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• Hosted by CSCMP – We are the supply chain industry’s leading organization focused on connecting, developing, and educating the world’s logistics and supply chain management professionals.

• Anchored in the Cornerstones of Supply Chain and Logistics – Experience how the cornerstones develop you and your entire team, but in a more prescriptive and unique way.

• Developed by CSCMP leaders and industry experts – Conference tracks are designed and managed by CSCMP members, a committee of high-profile industry professionals serving as track chairs.

• Focused on customers and consumers – If you only focus on the process and not consider the impact that supply chain and logistics has on customers and consumers, you’re missing something. This conference includes the world’s leading consumer research organizations and their latest findings.

• Features up-to-the-minute supply chain research and industry information – It’s only available at CSCMP’s annual conference.

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Now recognized as a key strategic discipline, SCM is having a major impact on every part of every business.
And it’s just getting started.
Once upon a time—back in the 1970s—most companies had procurement officers. They were hardworking souls, largely responsible for organizing the movement of goods from one shelf to another, from factory to rail depot, and from one town to the next. More often than not, the typical procurement officer had a practical bent, basic math skills, and a high school education.

That was then. Now, four decades later, globalization and a digitized world have forever changed the way businesses access raw goods and equipment, and ongoing revolutionary developments are affecting how firms deliver finished products and services. Put simply, what was once known as procurement is having a major impact on the supply-and-demand process. By some estimates, the care and feeding of all aspects of a company’s supply chain now accounts for roughly 60% of its total costs.

All this has given birth to the evolving and fast-growing profession of supply chain management, generally referred to as SCM. And because managers on the logistics side of business must oversee the end-to-end flow of data, products, and money, a high school education doesn't cut it any longer. SCM practitioners must not only master intricate information systems, they also must fully grasp the science of cloud computing and all its implications. In the world of SCM, complexity is the order of the day, and advanced degrees are called for.

HEAD IN THE CLOUD
Cloud computing, which may represent the future of SCM, comes in two basic flavors. A public cloud is one in which a service provider offers access to applications and storage via a subscription or a pay-per-use model. Using a public cloud has many advantages. For one thing, providers absorb the hardware, application, and bandwidth costs. At the same time, the public cloud is scalable—businesses take just what they need from it. By contrast, a private cloud, which refers to firewall-protected computing architecture, is favored by organizations that want to maintain total control of their information flow. But whatever form cloud computing takes, it’s here to stay. The research firm Gartner Inc. predicts that by 2016, more than 40% of new logistics applications will be delivered by means of the cloud. Gartner has also found that cloud adoption levels vary depending on the nature, size, and degree of sophistication of the enterprise. Larger and more complex firms might be more inclined to consider a private-cloud model in order to exercise proprietary control over their applications. Small and midsize businesses are likely to be quicker to adapt to the public cloud, presumably because they appreciate the advantages of shifting application maintenance to the provider, among many other pluses.

All the evidence suggests that even big business is beginning to catch on to the benefits of the public cloud. In 2011, CDW, a provider of integrated information technology solutions, conducted a tracking poll that revealed that, even back then, 84% of organizations were using at least one cloud application daily, many via the public cloud. Cloud usage has clearly increased since then and will continue to do so.

There is little doubt that cloud computing is poised to shake up the SCM industry in myriad ways. Suppose, for example, a company’s transportation, receiving, and service partners are all part of the same cloud-based community. That kind of robust network would allow all the involved parties an overview of the status of deliverables, alert them to potential disruptions, and reveal inefficiencies that might otherwise have been overlooked. Such a platform, which can inexpensively make increased transparency available to all players, offers early-adopter companies a competitive edge in today’s worldwide economy.

