



Letter of Request for Case Studies

Dear Sir or Madam,

This is Ai Qiang Li (known as Eric) from The University of Buckingham, UK. I am doing my PhD research on the supply chain management of **Product-Service Systems (PSS)**. My PhD supervisor is Professor Pauline Found (in Lean Operations Management). I am writing to kindly request your help on a case study of your company to verify my research.

Manufacturers are shifting to a new business model of PSS that integrates product with services to enhance customer value. The emerging digital technology is also reshaping the scope and quality of services that manufacturers can provide, in an unprecedented form and rate. Meanwhile, a new kind of collaboration 'value co-creation' is rising in the complex and dynamic PSS supply chain.

However, research has shown that PSS providers have difficulties in managing their PSS supply chain that is thought to be different from either the product supply chain or service supply chain. Its features, drivers and barriers need to be further explored. This research aims to address those issues by answering the following **two key questions** through case studies:

1. What are the key features, drivers and barriers of PSS supply chain management?
2. How are the PSS providers managing their PSS supply chain?
 - 2.1 How do they manage the convergence of the product and service supply chain?
 - 2.2 How do they manage the relationships in the PSS network?
 - 2.3 How do they perceive and develop value co-creation?

The case study may occur in one or a mix of the following ways:

- Interviews of several key informants (proposed main method);
- Facilitating workshops on PSS (based on company needs);
- On-site observations or referring to archival documents such as company reports.

The case study may need 1-3 visits of your sites depending on the ways agreed and availability of the interviewees. The targeted interviewees are mainly from sales, engineering, purchasing, logistics, production, after-sale services, marketing, IT, etc. Other terms of collaboration:

- Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and any participants can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. Participants may also ask questions at any time and discuss any concerns with either myself (1500508@buckingham.ac.uk; +44 7519 490036) or my PhD supervisor Prof. Pauline Found (pauline.found@buckingham.ac.uk)
- The findings of the study will form part of my PhD thesis
- All information provided during the interviews will be held anonymously so that it will not be possible to trace information or comments back to individual contributors.
- Information will be stored in accordance with the current Data Protection Act
- A formal confidential agreement will be signed before the study starts.

In return for the case study, your company will receive **a formal report and/or several facilitated workshops** that are aligned with your company strategy/need on PSS, for example, to:

- Develop a differential PSS model and guidelines for business excellence;
- Enhance customer relationships (e.g. by value co-creation);
- Converge the product supply chain and service supply chain (including the service people);
- Reshape services strategy of digitalisation (e.g. on optimising service routes of people & parts);
- Best practice sharing from the research network and research findings.

Thank you very much for your time and I look forward to receiving from you.

Yours sincerely,

Eric Li