

Highlighting our accomplishments from the past year and **recognising** our partners and affiliates.



SAPICS

THINK SUPPLY CHAIN  **THINK SAPICS**

YEAR END E-ZINE

2024

www.sapics.org.za

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear SAPICS community,

We are already at the end of 2024!

This year has flown by and so many positive events underscore the bright future of the supply chain community. We are proud to support all of you in your journey to elevate, educate and empower yourself.

Supply chain management in 2024 may have been the toughest it has ever been. Change was the only constant in supply chains, and the volatility is set to continue. Geopolitical tensions, climate crises, economic instability and unpredictable consumer behaviour will keep supply chain managers on their toes.

The key trends indicated the importance of evolving as a supply chain professional:

- The future of supply chain is innovative and real time through digitisation.
- AI is already a useful tool for supply chain managers and is here to stay.
- Data is vital to optimise supply chains. It is more important than ever in the current uncertain and disruption fraught business environment.
- Educating supply chain professionals is key to ensure that all investments in innovation are aligned with a skilled workforce.
- Risk management and supply chain resilience will remain top the agendas of successful organisations in the future.
- Supply chains will be more human centric and sustainable. ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) considerations have become integral to supply chain management.



Supply chain management is a constantly changing profession. I am especially excited about the fact that in South Africa, the results of our elections showed how important it is to work together, and that supply chain management is high on the list of priorities.

Our conference in June was a huge success and the 2025 edition will be even better with the theme "Innovation in Motion". Please remember to register and take advantage of early bird pricing.

The continued dedication and passion of our members, volunteers and staff is what makes SAPICS what it is today. Many thanks to the Board for taking the time out of their busy days to contribute their expertise to this association.

We look forward to being able to offer exciting events, opportunities and support in 2025.

Wishing you all a well-deserved rest and an amazing 2025.

**Warm Regards,
MJ Schoemaker, SAPICS President 2024.**

SAPICS MEDIA PARTNERS



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SAPICS SUPPORTS YOUTH, TACKLES SKILLS GAP AND UNEMPLOYMENT



SAPICS has reinforced its commitment to developing South African youth by rolling out new initiatives and partnerships aimed at upskilling and empowering young graduates and professionals for career success, addressing the skills gap in the supply chain field and fighting the country's high youth unemployment rate.

We have launched a drive to engage with key stakeholders to explore strategies and collaborations that will ensure the competency of supply chain management students. One of our objectives is to create a pathway and provide support to ensure that academia and the supply chain requirements of the private and public sectors are aligned, for mutual benefit.

The outcomes of these discussions have included the establishment by SAPICS of supply chain chapters or desks at selected universities. SAPICS will offer support and resources, arrange events, and provide opportunities for dialogue, personal and professional development. SAPICS will also facilitate industry's involvement in research at universities. SAPICS will be a conduit for all industry sectors to connect and obtain information.

SAPICS corporate members have come to the party, too, and through SAPICS, will advise educational institutions of project work and vacation work opportunities for students. SAPICS will create a database with these opportunities, and universities and students will have access to this information.

Soft skills needed

Soft skills have been identified as an area where supply chain graduates are lacking. The first initiative to address this is a partnership between SAPICS and Unisa. Together, we have launched a series of lunchtime online Mini-Master Classes. The inaugural class, held in August and led by Dr Alicia Weber, a senior lecturer at Unisa, focused on the importance of core values and personal branding. She was joined by Nikita Reddy, school manager at Mancosa and a SAPICS director. She examined strategic personal branding.

The second class, which took place in September, was titled "Navigating the Supply Chain Management Fast Lane: Enhancing your Personal Agility". This session offered a compelling look at personal development and adaptability. It featured Regina Naiker from Castrol, who shared her personal experiences of achieving work-life balance, and Dikeledi Sathekge of Coca-Cola, who explored thriving within fast-paced organisational environments, drawing from her background in logistics and digital transformation.

The October class, titled "Balancing Tech and Talent - Skills for Success in AI-Enhanced Supply Chains," explored the integration of technology and human skills in modern supply chains. Alvin Kalideen from SANDVIK Group opened this session with a reflection on the historical evolution of AI and its impact on the supply chain industry. He was joined by Tony Mthethwa of Microsoft, who presented his take on the critical skills needed in AI-enhanced workplaces, highlighting the need to blend technical competencies, such as data analytics and process engineering, with essential soft skills, including communication, adaptability, and creativity.

These Mini-Master Classes are playing a vital role in developing the crucial soft skills required for emerging supply chain professionals. Students have already provided enthusiastic feedback, commending the classes for being entertaining and providing tangible benefits.

In addition to the UNISA Mini-Master Classes, SAPICS addressed the pressing need to develop supply chain professionals' soft skills by arranging a webinar with leadership development and training specialist Dr Hekkie van der Westhuizen.

He covered the important areas of self-leadership, emotional intelligence and conflict management.

Discussions with the University of KZN University of Johannesburg and Stellenbosch University

SAPICS has also entered into discussions with the University of KwaZulu-Natal and Stellenbosch University, to formalise its support for students studying Supply Chain Management and Logistics and Industrial Engineering. Engagement with the University of Johannesburg has led to a Memorandum of Understanding whereby students will receive memberships of SAPICS. Site visits will also be arranged for students, and the university will be involved in the SAPICS Young Professional and Student Conference in February 2025. This is an annual event hosted by SAPICS and geared towards ensuring that young professionals are industry-ready for job opportunities in the dynamic and increasingly critical supply chain management field, and that students are aware of the exciting career opportunities in the profession.