New and advanced SCM-specific software on the horizon may also up the ante. In the not-too-distant future, applications may be able to predict problems and highlight approaching issues. Such software might assess well in advance, for example, when shipping demands are going to be especially heavy, allowing managers to staff up as needed.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE
Having any kind of technological advantage is critical, say those at the forefront of the SCM field. “Today’s global environment is more dynamic and harder to predict,” says Serge
Massicotte, vice president and chief technology officer at JDA Software, which specializes in efficiently moving supply chain information. “Today’s integrated supply chains mean companies and their partners are more interdependent than ever. Technology plays a significant role in keeping systems and supply chain actors in sync and collaborating. Information about the impact of disruptions is flowing quickly across networks, ideally making supply chains more adaptable. That can lessen the pain following a natural disaster, for example.”

**BOTTOM-LINE BLOW**

The corollary is obvious: When technology fails and no one is equipped to handle the fallout, a company’s reputation—not to mention its bottom line—can suffer a mighty blow. Significant supply chain disruptions can cut into revenues and market share. They can cost firms millions if not billions of dollars in added inventory and lost production. Technology plays a key role in both preventing such disruptions and lessening their impact. Technology is also essential in helping supply chain managers address disruptions as they occur.

Help Wanted: Knowledgeable, Dedicated Supply Chain Managers

When technology fails and no one is equipped to handle the fallout, a company’s reputation—not to mention its bottom line—can suffer a mighty blow. The irony is rich: The very industry based on finessing the fine balance between demand and supply is facing a serious supply shortage in its own ranks, as qualified supply chain professionals are remarkably hard to come by. Since 2010, for example, the number of Supply Chain Management degrees awarded has been declining, as has the number of Supply Chain Management majors per college.

Disruptions still happen. And if knowledgeable, dedicated SCM managers are not on hand to anticipate those disruptions and address them as quickly as they occur, the results can be disastrous. Massicotte, vice president and chief technology officer at JDA Software, which specializes in efficiently moving supply chain information. “Today’s integrated supply chains mean companies and their partners are more interdependent than ever. Technology plays a significant role in keeping systems and supply chain actors in sync and collaborating. Information about the impact of disruptions is flowing quickly across networks, ideally making supply chains more adaptable. That can lessen the pain following a natural disaster, for example.”

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hard-earned, hands-on wisdom they’ve acquired after decades of honing their craft. To complicate matters, not everyone even agrees on the definition of SCM. In fact, some believe that the supply chain is not a business function at all. Instead, they view it as a network of companies, and they see SCM as the implementation of cross-functional relationships with key customers and suppliers in that network. It is a new business model necessary for an organization’s success, and every function needs to be involved.

That’s the view held by Douglas Lambert, the Raymond E. Mason Chair in Transportation and Logistics at The Ohio State University Fisher College of Business. Professor Lambert is also director of the college’s Global Supply Chain Forum, which is a collaboration between academics and executives from a cross section of leading companies who have spent the past 22 years developing a comprehensive, cross-functional, cross-firm, process framework for SCM. Forum researchers work with companies around the world to implement and extend the framework for SCM.

“We have worked with leading-edge companies to redefine supply chain management and develop the framework for success.”—Lambert

Forum research participants in “The Beer Game,” an interactive simulation that involves several key supply chain management principles.

Integrated SCM is cross functional and cross firm.

Relationships and Key Business Processes

Customer relationship management & supplier relationship management form the critical links in a supply chain.

Coordinated through these links are: customer service management, demand management, order fulfillment, manufacturing flow management, product development and commercialization, returns management—all forming the framework for long-term success.

Want to learn more?

Visit go.osu.edu/gscf-scm today—and start defining your SCM future.
simple management of materials,” says Bill Keough, director of pro-
gram operations at the University of Washington Supply Chain Transporta-
tion and Logistics master’s program, which focuses on transportation in
the broader context of the supply
chain. “Then, senior executives rec-
ognized that an efficient supply chain can be a real competitive weapon.
Now it’s been elevated to a strategic
discipline.”

