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The process of logistics integration can be divided into four stages: The first stage in the process is generally considered to have been the "revolution in physical distribution management" which began in the early 1960s in the USA and involved the integration into a single function of activities associated with the outbound distribution of finished goods. Formerly, logistics was a fragmented and often uncoordinated set of activities spread throughout various organizational functions with each individual function having its budgets and priorities and measurements. Separate distribution departments were created which, for the first time, were able to coordinate the management of trans-port, warehousing, inventory management, materials handling, and order processing.

The second stage is generally known as "materials management" which means the general principle in physical distribution management PDM is subsequently applied to the inbound movement of materials, components, and subassemblies. By the late 1970s, many finns had established "logistics departments" with overall responsibility for the movement, storage, and handling of products upstream and downstream of the production operation. This enabled them to exploit high-level synergies, share the use of logistics as- sets between inbound and outbound flows, and apply logistical principles more consistently across the business. Within the third stage, "systems integration" occurred, many firms tried to coordinate logistics more closely with other functions; it means that a logistics system with cross-functional integration should achieve greater results than one deficient in coordinated performance. With the emergence of business process re-engineering BPR in the ,early 1990s, the relationship between logistics and related functions was redefined. BPR identifies a series of core processes that cut across tractional functional boundaries and are essentially customer-oriented. Effective management of these processes requires the development of new working relationships between functions and the formation of more cross-functional teams.

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