In addition to compelling presentations by an array of insightful, relevant and inspiring presenters, the annual SAPICS Young Professional and Student Conference also offers vital networking and mentoring opportunities. These are critical components for career success.

Learn more: <https://sapics.org.za/young-professional-student-portal>



THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF SUPPLY CHAIN FINANCE: BOOSTING CASH FLOW, REDUCING RISK, SAVING LIVES

Supply chain finance is an increasingly critical aspect of supply chain management, enabling organisations to improve their cash flow, mitigate risk in their supply chains, and ensure the continuity of supply and the financial health of their suppliers.

In the public health sector, lives depend on efficient supply chains, to ensure that essential medicines, vaccines and healthcare commodities are available to patients and vulnerable communities when and where they are needed. However, the financial side of these supply chains can often be a complex hurdle that impedes the effectiveness of health programmes.

Recognising the imperative to intensify the focus on finance in supply chain management, and to ensure that our members are empowered with the latest knowledge, skills, tools and technology, SAPICS has partnered with the global Supply Chain Finance (SCF) Community. This group consists of international knowledge institutions, corporations and supply chain finance professionals who share best practice and new research in an open, collaborative environment. Its founder members are leading business schools supported by corporations, banks, consultancies and technology vendors. The SCF Community aims to promote and accelerate the understanding, development and implementation of supply chain finance models.

Too many companies protect working capital by slow-paying suppliers

“Supply-chain finance today takes many forms, including early payment with dynamic discounting, inventory financing, pre-shipment purchase-order financing, and asset-based lending,” explains Luca Gelsomino, academic director at the SCF Community. “But the sector offers plenty of room for growth,” he states.

“Too many companies continue to limit their efforts at protecting working capital to slow-paying suppliers.



LUCA GELSOMINO

“More creative solutions are needed to benefit both parties, especially at a time when economic uncertainty promises to put even more pressure on already challenged margins.” Based in The Netherlands, Gelsomino is also an assistant professor at the University of Groningen.

Supply chain finance was in the spotlight at this year’s SAPICS Conference. Delegates gained knowledge and insights at a powerful practical workshop facilitated by Luca and a presentation on supply chain finance.

Managing physical and financial flows in supply chains

These sessions explored the relevance of supply chain finance for today's supply chain manager. Conference attendees had the opportunity to work on real-world case studies, applying supply chain finance principles to day-to-day operations. “This hands-on approach ensures a deeper understanding of how supply chain finance principles can be applied to enhance cash flow optimisation, supply chain resilience and sustainable performance. In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, the integration of supply chain and finance has become paramount for success. It is critical that we jointly manage physical and financial flows in supply chains,” Luca stresses.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN PROFESSION

During this year's Women's Month in South Africa, SAPICS announced the results of our latest Women in Supply Chain Leadership Survey. It revealed that women in the supply chain profession earn less than their male counterparts and most of them have faced gender discrimination in the workplace.

A worrying 64% of the female respondents said that they had experienced or witnessed gender discrimination in the workplace. Also concerning was the finding that 70% of the women surveyed had experienced resistance when leading men. More than one-third (36%) of the women who took part in the survey said that salaries for men were higher in their organisations and 35% of the participants were unsure of this.

Men were also included in this survey, and according to SAPICS, it was encouraging that 100% of the male respondents felt that men have an important role to play in championing gender diversity.

The survey results show that our profession has a long way to go in terms of gender diversity and inclusion. As a leading industry body, SAPICS is proud to have a good story to tell when it comes to empowering and advancing women. This includes

the fact that there are more women in the supply chain management profession today than there were 10 years ago, and SAPICS has had four female presidents over the years.

When our current president, MJ Schoemaker was nominated as SAPICS president in 2021, she took over from Keabetswe Mpane, who had served as a director of SAPICS for eight years and had a two-year tenure as president. Tracy Cheetham has the honour of being the first woman president of SAPICS. She served in this role for five years and handed over to Liezl Smith, who was a director of SAPICS for nine years.

However, while we have seen an increase in the number of women employed in the supply chain field this is not at the executive level.

The women respondents cited gender bias and the male dominated industry as two factors blocking the progression of their careers in supply chain management. Confidence and family commitments also ranked among the biggest challenges facing female supply chain leaders today.

While the results underscored how much work needs to be done to break down barriers for women in supply chain leadership, they also showed that gender balance is being prioritised by organisations. Asked if their company's leadership is committed to gender equality, only 14% of the women surveyed said that it was not an important and strategic element in the business.



Women are predominantly working in support functions and there is little movement to the upper levels. South Africa is lagging behind in innovative solutions such as flexible working hours for parents and hybrid working solutions, which would allow for career advancement and opportunities.

SAPICS believes that organisations must have a clear diversity and inclusion policy that promotes equal opportunities for all employees. Action must start at the top and be cascaded through the organisation to ensure that all leaders recognise the importance of diversity and move away from the traditional unconscious bias that supply chain is a male career.



SAPICS EMPOWERS WOMEN AT 2024 EVENTS

We hosted several exciting events for women this year. These have received high praise from attendees.

On 11 October 2024, our breakfast event at L'Oreal saw L'Oreal South Africa supply chain and sales & operations planning manager Kim Vengadajellum share her inspiring journey with attendees. Glynis Penny from Futuræ was also a presenter. She told attendees about the powerful concept of "Prosilience", which is a proactive approach to build your internal power and futureproof yourself. It's vital to prevent burnout.