It’s not surprising, therefore, that
enterprises want to be sure that
everyone they hire to take charge of
such a sensitive position is up to the
task. They’re seeking candidates with
a rare combination of hard and soft
skills that typify the best practitio-
ners of the profession. They want
people who can do the math—but
they also want those with excellent
leadership and communication skills,
who are quick on their feet when it
comes to solving problems, and
who have a sophisticated world view.
Given the rapid pace of change in
the field, they also expect their
SCM professionals to upgrade their skills on a regular basis.

CRITICAL STRATEGIC THINKERS
That’s why, says the Council of
Supply Chain Management Profes-
sionals (CSCMP), even an entry-level
consultant in the field must have a
strong educational background in
software selection and development,
strategic sourcing, and logistics
network design, to name a few areas
of critical expertise. Moving up the
ladder, SCM professionals must be
critical strategic thinkers who plan
years ahead and have significant
influence on every aspect of a com-
pany’s operation. Their role entails
routinely monitoring core supply
chain performance, including deliv-
ering against product and service-
level agreements and meeting cost
objectives. At any level of employ-
ment, skills must be constantly
sharpened to stay atop important
trends in the industry.

All of which explains why there is
increased demand for SCM educa-
tion on more campuses across
the country. David J. Closs is the
chairperson of the Department
of Supply Chain Management at
Michigan State University, which has
taught SCM degree granting and
executive education since 1995. The
MSU perspective of SCM integrates
the processes involved in procure-
ment, operations, and logistics,
which corresponds with the organi-
zational model being used by many
manufacturers. However, the reach
of SCM, Closs adds, extends beyond
traditional business processes to
include packaging and criminal jus-
tice, for example, where managers
must consider product protection,
security, and counterfeiting.

It’s clear, then, that supply chain
professionals nowadays are obliged
to be both tactical and strategic
thinkers, tasked as they are with
 overseeing networks that span the
world. The supply chain design
process extends all the way through
distribution to the customer, and
customer satisfaction must be well
understood. Of necessity, SCM job
candidates need a solid basis in
theory that can be accomplished
through a variety of different
methodologies. What’s important
from an employer’s perspective is
that the fundamental knowledge an
SCM job candidate has garnered is
appropriate and up to the highest
standards.

Colleges and universities like
Michigan State, Ohio State, MIT, and
the University of Washington are
working hard to meet the demand
for qualified supply chain personnel
with a variety of targeted programs.
Some concentrate on transporta-
tion, operations management,
international logistics, law, and
legislation, while others emphasize
supply chain design, supply and
purchasing, and information tech-
nologies. In all instances, specially
bachelor’s and master’s degrees in
the discipline are designed to ensure
that old school, narrowly focused
procurement officers of the past will
continue to be replaced by highly
educated SCM authorities. Such
programs are proving to be a boon
to employers seeking the right fit for
their supply chain needs.

For those seeking a career in
SCM, one of the potential appeals is
the fact that supply chain functions
are gaining recognition across all
sectors of the economy, including
nonprofits. That means people with
the right credentials in the field
have pretty much have their pick of
employment opportunities, no matter
whether their interests lie in health
care, tourism, or charitable con-
cerns. Once they have spent time on
the job, supply chain managers are
also finding that opportunities for
career advancement abound.

There is no question that de-
mand is running high for qualified
SCM practitioners—and all indica-
tions are that demand will only go
higher for several decades, if not
longer. The profession not only calls
for fundamental, sound attributes
and instincts—curiosity, quick think-
ing, an appreciation of systems and
how they work—but it also requires
training at a distinctly advanced
level. If today’s SCM professionals
have their heads in the cloud, that’s
an asset. But it also means they are
at the top of their game and have every
intention of furthering their knowl-
edge to stay there.

“The ability to think horizontally
is a critical part of the package,”
says Ohio State’s Lambert. “At all
levels, we see how vertical think-
ing—the silo mentality—can result
in unintended consequences and
inadequate performance. Our SCM
framework focuses on the integra-
tion of all business functions, so that
graduates and executives appreciate
the big picture.”

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