

LOGISTICS

TIMES

SRI LANKA'S FIRST EVER LOGISTICS MAGAZINE



A PUBLICATION BY

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE
GENERAL SIR JOHN KOTELAWALA DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

**"CONTINUOUS LEARNING IS HIGHLY
VALUED IN THE COMPANY CULTURE"**

Sameera Maheepala
Director
Sourcing and Supply Chain
MAS Holdings

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**"WE SEE CHALLENGES
AS OPPORTUNITIES
TO THINK DIFFERENTLY"**

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Head of Procurement
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UNDERSTAND LOGISTICS,
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SUPPLY CHAIN OPTIMISATION"**

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Assistant Manager
Commercial and Marketing, Hambantota
International Port Group (HIPG)

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**"MAINTAINING A LIFELONG
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PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS"**

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Director
Supply Chain
Yokohama TWS Lanka

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ISSN 2550-3332



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A modern conference room with large windows and a wooden table. The room is bright and professional, with a large wooden conference table in the foreground. On the table, there is a tablet on a stand, a microphone, a glass of water, and some papers. In the background, there are more tables and chairs, and large windows looking out onto a city skyline.

From Classroom to Boardroom: Empowering Future Supply Chain Leaders

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The iconic “Kandawala Walawwa” of General Sir John Kotelawala:
Peerless gift to the motherland that proudly represents
the academic excellence and discipline upheld by KDU
as a renowned Defence University.

GENERAL SIR JOHN KOTELAWALA DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU) is one of Sri Lanka's most prestigious universities, producing well-educated graduates who serve the country under the motto "For the Motherland Forever." Today, KDU holds the distinction of being the country's only Defence University, producing an eclectic blend of officer cadets, officers, and civil undergraduates to serve the country.

VISION

To be a university nationally and internationally known for its unique ability to engage both undergraduate and graduate students in distinctive and interdisciplinary defence- related higher education that best serves the tri-services, the state sector, and society at large.

MISSION

To ensure a high-quality, learner-centred educational experience through undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs along with high-quality research across many disciplines in the field of defence, in both residential and non-residential settings on the campus.



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General S.H.S Kottegoda
(Retired) WWV, RWP, RSP,
VSV, USP, ndc



VICE CHANCELLOR
Rear Admiral H.G.U Dammika
VSV, USP, psc,
MMaritimePol, BSc (DS)

FACULTIES OF KDU

Faculty of Graduate Studies

Faculty of Defence and Strategic Studies

Faculty of Medicine

Faculty of Engineering

Faculty of Law

Faculty of Management, Social Sciences and Humanities

Faculty of Allied Health Sciences

Faculty of Built Environment and Spatial Sciences

Faculty of Computing

Faculty of Technology

Faculty of Criminal Justice



MESSAGE FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR

Dear Readers,

I am delighted to convey my heartfelt congratulations to the Technical Sciences and Management Society (TSMS) of the Department of Management and Finance of General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU) on the 9th edition of Logistics Times Magazine. This publication, under the theme “From Classroom to Boardroom: Empowering Future Supply Chain Leaders,” fits with our vision of making classroom learning flow seamlessly into industry practice.

As a proud product from the 6th intake of KDU, I can personally attest to the transformative education and training KDU provides. At KDU, we are dedicated to producing successful leaders for the nation by equipping them with the right exposure and the essential ability to comprehend the ground realities of the world. Logistics Times magazine is a commendable effort towards this goal. As the Vice Chancellor of KDU, I congratulate TSMS on the success of this magazine, which provides outstanding value. This significant endeavor will clarify the way and journey to the peak of the business and logistics sectors for the entire world and its readers.

Our university takes pride in providing a solid academic foundation with the goal of producing global

graduates who are proficient readers, cooperative colleagues, and socially conscious. We offer the best facilities, including classrooms outfitted with the latest technology and talented lecture panels, as well as an extensive range of extracurricular activities in accordance with the global exposure. By cooperating with external corporate partners, we hope to create a bright future for our undergraduates, empowering Sri Lanka’s future generation.

KDU will continue to participate in such projects in the future by giving our undergraduates essential exposure. I sincerely thank the TSMS team for their ongoing dedication to guaranteeing excellence. We continue to attain these milestones with great success thanks to their collaborative efforts. I invite readers to explore this magazine, a journey of discovery and learning that highlights the commitment and quality at the heart of KDU.

Warm regards,

**Rear Admiral HGU Dammika Kumara,
VSV, USP, psc, MMaritimePol, BSc (DS)
Vice Chancellor
General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University**



MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the 9th edition of the Logistics Times, an embodiment of our commitment to shaping the supply chain leaders of tomorrow. This year's theme, "From Classroom to Boardroom: Empowering Future Supply Chain Leaders," resonates deeply with our mission at the Faculty of Management, Social Sciences, and Humanities.

As we navigate through the complexities of the modern business landscape, the transition from academic theories to practical applications has never been more critical. Our faculty takes immense pride in bridging this gap, equipping our students with the knowledge, skills, and ethical grounding necessary to excel in the boardroom and beyond.

This edition of the Logistics Times is a celebration of that journey. Through rigorous coursework, hands-on projects, and industry partnerships, we have created an environment where theoretical knowledge meets strategic execution. Our students are not just passive recipients of information; they are active participants in their education, ready to tackle the challenges of supply chain management head-on.

The articles and insights within these pages are a testament to the transformative education we provide. They showcase innovative research, explore cutting-edge technologies, and highlight the importance of

sustainability and social responsibility in logistics. Our contributors, ranging from seasoned academics to aspiring professionals, all share a common goal: to empower and inspire the next generation of leaders.

As the Dean, I am honored to witness the remarkable growth of our students as they transition from the classroom to the boardroom. Their achievements are a direct reflection of the dedication and passion that our faculty has invested in their success. Furthermore, the invaluable contributions of the Technical Sciences and Management Society in this transformative process deserve admirable recognition.

I encourage each of you to engage with the content of this magazine, to challenge yourselves, and to embrace the opportunities that lie ahead. Together, we will continue to nurture a culture of excellence and innovation, empowering our students to become the visionary leaders that the supply chain industry so greatly needs.

Thank you for joining us on this remarkable journey.
Warm regards,

Dr. Lakshika Liyanage

Dean

Faculty of Management, Social Sciences, and Humanities

General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University



MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT

Dear Readers,

I am delighted to welcome you to the 9th edition of Logistics Times, a publication that reflects the collaborative efforts and innovative spirit of the Management and Finance Department at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. This magazine serves as an essential bridge, reducing the gap between academia and industry, and offering our students profound insights into the dynamic world of operations and logistics.

In today's fast-paced global economy, logistics plays a critical role in ensuring the smooth flow of goods and services. From optimizing supply chains to implementing efficient last-mile delivery solutions, the field of logistics is integral to the success of businesses in a highly competitive environment. Logistics Times is designed to provide our readers with the latest trends, insights, and advancements that are shaping this vital sector.

This edition is particularly special as it represents the theme of "Classroom to Boardroom: Empowering Future Supply Chain Leaders," featuring a diverse collection of articles and interviews that highlight the interaction between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Whether you are interested in cutting-edge technologies transforming warehouse management or best practices for sustainable transportation, this magazine has something for everyone.

Logistics Times is more than just a publication; it is a platform for knowledge-sharing and collaboration among students, faculty, and industry professionals. We encourage

you to engage with the content, share your insights, and join the conversation on how we can collectively drive innovation and efficiency in logistics and operations.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our contributors, the editorial team, and our readers for making this edition possible. Your dedication and enthusiasm inspire us to continue delivering high-quality content that educates, informs, and inspires.

Launching this edition as a product of our department fills me with great pride. It is a testament to our commitment to fostering an environment where academic excellence meets real-world application. This magazine is a foundation project for our department, and it symbolizes our mission to produce graduates who are well-equipped to make meaningful contributions to the industry.

Thrilled to have you on board for this exciting chapter in logistics and operations! Together, we unlock a future filled up with possibilities.

Warm regards,

Dr. Upali Rajapaksha

Head of the Department

Department of Management and Finance

Faculty of Management, Social Sciences and Humanities

General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University



MESSAGES FROM THE LECTURERS-IN-CHARGE

“As a product of KDU Intake 32, my classroom to boardroom journey has been remarkable. Starting as the Co-Editor for Logistics Times Magazine in 2017, I progressed to become the Project Head of Logistics Day and Logistics Times Magazine. Additionally, serving as the Lecturer-in-Charge of the Technical Sciences and Management Society (TSMS), I guide my students in organizing the 9th KDU Logistics Day. Reliving my learnings, experiences, and memories from back then, not as a student but as a lecturer, has been a humbling and grateful experience. I am forever grateful to KDU.”

Mr. Anju Ilangasekara

Lecturer (Probationary)

Project Head of Logistics Day and Logistics Times Magazine

Lecturer-in-Charge of Technical Sciences and Management Society (TSMS)

“Since 2020, I have had the privilege of serving as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Management and Finance. It is with great pride and honor that I reflect on my role as the Lecturer-in-Charge for the 9th KDU Logistics Day. This event marks another milestone in our ongoing efforts to advance the field of logistics through education, collaboration, and innovation. This year’s Logistics Day was particularly noteworthy due to the introduction of several new initiatives by our organizing committee. One of the highlights was the Networking Session 2024, held on 31st May, which was an initiative aimed at fostering stronger collaboration between KDU and industry partners. Under my supervision, this session proved to be immensely successful, showcasing our dedication to bridging the gap between academia and industry. I am especially proud to highlight the involvement of two exemplary individuals, Mr. Anju and Mr. Arjuna. As former students, their growth and achievements are a source of immense satisfaction for me. Together, we are shaping the future of logistics”.

Mr. Lahiru Gunathilake

Senior Lecturer Gr. II

Lecturer-in-Charge of KDU Logistics Day

My journey from being a KDU student to a lecturer at KDU has been transformative. During my time in the corporate sector prior to joining academia, I truly recognized that a university should develop undergraduates with the “Classroom to Boardroom” approach, which is the main theme of KDU Logistics Day 2024. It is a great honor to guide future supply chain leaders in my role as the Lecturer-in-Charge for the 9th KDU Logistics Day and as a member of the Editorial Committee for the “Logistics Times” magazine. Reflecting on my journey, not as a student but as a lecturer, it has been a deeply rewarding and humbling experience. I am forever grateful to KDU for shaping my career, and I am committed to building excellence and innovation in our students.

Mr. Arjuna Vishwanath

Lecturer-in-Charge of

KDU Logistics Day

MESSAGES FROM THE DEPARTMENT LECTURERS

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE



“KDU has taken many initiatives in the higher education in Sri Lanka. We launched the first ever magazine ‘Logistics Times’ in logistics management. We are well recognized for new initiatives, quality of education, discipline, and accepting challenges. Completion of 9 years is a milestone in the department history. We are stronger and ready to move forward with many more exciting works. Wish all the very best to the organizing team”.

Eng. (Dr.) Namali Sirisoma
Senior Lecturer Gr. I



“Congratulations on the launch of the Logistics Times Magazine! This highlights the commitment, dedication, diligence, and innovative spirit demonstrated by our students, where the efforts put in to bring this project to fruition are truly commendable. As young scholars who are entering the ever evolving and advancing industry, they exemplify the future leaders who will drive progress and innovation in the logistics field. May you achieve continued success in all your future pursuits!”.

Mrs. ID Wattuhewa
Senior Lecturer Gr. I
Senior Treasurer – Technical Sciences and Management Society



“As a Senior Lecturer in Logistics Management, I am delighted to witness the expanding influence of the Logistics Day concept. Logistics Day brings together professionals, from industries, educators and policymakers to celebrate achievements in logistics while also addressing the sectors’ challenges and opportunities. This event highlights the role that logistics plays in economic growth and encourages ongoing improvements and innovative practices in the field. Additionally, Logistics Day serves as an excellent platform for students to demonstrate their talents and potential as future professionals in the industry. I extend my best wishes to all the young scholars participating in this event.”

Dr. Wasantha Premarathne
Senior Lecturer Gr. I



“It is a great pride and honour to pen down the message for 9th edition of Logistics Times magazine. When considering the historical evolution, this magazine will be distributed among the academia and all the parties interested in the logistics field during the logistics day event. It always made a fair attempt to provide an in-depth insight into present challenges in the logistics industry and logisticians’ role that logisticians could play. In the era of ever-changing business environment, the magazine unfolds ways to address issues and timely topics to tap the opportunities which enhance the learning potentials of the reader. I firmly believe the current theme of the magazine “classroom to board room”, is an attempt to unveil how to mingle the theory with practice to groom qualified graduates. Both Logistics Day and Logistics Times magazine serve as incubators for students to uplift their communication, teamwork and leadership skills. I congratulate all the members who follow in the footsteps of their predecessors, while enthusiastically accepting changes to be on par with the changing environment to bring timely discussions though the magazine. All the best for 9th KDU Logistics Day!”.

Ms. DD Lokuge
Senior Lecturer Gr. II



“As technology enters our daily lives and professional spheres with AI and other methods, the human interactions between intelligent employees may reduce in the years to come. In this light, I encourage you to consciously practice interpersonal skills, communication, and team collaboration. This will sustain and preserve the most valued intellectual asset- human resources and its organizational usefulness”.

Ms. Dhinesha Perera
Senior Lecturer Gr. II



“Congratulations to the students on organizing the 9th KDU Logistics Day and the release of the 9th edition of Logistics Times magazine! Your dedication and hard work have paid off, showing your remarkable commitment to logistics. May this year’s event and publication be your most successful yet, inspiring future logistics professionals. Here’s to another decade of innovation, learning, and growth. Best wishes for a fantastic Logistics Day and an outstanding issue of Logistics Times!”.

Dr. (Ms.) Kalpana Ambepitiya
Senior Lecturer Gr. II



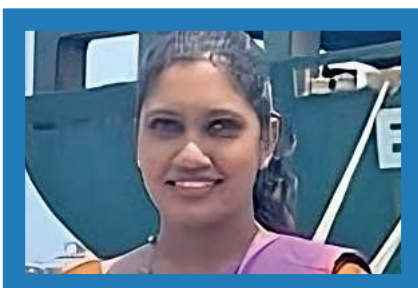
“Logistics Day reminds us of the intricate networks that support our daily lives, from supply chains to global trade. Our magazine captures the essence of these complexities through insightful articles and cutting-edge research. It’s a pleasure to see our students’ contributions highlighted, reflecting their potential to become leaders in the industry”.

Mrs. Piumi Lankeshwara
Senior Lecturer Gr. II



“I am immensely proud of our students for their dedication and hard work in bringing the 9th Edition of Logistics Times magazine to life, showcasing their potential as future supply chain leaders. Their commitment to excellence and innovative thinking reflects the high standards we uphold in our department. This publication is a testament to their readiness to transition from the classroom to the boardroom, truly embodying the theme of KDU Logistics Day 2024”.

Dr. AHS Sharic
Senior Lecturer Gr. II



“I am glad to express my sincere gratitude to the members of TSMS and all others who did the background work to launch its 9th edition of annual Logistics Times magazine. Witnessing the evolution of Logistics Day since its inception has been a profoundly rewarding experience. The dedication and innovative spirit of our students, showcased through this event and the Logistics Times Magazine, embody the future leaders of the logistics industry. Logistics Day is an event which motivates our undergraduates to pursue their competencies relating to networking which immensely helps them to find career opportunities in their respective fields. Every edition of the Logistics Times magazine heavily focuses on timely themes in this fast- paced world and sharpen the knowledge of students pertaining to the logistics industry.”

Mrs. Danisha de Mel
Senior Lecturer Gr. II



“Engaging with the logistics community on Logistics Day is always a highlight of the academic year. This magazine is a wonderful medium to share our department’s progress and the innovative solutions our students and faculty are developing. As a former student of KDU from intake 36, I am excited to be a part of this and for readers to delve into the rich content we have prepared”.

Ms. Hasali Karunathilaka
Temporary Tutor



“As a former student of KDU from intake 36, I congratulate the students on the successful launch of the 9th Edition of Logistics Times Magazine. Their commitment, curiosity, and creativity are truly admirable. This magazine showcases the qualities we seek in future leaders of the logistics sector. We are confident it will become a valuable industry resource, benefiting from the talents and dedication of these gifted individuals”.