On 24 October 2024, SAPICS president MJ Schoemaker explored what a supply chain career looks like, using examples from her own experiences and career path. Sharon Brand from Cornerstone Institute shared a compelling presentation that covered the path towards Industry 6.0 and the critical capabilities needed in this next phase of industrialisation.

SAPICS was thrilled to facilitate delegate donations to POWA (People Opposing Women Abuse) at both events. Thank you to everyone who kindly donated. Your contributions were greatly appreciated by this important organisation.



WAREHOUSE MANAGEMENT IS A VITAL LINK IN SUPPLY CHAIN OPTIMISATION

Warehouse management is a vital link in an efficient, resilient, sustainable supply chain, but the crucial role that the warehouse plays in the supply chain and in organisational success is often overlooked by companies.

Today, more than ever, qualified and skilled personnel are needed to ensure optimisation across the entire supply chain, to add value and deliver a competitive advantage. Warehouses that are not functioning well can have a significant impact at every stage of the supply chain. Warehouse management helps to ensure the availability of the right goods, in the right quantity at the right time; the safe, secure and optimal storage and distribution of goods; and their timely delivery, in perfect condition, to ensure customer satisfaction and business success. There have been great advances in warehousing technologies over recent years, but many warehouse managers still find inefficiencies in their operations. At the same time, consumer expectations for customised products, product transparency, and faster delivery are putting increased pressures on supply networks.

Warehouses must even function well in reverse, and this, too, is more important than ever because with the rise of e-commerce, product returns are higher. Reverse logistics encompasses all the activities associated with a returned product or product components that are effectively moving backwards through the supply chain. One downside to e-commerce is the high rate of returns. Up to 40 per cent of goods purchased online end up being returned. This is substantially higher than in-store returns, where shoppers return just five to 10 per cent of their purchases. The high rate of returns in e-commerce means that 20 per cent more space and labour is needed for reverse logistics.

Courses aimed at warehouse employees

Among SAPICS's education offerings are courses aimed at warehouse employees, supervisors and managers. The SAPICS "Basic Stores & Stock Control" (BSSC) is a short course that promotes stores efficiency and sound management practices.

The BSSC is widely regarded as the flagship supply chain course in South Africa. It provides learners with a sound understanding and base knowledge from which to advance their studies in the field of operations management.

Energy-efficient warehouses

When it comes to supply chain sustainability, the warehouse is an important, impactful place to start making changes. The drive for greener, sustainable supply chains often puts the spotlight on factors like raw materials and transport, but reducing the energy used in factories and warehouses may be more easily achievable and will have a substantial impact on an organisation's carbon emissions.

Supply chain sustainability leaders are increasingly citing the energy used in their facilities as one of the best levers supply chains have to reduce their emissions. While material and product use are significant contributors, supply chains usually have more control over the decisions concerning energy sourcing for their facilities.



SUPPLY CHAIN EDUCATION IS ESSENTIAL

Supply chains have never been as volatile as they are today, impacted by health crises like the Covid-19 pandemic, geopolitical conflict, climate change and economic instability. Amid the uncertainty, however, one thing that is certain is the growing demand for skilled, knowledgeable, suitably qualified supply chain professionals who can navigate the ongoing challenges and changes.

Education is key to ensuring that supply chain professionals are equipped to deal with the increasing complexities of supply chain management and with rapid advances in technology. SAPICS has been working to elevate, educate and empower supply chain professionals in South Africa and across the continent since 1966. We provide Southern African supply chain practitioners with access to a range of internationally recognised certifications as well as high quality, impactful short courses.



SAPICS is the Premier Elite Channel Partner in Sub-Saharan Africa for APICS, which is part of the United States-based international supply chain management body ASCM (The Association for Supply Chain Management). SAPICS is also a global affiliate of the DDI (Demand Driven Institute), the IBF (Institute of Business Forecasting) and ISCEA (the International Supply Chain Education Alliance). These global organisations all promote best practice methodology for the supply chain profession, and through these partnerships, SAPICS provides the best education content that is available globally for the supply chain profession. It is delivered through our network of carefully selected SAPICS Authorised Education Partners.

Rapidly changing logistics, transportation and distribution industries

SAPICS's education offerings include the APICS CPIM (Certified in Production and Inventory Management), CSCP (Certified Supply Chain Professional), CLTD (Certified in Logistics, Transportation and Distribution) and CTSC (Certified in Transformation for Supply Chain). The CPIM is considered the premier certification for internal supply chain business operations. The CLTD programme addresses the burgeoning need for standard benchmarks in the rapidly changing logistics, transportation and distribution industries. The APICS CSCP programme is the first and only supply chain certification that encompasses the end-to-end global supply chain. CSCP designees gain the skills to effectively manage the global supply chain activities that involve suppliers, plants, distributors and customers located around the world. The CTSC programme provides the essential knowledge to help employees effectively manage an end-to-end supply chain transformation project.

SAPICS offers training in the Supply Chain Operations Reference Digital Standard (SCOR DS) model, which organisations around the world and across industries are increasingly adopting to make dramatic and rapid improvements in their supply chain processes.

Recognising the imperative to drive sustainability in supply chains, to benefit organisations, the environment and society, SAPICS education includes a masterclass in the best practices and solutions to build a sustainable supply chain – provided in partnership with ASCM – as well as ISCEA's Certified Sustainable Supply Chain Professional programme.

