



CEOCFO Magazine - The Most Powerful Name In Corporate News and Information

Consulting and Implementation Company, New Course is helping Consumer Package Goods Companies, Automotive Manufacturers, Pharmaceuticals and Multi-Channel Retailers to leverage Supply Chain and Logistics Based Technology to Drive Efficiency

**Business Services
Supply Chain**

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John J. Sidell
Principal and Co-Founder

BIO:

John has been active in the Supply Chain Management software and consulting market since the late 80's. Prior to co-founding New Course, John was a co-founder of ESYNC, an industry leading Supply Chain Execution (SCE) consulting firm, as well as an executive with multiple SCE software vendors. John is well known within the Supply Chain marketplace as an active member of the seminar, roundtable and speaking circuit as well as advisory board positions for several firms. He is a popular speaker and has given many presentations at industry events including MHIA, CSCMP Annual Conference and various Supply Chain Software User con-

ferences. Additionally, he has authored many articles on the topics of supply chain optimization, supply chain execution technologies and systems deployment and has been frequently quoted in industry periodicals.

John is a member of the CSCMP and MHIA. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Bowling Green State University and has been inducted into BGSU's Business School Hall of Fame. In 2001, he was honored as a regional winner for the Ernst and Young's Entrepreneur of the Year.

About New Course:

New Course professionals are seasoned supply chain veterans, capable of leading both small and large scale projects. Our proven methodologies for both consulting and systems implementation engagements drive projects to successful conclusions each and every time.

**Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine**

CEOCFO: Mr. Sidell, would you tell us about New Course?

Mr. Sidell: New Course is a consulting and implementation organization that focuses on companies that have supply chain and logistic initiatives. It can be strategic consulting around how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of supply chains and logistics operations or the deployment of technology that drives efficiency and improvements in process within supply chain logistics operations.

CEOCFO: Do you find that your industry is a little late to technology in some cases?

Mr. Sidell: I would not say late, just slow to adapt at times. I would say from an overall industry perspective, much of the new technology requires a "project approach" in order to successfully implement it. Because of this approach, the costs associated to the new technology can be higher than expected and therefore it takes a while to get funding approval. Therefore, the adoption of technology from most companies can be a bit challenging.

CEOCFO: What types of companies are coming to you for help?

Mr. Sidell: It ranges from the world's largest companies to organizations that are as small as one hundred million in sales. Over the years we have dealt with many of the consumer package goods companies, the leading automotive manufacturers, large multi-channel retailers, pharmaceutical organizations as well as smaller niche based companies. The common thread of these companies is they all utilize and leverage supply chain and logistics based technology to drive efficiency and in some cases a competitive advantage over other organizations.

CEOCFO: When a company comes to you what are some of the basics that you can do for them? What are some of the solutions that people might not even realize are available, that you are able to put together?

Mr. Sidell: I think some of the main drivers are, "How can I do a better job of serving my customers by improving

inventory levels, by providing better customer service and synchronization of inventory, with less cost and greater visibility." I think that many companies are trying to do more with less, which is probably a theme across all kinds of industries.

CEOCFO: Would you give me an example of a typical project?

Mr. Sidell: A typical project for us would be that we have a four billion dollar company that has warehousing and distribution operations across multiple zones, such as North America, Europe and Asia. The project may have several objectives such as; optimize inventory levels and inventory visibility, which generally means to reduce safety stock and provide visibility upstream and downstream, so the visibility to their suppliers of inventory levels and visibility downstream to their customers of available inventory and statuses. Therefore, a project for us would be to pull together a strategy of how we can effectively meet the requirements at an implementation pace and at a cost that has a positive ROI, Return on Investment. Ultimately, the technology implemented meets the functional and technical requirements and allows the operations to function with less cost and a greater level effectiveness.

CEOCFO: Where does the decision making come together between technology running the numbers and instinct, gut feeling and experience? How do you put the two together to come up with the right solution?

Mr. Sidell: Part of it is an art and part of it is a science. From a science perspective, there are just certain things that are inherently accepted within our industry. For example, data collection is a better way to capture and record transactions in a warehouse than manually recording via hand written notes on a sheet of paper. Therefore, anytime we can work with clients to utilize proven technologies around data collection, it absolutely makes sense. Generally, new technology that impacts operations gets escalated up the chain to the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and either the Senior Vice President of Operations or the Chief

Operating Officer (COO). In a general sense, the CIO is usually pushing the new technology and the COO is leery to deploy the latest, un-proven technology. Often times, we end up bringing those two organizations together; operations and IT, to work together on a solution that suits both objectives.