Ms. Yasasi Anuththara
Temporary Tutor



“The introduction of the 9th edition of Logistics Times Magazine exemplifies the unwavering commitment and diligence of our scholarly members and industry professionals who contribute to its triumph. This edition exemplifies our dedication to bridging the divide between academia’s theoretical concepts and their practical implementation in the industry. The magazine remains a valuable asset, promoting the exchange of knowledge and sparking fresh concepts within the sector. As a product of KDU from intake 37, I invite you to delve into this dynamic edition and observe firsthand how theoretical constructs from the classroom evolve into strategic frameworks in the boardroom, thereby propelling advancements in the logistics sector.”

Ms. Hansi Perera
Temporary Tutor



“Congratulations to the 9th logistics times magazine. This isn’t just a publication; it’s a journey through the heart of logistics, offering a diverse range of perspectives to readers of all backgrounds. What sets this publication apart is its attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice. As a product of KDU from intake 37, I thank the students and organizers behind this for their dedication to delivering high-quality content that continues to inspire and educate readers”.

Ms. Tharushika Sooriyaarachchi
Temporary Tutor

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Swetha Costa
President
Logistics Times - 2024

Dear Readers,

As the President of the Technical Sciences and Management Society (TSMS), I am honoured to unveil the 9th edition of our esteemed magazine. This year's theme, "From Classroom to Boardroom: Empowering Future Supply Chain Leaders," embodies our commitment to merging academic education with practical industry experience. This edition is dedicated to narrowing the gap between theoretical education and practical industry wisdom, highlighting the significant progression from academic studies to leadership roles within the supply chain domain.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to our valued corporate partners for their generous support and unwavering dedication. I extend a special acknowledgment to Rear Admiral H.G.U. Dammika Kumara, Vice-Chancellor of General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Major General C.A. Wickramasinghe (Defence and Administration), Prof. K.A.S. Dhammika, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Dr. L.S. Liyanage, Dr. U.G. Rajapaksha, Dr. Namali Sirisoma, Dr. Kalpana Ambepitiya, Dr. Sabeen Sharic, Mrs. I.D. Wattuhewa, Mr. Lahiru Gunathilake, Mr. Anju Ilangasekara, Mr. Arjuna Wishwanath, Mrs. Chamila Kothalawala, and all other esteemed faculty members who have provided invaluable guidance on this enriching journey.

I want to extend my sincere gratitude to the Editorial Committee for their unwavering commitment, and to Our Editor, Kevin Perera, and Assistant Editor, Rashmi Perera, for their consistent support and innovative contributions during this endeavor. The ongoing support and guidance provided by the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of TSMS have been invaluable, and I am sincerely grateful for their resolute commitment throughout this journey.

I would also wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to the former members of the executive committee for the hard work and vision that they have put into making this outstanding publication a reality. They left us with such a great work that we have the responsibility of ensuring that we uphold those standards as we proceed.

Thank you.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR



Kevin Perera
Editor
Logistics Times - 2024

Dear Readers,

It is with great pride and gratitude that I pen this Editor's Note for the 9th Edition of the Logistics Times Magazine, brought to you by the Technical Sciences and Management Society (TSMS). This edition's theme, "From Classroom to Boardroom: Empowering Future Supply Chain Leaders," reflects the collective efforts of our dedicated undergraduates from Intakes 39 and 40, who have tirelessly worked to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and industry insights.

Exploring the realms of university-based education, corporate industry expertise, and the invaluable advice from industry professionals and military personnel, this magazine serves as a treasure trove of insights and perspectives. Through interviews conducted by our undergraduates and articles contributed by various stakeholders, including corporate leaders, lecturers, and students, we aim to provide a holistic view of the journey towards leadership excellence.

I extend my sincere appreciation to our esteemed corporate partners for their generous support and commitment, and a special acknowledgement goes out to Rear Admiral H.G.U Dammika Kumara, Vice-Chancellor of General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Major General C.A Wickramasinghe, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Defence and Administration), Prof. K.A.S. Dhammika, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Dr. L.S. Liyanage, Dean of the Faculty of Management, Social Sciences and Humanities, Dr. U.G. Rajapaksha, Head of Department, Department of Management and Finance, Dr. Namali Sirisoma, Dr. Kalpana Ambepitiya, Dr. Sabeen Sharic, Mrs. I.D. Wattuhewa, Mr. Lahiru Gunathilake, Mr. Anju Ilangasekara, Mr. Arjuna Wishwanath, Mrs. Chamila Kothalawala, and all other key figures of the faculty who have guided us along this enriching journey.

Special thanks goes out to the Editorial Committee members for their persistent commitment and enthusiasm, and to our Assistant Editor, Rashmi Perera for her steadfast and unwavering support, for infusing creativity into every page and aiding me through this journey. The Executive Committee of TSMS has been a constant source of encouragement, and I am grateful for the guidance provided by our senior colleagues. Amidst the challenges we faced, for instance the crucial lack of time, it is worthwhile mentioning that each and every editorial committee member contributed their very best to help ensure the tasks flowed smoothly.

I also express my sincere gratitude to the President of the TSMS, Swetha Costa, for her invaluable leadership in guiding the society to its success and making this magazine a proud product of the Department of Management and Finance.

To each author who contributed their time and expertise, and to every member of TSMS who played a role in bringing this edition to fruition, I extend my heartfelt gratitude. As you embark on your reading journey, may you find inspiration and enlightenment within the pages of the 9th Edition of the Logistics Times Magazine.

Thank you.

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT EDITOR



Rashmi Perera
Assistant Editor
Logistics Times - 2024

Dear Readers,

It is with gratitude that I write this Assistant Editor's Note for the 9th Edition of the Logistics Times Magazine, presented by the Technical Sciences and Management Society (TSMS). As our theme, "From Classroom to Boardroom: Empowering Future Supply Chain Leaders" unfolds, it mirrors the dedicated efforts of our undergraduates from Intakes 39 and 40, whose utmost commitment helped make this publication an achievement of success.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the esteemed Vice-Chancellor of General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Rear Admiral H.G.U Dammika Kumara, and all other key figures of the academia whose exemplary leadership guided us along this enriching journey.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our President of the TSMS, Swetha Costa, for her supervision and guidance, and to our Editor, Kevin Perera, for his leadership throughout the creation of the publication, and to all the Editorial Committee members for the enthusiasm and support till the very end. Your ingenuity and commitment have been instrumental in bringing this publication to fruition.

As you explore the pages of the 9th Edition, may you discover inspiration and valuable insights that would enhance your knowledge and journey.

Thank you.

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THE FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT

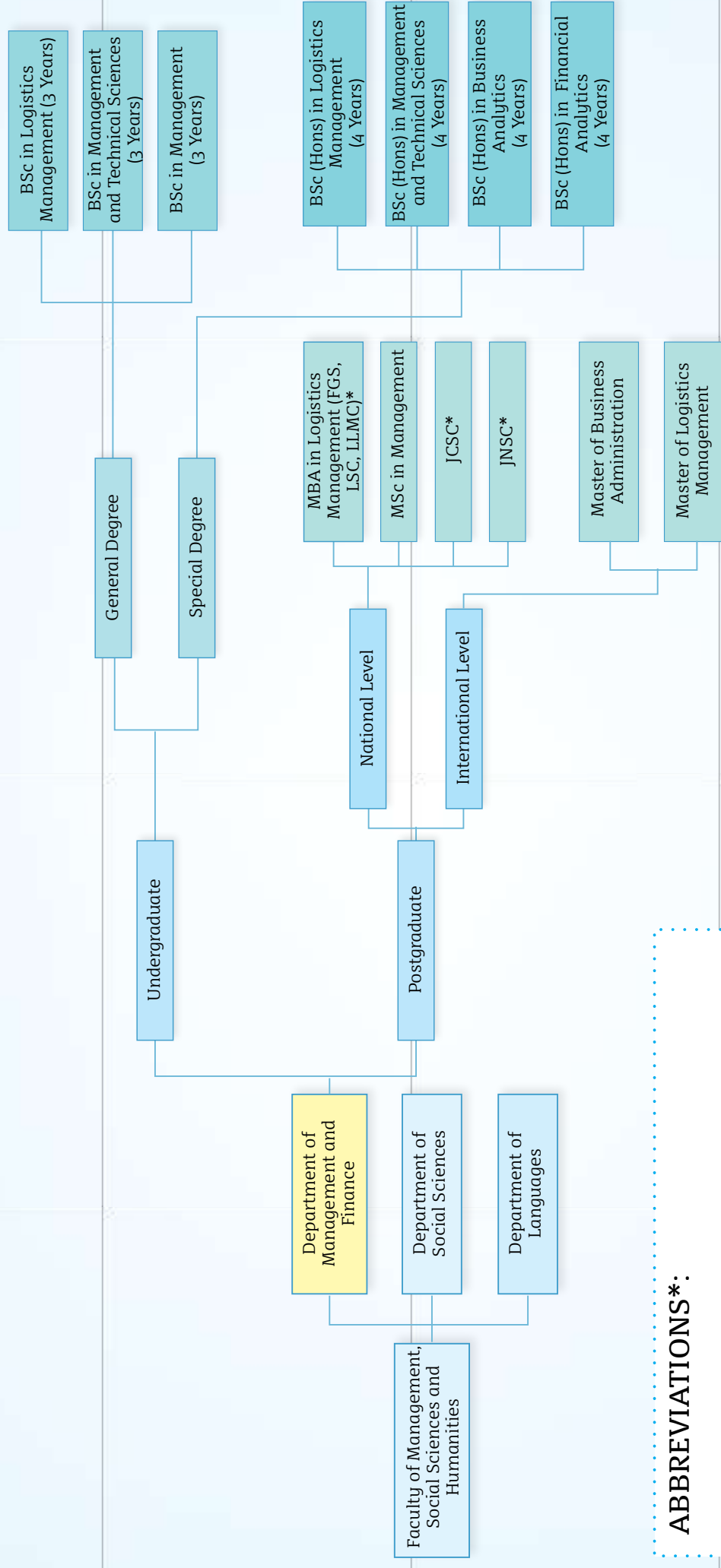
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

The Faculty of Management, Social Sciences and Humanities has been established under the restructuring program of the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University in 2011. It consists of three departments, namely, Department of Management and Finance, Department of Social Sciences, and Department of Languages. At present, more than 1000 undergraduates are enrolled on the degree programmes offered by the Faculty with more than 50 members of the academic staff. Undergraduates study as officer cadets and day scholars in all the degree programmes. The Faculty has contributed a lot to brighten up the name of General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University.

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

The Department of Management and Finance, formulated under the Faculty of Management, Social Sciences and Humanities at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, has initiated several activities for its reputation by supporting the growth of the university. Currently, the department is offering B.Sc. in Logistics Management and B.Sc. in Management and Technical Sciences degree programmes with over 500 students managed under the department.

DEGREES OF THE FACULTY



ABBREVIATIONS*:

- **FGS** : Faculty of Graduate Studies
- **LSC** : Logistics Staff Course
- **LLMC** : Long Logistics Management Course
- **JCSC** : Junior Command and Staff Course
- **JNSC** : Junior Naval Staff Course

Logistics Day History Timeline



Recapturing the History of the Logistics Times Magazine

LOGISTICS TIMES 2016
TOGETHER TOWARDS TOMORROW
FOR SUSTAINABLE LOGISTICS



LOGISTICS TIMES 2017
SRI LANKA TOWARDS E-LOGISTICS:
THE WAY FORWARD



LOGISTICS TIMES 2018
HUMANITARIAN LOGISTICS:
THE SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY



LOGISTICS TIMES 2019
LOGISTICS AND OPERATIONS OF
INTERNATIONAL TRADE: THE WAY FORWARD



LOGISTICS TIMES 2020
CHALLENGES IN INTEGRATED LOGISTICS OF
OPTIMIZATION



LOGISTICS TIMES 2021
SMART SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT:
THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA



LOGISTICS TIMES 2022
RESILIENT SUPPLY CHAINS FOR ECONOMIC CHALLENGES
IN THE NEXT NORMAL



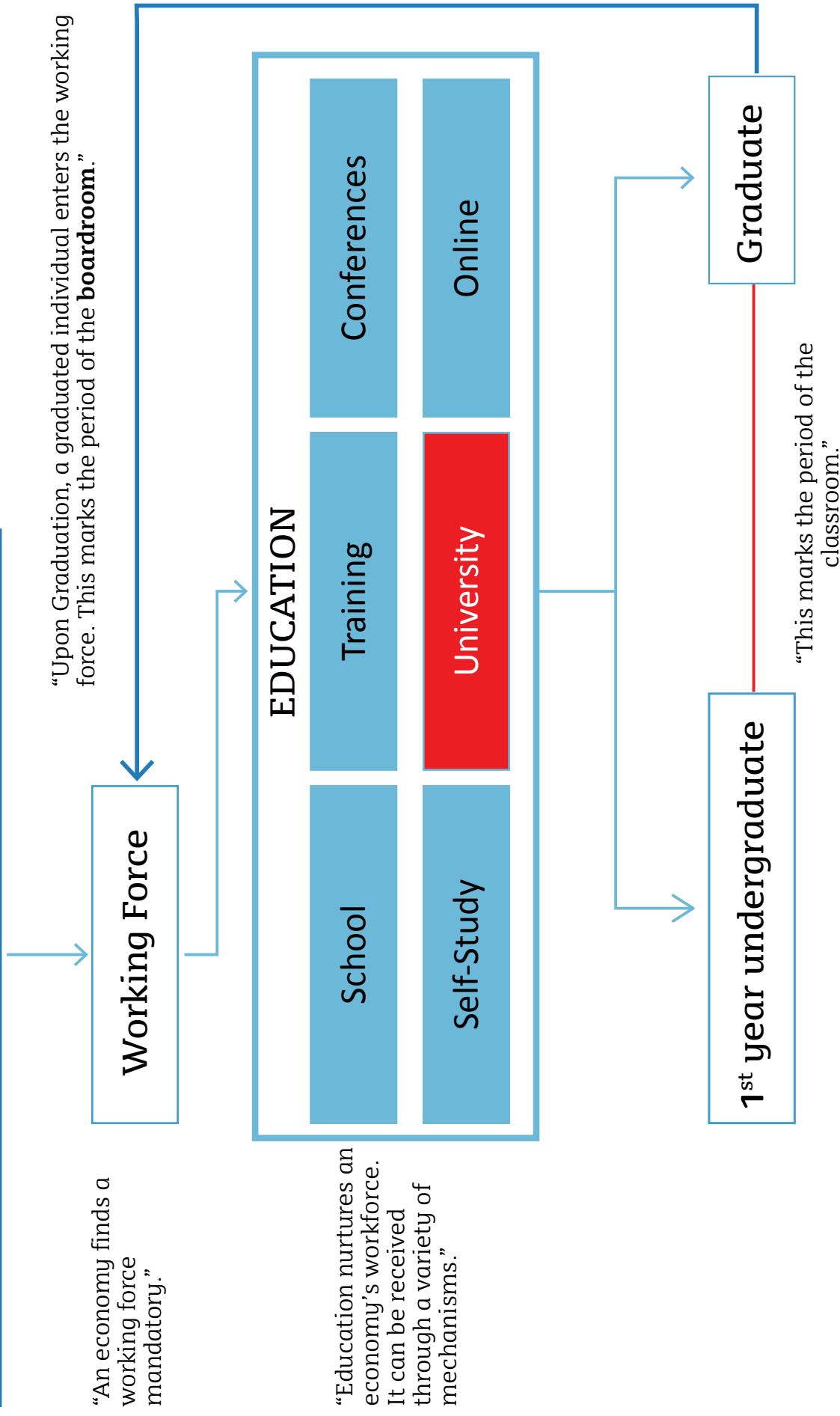
LOGISTICS TIMES 2023
RE-ENGINEERING SUPPLY CHAINS TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY:
ASSURING SURVIVAL AND COEXISTENCE



FROM CLASSROOM TO BOARDROOM:

Empowering Future Supply Chain Leaders

“Education plays a vital role in a country’s economy”





TECHNICAL SCIENCES AND MANAGEMENT SOCIETY (TSMS)

Vision:


"To be a beacon of excellence, shaping confident, competent leaders equipped to thrive in modern business environments."