Designations that SAPICS offers through the DDI are the DDMRP (Demand Driven Materials Requirements Planning) qualification, the Demand Driven Leader Programme, and the Adaptive Enterprise Foundations (AEF) programme.

Forecasters and demand planners are in demand

As we move rapidly into the age of big data and analytics, forecasters and demand planners are in high demand. To equip them with the specific skills and knowledge needed, SAPICS's education line-up includes the IBF's Certified Professional Forecaster (CPF), the Advanced Certified Professional Forecaster (ACPF) and the Certified Supply Chain Analyst (CSCA) qualification from ISCEA. The latter is aimed at young professionals, those aspiring to move into a career in supply chain management or wanting to gain a solid foundational knowledge of the end-to-end supply chain.

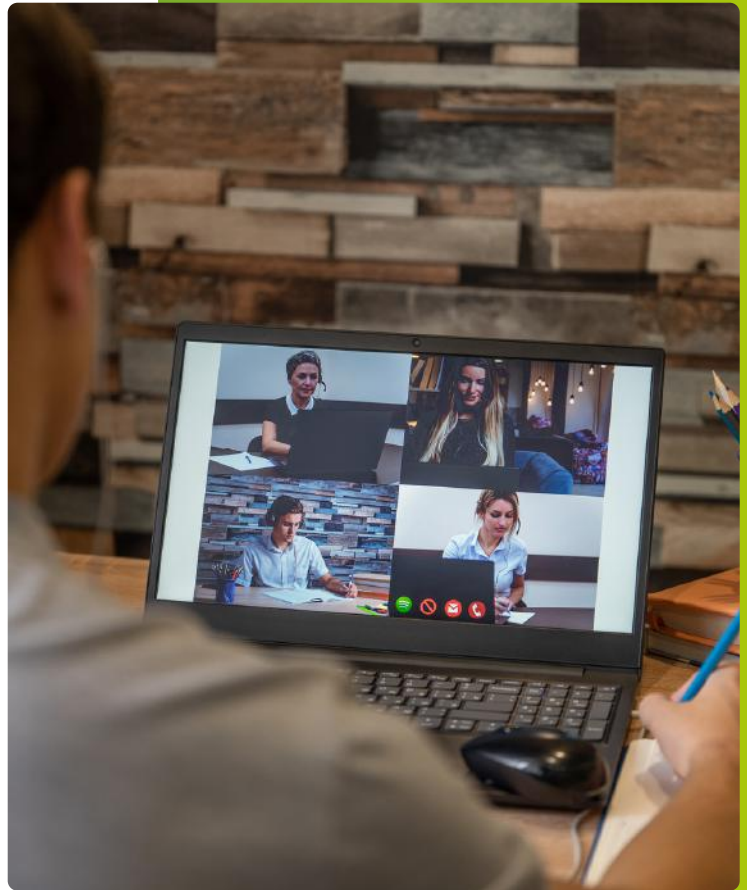
Healthcare supply chain management

Healthcare supply chain management encompasses a specific set of principles and procedures to deliver products and services to the right place at the right time at the right price in order to save lives and optimise patient care. ISCEA's Certified Healthcare Supply Chain Analyst programme, which SAPICS offers, covers many of the traditional supply chain topics like purchasing, transportation and sourcing, but it also covers healthcare-specific topics such as GSI, healthcare innovation and supply chain risk management.

SAPICS short courses

SAPICS short courses are designed to help individuals and organisations to get the supply chain basics right. They also offer new entrants to the field an understanding of the diverse career opportunities and varied paths available in the supply chain sphere. These courses have been assisting companies and their employees since 1982, when the SAPICS "Basic Stores & Stock Control" (BSSC) and "Principles Of Production & Inventory Management" (PPIM) short courses were first introduced.

The SAPICS BSSC course is aimed at warehouse employees, supervisors and managers. SAPICS's PPIM course provides learners with a sound understanding and base knowledge from which to advance their studies in the field of operations management.



The "Basics Of Manufacturing & Operations Management" (BMOM) is a SAPICS course that offers a basic insight into production and inventory management systems and helps develop learners' inter-departmental understanding and communication.

The value of the SAPICS short courses lies in the fact that they are structured in such a way that they prepare the learner for the challenges of today's VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) supply chains. SAPICS short course material is constantly updated to deal with the rapid changes in the dynamic, ever-evolving supply chain field, despite the fact that the core concepts have not changed.

Supply chains are essential for businesses to run, consumers to get the goods they need and society to function, but they can only be as effective and efficient as the people who manage them. To find out more about SAPICS's education offerings, visit <https://www.sapics.org.za/certifications-courses>

SMALL BUSINESSES NEED SUPPLY CHAIN SKILLS TO SURVIVE

The success of small businesses - which are the backbone of South Africa's economy - is being jeopardised by a lack of resources, skills and support in the critical area of supply chain management.

Small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) have a crucial role to play in the national economy as employers that can fight the country's dire unemployment rate and drivers of inclusive economic growth. A major factor in the growth and development of SMMEs is an understanding of operations and supply chain management best practices, but they are falling short and big business needs to step up.

Small businesses have so many responsibilities, and so many things to consider, that the essential supply chain function is often overlooked. But it can make or break the business and is increasingly important in today's complex and volatile business environment.

Corporates can support their suppliers with SAPICS Small Business Hub sponsorship

The SAPICS training and support programme for SMMEs offers a solution. A vital lifeline for small businesses that must navigate the turbulent supply chain landscape, the SAPICS Small Business Hub is also a valuable conduit for corporate businesses to support SMMEs and participate in the development of their suppliers. SAPICS urges corporates to sponsor Small Business Hub membership for their suppliers. Businesses can earn Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) points while empowering and uplifting SMMEs and upskilling their own supplier base.

