cycle. Overall, there was also a lack of communication for consumers around proper disposal options for products with less than 40% of consumer goods companies included in the report offering easily accessible information.
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Lack of radical alternatives. Most of the initiatives included in the report are addressing needs within our current economic and production model. These solutions are very important in the short and medium term but to shift to a truly circular economy will require new options for delivering value. For example, what if instead of buying a product, we could buy the 3-D blueprint, go to a neighborhood lab that uses locally generated waste material as feedstock, and print a custom product? Once the useful life of the product was over, the product would be processed back into feedstock for the community to re-utilize. This would create a closed loop system for not just physical material but also for local wealth creation and empowerment.

Findings from the report include a summary and analysis of different initiatives grouped by their Theory of Change and Industry Sector. Specific categories include:

- **Design:** Focusing on the design phase of products, systems, or materials to enable better reuse, repair, recycling and/or incorporate less material usage
- **Education and Awareness:** Building awareness and interest in Circular Economy principles and activities.
- **Financing:** Providing funds and investor support
- **Information Transparency:** Providing greater insight and transparency into current processes and/or systems
- **Material Innovation:** The development of new materials that are more sustainable from a production, life-cycle, and/or end-of-life standpoint than those currently in production
- **Product as a Service:** Offering an alternative to ownership whereby the organization provides a service instead of selling a product
- **Product Life Extension:** Creating methods to prolong the use and/or life-cycle of a given product through activities including sharing, repair, reuse, and remanufacturing
- **Waste as a Resource:** Utilizing what is considered waste and upcycling and/or recycling this material into another material or product.

The Full Report also includes expert interviews, case studies, and editorials featuring:

- Cole Rosengren, Senior Editor, Waste Dive
- ECOR & 20th Century Fox - Sustainability on Set
- Thread International - Tackling Pollution and Poverty
- Iris Alonzo, Co-Founder, Everybody.World
- Kari Herlevi, Project Manager Circular Economy, SITRA
- Cohealo - Lowering Costs and Increasing Utilization Rates for Hospitals
- Ecolab & Knjaz Milos - Understanding Chemical Leasing

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For several years now the buzz word in business has been “big data.” From a Reverse Logistics perspective where does this data come from? How do we turn this “big data” into usable information? And what does the data tell us about our company and the handling of reverse logistics?

We have had big data in businesses for decades and in some cases so much data that we became overloaded and not able to convert the data into useable information in order to make better business decisions. The world of reverse logistics is no exception. The US Army conducted a detailed study into their reverse logistics practices (commonly referred to in the Army as retrograde operations) in 1998-1999 (Peltz, Lackey, Blake, & Vaidyanathan, 1999) about the same time that Dr Rogers and Dr Lembke were conducting a study of commercial reverse logistics out of the University of Nevada at Reno (Rogers & Lembke, 1998). Both of these studies were based on the use of big data from the reverse logistics transactions and resulted in a greater emphasis on items going backwards in the supply chain.

In 2000, Murphy and Poist published a paper on the collection of reverse logistics data. In their paper they stated “Another environmental topic that has been receiving increased attention in recent years is reverse logistics (RL). RL refers to the process involved in reducing, managing, and disposing of hazardous and non-hazardous waste from packaging and products. The growth and interest in RL is very likely to continue in the future as firms recognize that reverse logistics is a key component of the total logistics management process” (2000). In this study, Murphy and Poist collected big data on the use of recyclable materials and compared the data from the US and International companies that responded to their surveys.

In 2002 Lembke published a paper in the International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management on product life cycles and reverse logistics planning (Lembke, 2002). In this paper, Dr. Lembke states “As the relative newness of this area of research would indicate, many companies are just beginning to understand the importance of reverse logistics, and to grapple with how to best manage their reverse logistics processes” (2002). Not long after Lembke’s paper was published the Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE) Directive went into effect in the European Union EU) to reduce the impacts from the growth of electronic products and the resultant disposal or life cycle management. This new directive produced a growth in the big data captured within the EU on the management of electronic waste materials.

One of the first of these studies was published in 2005 by Hischier, Wager, and Gauglhofer focusing on the impacts of WEEE on the collection of e-waste in Switzerland (2005). The authors captured data on the recycling of batteries, capacitors, other hazardous materials, metals, metal-plastic mixtures, plastics, cables, wiring boards and monitor screens. Their goal
Return to Sender

Manufacturer
- Recover
  - Repurpose

Retailer
- Repair
  - Resell

Dispose
- Recycle
  - Scrap

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was to establish a correlation between higher levels of recycling in Switzerland compared to the rest of the EU and environmental impacts/sustainability. A follow up was conducted by Wager, Hischier and Eugster in 2011 that revealed a significant increase in the recycling of products in Switzerland compared to the 2005 study (2011).

In the reverse logistics world we are constantly throwing around the number of tons of electronic waste that is disposed of in landfills (approximately 40,000,000 metric tons (Walden, Recycling of Electronic Products, 2012)). Since e-waste supposedly only accounts for 2-5% of the actual land fill wastes, this would mean that total waste production equates to approximately 800,000,000 metric tons or approximately 1.792 trillion pounds of waste each year. At the upper limit of the e-waste projections, this would still leave 1.7 trillion pounds of waste from other sources going into our landfills. What percentage of that quantity is also recyclable?

A report from the Ellen Macarthur Foundation places the estimate at 95% of all plastics used in packaging is not being recycled each year with an estimated recycling loss of $(USD) 80-120 billion while 32% of all plastics never get recycled (2017, p. 1). Besides plastics, what other resources are not being recycled or captured through the reverse logistics process?