Mission:

"To foster well-rounded undergraduates through academic excellence, soft skills development and diverse extracurricular engagement, preparing them for success in the dynamic business world."

The Technical Sciences and Management Society (TSMS) is one of the most renowned clubs of KDU, belonging to the Department of Management and Finance. It was founded in 2020 by the students of the Logistics Management and Management and Technical Sciences degree programmes. Its primary goal is to nurture undergraduates to build within themselves a balanced personality, rich in academic performance, soft skills, and extracurricular activities.





“Education is the foundation upon which we build our future. It prepares individuals not just to enter the workforce, but to innovate and drive industry forward.”

– Christine Gregoire



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CHANGE IS COURAGE

“CONTINUOUS LEARNING IS HIGHLY VALUED IN THE COMPANY CULTURE”

Sameera Maheepala

Director

Sourcing and Supply Chain

MAS Holdings

Interviewed by: Swetha Costa, Bhagya Kalutarage, Chameli Anuththra, Nethmi Liyanage

Transcribed by: Mithila Porage, Natasha Hendalage, Nethmi Liyanage, Rasogya Hasarenu, Shenoli Jayakody

Proofread by: Janisha Upeshika, Bhagya Kalutarage, Disara Alpitaya, Divyangi Thathsarani, Stephney De Silva

Photographer: Sachintha Abeywickrama

Q Can you provide us with a brief introduction about MAS Holdings and the development of its supply chain and logistics processes in the present day?

MAS Holdings is a global conglomerate with a presence spanning 14 countries. This approximately \$2 billion organization is the largest apparel tech company in South Asia, providing design-to-delivery solutions in apparel and textile manufacturing for the world's leading brands. MAS' product categories include intimate wear, athleisure, training and performance, swim, and shape wear, as well as adaptive apparel for persons with disabilities. The manufacturing and supply chain operations are geographically dispersed, with activities in Asia, Africa, and America. The supply chain plays a critical role at MAS, ensuring that brand expectations are consistently met. Some brands grant MAS complete autonomy, from design to delivery, while others provide a direction for MAS on how to proceed from fabric to design and production. Accordingly, MAS is capable of handling any expectations from leading brands. Serving the world's most valued brands allows MAS to develop a comprehensive end-to-end supply chain. Starting from tier 4 to tier 1 manufacturing, our engagement with MAS adds value to clients and the brands.

Q How does MAS Holdings infuse education and continuous learning into its corporate culture, specifically on the field of supply chain and logistics?

MAS Holdings is recognized as a learning organization that nurtures the high potential of its employees. With a strong focus on employees, training and development are paramount, and continuous learning is highly valued in the company culture. MAS utilizes the 70-20-10 model for training, where 70% of learning comes from on-the-job experiences, 20% through coaching, and 10% through formal training programs. This approach is common in supply chain and manufacturing. When we onboard newcomers, we encourage them to actively engage in on-the-job learning and to learn from overcoming failures. However, we have a proper system to avoid repetition, identify outliers, and continuously improve our existing systems because MAS follows the lean philosophy. Therefore, continuous learning is embedded as a part of the culture at MAS.

Additionally, there are processes for identifying skill gaps at all levels of employees. A unique training approach wouldn't work for our diverse workforce. Instead, we focus on individualized training programs based on identified skill gaps. Within the supply chain department itself, we see a diverse range of educational backgrounds. Some employees have a Master's degree in Supply Chain Management, while others possess expertise in textiles. We cannot determine who is more important because sometimes the textile engineer plays a critical role in technical knowledge in the supply chain. Sometimes, the supply chain expert plays a



dominant role, but both skill sets are required. Based on these findings, we identify the skill gaps of individuals and develop training to address them. Therefore, this is a part of continuous competency assessment and development plans for individuals. Additionally, MAS has introduced a separate tech ladder system, especially for technical staff, as the textile and apparel industry requires technical knowledge in the supply chain and in their roles.

As mentioned previously, MAS emphasizes coaching as a vital component of its learning culture. Coaching, delivered by both supervisors and leaders from other

departments (cross-functional leaders) within MAS, comprises 20% of the training model. These sessions cover various aspects of supply chain management, including value creation and customer relationship management. Additionally, MAS identifies gaps and provides classroom style specialized training to address them, such as data analysis training. The company offers traditional learning methods alongside online platforms, enabling employees to access technical, brand protection-related compliance, and IT-related training. MAS ensures that opportunities for on-the-job training, coaching, and guided technical sessions are readily available, allowing employees to continuously develop and enhance their skills.

Q In the position you hold as the 'Director of Sourcing and Supply Chain', what strategies do you utilize to bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and practical applications in the supply chain industry within the younger generation?

The field of supply chain is constantly evolving, akin to other dynamic industries like engineering. Just as the vehicles of today differ from those of tomorrow in terms of speed, engine capacity, and dynamics, manufacturing undergoes similar transformations. Consequently, the dynamics of supply chains also undergo continuous change. It becomes challenging for individuals to solely rely on theoretical knowledge and apply it directly to practical scenarios. However, a comprehensive understanding of guided theoretical knowledge, encompassing both macroeconomic and microeconomic factors, is essential. This understanding aids individuals in better positioning themselves to analyze problems effectively.

In the supply chain, individuals often encounter multidisciplinary problems. These can range from macroeconomic practices to political or economic factors. For instance, disruptions in economic stability, as witnessed recently in Sri Lanka, necessitate a global manufacturing company like MAS to navigate through such challenges. During certain periods, the country faced difficulties in paying suppliers due to material procurement from various countries such as Taiwan, China, India, and Thailand. Classroom knowledge alone may not suffice in such situations. One needs to possess knowledge of macroeconomic climates and theoretical backgrounds to effectively apply solutions.

"MAS emphasizes coaching as a vital component of its learning culture."

But in my PhD, I've learned that theories are continually evolving. Foundational theories like Porter's five forces, PESTEL analysis, demand and supply principles, and economic theories undergo modifications and additions over time. Thus, the approach we adopt involves providing on-the-job training. This approach equips individuals with practical knowledge, leading to enhanced analytics, problem-solving skills, and better approaches to address challenges.

The field of supply chain management presents dynamic learning opportunities, transcending conventional industries like agriculture or even medicine. The evolving nature of the supply chain demands necessitate a deep understanding of theoretical frameworks and models. However, the ability to apply

this knowledge is paramount. Sometimes, individuals pursuing degrees while concurrently gaining work experience demonstrate better application of theories in real-world scenarios compared to those who solely rely on classroom learning. Supply chain management, being highly practical, benefits from such hybrid approaches where theory informs practice and vice versa. Therefore, we emphasize providing up to 70% on-the-job training to mold new graduates from diverse industries, aligning their understanding of supply chain dynamics with practical business requirements.

Q What specific talents, skills, and attributes do you believe are necessary for future supply chain leaders, and how can educational institutions; basically universities, foster the growth and development of these qualities?

As I mentioned, the skill set required for sourcing and supply chain management is continuously evolving. What was relevant five years ago may not be the same today due to the dynamic nature of the field. Critical skills such as digitization, agility, speed, and throughput are now in high demand. To navigate these challenges, future supply chain leaders must possess a blend of technical and soft skills. Effective collaboration and clear communication are essential for conveying messages to the next level. Additionally, the ability to quickly process information, devise solutions using digital tools and technology, and forecast potential risks is crucial in meeting the new expectations of the supply chain.

Furthermore, a foundational understanding of finance, marketing, and economics is necessary to comprehend the entire spectrum of supply chain requirements. Regarding the collaboration between academic institutions and the industry, I believe it's imperative for both parties to work together to enhance resources.

The syllabus, particularly in supply chain and procurement, should undergo continuous improvement and assessment to stay relevant. Joint collaboration between academia and industry can facilitate this process. Collaborative research opportunities can enable candidates, institutions, and the industry to work synergistically. Fortunately, the textile and apparel industry, a significant sector in Sri Lanka, benefits from institutes with a focus on continuously enhancing their curricula. These institutes work hand in hand with the industry to ensure that graduates are well-prepared to engage with industry dynamics upon graduation.

Overall, fostering connectivity between industry and education systems is crucial for uplifting the curriculum and enhancing students' ability to engage with industry dynamics. It's essential for both industry and academia to collaborate effectively to develop and improve the curriculum, as well as enhance engagement opportunities for students.

Q What do you perceive as the most significant challenges and opportunities for future Leaders in the Supply Chain and Logistics Industry, and how do you think educational Institutions can tailor their curriculum to better educate students to be competent in such situations?

The challenges, as mentioned previously, revolve around the rapidly changing nature of supply chain demands, encompassing agility, speed, order size, order quality, and product variations.

These factors significantly impact supply chain dynamics, reflecting the evolving industry landscape. Traditionally, supply chain theories underscore the competition among supply chains rather than individual organizations competing against one another. Challenges include unpredictable geopolitical and economic concerns globally, such as the current Red Sea issue and ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, leading to disruptions in the supply chain, including shipping and procurement.

The past COVID-19 crisis presented a unique set of challenges, further emphasizing the need for swift adaptation and alignment with changing supply chain dynamics to prevent system damage. Notably, companies like Nokia and certain vehicle supply chains failed to adapt to consumer changes and macroeconomic challenges, resulting in their decline.

Addressing these challenges requires effective collaboration, alignment, and trust within the supply chain to meet evolving demands. For instance, some suppliers adjusted their strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic to support businesses, even at the expense of profitability, emphasizing the importance of problem identification and proactive problem-solving.

Regarding educational institutions, collaboration with the industry is crucial to understanding industry dynamics and tailoring curricula accordingly. While early engagement may be challenging due to the need for foundational theoretical knowledge in the first and second years, fostering collaboration in the final year and facilitating industry-guided research can enhance the commercial viability and applicability of research outcomes. By aligning education with industry needs, educational institutions can create more value for both industry and academia.

Q What initiatives, programs, or collaborations does MAS Holdings undertake to mentor and groom aspiring leaders, aiding them to develop on skills when transitioning from their academic learning to the journey they pursue in the corporate sector?

There's the CCL training for instance, primarily targeted at middle management levels, which focuses on improving daily conversations. This training enhances



"The evolving nature of the supply chain demands necessitate a deep understanding of theoretical frameworks and models."

individuals' abilities not only to provide feedback but also to develop coaching and mentoring skills, fostering a learning culture within the organization. Additionally, senior leaders participate in the Mastering the Craft of Leadership program, which equips them with tools for coaching and mentoring. MAS also spearheads initiatives like Ignite and Women in Management, focusing on succession management and sponsoring programs aimed at identifying initiatives for coaching and mentorship.

Furthermore, MAS ensures that new recruits receive ample on-the-job training to better position them within the industry. Given the diverse backgrounds from which supply chain professionals are sourced, such as finance or economics, MAS provides comprehensive on-the-job training to align individuals with the company's objectives. Moreover, MAS offers a wide array of training programs, catering to various skill gaps and needs identified among employees. Additionally, MAS supports employees by



covering fees for professional memberships, such as CIMA memberships, enabling individuals to continue their professional development with financial assistance.

Q What advice do you have for young professionals aiming for future leadership roles in the supply chain and logistics industry in Sri Lanka?


I would advise prioritizing continuous learning. Before coming to this interview, I had discussions with my managers to understand the ground-level situation and gather feedback on new employees. One common observation is that recent graduates often have high expectations and a desire to quickly climb the corporate ladder without taking on significant responsibilities. They may even inquire about promotions during interviews. While having clear career goals is commendable, it's crucial to prioritize learning and gaining experience.

My own journey began at the grassroots level, where I dedicated extra hours beyond my regular work schedule to learn and engage in the process. This industry sometimes demands long hours, especially in manufacturing, where operations run 24/7. Therefore, fresh graduates need to understand their scope, identify their strengths, and focus on mastering their skills. Success in the long term comes from continuously improving one's skill set and adding value to the organization.

"The field of supply chain management presents dynamic learning opportunities, transcending conventional industries like agriculture or even medicine."

Don't aim for short-term comfort by immediately seeking better pay and less work at the beginning of your job. Doing so may hinder your learning and growth. Instead, focus on developing a mindset geared towards continuous improvement. While there may be exceptions for highly technical individuals with efficient learning methods, it's generally important to prioritize skill enhancement after obtaining your degree.

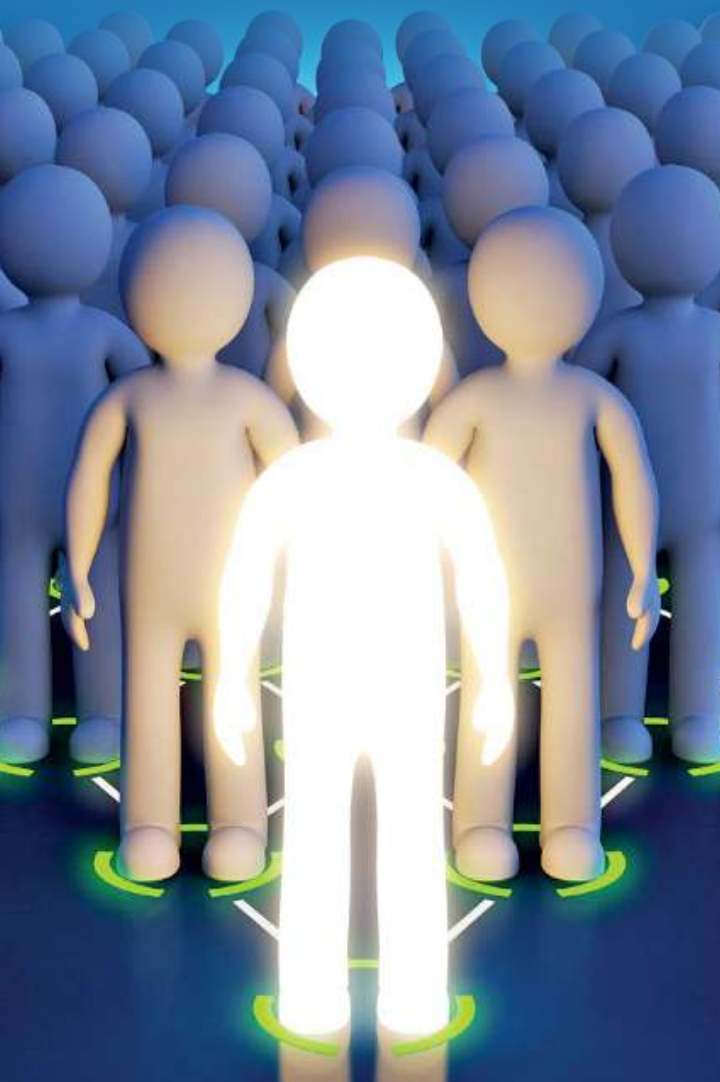
Therefore, dedicate yourself to improving your skill set to add value in your chosen area of expertise. Identify potential growth areas and commit to ongoing learning and development. By combining your experience with continuous learning, you will undoubtedly contribute a unique value to the industry. This process involves carving out a niche, actively engaging, and presenting a compelling value proposition within the supply chain sector. ■



***“A strong
education system
fuels a vibrant
and competitive
industry, driving
progress and
economic
prosperity.”***

– Barack Obama

A COMPARATIVE EXPERIENCE: MANAGEMENT RESEARCH CONFERENCES



Dr. Sabeen Sharic

Senior Lecturer

Department of Management and Finance

Faculty of Management, Social Sciences and Humanities

General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University.

Research and the dissemination of findings through conferences are pivotal in the development of future leaders in management. Conferences provide a platform for scholars to present their work, receive feedback, and engage with peers from around the world. This exchange of knowledge not only advances individual research but also fosters a collaborative environment that is essential for innovation and progress in any field. Organizing and participating in research conferences are crucial for the growth of academia and industry alike, as they help bridge the gap between theoretical research and practical application.