Usually, training for SMMEs focuses on aspects such as marketing and finance, leaving operational skills undeveloped. To survive and thrive, SMMEs need to address the knowledge gaps that exist, including in supply chain management.

For an annual membership fee, SMMEs can join the SAPICS Small Business Hub and reap the benefits of skills development and knowledge sharing activities like workshops and webinars.



They can expand their professional network and have regular face to face and online interaction with the SAPICS supply chain community across Africa. They can enjoy discounted registration fees for industry events, including the annual SAPICS Conference, the leading event in Africa for the supply chain profession.

The topics covered in SAPICS's skills development events specifically for SMMEs include introductions to supply chain management, demand planning, and sales and operations planning. Case studies and success stories are covered and SMMEs receive advice from industry leaders. Accredited education programmes are also offered and can be sponsored by corporates to grow and develop their suppliers. These focus on specific aspects of supply chain management - like warehouse control, inventory replenishment principles, operational planning and scheduling, lean manufacturing principles and supply chain and materials management - as well as general entrepreneurial topics like business management and basic finance.

A SAPICS SMME Support Line enables small business owners to get advice and assistance.

When it comes to reaping the benefits of supply chain optimisation - including efficiency enhancements and cost savings - SMMEs are being left behind, but we can change this, and corporates have a role to play.

For more information on the SAPICS Small Business Hub, visit: <https://www.sapics.org/sapics-small-business-hub-members>





46th SAPICS Conference



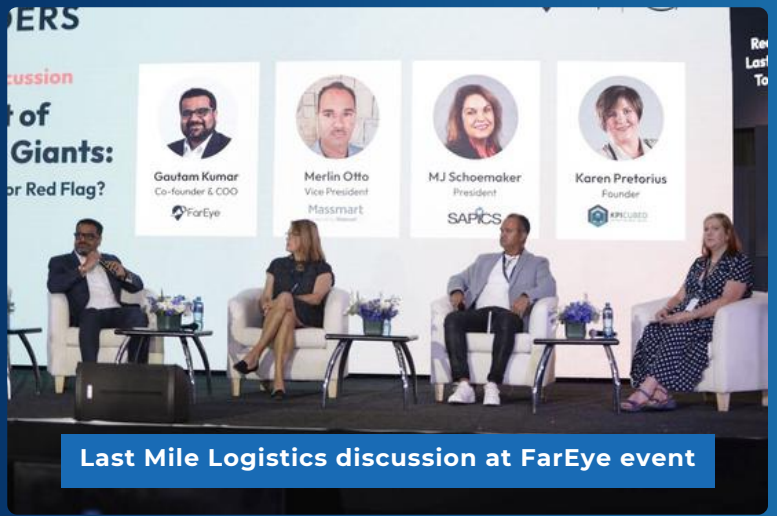
Thato Moloi and Debbie Tagg at ASCA 2024



Bev, Clare and Lesego at the Golf Day



Golf Day at Modderfontein



Last Mile Logistics discussion at FarEye event



Road Freight SME summit



Clare with Inhance Team at LeaderEx

SAPICS Young Professional & Student Conference

Sponsored by

Trailblazers Unite

Shaping the Future of Supply Chain Practices through innovation and leadership

Online
February 22, 2024
12:00 - 17:00



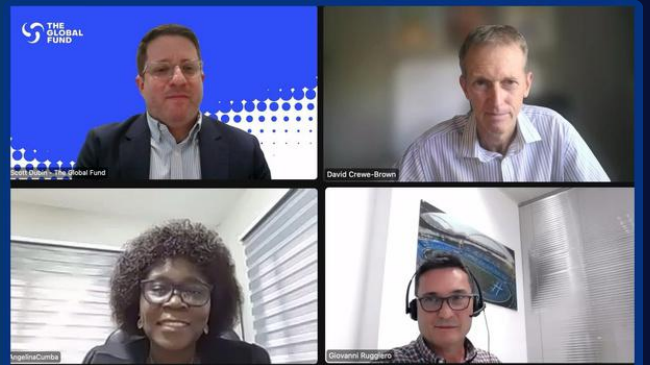
Jonathan Mphake at the SME Summit



Smart Procurement World



Lesego and Irene Gregory at an IMM breakfast



VILLAGE REACH X **SAPICS**

Building Health Supply Chains for the Future: Opportunities for Private Sector

Supply Chain NOW

Supply Chain Leadership Across Africa: Breaking Down Silos and Building Bridges

Thato Moloi and Vanya Jansen speaking at a Supply Chain Now podcast



Women's breakfast at L'Oreal

THIS YEAR'S PEANUT BUTTER RECALL PUT THE SPOTLIGHT ON REVERSE LOGISTICS

Reverse logistics is an often-neglected aspect of supply chain management. Its importance is highlighted during a product recall - like this year's peanut butter recall.

In March 2024, the National Consumer Council (NCC) urged consumers to stop consuming and return certain brands of peanut butter to stores due to heightened levels of aflatoxin. A recall like this can be a nightmare for organisations and supply chains. The logistics involved in getting items back from consumers and retailers around the country is an enormous challenge.

Having efficient, tried and tested recall plans and effective reverse logistics programmes in place is essential for manufacturers, retailers and everyone in the end-to-end supply chain.