CEOCFO: Are there particular technologies that you use or does it really depend on the client and their needs?

Mr. Sidell: In our space, specifically supply chain execution and logistics, some of the common technologies are bar coding, radio frequency terminals, voice based terminals, RFID and then application software that use these technologies as data collection components. We will also integrate the application software systems into automated material handling systems such as conveyors, sortation systems, some level of robotics and so on.

"The methodologies we've developed over hundreds of projects help create an environment for our customers that take them from inefficiency to highly effective, in a time period that is practical and has a solid business case."- John J. Sidell

CEOCFO: How is business these days?

Mr. Sidell: Business is pretty brisk! We are doing a lot of work with SAP. There is always a "shifting of the sands" in our industry around better, faster and more efficient ways of doing things. Sometimes that means a lower inventory level. Sometimes that means working with third party logistics companies. Sometimes that just means driving efficiencies within the operation. There is always something that we are working with clients on, so that they can provide better service at a lower cost.

CEOCFO: What has changed the most over your business life reflective of the economy?

Mr. Sidell: It is the evolution of technology. What has really changed in the last four to five years is the advancement of mobile applications and the use of handheld devices as op-

posed to just everyone being tethered to their desktop or even their laptop. It is just amazing what is going on in the mobile space these days.

CEOCFO: How do you know what new technologies to pay attention to and what might be applicable for your business and what is likely to go by the wayside?

Mr. Sidell: If it makes sense from an ROI perspective and you have seen a real opportunity to apply the application in a simplistic manner, then those are the types of technologies that will probably reach early adoption and become marketable products. The ones that look really good but have eight to ten steps in order for them to become effective are the ones that generally, in my mind, do not pan out.

CEOCFO: How do you reach perspective customers?

Mr. Sidell: We actually drive marketing and sales activity through a variety of mechanisms. Part of it is channels, so what we do is market to other organizations that are in front of customers that could utilize our services. We also work with the industry analysts and the media to do subject matter expert interviews and become part of the industry as a knowledge resource. Then there is just good old fashioned hard work around creating a message that resonates with people and pushing that message forward through word of mouth.

CEOCFO: What is the competitive landscape like?

Mr. Sidell: There are dozens and dozens of companies that do, in general terms, systems integration and consulting work. However, what we found is that if we can pick one of those particular areas, like supply chain or logistics, that we are absolutely rock solid in, then we are able to differentiate ourselves from the generalists that are out there. If we could find the specific projects that are really focused on logistics; competition is always there, but it is not as heavy as what it would be for a big general implementation project.

CEOCFO: Are there services or pieces of the puzzle that you would like to add or that you are working on?

Mr. Sidell: Part of what makes us successful, that is really a key part of the puzzle, is a methodology to actually help customers go from, "I am inefficient and not effectively serving my customers," to, "I am highly effective and I am ranked very high in quality in customer service." The methodologies we have developed over hundreds of projects help create an environment for our customers that take them from inefficiency to highly effective, in a time period that is practical and has a solid business case. That, to us, is part of our secret sauce, that methodology.

CEOCFO: What are the intangibles that you want in your people?

Mr. Sidell: The intangibles that we are looking for is career diversity. Therefore, we do not want career constants that have never actually been on either the technology side or on a client's side. An ideal candidate for us is someone that has been a customer, a software technology vendor, as well as a consultant. That is because they understand it from all perspectives and can be highly effective in working with customers.

CEOCFO: Why should investors and people in the business community pay attention to New Course LLC? What makes you an exceptional company?

Mr. Sidell: What makes us exceptional company, especially if you are looking at it from a private equity perspective, is that we have been there and done this before. This is our second "go around". We developed a

similar organization (ESYNC) from scratch, ran it for a few years, sold it and fulfilled our original exit strategy. We retired for a bit and then reopened up this company, New Course. It looks similar to our previous company, but is highly focused on SAP. Right now SAP is one of the hottest software vendors in the supply chain industry and getting hotter. We are helping SAP position their Supply Chain software into their client base by working directly with clients to determine the business case and value proposition for the project. This approach yields happy clients, drives very profitable growth for New Course and supports our long-term partnership with SAP.



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