Reflecting on my experience attending the International Conference on Management Research 2023 at the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT Madras), Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, I find significant contrasts and similarities with management research conferences held in Sri Lanka. This comparison provides valuable insights into how we can enhance our academic and professional gatherings to better prepare future leaders.

Overview of IIT Madras

IIT Madras, established in 1959, is one of India's premier institutions of higher learning. Known for its cutting-edge research and innovation, IIT Madras has consistently ranked among the top engineering schools in the world. The institution boasts a comprehensive network of alumni, many of whom are leaders in academia, industry, and government.

Masterclasses and Workshops

The conference at IIT Madras featured a series of masterclasses that included workshops on Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning, and Research Designs. These sessions provided a comprehensive

overview of current trends and techniques in the research field, enabling participants to stay connected with technological advancements. Incorporating similar workshops in Sri Lankan conferences could greatly benefit our researchers by broadening their skill sets and aligning their work with global standards.

International Exposure and Networking

One of the standout features of the IIT Madras conference was the presence of international scholars from leading universities in the USA, Singapore, and other countries. This provided an invaluable opportunity for networking and collaboration. The conference included a social outing to Besant Nagar Beach, fostering informal interactions among participants. In Sri Lanka, while we do have international participants, the scale and diversity are often more limited. Organizing similar outings could enhance the networking experience and build stronger professional relationships.

Industry-Oriented Discussions

At IIT Madras, the technical presentations were highly focused on industry applications, with feedback primarily revolving around practical implementation rather than just theoretical aspects. This industry-oriented approach is crucial for bridging the gap between research and practice. Sri Lankan conferences, on the other hand, often emphasize methodological rigor, sometimes at the expense of practical relevance. Shifting our focus towards more industry-relevant discussions could make our research more impactful and applicable in real-world scenarios.

Innovative Networking Activities

An innovative aspect of the IIT Madras conference was the networking dinner, which included entertainment activities related to research experiences, such as singing songs about PhD supervisors or journal publication experiences. This unique approach not only made the session enjoyable but also fostered a sense of community and shared experiences. Introducing similar creative activities in our conferences could enhance participant engagement and make networking more memorable.

Funding and Alumni Support

A notable difference between the IIT Madras conference and those in Sri Lanka is the source of funding. The IIT Madras conference was largely funded by its extensive alumni network, reflecting a strong culture of giving back. In Sri Lanka, conferences are typically funded through university budgets and external sponsors. Developing an alumni network and encouraging alumni contributions could provide additional financial support and enhance the quality of our events.

Logistical and Administrative Aspects

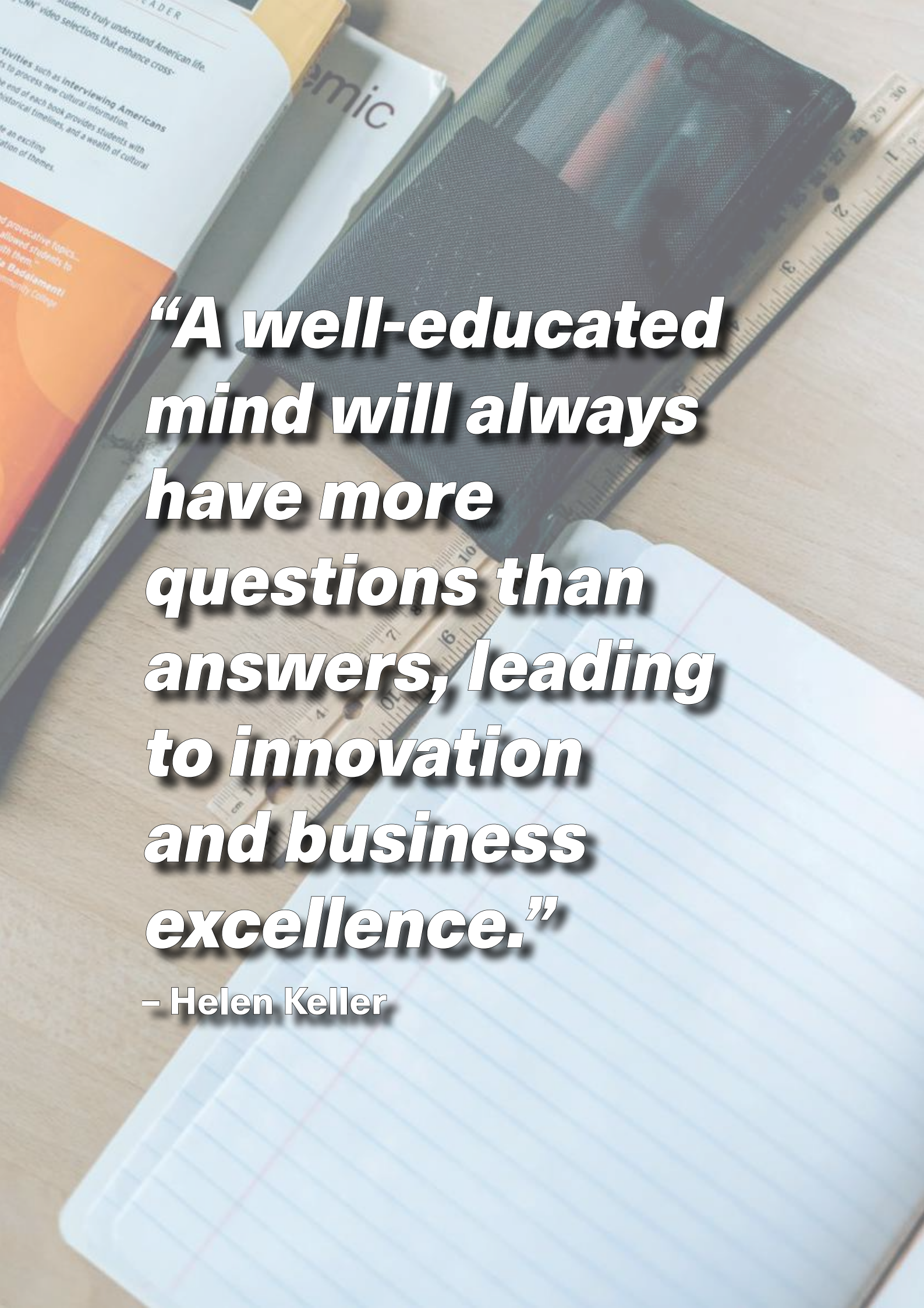
In terms of logistics, the IIT Madras conference offered in-house accommodation at their guesthouses and hostels which were like mini luxury hotels, for a charge. This convenience was highly appreciated by participants. Additionally, the organizers shared photos and contact details of all participants at the end of the conference, fostering continued communication and collaboration. In Sri Lanka, such comprehensive logistical arrangements and follow-up practices are less common. Adopting these practices could improve the overall experience and facilitate ongoing professional relationships.

Food and Cultural Observations

Cultural differences were also evident in the food arrangements. The variety and portion sizes at the IIT Madras conference were different from what we are accustomed to in Sri Lanka. Additionally, there was a more relaxed approach to seating arrangements. While these are minor details, they highlight the importance of cultural sensitivity and adaptability in international conferences.

Conclusion

Comparing my experiences at the IIT Madras conference and Sri Lankan management research conferences reveals several areas for potential improvement. By incorporating more masterclasses on emerging technologies, focusing on industry-oriented discussions, introducing innovative networking activities, leveraging alumni support, and improving logistical arrangements, we can enhance the quality and impact of our conferences. These changes will better prepare our future leaders to transition smoothly from the classroom to the boardroom, aligning with the theme of KDU Logistics Day 2024. By learning from the best practices observed at IIT Madras, we can empower our future leaders with the skills, knowledge, and networks necessary to excel in the dynamic field of management. ■

A collage of educational items including books, a ruler, and a notebook. The background features a wooden desk with a yellow ruler, a blue notebook, and several books. One book has a green cover with the word 'emic' visible. Another book has an orange cover with text about 'prolocative topics'. A quote is overlaid on the image in a bold, white, italicized font with a black drop shadow.

***“A well-educated
mind will always
have more
questions than
answers, leading
to innovation
and business
excellence.”***

– Helen Keller

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“WE SEE CHALLENGES AS OPPORTUNITIES TO THINK DIFFERENTLY”

Gihan Vidanapathirana

Head of Procurement

Nestlé Lanka PLC

Interviewed by: Kevin Perera, Chathumi Ekanayake, Ayandi Pathirage, Kavitha Costa

Transcribed by: Subashi Fernando, Sachintha Abeywickrama, Kalika Gamhewa, Dilini Sarangi, Bhagya Kalutarage

Proofread by: Chathumi Ekanayake, Nethmi Liyanage, Dulakshi Perera, Ayandi Pathirage, Stephney De Silva

Photographer: Kasun Wijeyweera

Q Can you provide us with a brief introduction about yourself?

I graduated from the University of Moratuwa with a degree in Transport and Logistics. I began my career in the shipping industry at one of the leading privately-owned container terminals in the Port of Colombo. Subsequently, I joined Nestlé as a buyer at the Kurunegala factory, where I managed the operational elements of procurement and gained exposure to warehouse operations management within factory supply chain department.

In 2018, I transitioned to our corporate office in Colombo to take on the role of Strategic Buyer, primarily managing the ingredients portfolio of the business. My career then advanced as a Procurement Business Partner for Foods and Nestlé Professional businesses to work closely with local business units and above market buying teams sitting at our global procurement hubs to secure most favorable terms and contracts for Nestlé Lanka business and deploy procurement projects at local market to support the profitability. Subsequently, I had the opportunity to manage various spend categories such as Packaging and Commodities which allowed me to further enhance my functional expertise in procurement.

During this time, I had the opportunity to refine the coconut milk sourcing strategy for the business, the largest locally managed spend category in our operations here in Sri Lanka. This role significantly enhanced my procurement expertise and knowledge of risk mitigation strategies, providing me with substantial exposure in these fields.

In 2022, I progressed my career as a senior manager while providing leadership to direct materials pillar of the business to support the business growth and to lead key localization projects within the organization. Now, I am working as Head of Procurement, spearheading the procurement strategy for the organization since 2023.

Q Can you provide us with a brief introduction about the organization Nestlé?

Nestlé, the largest food and beverage company in the world, was first introduced to Sri Lanka over 115 years ago, and today, Nestlé is an integral part of Sri Lankan lives. With over 90% of Nestlé products sold in Sri Lanka being manufactured in its state-of-the-art factory in Kurunegala, Nestlé Lanka is known for its range of beloved brands including Nestomalt, Milo, Milkmaid, Maggi Noodles, Maggi Rasamusu, Nescafe, Nespray etc. Further, Nestlé Lanka continuously contributes to the local community, being one of the largest exporters of Coconut Milk Powder who indirectly purchases over 90 million coconuts per year and is one of the largest private sector collectors of fresh milk in Sri Lanka.

Q What does Nestlé focus on achieving through its supply chain, and what measures have Nestlé utilized to do this?

To put it simply, our main objective at Nestlé is to ensure that when a consumer reaches the shelf, they can find high-quality and safe Nestlé products available to buy. At Nestlé Supply Chain, we want to be superior to competition in terms of availability, freshness & quality on shelf, value for money & trust of being a



responsible brand which are our core focus and prime goal.

To achieve this, Nestlé has implemented several strategies to enhance product accessibility and supply chain efficiency embedded with sustainable goals. One key approach is aligning the vision and objectives throughout the organization, ensuring that everyone is working towards a common goal and prioritizing business objectives over individual functional priorities.

Additionally, we are actively implementing and utilizing digital tools to achieve real-time visibility

across the value chain. This increased visibility enhances our agility and efficiency in responding to market demands and customer needs.

Furthermore, we are actively working on our plans towards net zero emission and plastic neutrality in our value chain which are our commitment towards sustainability. By recognizing our potential to create a competitive edge and contribute to a better future, we embrace sustainable practices that align with market trends. This commitment not only strengthens our position as a leader but also allows us to offer the best products to consumers.

Through our dedication to continuous improvement, Nestlé remains at the forefront of supply chain practices within the industry, ensuring that we consistently deliver on our promise of quality and safety to our valued customer.

Q According to Nestlé, what are the challenges met, and opportunities grasped; in the supply chain and logistics industry by Nestlé?

When it comes to challenges in the supply chain and logistics industry, at Nestlé, we see challenges as opportunities to think differently which open doors for new avenues. The biggest challenge we face is the ever-changing consumer demand. Consumer preferences and demands are constantly evolving. Our supply chain needs to be extremely agile and customer centric to meet expectations and delight consumers. Our champions at Demand & Supply Planning teams are pioneering by using digital tools to predict demand more accurately. This has been a significant opportunity for us, and we've made substantial progress over the past few years in using these tools to better support our business.

“Nestlé invests in leadership development programs to nurture and groom future leaders within the company.”

Another challenge we've experienced in recent years is the changing geopolitical environment, which impacts global supply chains and international trade. This gave us opportunities to fast-track our risk mitigation strategies such as de-risk our sourcing origins to multiple geographies and finding substitute products as a business continuity plan to improve the sourcing flexibility and ensure we run our operation continuously while adhering to all quality and compliance requirements. Furthermore, a significant initiative we have embraced is Project Serendib, which focuses on localizing our spend categories wherever feasible. The primary objective of this project is to reduce the outflow of USD and attain enhanced logistics and cost efficiencies which support the business and the country's economy in a positive way.

Q Discussing on the aspect of education, in what ways does Nestlé promote education to foster the growth of professionalism and leadership?

Nestlé has established a robust framework known as the 'Nestlé Leadership Framework' to foster professionalism and leadership within the organization. This framework

aims to provide employees with the tools to enhance their theoretical knowledge and develop strong leadership skills. The guidelines, processes and methodologies used in Nestlé give opportunities to employees to understand deep purposes of Nestlé's processes, guidelines, and methodologies are akin to those of a university, offering employees the opportunity to refine their skills and thrive in a dynamic working environment. This helps the professional and personnel growth of employees creating a progressive and transparent environment fostering continuous improvement.

Nestlé invests in leadership development programs to nurture and groom future leaders within the company. These programs provide trainings, mentoring, and coaching to individuals with potential, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to lead teams and drive organizational success.

Additionally, workshops, seminars, and online i-learn training modules which are specially designed for functional and leadership development are enhancing the technical skills and leadership capabilities of the employees while fostering a culture of continuous learning and growth within the organization.

The company also places a strong emphasis on leading youth initiatives within the corporate sector. Several years ago, Nestlé initiated projects aimed at enhancing the corporate skills of the younger generation. Currently, Nestlé has entered into Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with a leading university to elevate the skills and leadership competencies of fresh graduates, preparing them for the corporate world. Given the rapidly evolving nature of the supply chain, the skill sets that one possesses today might not be relevant in the future. Undergraduates must possess a deep understanding of market trends and expectations, and such feeding and exchanging of information to undergraduates occur primarily due to the MOUs and other collaborations with universities.

However, these MOUs not only provide Nestlé with the opportunity to educate and share valuable resources with younger generations but also enable the company to benefit from the universities' support for problem-solving and research projects. This collaboration serves as a mutually beneficial arrangement for both Nestlé and the universities involved.

Q As per Nestlé perspective, what skills and competencies mark a successful leader in the supply chain operations?

There are several key combinations of skills and competencies that I can highlight which successful leader will possess in the supply chain industry in order to navigate through complexities and drive organizational successes.

Firstly, it is essential to have a holistic view on the business environment which focus every decision on the customer centricity. You need to grasp end to end business know-how and embody a customer obsession culture and channel it upstream to improve the operations.

In addition, strong communication and influential skills play a crucial role. It is imperative for supply chain professionals to possess the ability to communicate complex ideas clearly and inspire & motivate their teams, and influence stakeholders to gain support for supply chain initiatives and drive organizational change.

Change management and adaptability are other important skill sets that define successful leaders in supply chain functions. The supply chain industry is constantly evolving, and successful leaders must be adaptable and skilled in change management. They should be able to navigate through disruptions, embrace new technologies, and guide their teams through transitions to ensure the supply chain remains agile and responsive to changing market dynamics.