It can mitigate the potential damage and turmoil associated with a recall, including ensuring the health and safety of consumers, maintaining good relationships with suppliers and customers, preserving brand reputation and retaining the trust of consumers, and reducing the potentially enormous costs associated with a recall.

SAPICS urges all organisations, including manufacturers, retailers and logistics service providers, to examine their reverse logistics plans and skills.

What is reverse logistics?

Reverse logistics encompasses all the activities associated with a returned product or product components that are effectively moving backwards through the supply chain. It includes recalled goods as well as faulty or substandard items and parts of products that are reused or recycled.

Reverse logistics is often forgotten because most companies' primary focus is on the forward supply chain, or forward logistics, which gets products to market and has the greatest impact on a business's bottom line. However, organisations ignoring the reverse supply chain and the need for reverse logistics planning and competency do so at their peril.

Recognising the importance of reverse logistics, it is one of the topics that SAPICS covers in our regular skills development and networking events, like the annual SAPICS Conference, the leading event in Africa for supply chain professionals. It is also why SAPICS is an affiliate member of the Reverse Logistics Association (RLA), which helps companies to optimise the reverse logistics process.

The association's Anthony Goldberg comments: "The subject of reverse logistics is so well covered and understood in the United States and Europe but completely underdeveloped in South Africa. When engaging with logistics, operations, sales and customer service personnel, we are often asked what reverse logistics is. Do you know that it extends into the realm of sustainability and the circular economy, to address all product that enters the reverse supply chain? The RLA's global mission is to educate and inform; to bring together manufacturers, retailers and solution providers; and to be the voice of the returns industry."

Anthony is also the CEO of Antel Solutions, the company that conducted the peanut butter recall on behalf of Pick 'n Pay.

DISRUPTIONS TO SUPPLY CHAINS ON THE HIGH SEAS

The vast majority of goods are still transported by sea. Sight is often lost, however, of how shipping disruptions have a far-reaching impact on global trade and supply chains, including inflation and food and energy security.

To survive and thrive in an environment marked by a host of problems in maritime trade, businesses must be able to identify the risks and have plans in place to mitigate them.

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) International Maritime Bureau (IMB) has expressed concerns about the continued acts of maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia. In the first three months of 2024, the IMB reported that a total of 33 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships were recorded - an increase from 27 incidents for the same period in 2023. Of the 33 incidents reported, 24 vessels were boarded, six had attempted attacks, two were hijacked and one was fired upon. While the number of reported incidents decreased later in 2024, according to the IMB, violence towards crew members is still concerning, it states. Between January and September this year, 111 crew were taken hostage and 11 kidnapped.

ICC Secretary General John WH Denton AO has said: 'It is crucial to protect trade, safeguard routes and the safety of seafarers who keep commerce moving. All measures to ensure the uninterrupted free flow of goods throughout international supply chains must be taken.'

This year was also difficult for vessels using two of the world's busiest shipping lanes – the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal. As a result of Houthi rebels attacking vessels, ships have been diverted around southern Africa and trade volumes through the Suez Canal dropped. While the Suez's ongoing troubles are geopolitical, Panama's issues have been climate related, with the lakes that feed the canal drying up due to drought.

The Suez Canal issues and the rerouting of vessels around Africa could represent an opportunity for South African ports,

but they are currently hampered by chronic congestion, infrastructure deterioration and equipment breakdowns.

These are enormously challenging times for global maritime trade, with supply chain repercussions impacting businesses, economies and consumers. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the disruption of the Suez Canal has created shortages of goods due to the increased cargo delivery time. Products affected include avocados in East Africa as well as tea and coffee supply chains. An UNCTAD report notes that 'rerouting vessels around Africa adds about 12 days to the ship journey on a route from Asia to Europe. Extended travel distances and transit times are estimated to cut effective global container shipping capacity by around 9%. A round trip between India and Europe, for example, takes 56 days and 8 ships. If the journey takes 63 days, an extra ship will be needed'.

Recognising the critical role that shipping plays in global supply chains, SAPICS included a compelling presentation on supply chain disruptions on the high seas in the programme for the 2024 SAPICS Conference. We believe that it is crucial for supply chain professionals to understand the current causes of disruptions to supply chains caused by shipping issues, and to be empowered to take steps to mitigate the risks, including contractual and insurance arrangements.



SAPICS PARTICIPATES IN BOTSWANA SUPPLY CHAIN SUMMIT TO STRENGTHEN AFRICA'S SUPPLY CHAINS

SAPICS's involvement in the inaugural Botswana Supply Chain Summit reflects our commitment to elevating, educating and empowering supply chain professionals not just in South Africa but across the continent.

SAPICS recognises Africa's potential as a global supply chain force, and the imperative to strengthen African supply chains to unlock the region's growth and prosperity.

The Botswana Supply Chain Summit took place on 6 and 7 November 2024 in Gaborone. It was a pivotal event; a milestone in Africa's growing prominence in the global supply chain landscape. By participating in this summit, SAPICS aimed to contribute to the development of innovative strategies that can bolster Africa's supply chain capabilities. The summit also aligned with our mission to foster excellence in supply chain management through knowledge sharing, skills development and networking opportunities for supply chain professionals in Africa.

Strengthening African supply chains – and developing our supply chain community – is crucial not only for regional growth but also for Africa's successful integration into the global economy. We need supply professionals who are equipped to meet the evolving demands of the industry and drive sustainable growth.