Cucchiella, D’Adamo, Koh, & Rosa reported a plethora of data on the disposition of electronics in their 2015 paper on results from the WEEE Directive. “Waste from Electric and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) is currently considered to be one of the fastest growing waste streams in the world, with an estimated growth rate going from 3% up to 5% per year. The recycling of Electric or electronic waste (E-waste) products could allow the diminishing use of virgin resources in manufacturing and, consequently, it could contribute in reducing the environmental pollution” (2015). The goal of this data capture was to demonstrate the volume of recyclable materials to include precious metals and limited natural resources coming from electronic products.

Although the study by Rogers and Lembke in 1998 stated that “now more than ever, reverse logistics is being seen as important” (1998), the growth of reverse logistics continues to burden companies with a mountain of products going backwards. Tansel reported “Increasing quantities of discarded consumer products remain a major challenge for recycling efforts, especially for discarded electronic products. The growing demand for high tech products has increased the e-waste quantities and its cross boundary transport globally” (2017). Rogers and Lembke reported the reverse logistics issue to be a $35 billion (USD) industry in 1998 (1998). By 2006 the estimate was placed at $100 billion (USD) and yet even with the growth in importance of reverse logistics, by 2012 the value of electronics in the reverse logistics system had risen to $677 billion (USD) (Walden, 2012). The year prior to this a data collection effort showed: “The resource recovery per tonne of high-grade WEEE ranged from 2g of palladium to 386kg of iron. Quantified in terms of person-equivalents the recovery of palladium, gold, silver, nickel and copper constituted the major environmental benefit of the recovery of metals from WEEE. These benefits are most likely under estimated in the model” (Bigum, Brogaard, & Christensen, 2011). Thus showing that the recycling of electronic products can not only produce limited resource precious metals such as palladium, gold and silver but also reduce the need to mine those metals as well as other metals such as iron.

In a recently published paper, the US Environmental Protection Agency reported “In 2014, approximately 41.8 million tons of e-waste was generated worldwide. Only 6.5 million tons of total global e-waste generation in 2014 was treated by national electronic take-back systems” (EPA, 2018). The report goes on to say “Cell phones contain a very high amount of precious metals such as silver and gold. Americans throw away approximately $60 million worth of silver and gold per year” (EPA, 2018). A separate EPA report states “For every million cell phones we recycle, 35 thousand pounds of copper, 772 pounds of silver, 75 pounds of gold and 33 pounds of palladium can be recovered” (EPA.Gov, 2018). The problem is that although the EU has the WEEE Directive for all of its member companies, in the US there is no national policy and only a little over half of the states have laws on the books concerning e-waste recycling.

Consider the recent report in Forbes Magazine: “given the fact that flash sales such as the soon to come Black Friday and Cyber Monday mostly encourages spontaneous consumer purchases, the return rate for clothing spikes dramatically following these limited time periods. According to a study from KPMG, 31.4% of consumers who had bought fashion apparel on 2017’s
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RLA SmartBrief

August 18, 2017

TOP STORY

Report: Majority of companies handle returns themselves
When dealing with returns, 60% of companies reported that they handled the process in-house, and 40% used a third-party logistics provider, according to a survey run by Chris Connane and DC Velocity. To cover the costs associated with returns, 31% of those polled said they charge customers for returns.

INDUSTRY UPDATE

Consider using ADR to assess vehicle reconditioning
Measuring efficiency in terms of average days in reason can provide clearer insight into the costs of waste in vehicle reconditioning, writes Rapid Recon CEO Dennis McGinn. Unlike time-to-market benchmarks, ADR focuses solely on the time a vehicle spends in reconditioning.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Denso among founders of Automotive Edge Computing Consortium
Toyota and Intel have partnered with three other companies to form the Automotive Edge Computing Consortium, with the goal of using data for connected services technology. Others to join the group are Japanese auto parts manufacturer Denso, Swiss telecommunications company Ericsson and Japanese telecommunications firm NTT DoCoMo.

RLA NEWS

Early bird special for RLA Conference in Amsterdam
This year’s three-day conference, Oct. 10-12, will include keynote addresses, sessions presented from European-based RL professionals, leading academics, and interactive panel discussions. In addition, there will be ample opportunities for networking and collaborating with peers within the reverse logistics industry. Sign up before Sept. 10 for the early bird rate.

Free 3-month subscription to Reverse Logistics Magazine
Reverse Logistics Magazine is a monthly digital publication of the Reverse Logistics Association, with a circulation of over 90,000 readers worldwide. Articles include reverse logistics editorials that cross all industries including high-tech, retail, medical, pharmaceutical, automotive and aerospace, just to name a few. The magazine provides the latest information regarding the various areas of reverse logistics, including returns management, refurbishment, field service and warranty.

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Black Friday, expected to return one or more items. With return rates up to 30% on Black Friday, the revenue lost from unnecessary returns from this day alone sums up to billions of dollars globally” (Khusainova, 2018).

The bottom line is that we continue to produce a plethora of data on reverse logistics activities and continue to report the vast amounts of electronic products produced and discarded but the problem continues to grow. Data collection and reporting is fine, but without analytics to turn all of this big data into usable information to help stop the growth of reverse logistics, we are not making progress. Data collection is fine but the whole purpose of data is to analyze the data, convert it into information and use that information to make better decisions within the world of reverse logistics and enable companies and consumers to think about the product design, process design and their impacts on the environment from the continued growth of electronic products and the growth of reverse logistics as a result of electronic commerce growth.

Joe Walden has 30+ years in warehousing, distribution, operations and supply chain management. A third book on supply chain leadership will be released this summer. In addition to operational supply chain experience, Joe also teaches graduate courses in Operations Management and Supply Chain Management for Webster University, as well as undergraduate classes in Operations Management for the University of Kansas.  

Joe Walden

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