“It is important to maintain an open mindset towards acquiring new skills and staying updated on emerging trends and industry needs.”

Finally, I want to highlight the importance of having a continuous learning and development mindset. In the ever-evolving nature of the supply chain industry, the skill sets and knowledge you may have today may quickly become outdated.

Thus, it is important to maintain an open mindset towards acquiring new skills and staying updated on emerging trends and industry needs. Overall, this approach not only ensures relevance, but also facilitates a smoother evolution of the supply chain and to stay ahead in a rapidly changing environment.

Q In terms of effective deliverance and knowledge sharing, can you share with us how Nestlé bridges the gap between theory and practical knowledge to its interns through the internship programs conducted?

According to Nestlé’s learning framework, we believe that 70% of an employee’s learning is based on experience, 20% is derived from coaching, mentoring, feedback, and networking, and the remaining 10% is acquired through classroom exercises.



In line with the learning framework, we always try to give a balanced exposure by covering all above aspects to our interns through our Nestlé’s internship program. Nestlé’s internship program emphasizes project-based work which focuses on experience-based learning. Interns are assigned for projects with clear objectives and deliverables, allowing them to independently research, apply theoretical knowledge, and develop practical solutions for real-world business challenges. This project-centric approach distinguishes Nestlé’s internships from those that focus solely on routine tasks.

Mentoring and knowledge-sharing sessions are another key advantage of a Nestlé internship. These programs are held in their respective departments as well as in other cross-functional departments. These sessions provide interns with diverse perspectives from management across various functions, fostering a broader understanding of the business and encouraging them to think critically and adapt to different viewpoints.

Mentorship from diverse leaders broadens the interns’ perspectives, fostering critical thinking and a deeper

understanding of Nestlé's corporate culture. Nestlé further enriches the internship experience by offering workshops on skill and leadership developments. These workshops equip interns with practical knowledge and competencies relevant to their chosen field.

Q What message would you like to share with the undergraduates who aim to exercise the roles as effective and prominent leaders in the supply chain and logistics industry?

Supply Chain is an industry which is rapidly changing and evolving fast with technology. Furthermore, supply chain plays a crucial role in integrating all functions together to efficiently achieve the business objectives.

At the undergraduate level, it is essential to grasp the fundamental purpose of the supply chain, which is to ensure the availability of the right products on the shelf and to align with the overall business objectives

of the organization. This perspective emphasizes the importance of prioritizing organizational goals over individual or functional objectives and inculcate customer centric mindset. By instilling this mindset early on, students can understand its importance and apply it effectively when they enter the corporate world, providing them with a significant advantage.

“It is crucial for undergraduates to embrace technological advancements and become proficient with new digital tools.”

Also, the communication is key when it comes to running a successful supply chain operation. Clear communication of complex problems is a key skill you need to inculcate and practice which will be essential in corporate supply chain career.

Additionally, it is crucial for undergraduates to embrace technological advancements and become proficient with new digital tools. Familiarity with these tools and an understanding of their importance will make the transition into the corporate environment much smoother for them. Furthermore, leadership skills are essential. Undergraduates should cultivate the courage to express their ideas, communicate clearly, solve problems effectively, and understand the broader and holistic business environment.

Developing these skills and maintaining an open mindset will help students integrate these practices into their daily lives, ensuring they are well-prepared and competitive when they enter the corporate world. ■





“The most important investment we can make is in our human capital. With the right education, individuals can transform industries and shape the future.”

– Klaus Schwab

THE LANGUAGE OF LOGISTICS: ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR UNDERGRADUATES OF SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT



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Effective communication is the ability to adapt a person's communication style and content according to a particular purpose and context of communication. Supply chain teams should have effective communication strategies to fulfil their responsibilities of purchasing materials and maintaining inventory and product deliveries. As effective communication is a fundamental aspect in the field of supply chain management, universities are responsible for equipping future supply chain managers with the necessary communicative skills to enable them fulfilling workplace demands. This article presents the essential communication skills such as interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, written and verbal communication, negotiation and conflict management, and digital communication skills, which should be integrated into the university curricula of supply chain management. Undergraduates will be better prepared to manage relationships, foster teamwork, and effectively coordinate operations in supply chain management careers with their practice of effective communication skills.

Enhancing Interpersonal Communication Skills of Undergraduates

Interpersonal communication refers to the transmission of information between two individuals with a particular purpose. Building rapport, fostering teamwork, and managing relationships effectively are essential for stakeholders in the supply chain management. Empathy is one of the key aspects of interpersonal communication that needs to be considered in one-to-one and small-group communication. In universities, it is important to develop courses in which students learn the theoretical

and practical aspects of empathy in communication. For example, undergraduates can be trained to develop an empathy map to better understand their co-workers and clients in a future work environment. The empathy map was introduced by Dave Gray, the founder of XPLANE, a visual thinking company. It is a visualization that assists to understand another's perspective on a specific issue, and it was originally developed to create customer profiles in a business environment. It synthesizes known information about an individual through the visualization of what he or she says, does, sees, and hears. Additionally, it pays attention to the individual's worries, fears, and frustrations, wants and needs, and what makes him or her happy. Empathy maps help to have a better understanding of end users. It is recommended that undergraduates should practice creating empathy maps for various supply chain scenarios, fostering collaboration and connecting diverse perspectives. Further, writing reflective thoughts on empathy maps would encourage undergraduates to analyze them and consider how their understanding about another can improve communication and decision-making.

Activities related to emotional intelligence also enhance empathy. The bestselling book of Daniel Goleman "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ," published in 1995, helped to popularize the idea that emotional intelligence is a critical factor in determining success both in personal and professional life. Since then, emotional intelligence has been widely studied and recognized as an important skill set for individuals across various fields and industries. Emotional Intelligence can be improved through self-awareness and social awareness tasks. Therefore, undergraduates can be encouraged to write reflective journals to increase their consciousness of their emotional appeal in handling various situations during their academic life.

Enhancing Intercultural Communication Skills

Through activities related to intercultural communication, the students learn to appreciate cultural diversity, which is an important skill in global supply chain management. Effective intercultural communication is of vital importance as undergraduates must work in different working settings nationally and internationally. Hence, they should have an awareness of the diversity of communication styles in written communication such as in emails, text messages and letters of various cultural groups. It is also important to integrate course units related to cultural sensitivity into supply chain management courses, as students should be aware of the impact of cultural differences on business practices and communication. In a cross-cultural setting, an awareness of international

business etiquette is essential for clear and consistent communication processes.

When considering practical applications, it is important to introduce international internships to obtain experience with different cultures. Further, undergraduates can be motivated to work with multinational companies where they experience intercultural communication scenarios. They can also analyse case studies from various multinational companies to identify cultural differences and their effects on communication.

Enhancing Written and Verbal Communication Skills

Enhancing business writing skills is essential for effective workplace communication. Undergraduates should be trained to develop clear and concise business genres such as emails, business proposals, meeting minutes, various types of reports, contracts, risk management plans, etc. It is important to give them exposure to the authentic business genres produced by supply chain management professionals, so that undergraduates can learn specific genre conventions to develop business documents used in their workplaces effectively. Moreover, they can also be given scenarios in which they have to produce emails, such as a price negotiation email, followed by a session on peer correction.

Presentation skills are another aspect of verbal business communication. It is essential to identify the situations that they need to present in their professional contexts. For instance, undergraduates can conduct a presentation on strategies useful for stakeholders in supply chain, which reflects their communicative needs in authentic professional contexts. Similarly, it is suggested to provide them exposure to real-world business presentations to identify the specific structures and features of presentations related to supply chain management.

Enhancing Communication Skills for Negotiation and Conflict Management

Negotiation and conflict management are key components of supply chain management. It is necessary to provide communication skills on how to reach agreements between parties who have contrasting goals while resolving disputes constructively. In this regard, communication skills course units should focus on enhancing active listening skills, which is an important skill for collaboration in a workplace setting. Ways to teaching active listening techniques include activities on reflective listening, note-taking, summarizing, and asking questions for clarification.

Assertive communication training is also vital in negotiation and conflict management. Undergraduates should be able to express their thoughts and feelings clearly and respectfully in a conflict situation without being aggressive. It is necessary to provide them scenarios to conduct role plays to practice conveying their disagreement assertively. Additionally, it is suggested to train them to write reflections after they conduct a group project to make them aware of how they negotiate and solve conflicts in the process of achieving their group goals.

Enhancing Digital Communication Skills

Digital communication is a key to success in supply chain management in which professionals must coordinate operations across diverse geographies and time zones. Successful digital communication involves the effective use of emails, text messaging, video conferencing, and collaborative platforms that ensure smooth and timely interactions with stakeholders, suppliers, clients, logistic suppliers, etc.

Undergraduates of supply chain management should master the skills relevant to writing concise emails with appropriate etiquette, as emails are the widely used communication mode in the field of supply chain management. Digital communication skills are relevant to virtual meetings such as Zoom and Teams meetings, in which the communication process tends to be complicated due to misunderstandings, language and technological barriers. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that universities incorporate digital communication training sessions into curricula, focusing on e-communication etiquette

and the appropriate use of digital communication platforms. This can be practically conducted by providing them with opportunities to conduct virtual meetings. Peer observation can also be conducted during virtual meetings followed by feedback sessions. Further, undergraduates can analyse strategies of etiquette in emails written for business purposes. It is also suggested to make them engaged in virtual team collaboration projects where they experience multiple channels of communication such as virtual meetings, emails, and text messaging to enhance the adaptability of communication.

Integrating a holistic approach to communication skill development activities into the supply chain management curriculum is crucial for enabling undergraduates to enhance communication skills required in their professions. Therefore, teaching materials that incorporate both theoretical and practical aspects related to interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, verbal and written communication, and digital communication skills is of utmost importance. For instance, a course unit on communication skills for negotiation and conflict management enables undergraduates to interact with others effectively. Undergraduates with effective communication skills are equipped to handle complexities in modern supply chain management using their abilities in effective negotiation skills, collaboration, and conflict resolution in various national and international business arenas. The integration of communication skills into supply chain management curricula is crucial to have efficient and strong supply chains. ■

HAMBANTOTA INTERNATIONAL PORT



RORO

LPG/Bunkering

Marine Services

Dry Bulk/BB/
Project Cargo

Cruises

Container



Port Services

Ro-Ro
LPG
Bunkering
Dry bulk/BB/Project cargo
Cruise
Marine Services
Container

Port Related Industry

Supporting services
Port-Park-City model
Community development

Integrated Logistics

Bonded warehouse
Value added services
Duty free facility
Logistics finance
Wholesale centre
Product exhibition

Energy Hub

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ISO
45001
CERTIFIED

“FUTURE LEADERS MUST UNDERSTAND LOGISTICS, OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT, AND SUPPLY CHAIN OPTIMISATION”

Jayathmi Gamachchige

Assistant Manager

Commercial and Marketing

Hambantota International Port Group (HIPG)

Q Can you provide us with a brief overview of HIPG and its role in the global supply chain process?

The Hambantota International Port Group (HIPG) is a significant player in the global maritime industry. HIPG is a public private partnership between Sri Lanka Ports Authority and China Merchants Ports Holdings Limited (CM Port). CM Port, the parent company of HIPG is a world-leading port developer, investor, and operator headquartered in Hongkong, with its presence in 25 countries across 6 continents. As HIPG's global partner CM Port owns 85% of its shares with Sri Lanka Ports Authority owning 15% of equity in HIPG.

Strategically located on the southern tip of Sri Lanka, the Hambantota International Port (HIP) was established by HIPG, with the objective of it becoming a major hub in the global supply chain. As a multipurpose port, HIP provides a variety of services across several business sectors. The port handles dry bulk, breakbulk, liquid bulk [liquefied petroleum gas (LPG)], roll-on/roll-off (RORO), container, Cruise, project cargoes, and provides marine services and bunkering. HIP to date, is the only ISO IMS certified Sri Lankan port.

HIP's strategic location, combined with its efficient and reliable operations, positions it as a crucial transshipment

hub. It connects major trade routes between Asia, Europe, and Africa, playing a pivotal role in the global supply chain process. HIP's strategic partnerships further solidify its position as a key facilitator of international trade and logistics, ensuring the seamless movement of goods across continents.

Q How does HIPG address the evolving challenges and opportunities in the supply chain industry of Sri Lanka?

HIP is a catalyst for Sri Lanka's evolving supply chain. By constantly innovating and expanding its facilities and services, the port tackles industry challenges and unlocks new opportunities. HIPG's strategic partnerships guarantee the port's efficient and reliable cargo handling, streamlined logistics, and seamless connectivity.

Through continuous investment in infrastructure, technology, and human capital development, HIP ensures that its operations remain agile and responsive to changing market dynamics.

HIPG collaborates with stakeholders across the supply chain ecosystem. By leveraging digitalization and automation, the port optimizes cargo handling processes, reduces turnaround times, and boosts overall supply



chain efficiency. HIPG's vision extends beyond the port itself. Our strategic initiatives, including the development of an industrial zone and a "port, park, city" model, create synergies that solidify Sri Lanka's position as a regional logistics powerhouse.

Q What skills and knowledge will be most valuable for the development of future supply chain leaders according to HIPG?

HIPG recognizes the pivotal role that future supply chain leaders play in driving innovation, efficiency, and sustainability in the industry. To meet the evolving

demands and challenges of the global market, these leaders require a diverse and robust skill set coupled with a deep knowledge base.

A strong foundation in technical expertise is paramount. Future leaders must understand logistics, operations management, and supply chain optimization. This knowledge empowers them to handle the complexities of moving goods, ensuring smooth operations and timely deliveries.

HIPG recognizes that leadership goes beyond technical proficiency. Effective leaders are skilled at



“By investing in the next generation, HIPG strengthens its own workforce while contributing to the overall growth and sustainability of the industry as a whole.”

guiding teams, making strategic decisions, and fostering innovation. Excellent communication allows them to build strong relationships, collaborate effectively, and convey ideas clearly. Furthermore, adept problem-solving abilities are crucial for navigating challenges, identifying opportunities, and driving continuous improvement.

The future business landscape is Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA). Future leaders must be comfortable in this environment and possess the skills to navigate it successfully. Additionally, understanding and utilizing technology like AI and data analytics is essential for optimizing efficiency and productivity – a key skill for any successful leader.

HIPG recognizes the interconnectedness of the supply chain and that future leaders need to excel at working across functions and organizations, building partnerships,

and aligning diverse interests for shared success. This requires a strategic mindset, holistic thinking, and a commitment to creating synergies that maximize value across the entire supply chain ecosystem.

Teamwork is a core value at HIPG, and it's essential for any high-performing organization. The supply chain landscape is constantly evolving, driven by technology, market dynamics, and regulations. HIPG places emphasis on continuous learning and professional development. Future leaders are encouraged to stay updated on emerging trends, technologies, and best practices through ongoing education, training programs, and industry events.

By fostering well-rounded and forward-thinking leaders, HIPG is not just meeting today's challenges but shaping the future of the supply chain industry. Through a powerful combination of technical expertise, leadership excellence, and a commitment to lifelong learning, HIPG empowers future leaders to drive innovation, collaboration, and value creation in a complex and interconnected world.

Q How does HIPG empower its future leaders to take initiative and contribute fresh ideas to optimize the port's supply chain processes?

Fostering a culture of innovation and empowerment isn't just a buzzword at HIPG; it is the bedrock of our success. We believe in the power of fresh perspectives and the potential of our future leaders to drive continuous improvement in our supply chain processes.

We actively encourage our young professionals to take initiative and contribute

innovative ideas. We understand that the best solutions often come from those closest to the challenges. Through open communication channels and cross-functional collaboration, we provide a platform for active participation. Pilot projects and brainstorming sessions become opportunities to leverage diverse expertise and co-create solutions that streamline workflows, enhance productivity, and identify efficiency gains.

At HIP, we don't just ask for ideas; we value them. We actively seek input from all levels of the organisation, incorporating these insights into our operations. By leveraging the collective wisdom and creativity of our team, we ensure continuous improvement. Our open and inclusive environment fosters participation and rewards innovation. We incentivise the generation of new ideas through Annual recognition programmes and performance management systems.