The Botswana Supply Chain Summit offered a vital platform for collaboration among industry leaders, government bodies and supply chain professionals, enabling them to exchange insights, explore emerging trends and develop actionable solutions for enhancing supply chain efficiency across Africa. Key issues such as infrastructure development, procurement practices and supply chain resilience were examined.



Karen Pretorius, SAPICS Board Member, Thato Moloi, SAPICS Board Member, MJ Schoemaker, SAPICS President, Lesego Manganye, SAPICS Administrator

The event's highlights included a keynote address by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat's director of Trade in Services, Investment, IPR, and Digital Trade, Emily Mburu-Ndoria. She discussed the transformative role of supply chains in Africa's economic integration.

A dedicated session explored how infrastructure development and enhanced transport networks can drive supply chain efficiency, focusing on the AfCFTA agenda. This discussion around transport, infrastructure and telecommunications addressed the crucial role of transport corridors and digital infrastructure in enabling cross-border trade.

The summit offered industry workshops and panel discussions on topics ranging from procurement practices and ethical sourcing to supply chain resilience. Attendees got to participate in discussions led by experts from key sectors including mining, manufacturing, energy and telecommunications.

Summit attendees also had the opportunity to participate in site tours of leading organisations' facilities, to gain first-hand insights into supply chain operations, offering a practical learning experience that complements the summit discussions.

SAPICS was thrilled to have had the chance to engage with attendees and contribute to the dialogue on advancing supply chain management in Botswana and across Africa.

SAPICS PUTS THE SPOTLIGHT ON HEALTHCARE SUPPLY CHAINS – BECAUSE LIVES DEPEND ON THEM

While supply chains get goods from manufacturers to end users, they also save lives. Strong healthcare supply chains are critical to get lifesaving medicines and health commodities to where they are needed, when they are needed, including to the most vulnerable communities. Recognising this, SAPICS included powerful healthcare focused presentations in the programme for the 2024 SAPICS Conference. There was also a global public health supply chain track running throughout the event.

This year's compelling sessions examined topics ranging from last mile distribution challenges across Africa to the successful use of drones for the delivery of blood, medicines and snakebite antivenom. Artificial intelligence's role in reducing drug shortages by analysing huge volumes of data faster than any human could was also explored, along with the power of public-private partnerships to enhance public health supply chains.

Echo VanderWal inspired and uplifted 2024 SAPICS attendees with the story of The Miracle Campus, The Luke Commission and a powerful digital platform called Luvelo.

In 2005, at the height of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Eswatini, Echo and her husband Harry, a medical doctor, decided to move from the USA with their three-year-old triplets and one-year-old baby. They founded The Luke Commission (TLC) to provide comprehensive healthcare to those most in need, particularly those suffering from HIV/AIDS. What began with a small team of eight, conducting outreaches from a rented house, has grown into The Miracle Campus, an incredible, self-contained hub for healthcare services.

When the Covid pandemic struck, TLC built a 2500LPM PSA oxygen plant in just 52 days, ensuring Eswatini's oxygen independence. TLC's snakebite treatment programme, with a nationally recognised treatment algorithm and consistent stock of antivenom, has treated nearly 900 snakebite victims in the past five years. To overcome the challenges of rural healthcare delivery, TLC implemented a medical drone network. The Miracle Campus is on its way to being predominantly off-grid, with extensive solar installations and plans for further expansion, including micro-hydro installations.

The Luvelo digital ecosystem was developed by TLC to optimise their supply chains, streamline healthcare delivery and improve operations and personnel management. Meaning "compassion" in Siswati, this mobile-first, human-centric software integrates healthcare, supply chain and HR processes, promoting efficiency and accountability even in low-resource settings. Luvelo's success at TLC showcases its potential to revolutionise operations for other NGOs, governments and businesses, Echo says.

AI and drug shortages

The question of whether artificial intelligence (AI) can predict a drug shortage before it starts was examined at the 2024 SAPICS Conference by expert panellists Matt Christian, Daniel Rosen and Claudina Loots. Drug shortages pose a major threat to public health. While the panellists agreed that AI has the potential to predict and reduce drug shortages and ensure a more reliable and resilient pharmaceutical supply chain, they cautioned that the data it delivers must be shared responsibly.





There is a burden on data scientists to not just publish information which could cause panic, they stressed.

Drone technology is taking off

Drone technology is taking off and cargo drones are being used successfully in supply chains around the world, to deliver things ranging from critical medicines, mail and money to spare parts and tissue samples. At the 2024 SAPICS Conference, a panel of experts discussed the potential for drones to optimise supply chains for a wide range of commodities and expand healthcare access.

Olivier Defawe, director on the Private Sector Engagement team and innovation development expert at VillageReach, a non-profit organisation based in Seattle in the United States, was one of the panellists who shared his insights with SAPICS delegates. VillageReach works with governments, the private sector and communities to improve how medicines, vaccines, health information and services are delivered to the hardest-to-reach people.

Olivier said that drone transport has mainly been used in public health applications to date, including VillageReach's "Drones for Health" initiative, which aims to improve access to health products by integrating drones into supply chains. Through this initiative, VillageReach is connecting African ministries of health with private companies to establish drone delivery systems.

VillageReach has helped to start drone programmes in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Malawi and Mozambique, and now works in more than 20 countries.

Panellist Rob van den Bergh, sub-Saharan regional sales director for the OXIMIO Group, revealed that drones are playing a vital role in clinical trials for therapies that could revolutionise the prevention and treatment of diseases. While the actual trial medicines are not yet being transported by drone, his organisation is currently exploring using drones to get bio-specimens back from sites.