At HIP, empowerment goes beyond simply soliciting ideas; it's about providing resources, support, and autonomy. This allows our future leaders to explore new

approaches, experiment with solutions, and drive positive change within the organisation.

By nurturing a culture of innovation and empowerment, we're not just preparing our future leaders; we are building a dynamic and resilient organisation. This allows us to adapt and thrive in an ever-changing world.

Q Can you share with us an example of a recent project or initiative at HIPG which can inspire the future leaders in the supply chain industry?

HIPG is committed to nurturing the next generation of supply chain leaders. We believe in investing in young talent and providing them with the tools and experience to thrive in this dynamic industry.

Growing Our Own:

- **Graduate Trainee Program:** Our flagship program grooms graduates across all functional areas, preparing them for impactful roles within HIP. Over 60% of our workforce is a testament to the success of this program, playing a vital role in driving HIP's performance.

- **Diversity Champion:** We actively recruit promising individuals and foster a diverse workforce. We're proud of our 14% female participation, challenging the male dominant industry norm.

Building a Talent Pipeline:

- **Educational Visits:** We host undergraduate students from local universities, providing firsthand exposure to port operations and the maritime industry. These visits bridge the gap between theory and practice, complementing their academic studies.

- **Industry Engagement:** HIPG actively participates in university panel discussions. These forums facilitate knowledge exchange, encourage critical thinking, and inspire future leaders. Students gain valuable insights into real-world experiences, career paths, and industry trends.

- **Family Outreach:** Recognising the role families play in career choices, we organize port visits and educational sessions for our employees' families. This fosters a culture of learning and engagement, raising awareness about exciting opportunities within the supply chain industry.

By investing in the next generation, HIPG strengthens its own workforce while contributing to the overall growth and sustainability of the industry as a whole.

Q What advice would you offer to young undergraduates who aim to transit into



successful corporate professionals in the industry, based on your experience?

As a university graduate who carved my path in the competitive shipping industry, I would like to share some key pieces of advice for aspiring young professionals.

The shipping landscape is constantly evolving, driven by technology, markets, and consumer trends. Stay relevant by keeping up with emerging trends, technologies, and best practices. Invest in new skills through workshops, certifications, and continuous learning to become a valuable asset.

The power of connections is undeniable. Cultivate meaningful relationships with mentors, peers, and industry experts. Seek mentors for guidance and learn from their experience.

Actively engage with peers to exchange ideas and support each other. These connections open doors to learning, collaboration, and career advancement.

Setbacks are inevitable in the fast-paced world of shipping. View them as opportunities to learn, innovate, and stand out. Be proactive by seeking new challenges, taking calculated risks, and exploring innovative solutions. Building a successful career requires dedication, determination, and ethical conduct. Upholding these values – perseverance, resilience, and integrity – will not only lead to your professional success but also contribute to a more sustainable and prosperous future for the entire industry. ■

EMERGING TRENDS IN SUPPLY CHAIN EDUCATION: PREPARING LEADERS FOR INDUSTRY 4.0



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The emergence of Industry 4.0, characterized by integrating digital technologies and automation into manufacturing and supply chains, has triggered a fundamental shift in industrial operations. This transformation goes beyond adopting new tools. It involves a complete restructuring of business processes and models. In this dynamic landscape, the significance of supply chain education cannot be overstated. It serves as the cornerstone for developing leaders capable of navigating the complexities of Industry 4.0 and driving innovation.

Today, supply chain education faces a dual challenge. On one hand, there is a growing demand for skilled professionals who can leverage emerging technologies like AI, IoT, blockchain, and data analytics to optimize supply chains. On the other hand, traditional education systems struggle to keep pace with these rapid advancements, resulting in a skills gap among supply chain leaders and hindering the full potential of Industry 4.0.

Leading institutions are now integrating digital technologies into their curricula to provide hands-on experience with tools such as predictive analytics, supply chain visibility platforms, and automation software. This approach equips students with the skills needed to leverage technology for enhanced decision-making and operational efficiency. Moreover, with increasing awareness of environmental issues, supply chain education is placing a stronger emphasis on sustainable practices. Courses on green supply chain management, circular economy principles, and strategies for reducing carbon footprints are becoming standard, reflecting the industry's shift towards environmentally responsible operations.

The disruptions caused by events like the COVID-19 pandemic have underscored the importance of resilience in supply chains. Educational programs are now incorporating modules on risk assessment, contingency planning, and supply chain diversification to prepare leaders for mitigating the impact of unforeseen crises.

Collaboration is no longer confined to internal departments. It extends across organizations and sectors. Supply chain education fosters collaboration skills through group projects, industry partnerships, and cross-functional training, enabling leaders to navigate complex networks and build strategic alliances.

In addition to technical skills, supply chain leaders require a blend of soft skills and strategic acumen to thrive in Industry 4.0. The ability to analyze data, derive actionable insights, and make data-driven decisions is crucial. Supply chain programs integrate courses on statistical analysis, machine learning, and optimization techniques to develop this competency. Proficiency in using digital tools such as ERP systems, supply chain management software, and data visualization platforms is essential. Education focuses on hands-on training to ensure leaders are adept at leveraging technology for a competitive advantage. Leaders must possess strategic foresight to anticipate market trends, identify opportunities, and devise innovative supply chain strategies. Curricula emphasize strategic planning, scenario analysis, and scenario planning to hone this skill.

To address the evolving needs of Industry 4.0, supply chain education is adopting innovative approaches. Blended learning, for instance, combines traditional classroom sessions with online modules, simulations, and virtual labs to provide a holistic learning experience. This approach caters to diverse learning styles and enhances engagement and knowledge retention.

Experiential learning is also invaluable. Hands-on projects, case studies, and internships immerse students in real-world supply chain scenarios, bridging the gap between theory and practice and fostering practical skills and decision-making abilities. Moreover, lifelong learning is ingrained in modern supply chain education. Continuous professional development through workshops, seminars, and industry certifications ensures leaders stay updated with the latest trends and technologies.

Collaboration between educational institutions and industry players is instrumental in shaping relevant and effective supply chain programs. These partnerships offer several key benefits, including

enhanced curriculum relevance through industry input, practical insights through avenues such as guest lectures, industry projects, and site visits, and improved job placement opportunities for students through internship programs and mentorship initiatives.

While supply chain education has made significant strides, challenges such as keeping pace with rapid technological advancements, addressing the global talent shortage in supply chain management, and ensuring inclusivity and diversity in leadership roles persist. Looking ahead, supply chain education will continue to evolve, driven by advances in AI, robotics, and automation, a greater focus on ethical and responsible supply chain practices, and an emphasis on cross-disciplinary skills like supply chain finance and cybersecurity.

In conclusion, preparing leaders for Industry 4.0 requires a multifaceted approach that combines technical expertise, strategic thinking, and collaborative skills. Supply chain education plays a pivotal role in equipping future leaders with the capabilities needed to drive innovation, sustainability, and resilience in the era of digital transformation. By embracing emerging trends, fostering partnerships, and prioritizing continuous learning, we can build a robust pipeline of talent ready to lead the supply chains of tomorrow. ■

“MAINTAINING A LIFELONG LEARNING MINDSET IS ESSENTIAL FOR SUSTAINED PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS”

Sasanka Jayadasa

Director

Supply Chain

Yokohama TWS Lanka

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Q Can you provide us with a brief overview of the organization Yokohama TWS Lanka?

Yokohama TWS focuses on designing and manufacturing tire and wheel solutions for the future. With value, safety, and ease, Yokohama TWS solutions provide a more productive and sustainable performance to meet our customer's demands.

With over 6000 employees worldwide, the company has fourteen production plants across three continents, achieving sales in over 130 countries. Yokohama TWS has a complete portfolio of over 7000 products, and we have acquired multiple brands such as Trelleborg, Mitas, Maximo, Cultor and Interfit.

Sri Lanka stands out as one of the most significant contributors to Yokohama's TWS global production. Yokohama TWS Sri Lanka received an award for its exceptional export achievements, recognized as the 'Best Exporter in the Dry Rubber Products' category at the 25th Presidential Export Awards for two years, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. The solid tires produced here serve various industries, including material handling, agriculture, and forestry. Notably, these tires also support the passenger boarding bridges at airport

terminals, ensuring smooth passenger movement. Sri Lanka supplies 20% of the global solid tire demand, placing them among industry giants like Michelin, GRI, and LAVS. The dedicated workforce of over a thousand employees in Sri Lanka makes this achievement successful. Yokohama TWS operates in two locations in Sri Lanka: Sapugaskanda and Biyagama. This robust structure facilitates the large-scale production and export of solid tires, which are exported to Europe, the USA, and various other countries around the world.

Q According to Yokohama TWS Lanka, how has Yokohama TWS Lanka developed its supply chain operations to successfully address the complexities that exist in the present-day supply chain industry?

Let us start by discussing how complex the supply chain is right now and then briefly overview how we previously built our supply chain infrastructures. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, supply chain issues have received much attention and are still a hot topic of discussion.

The reasons are broad and varied. Firstly, there were major problems with logistical movements,



which disrupted global supply chain networks. This consequently made it impossible for suppliers to get raw materials, negatively affecting their capacity to satisfy client requests.

The sourcing base and sourcing footprint are two critical factors. In the past, we were dependent on vendors in Western Europe and, to a lesser degree, Asia, including China-based businesses. However, to strengthen and diversify our supply chain, Yokohama TWS has deliberately encouraged local suppliers in recent years. Localization is, therefore, a current project that we have initiated. Natural rubber makes

up the most significant part of our expenditure, as most of a tire's ingredients are rubber. The company purchases natural rubber mainly from local producers. Furthermore, although we can import, the shorter lead times and greater flexibility are unmatched benefits with local vendors.

To ensure that the company's supply chain structure is resilient to outside obstacles, there is a need to consider the long-term nature of the supply chain strategy. With this objective in mind, we have actively promoted localization efforts to improve supply chain resilience.

Secondly, we address the critical role of safety stock placement in controlling demand volatility. Yokohama TWS operates a global network of warehouses, including one in Sri Lanka, and many strategically placed warehouses that support fourteen production plants across three continents, nevertheless ensuring a solid local presence worldwide. In addition, the company can quickly satisfy any volatility in demand due to this strategic warehouse footprint, which allows us to successfully control demand changes by keeping safety stock at crucial locations.



Strategic locations like the Malacca Strait, the Suez Canal, and the Panama Canal play crucial roles in global logistics. Recent events have brought the vulnerability of these vital passages to light. For instance, the Suez Canal was disrupted a few months ago, beginning in December, when shipping lines decided to stop passing through the canal due to rebel attacks on commercial ships. This disruption serves as a reminder of the vital significance

of these critical maritime routes and the possible effects of disruptions on international trade.

Logistics activities have been greatly impacted by the extra shipping time of two to three weeks resulting from rerouting shipping routes through Africa to avoid the Suez Canal. As such, there are much higher expenses associated with this longer route. For instance, the average freight charge from Sri Lanka to Europe for container export has increased by a fourth. These increased costs show how expensive the disruption of global logistical channels is and the broader economic implications for companies that depend on international trade. The Yokohama TWS warehouse layout has allowed us to successfully reduce delays imposed by the changed shipment routes, even with the unavoidable increases in expense. By utilizing our well-placed warehouses in Europe and the USA, the company has effectively served its most esteemed consumer base, effectively handling the additional lead time. To overcome and mitigate the global risks inherent in this industry, our distribution network is a strategic undertaking.

Q What are some common challenges or gaps that you have observed in terms of the university education system when it comes to shaping an undergraduate to pursue a career in the supply chain and logistics industry?

I firmly believe that we need to enhance the practical applications of the supply chain during university education. The curriculum should provide undergraduates with more opportunities to gain practical insights. For instance, organizing field trips to diverse industries would offer invaluable firsthand industrial exposure, given the integral role of supply chain management across all sectors. Therefore, I recommend organizing frequent field visits, which should include opportunities to interact with customers and consumers, as understanding customer needs is crucial for marketing and, sales and supply chain professionals. It informs product design and helps create a more efficient customer-centric supply chain team. In summary, increasing industry engagement is essential for a well-rounded education.

Secondly, I would emphasize the importance of engaging in practical case studies. From my discussions with a few fellow colleagues from your batch, I learned that you had the opportunity to manage the Honor Shop of your university, which has provided valuable and significant exposure to the activities in the industry. While this is a great start, more extensive and varied experiences are necessary. How many of you have already considered or started your own company? In my opinion, registering a business is a valuable exercise, and everyone should be encouraged to attempt it even if it fails, as there is much to learn

from mistakes. The objective is to gain invaluable experience, not necessarily to become the wealthiest individual in Sri Lanka. Therefore, incorporating more practical case studies and entrepreneurial endeavors into the curriculum is crucial. Hands-on experience fosters learning and growth, which are essential for success beyond academic achievements.

Lastly, exposure to mentoring and industry interactions is essential for comprehensive education. Opportunities to interact with industry experts, recent graduates, and faculty members with industry

“Incorporating more practical case studies and entrepreneurial endeavors into the curriculum is crucial.”

experience, as well as participating in mentoring programs, are considered invaluable in my opinion. For instance, interviewing industry leaders for articles not only benefits the publication but also provides valuable insights and expertise they would be willing to share. Such engagement is crucial for bridging the gap between academic learning and practical industry experience. Overall, enhanced exposure to mentoring and industry interactions is essential for comprehensive education.

Q How important is mentorship for new graduates entering the supply chain field, and what opportunities does Yokohama TWS Lanka offer graduates in this regard?

Mentorship is crucial for new graduates entering the supply chain field. As previously mentioned, there is a notable gap between industry and academia. Bridging this gap through mentoring programs and increased industry engagement is essential for easing the transition of new graduates into the industry's working environments, enabling them to start performing effectively from day one. Without such support, graduates may spend six months to a year acclimating to their new roles, essentially falling into a rather deep end and struggling with the complexities of work until they adapt. Hence, mentorship programs can significantly reduce this adjustment period.

At Yokohama TWS Lanka, we actively work to provide opportunities that facilitate this transition. We offer numerous field visits and internships, especially in the supply chain sector, to help undergraduates gain practical exposure. Our mentoring programs are designed to bridge the gap between academic learning

and industry requirements. Additionally, with our workforce of over 1000 employees, we offer various employment opportunities post-graduation within the local and international context as part of establishing our global presence.

Q According to your experiences and point of view, what skills and attributes must undergraduates acquire and develop to become successful leaders in the supply chain and logistics industry?



In the field of supply chain, envisioning the broader landscape is crucial. ‘silo mentality’ in workplaces where individuals focus solely on their tasks and scores without understanding the roles and needs of others can be a primary barrier to growth. This mindset can be detrimental to supply chain management; hence, factors like collaboration and holistic viewing are essential. For

“Having strong communication skills to influence and engage stakeholders across the organization is the key to success.”

instance, imagine a team working on a final article for a magazine; each member shall contribute to this article by providing their respective notes and photographs. If the editor finds the notes of a member insufficient for a particular question, and if that member insists that they have completed their part, this silo mentality hinders the overall success of the project. Similarly, in supply chain management, those with a narrow focus will struggle, as success depends on understanding and integrating the entire supply chain.

Secondly, digitalization skills are critical. Many tasks that were once done manually can now be automated, thus improving efficiency. Present-day undergraduates often possess better digital skills compared to previous generations, but it's vital to stay ahead and develop as technology evolves with time. Supply chain roles cannot be replaced by machine learning or artificial intelligence, but individuals lacking essential digital skills will be replaced by those who possess them. Hence, continuous learning in digitalization and artificial intelligence is essential.

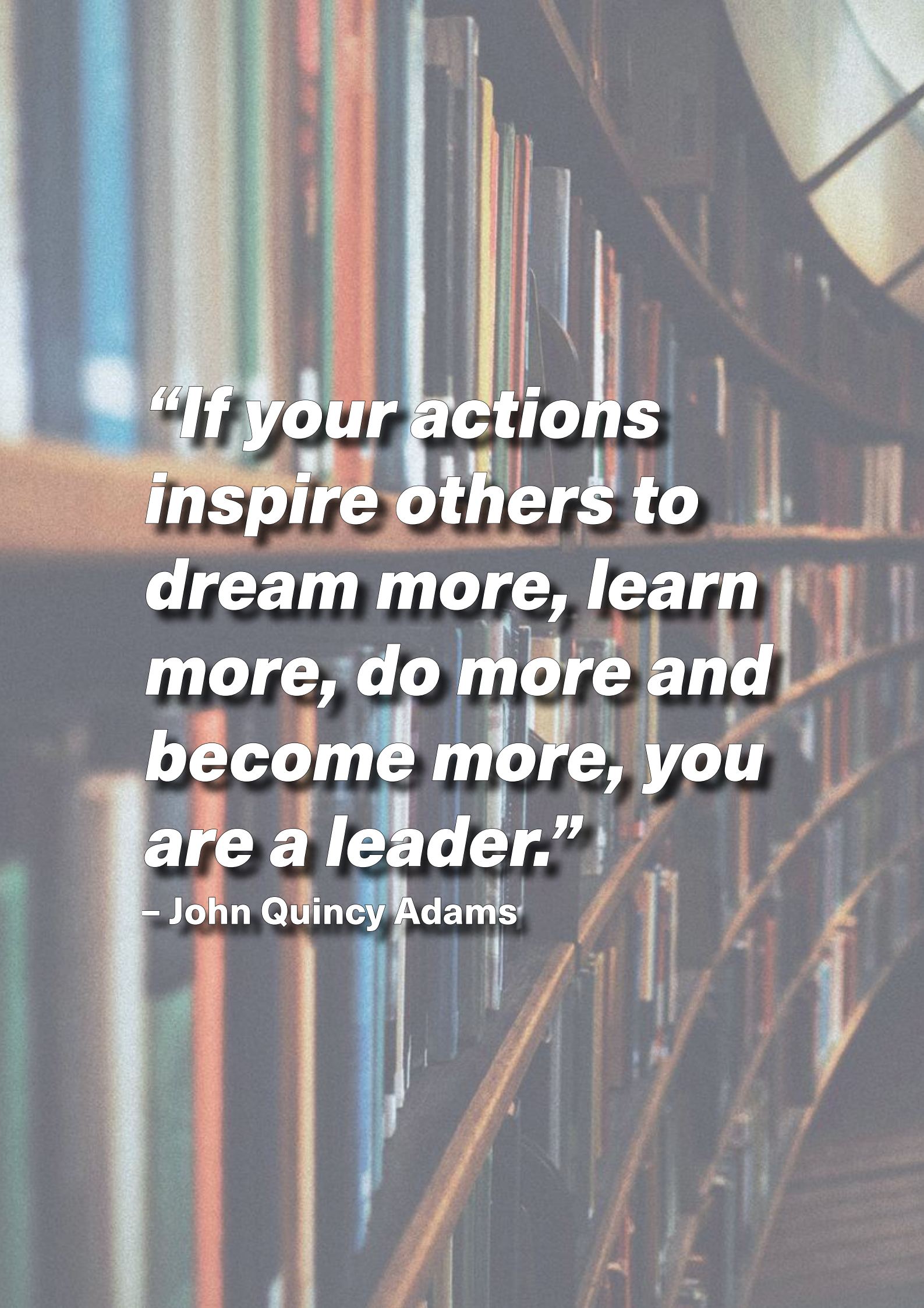
Finally, the ability to influence and negotiate is also critical. Supply chain professionals interact with various departments, from finance and human resources to production. Therefore, having strong communication skills to influence and engage stakeholders across the organization is the key to success.

Q What advice would you offer to young undergraduates or students who aim to exercise the role of future leaders in the field of supply chain management and logistics in Sri Lanka?

Maintaining a lifelong learning mindset is essential for sustained professional success. Newly hired graduates often begin their careers with high motivation, similar to enthusiastic students on their first day at university. However, this initial enthusiasm can naturally decline over time. To ensure sustained success, it is crucial to cultivate a lifelong learning mindset that prevents this decline from significantly eroding the initial eagerness to learn. People who embrace a growth mentality and sustain curiosity and thirst to learn are more likely to stay engaged and adaptable throughout their careers. This includes acknowledging areas where expertise is lacking and actively seeking opportunities to develop new skills.

Another key element for career success is a commitment to continuous self-improvement. Students should define what the ‘Best Version of Oneself’ means in the context of their current roles and set goals for ongoing development. Similar to companies establishing annual objectives, creating a personal development roadmap with short-, medium-, and long-term goals is recommended. This roadmap will guide the journey of individual learning and ensure alignment with long-term career aspirations.

Finally, it is important to remember that core values shaped by upbringing and cultural background serve as the foundation. Regardless of professional advancement, maintaining this foundation is crucial. Strong values ensure a stable base upon which to build a successful and fulfilling career. ■



***“If your actions
inspire others to
dream more, learn
more, do more and
become more, you
are a leader.”***

– John Quincy Adams

THE SUPPLY CHAIN GRANDMASTERS BRIDGE THE GAP TO LEAD TOMORROW'S LOGISTICS LANDSCAPE



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Imagine a colossal chessboard, its squares not black and white but continents and shipping lanes. The rooks are towering warehouses, and the knights are sleek delivery drones. Those are the countless products zipping across the globe to meet our insatiable consumer demands. This intricate web, the global supply chain, is the lifeblood of the modern economy. However, in today's dynamic world, the game is changing faster than ever.

At the helm stand the Supply Chain Grandmasters, strategic masterminds who navigate this ever-evolving chessboard. They are the architects who design and optimize these complex systems, the commanders who steer them through disruptions and unforeseen challenges. However, a critical question remains: how do we bridge the gap between the aspiring players in classrooms, brimming with potential, and the grandmasters shaping the future of supply chains? In answering this question, this article presents the current trends in supply chain management.

The Evolving Landscape of Supply Chains:

The supply chain landscape is undergoing a radical transformation. Automation and robotics are taking over repetitive tasks, freeing human players to focus on higher-level strategy. Data analytics and AI are the new powerhouses, analyzing vast datasets to predict demand fluctuations, optimize inventory, and identify potential disruptions. E-commerce is fundamentally altering consumer behavior, demanding faster moves and seamless omnichannel experiences. Sustainability concerns are pushing businesses to adopt eco-friendly practices throughout the supply chain. This chessboard is no longer static; it is a dynamic landscape demanding agility and adaptability.

The University Disconnect:

Universities offer logistics and supply chain management programs; however, the curriculum can struggle to keep pace with the rapid advancements reshaping the game. This creates a disconnect as students graduate with a strong foundation in logistics principles but lack the specific skill sets required to navigate the data-driven, tech-enabled world of modern supply chains. They are well-versed in theory but have not learned the grandmaster moves needed to win in this dynamic environment.

Building the Bridge: Strategies for the Future

To bridge the gap between classroom and boardroom, universities can consider the following future-oriented strategies:

Curriculum Revamp with Real-World Data:

Update the curriculum to reflect current industry trends, incorporating real-time data and case studies that showcase real-world challenges and winning strategies. Imagine guest lectures from industry leaders, semester-long projects collaborating with real companies on actual supply chain problems, or even incorporating industry-standard software into the curriculum.

Industry Collaborations:

Partner with leading logistics companies to create data-sharing agreements. This would allow universities to integrate real-world datasets into their curriculum, providing students with hands-on experience in analyzing and utilizing data for strategic decision-making. Students gain invaluable experience working with the kind of data they will encounter as professionals, and universities ensure their curriculum reflects the latest challenges and opportunities.

Tech-Enabled Learning:

Integrate courses on data analytics, AI, blockchain, and automation into the curriculum. Equip students with the ability to leverage technology to optimize operations, gain valuable data insights, and make data-driven decisions. Think hands-on workshops using industry-standard software, or even semesters focused on specific technologies like AI in supply chain management.

Soft Skills Development Through Experiential Learning:

Soft skills are essential for any grandmaster. Include courses and workshops that focus on communication, negotiation, leadership, and teamwork. Implement project-based learning opportunities where students collaborate on solving real-world supply chain problems using real data sets. This fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills in a simulated environment that mirrors the complexities of the boardroom. Students do not just learn the theory of

negotiation. They practice it in a safe space where they can develop confidence and hone their skills.

Beyond Universities: A Holistic Approach

The responsibility for preparing future supply chain leaders does not solely lie with universities. The following are the other avenues to consider.

Skills Development Programs by Industry Leaders:

Leading logistics companies can invest in comprehensive skills development programs that bridge the knowledge and experience gap. These programs can provide targeted training on the latest technologies and industry best practices, preparing graduates to hit the ground running upon entering the workforce.

Professional Certifications:

Encourage students to pursue professional certifications in supply chain management. These certifications demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning and validate proficiency in specific areas, making graduates more competitive in the job market.

Mentorship Programs:

Matching students with experienced supply chain professionals can provide invaluable guidance and support. Mentors can share industry insights, offer career advice, and help students navigate the transition from classroom to boardroom.

In conclusion, the global supply chain is a dynamic and ever-evolving chessboard. The leaders of tomorrow will need a unique blend of technical expertise, data fluency, and strong soft skills to navigate the complexities of this data-driven landscape. By bridging the gap between classroom and boardroom, we can empower the next generation of supply chain grandmasters to not only compete but to thrive in the dynamic world of tomorrow. They will be the architects who design agile and sustainable supply chains, the commanders who steer them through disruptions, and the minds who leverage data and technology to ensure the smooth flow of goods in an interconnected world. The future of the global economy hinges on our ability to cultivate this next generation of visionary leaders.

The chessboard of supply chains is not just for a select few. The beauty of the supply chain is that it touches every single aspect of our lives. Whether you're passionate about logistics, fascinated by data, or simply intrigued by the challenge of keeping the world's goods moving, there's a place for you on this board. Therefore, enhance your strategic thinking, embrace technology as your trusty knight, and get ready to make your move in the ever-evolving game of supply chain leadership. The future is waiting for its next grandmaster. ■

EMPOWERING FUTURE SUPPLY CHAIN LEADERS: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP IN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN BACKGROUNDS

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Q How have your experiences and leadership in the military shaped your approach to decision-making and leadership in civilian roles, especially concerning defence and security in Sri Lanka?

I witnessed both the beginning and the end of the racial strife, and I was actively involved in that strife from the beginning to the end. For your information, LTTE leader Prabhakaran was gunned down by my division. We witnessed the evolution of terrorism as it gradually gained momentum, eventually becoming a massive organization. Most people in the world thought it was an unbeatable organization. However, we were able to reduce their military force to the level of an ideology. Based on their capabilities, their leader was a master of suicide bombing. Before Al-Qaeda's first suicide attack, the LTTE carried out over a hundred suicide bombings. The majority of these bombings were carried out by

women. Similarly, there was significant evolution within their organization, and to match their capabilities and capacities, we needed to improve the capacity and capability of our own military forces.

For example, when I joined the Sri Lankan army in 1981, the strength of the army was barely 15,000 soldiers. When I became a General and commanded a division, the strength of the army had grown to 230,000 soldiers. This is a significant difference. Many factors were involved in this process, such as training, level of experience, exposure, and interaction. Among all these factors, one stands out as the most decisive: the decision-making process.

As a military leader, decision-making is crucial. I sincerely believe that every soldier I lead is somebody's son, husband, or father. I am not granted the power to



use them as expendable items. Therefore, I should follow correct decision-making procedures and ensure my soldiers and officers engage in combat with a clear understanding of what they are fighting for, what resources are available, and where and when to be launched into battle. This is very crucial, and based on such considerations, I think cautiously multiple times.

This is how we were molded, trained, and exposed to the bitter war that raged for more than three decades. This knowledge and experience is not gained overnight. As the expression goes, “once a soldier, always a soldier,” this applies to my military service. My inner system, from head to toe, is entirely militarized; it is in my bloodstream.

But, as a citizen of this country, I must understand how to transition from military to civilian life, and that is a significant transformation. Many officers fail at this transition because, when they retire and take jobs in the corporate sector, private sector, or even government sector, they try to apply the same military way of living to the civilian sector, which leads to failure.

When transitioning to civilian life, starting with the decision-making process, everything you do, every instruction you give, and every piece of guidance you direct must consider that your civilian counterparts will take it in spirit. Unless otherwise stated, a military officer’s decision-making process is extremely clear. It

is tough to transform without first comprehending the heartbeats of civilian counterparts. However, with the military training we received and the exposure we gained from engaging with many elements of society, it is not a difficult process.

Another advantage we have is making quick decisions. Even to achieve victory in war, swift decision-making is crucial. In the military, there are two types of decisions: hasty decisions and deliberate decisions. When it comes to decision-making, hasty decisions are common. We need to make quick decisions. Therefore, major categories are experience, exposure, capability, capacity, productivity, teamwork, time management, and speed.

“Effective leadership also entails understanding the team’s capabilities and leveraging them collectively rather than working in isolated silos.”

Another advantage is that we have no time constraints. We were trained to work around the clock, and we excel in time management. As a result, we find it easy to make decisions throughout the decision-making process. This means that at any time, we can consider numerous options and elements, take significant risks, and make quick decisions. When making a decision, we streamline all the available facts and figures to analyze, study, and foresee the opportunities or threats that may arise, and make the correct decision.

These are the strategies I firmly believe I apply in decision-making roles outside the military.

Q What tactics do you utilize to prioritize critical tasks and make the most significant decisions at times under pressure?

Understanding the situation is the initial step in effective task prioritization and decision-making. Delegating authority is crucial in this process; it involves selecting the right individuals for specific tasks based on their expertise and competence. After proper delegation, it is essential to communicate clear directives, intentions, and the overarching strategy. This includes setting deadlines, providing guidelines, and outlining available resources. Regular check-ins with the delegated individual maintain alignment and awareness of progress. Instilling confidence in team members regarding leadership is pivotal. This fosters accountability and commitment to the task. Effective leadership also entails understanding the team’s capabilities and leveraging

them collectively rather than working in isolated silos. Moreover, fostering a cohesive team spirit, often referred to as “Esprit de Corps,” is essential. This term, rooted in Latin, embodies team unity and mutual support. Cultivating such camaraderie enhances collaboration and overall performance. In essence, successful task prioritization and decision-making under pressure require situational understanding, effective delegation, clear communication, confident leadership, and fostering a collaborative team environment.

Q In what ways do you believe the Sri Lankan military must evolve to stay current with emerging trends and technologies, and how should future leaders prepare themselves to adapt to these changes effectively?

Wearing a military uniform does not make one person greater than another. A uniform does not give you the right to walk above other people. Interacting with others, whether in uniform or as a civilian, plays a pivotal role. Interaction is necessary to assess an individual’s skills, whether they are a team member or an external party playing a supportive role.

When a person is integrated into a certain system, they must possess the flexibility to work with others accordingly. Evolution or transformation requires one to be flexible enough to adapt to new trends.

The role and tasks of a radiologist have undergone considerable transformation. Initially, radiologists were consultant medical officers who interpreted x-rays. Then, scanners were introduced, and radiologists began interpreting scanning reports. Nowadays, when a patient with a stomachache comes in, they are put through a CT scan or MRI, and the radiologist interprets the scanning report with 100% accuracy. With the evolution of the medical industry, critical operations such as heart surgeries have also evolved. Traditionally, heart surgeries involved cutting open the patient’s chest, posing high risks. Now, a simple gadget inserted into a vein from the patient’s wrist can unblock and expand the valves near the heart. Evolution should be accepted by all parties, including military personnel, who must be able to adapt to the ever-evolving nature of technology.

In terms of leadership, a leader must understand the external environment and be updated with the latest news from around the world. There is no fixed theory for doing things. Setting a trend is not always the answer. Instead, one can better analyze the situation and utilize resources accordingly to obtain the best output. To handle particular situations, a leader must evaluate themselves from time to time with the knowledge and resources they possess. Seeking advice from seniors, counterparts, and even juniors can be helpful. The younger generation is often more fluent in information technology and artificial intelligence (AI) than older generations. Therefore, seniors must not



hesitate to learn from juniors and improve themselves. By doing so, one can identify new opportunities and avenues available to them and also enlighten others.