Shamit Shah, who is the group managing director of East African logistics service provider Freight in Time, discussed his organisation's involvement in a pilot project to launch Ethiopia's first long-range medical drone network. Over the first 30 days of this project, 6 936 vaccine doses were delivered in 44 total flights to six remote communities. Ethiopia is a drone transport success story and the Government now wants to establish a factory in Addis Ababa to manufacture drones, Shamit told SAPICS attendees.

According to Olivier, drone logistics are currently not financially sustainable for public health markets. To achieve cost-competitive and sustainable pricing for the public health market, the sector focus needs to be expanded to include applications in other spheres like agriculture, logistics, postal, energy, mining and maritime. In this way, economies of scale will deliver cost benefits and boost asset utilisation.



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INNOVATION IN MOTION” IS THE THEME FOR 2025 SAPICS CONFERENCE

The annual SAPICS Conference, Africa’s leading event for the supply chain profession, will be held from 8 to 11 June 2025 in Cape Town under the theme “Innovation in Motion.

Now in its 47th year, the SAPICS Conference enables supply chain managers to learn, network and share knowledge, which is increasingly important for our vital profession in today’s volatile and uncertain environment. More than 750 supply chain managers from 30 countries across Africa and around the world attended this year’s SAPICS Conference in June 2024.

The 2025 theme, Innovation in Motion, encapsulates the dynamic and forward-thinking approach that today’s supply chain professionals must adopt to stay ahead.

Innovation in Motion isn't just a theme—it is a call to action. It is about keeping pace with change, continuously improving and ensuring that supply chains across all industries and sectors are not only resilient and innovative, but also drivers of competitive advantage. The SAPICS Conference aims to equip delegates with all the knowledge, strategies, tools and techniques needed to do this.

SAPICS 2025 will bring together industry experts, thought leaders and professionals from around the world and across the supply chain spectrum, to share their insights and expertise in compelling presentations, panel discussions and practical workshops. Attendees can expect to learn from the brightest minds and the most influential voices in supply chain management as they explore the trends, technologies and strategies that are driving the future of the supply chain management profession. This is a not to be missed event for supply chain practitioners at all levels. Whether you are a chief supply chain officer or an experienced, senior supply chain manager, a supplier to the industry or someone who is simply eager to learn and grow, this is your opportunity to be at the forefront of our profession.

To find out more or to register to attend the 2025 SAPICS Conference, contact event organiser Upavon Management:
info@upavon.co.za
+27 11 023 6701

Visit the conference website:
www.conference.sapics.org



The 2025 theme, Innovation in Motion, conveys the imperative for organisations to innovate and strive for the agility and adaptability needed to rapidly respond to potentially chaotic changes and disruptions in today’s turbulent supply chain landscape. In the face of continuous technological advances, shifting global dynamics and the relentless pursuit of seamless efficiency, customer satisfaction and sustainability, one thing is clear: innovation is a necessity for supply chain managers.

Adaptability and innovation are the keys to success in supply chains today. Whether this means leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation, accelerating sustainability or rethinking traditional supply chain models, the need to innovate is more critical than ever.

The Leading Event in Africa for Supply Chain Professionals

47th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Century City Conference Centre, Cape Town



SAPICS HONOURS THE REMARKABLE (UNCLE) BILL SCHNEIDER!

SAPICS is proud to celebrate and honour the incredible contributions of Bill Schneider, fondly known as "Uncle Bill," who has been an integral part of the SAPICS family for an astonishing 40 years! A Life Member of SAPICS, Bill has served as an Authorised Education Partner, authored key publications, and left an indelible mark on the world of supply chain education and training.



Bill began his career in education and training in the early seventies when he did part-time lecturing for the Cape College for Advanced Technical Education, later becoming the Cape Technikon. In 1975, he joined the Cape Technikon in the industrial engineering department. In 1985, he moved to the Peninsula Technikon to start the Department of Industrial Engineering. In 1987, he was instrumental in setting up the Centre for Continuing Education at the Peninsula Technikon. He became Director of the centre in 1988 and remained in that position until he left in 1990 to set up his own business, Education in Industry.

During the past 50+ years, Bill has been involved in teaching and consulting to various companies, particularly in the areas of quality, supply chain management, and work-study, such as Plessey SA, Atlantis Foundries, Irwin and Johnson, Yardley of London, Toyota and MBSA.

Since the formation of SAQA, he has worked with companies such as Afrox, Unilever Ponds, Daimler Chrysler, Cape Span and Toyota to develop unit standards and training materials in supply chain management, particularly warehousing, transportation and distribution.

Bill joined the South African Production and Inventory Control Society in 1978. During his association with SAPICS, he has served on the board, twice served as chapter chairman of the Cape Town Chapter, and is responsible for writing much of the current training material used by SAPICS.

He developed a Diploma course in Foundry Technology with the Western Cape Institute of Foundrymen and helped many companies develop in-house training programmes to meet specific industrial engineering and supply chain management needs.

Since 2006, Bill has consulted companies in Egypt and Lebanon on warehouse management and productivity improvement. He has worked with Wadi Foods, Beyti, Farm Frits and Watania Fire Equipment. These interventions have been in conjunction with a partner of CCI.

Bill was born and educated in the United Kingdom and arrived in South Africa in 1968 on a 12-month working holiday. Since then, he has settled and made SA his country of residence.

SAPICS extends its deepest gratitude to Bill Schneider for his extraordinary contributions to the supply chain profession. His work has touched countless lives, and his legacy will continue to guide and inspire for years to come.

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