The world is undergoing rapid change, and the nature of warfare is no exception. The recent conflict in Ukraine illustrates this shift. Many skilled individuals may be lured by the prospect of proving themselves, but the reality on the ground is vastly different from past experiences. Modern warfare is characterized by high-tech weaponry like missiles and drones. Individual skills, while still valuable, take a backseat to the devastating power of these technologies. This is a crucial point for potential recruits to understand. The Sri Lankan conflict serves as a historical example of this evolution. Initially, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) employed conventional tactics. However, the introduction of missiles by the LTTE during the second peace-talk forced a strategic shift by the Sri Lankan forces.

This concept of adapting to changing circumstances extends to the current situation. Asymmetric warfare, a strategy where a weaker force utilizes unconventional tactics against a stronger opponent, has become

increasingly prevalent. The LTTE pioneered this approach, utilizing small boats in coordinated attacks to neutralize larger vessels. This tactic, often likened to a wolf pack, highlights the effectiveness of unconventional methods.

Drone technology is another example of asymmetric warfare, with smaller, explosive-laden drones inflicting significant casualties on unsuspecting targets. Understanding these evolving tactics is critical for modern militaries. Several Sri Lankan veterans who have returned from the Ukrainian conflict confirm this shift. Their experiences underscore the importance of staying current with these advancements and adapting training methods accordingly. Traditional approaches may no longer serve in the face of rapid innovation. By embracing these changes, militaries can ensure their continued effectiveness in the ever-changing landscape of warfare.

Q In what ways is logistics considered important in military operations, and how has it contributed to the development and popularity of logistics management in the present day?



“No war can be won without good logistics. During the era of the great Kandyan kingdom, its strength was displayed by the resilience of its leadership, especially Keppetipola Disawe.”

No war can be won without good logistics. During the era of the great Kandyan kingdom, its strength was displayed by the resilience of its leadership, especially Keppetipola Disawe. Despite numerous attempts by European nations such as the Portuguese, Dutch, and English to invade the kingdom, it remained unconquered. It is worth noting that the Kandyan kingdom successfully resisted two Portuguese attacks, two Dutch incursions, and three English battles. Internal unrest among the Sinhalese nobles eventually contributed to the handover of power to the British.

Historical events reveal how important logistics are in military campaigns. When European soldiers approached the Kandyan kingdom, they encountered a natural defense: stinging leeches. These leeches bit the warriors, causing tremendous pain and instilling fear. The next line of defense was much more deadly: malaria-carrying mosquitoes. Soldiers developed

malaria symptoms within two to three days, including severe chills and fever. Many soldiers died from malaria due to a lack of availability of contemporary antimalarial medications such as Chloroquine, Primaquine, Melarsoprol, or Fansidar. This combination of natural defenses hampered the European forces, emphasizing the crucial role of logistics in military operations.

In military logistics, moving the belongings of a single European soldier, including his bags and rations, necessitated the assistance of four local porters. Thus, each European soldier relied on four locals for assistance, constituting what was known as the baggage train. As the European army's assault component proceeded on the Kandyan Kingdom, the baggage train lagged a few kilometers behind. For every 200 European soldiers, there were 800 local laborers. Sinhalese forces would launch strategic attacks on European soldiers, cutting them off from their supplies. This disruption in logistics was critical to undermining European military efforts.

When logistics get interrupted, critical supplies such as medication, food, and other necessities are cut off. As the European soldiers moved towards the Kandyan Kingdom, some reached Balana and Gampola. When they arrived at Kandy, they saw that the city had been completely abandoned. Malaria, wounds, and a lack of food and supplies quickly undermined the soldiers' morale. They started to retreat, frustrated and weakened. At this vulnerable point, the Sinhalese forces unleashed their attacks, effectively beating the dropping army.

So, everything was dependent on logistics. Even the best army in the world becomes powerless once its logistics are cut off. As an officer in a fighting regiment, I understand this completely. As a fighting regiment officer, my ability to succeed in combat was heavily dependent on the logistics officers who provided food, water, ammunition, as well as explosives, and coordinated the evacuation of injured and dying soldiers. While names such as Kamal Gunarathne, Shavendra Silva, Jagath Dias, Prasanna Silva, and a few others are well-known, the critical efforts of individuals in charge of logistics are frequently overlooked. Remember, logistics is a thankless job that is rarely recognized or admired, despite its critical need. A strong logistical foundation is critical to any army's success. Therefore, effective logistics management is quite important. Recognizing this, we launched a highly desired logistics management degree at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. This course has grown into one of the most popular, surpassing even the studies of Law and ranking second only to Medical Studies at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. This emphasizes the importance of logistics in the military and beyond. ■



***“Management
is doing
things right;
leadership is
doing the right
things.”***

- Peter Drucker

CULTIVATING LEADERS: EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF AGRICULTURAL LEADERS FOR BOARDROOM SUCCESS



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Gerald O'Hara is a fictional character from one of the best-selling novels written by Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind*. In one instance, he highlights how land is the only thing in the world that is worth working for, fighting for, and even dying for because it is the only thing that lasts. Sri Lankan history identifies agriculture as the first step towards civilization. In the beginning, when not only needs but also wants were not that complex, agriculture played a central role in ensuring that the economy was “self-sufficient.” Initially, the ancient people cultivated what they needed by themselves, and the surplus was exchanged among themselves, giving birth to the Barter System. The system later evolved into a much broader element with the introduction of “money” and continued a few centuries later. Currently not only Sri Lanka but also the rest of the modern world revolves around the “money” concept. Therefore, it is evident that the standard of living, or in other words the quality of life that we have right now would not have been possible if it were not for our ancestors discovering the idea of nurturing the land so that human life could continue.

Farmers were once considered crucial and very important individuals under the Sri Lankan sectorial composition due to the higher contribution the agricultural sector provided to the overall Gross Domestic Product of the country. At present, it is evident that according to the 2022 Central Bank Annual report, the highest contribution of 60.5% to the overall GDP of the country is provided through the services sector. Meanwhile, the industry and agricultural sectors only contribute 27.5% and 7.5% respectively, to the overall Sri Lankan GDP. Nevertheless, it must not be neglected that both agriculture and farmers are indispensable factors in the journey of sustaining and maintaining

life. In other words, the agricultural community is a crucial part of any economy as the primary producer of food, which is the basic requirement essential for existence.

The profession of farming holds a perception as excessively labor-based, as an inevitable struggle in terms of finance or income, and simply as a “low life” career path in comparison to other professions among the majority of the youth. Only a few percentages of young people would choose an agricultural career path with a true keen interest or due to the generational farming careers that exist in the family. Since the need for food is essential and will continue to be so, there is a rising need to navigate the few existing agricultural young leaders towards indefinite success. For instance, during 2023-2024, under the Ministry of Agriculture and Plantation Industries, the Department of Agriculture offered a minimum purchasing price of Rs.105 for 1kg of paddy (Nadu) to the farmers and small and medium scale paddy mill owners, whereas the selling price of 1kg of rice (Nadu) in supermarkets is approximately above Rs.200. This price difference is solely due to the supply chain that existed between the farmer and the end consumer at the point of production and at the point of consumption respectively. Therefore, it is argued that if all farmers are empowered with a proper education and knowledge on efficient supply chain management, which is required from the point of production up to the point of consumption, “farming” will not be a low-income profession.

There are only a handful of agricultural subjects in the Sri Lankan education system. It is clear that empowering the few existing future young leaders

in the agricultural sector towards success can only be achieved through government and private sector institutions that provide exclusive and comprehensive knowledge. It's important that this knowledge not only comprises the training needed in cultivating crops, but also agricultural business operations, expansions, technological adaptations, and most importantly, business ethics to ensure revenue maximization and consumer protection. Furthermore, this education should not be limited to books only, but mentorship programmes, coaching sessions and even internships; so that these aspiring young farmers could also be successful business owners in the near future. It can be stated that professional development opportunities and soft skill enhancement play a pivotal role in this transformative process. By providing such education and extensive training to these young people, it will be ensured that the stereotypical perception that currently exists with regards to the farming profession will be eliminated due to its success rate.

In conclusion, there are certain industries in which education is given solely in the form of theory without practice. It poses the question of whether it is capable of creating triumphant and prominent businessmen. However, the agricultural industry clearly does not belong to such industries. It has been highlighted throughout this article that the agricultural or in other words farming industry currently requires the younger generations to be more involved with it in order to ensure its continuity. Finally, it is vital to empower the future leaders of the agricultural sector not only to be successful farmers, but also to be accomplished businessmen with higher levels of income and standard of living. ■

EMPOWERING FUTURE SUPPLY CHAIN LEADERS: REFLECTING ON THE THIRTY YEARS OF WAR INTO THE JOURNEY FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE BOARDROOM

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Q In what ways can you contemplate the integration of military logistics into the aspect of civilian-based supply-chain management?

There are many areas in which military logistics and civilian-based supply chain management can be integrated. One such area is strategic foresight. Military operations are fundamentally based on strategic anticipation, using intelligence gathering to collect data through physical or electronic methods. This data helps plan logistical routes and operational plans for special operations. In the civilian context, foresight can be implemented through advanced data analytics, market trend analysis, and predictive modeling. By analyzing data, organizations can diversify suppliers, stockpile critical inventory, or invest in flexible manufacturing techniques to maintain smooth operations. Effective foresight is crucial for both sectors to anticipate contingencies and improve their operations.

Military logistics is renowned for detailed planning and efficiency, which is crucial for successful military operations. In the civilian sector, improved forecasting, inventory management, and precise planning can help organizations reduce waste, improve service delivery, and respond effectively to industry changes. Adopting military-style precision in planning by detailing processes from procurement to distribution can significantly benefit civilian supply chains.

Interoperability and standardization are also vital for efficient military logistics. During the COVID-19 crisis, different types of planning ensured readiness to address unexpected issues. Standardization prevents decision-making disruptions and ensures seamless operations. In the civilian sector, standardizing supply chain processes and equipment ensures compatibility, facilitates the integration of new technologies, and makes the supply chain more efficient and effective.



Rapid response and scalability are crucial in the military. A prompt response ensures resource availability during operations. Civilian supply chains can learn from this by developing systems that can rapidly scale up or down and adapt to industry changes. This capability ensures resilience and continuity, enabling organizations to handle sudden spikes in demand or supply chain disruptions.

Simplifying systems and ensuring clear communication enhances efficiency. Simplified procedures reduce errors, speed up operations, and ease training. In the civilian context, reducing complexity in supply chain operations

helps minimize errors, speed up processes, and make training easier. This simplicity improves system adaptability, making it less dependent on specialized knowledge and complex systems.

Logistic integration is another critical aspect. Military logistics units, such as divisions and brigades, function effectively by incorporating various administrative areas. Similarly, civilian supply chains can benefit from integrated logistics that combine warehousing, transportation, and distribution systems. This integration enhances overall performance and efficiency, reducing delays and improving service delivery.

Resource optimization is key in both sectors. The military maximizes resource use through rigorous optimization techniques. Civilian sectors can adopt advanced analytics and data-driven decision-making to optimize resource allocation. Lean management techniques help eliminate waste and reduce costs, benefiting consumers with lower prices and promoting sustainability. Effective resource use in logistics involves deploying the right tools at the right time and avoiding unnecessary bulk. This approach ensures cost-effective supply chain operations and promotes sustainability by minimizing waste.

Flexibility is essential in military logistics, allowing quick adaptation to changing requirements. Flexibility and adaptability are crucial for both sectors. In the military, operational flexibility is vital, as it enables quick adjustments to changing requirements. For example, during operations, soldiers might carry extra resources to support their comrades in need. In the civilian context, flexibility allows companies to respond dynamically to market changes, demand fluctuations, and supply disruptions. Techniques such as modular system designs, flexible workforce management, and multi-sourcing contracts help organizations adapt to uncertainties like economic downturns, geopolitical tensions, or natural disasters, ensuring survival and operational continuity.

By learning from military logistics principles, civilian supply chains can enhance their efficiency, resilience, and adaptability. Integrating strategic foresight, detailed planning, interoperability, rapid response, simplification, logistic integration, resource optimization, and flexibility can significantly improve civilian supply chain management. These strategies enable organizations to reduce costs, improve service delivery, and adapt to the ever-changing industry landscape, ultimately benefiting both businesses and consumers.

Q Sir, can you elaborate on the critical strategies that you practiced to achieve effective lead times and share with us a few experiences where you crucially integrated such strategies, and how civilians can incorporate such strategies to face industry related competition?

One crucial strategy is centralized command and control. While some processes can be decentralized, logistics often requires centralized command to achieve goals efficiently. During the COVID-19 crisis, limited resources highlighted the need for proper planning and command. The knowledge and skills in planning differ among individuals, so appointing the most suitable expert for decision-making is essential. A centralized structure streamlines protocols and reduces the time taken to address matters, improving agility in the supply chain.

Additionally, with an abundant number of protocols coming in when under the military, approaching those in charge of a certain process would be complicated under a decentralized structure, as you might have to approach and get the response of various parties to address a certain matter. This is very inefficient and time-consuming, but if the structure of command was built under a centralized nature, such hindrances can be omitted; as one individual or party is responsible for giving direct responses or commands. Thus, it aids in reducing the time taken to obtain responses, enabling better response times and improving agility of the supply chain.

Anticipative planning and simulations are also vital. In the military, advanced simulations help plan operations and foresee potential issues. For instance, as a student, you might prepare for an examination by referring to the past papers in that respective subject. You might have the ability to foresee and predict a structure based on the previous examination material, perhaps a repeated question. But with proper



anticipative planning, you can prepare well for the exams by developing a question bank on an area that could be tested in the examination, making you ready for any aspect to be asked as a question. This practice can be applied in civilian supply chain management through tools like digital twins and predictive analytics. These tools help identify potential disruptions and develop strategies to mitigate them.

Another strategy is the pre-positioning of resources. Military logistics often include this strategy to position resources likely to be needed when in an operation, but at a safe and secure location. For instance, when undergoing an operation, we require ammunitions. We might have to cover long distances by foot, perhaps even ten kilometers. When we plan this operation beforehand, we strategically plan and locate ammunitions at secured positions on the route of this operation and later acquire it when the necessity arrives. Pre-positioning happens in relation to vehicles too, where we position our resources to prepared military vehicles, so it can respond to a point of need taking less time. Let's say a military helicopter, it would have pre-positioned resources available at close proximity to the helipad, enabling the supplying of resources to an area of need. This strategy can be adopted by civilian companies by positioning inventory close to key markets or along major transportation routes, reducing response times and improving efficiency.

Standardization of procedures and equipment is crucial in the military for better lead times. Standard procedures simplify maintenance, streamline training, and speed up resource deployment. During the Sri Lankan civil war, standardized procedures for supplying resources ensured smooth operations. For example, at the Colombo Army Headquarters, the availability of resources is ensured, but if a point of need arises at a certain location, we have positioned resources at strategic forwarding locations such as Minneriya, Dambulla, Anuradhapura, Kilinochchi, and Jaffna. The closest area to the point of need can supply the resources as required, and the time taken to acquire these is less; as a wider geographical area is covered in terms of resource availability instead of having one main location to store and supply resources. Similarly, businesses can standardize components and processes to speed up production and reduce maintenance, ensuring favorable lead times. Interchangeable parts and standardized processes allow for seamless operations and efficient training.

Simultaneous planning of military logistics and operations is mandatory. The success of an operation depends on efficient replenishment, and logistics must adapt to time, space, and situational constraints. This integrated approach ensures that logistics supports operational success. Civilian organizations can adopt this mindset to achieve effective lead times and seamless operations.



Q Can you share with us another experience in which the crucial aspects of military logistics aided you to successfully encounter and conquer a multifaceted military related logistics challenge when serving in the battlefield?

The 1991 Operation Balavegaya, launched to rescue Elephant Pass camp, highlighted the critical challenges faced on the battlefield. A critical shortage of ammunition in the country forced a two-day halt to the operation until supplies could be procured internationally. This experience underscores the importance of logistical preparedness.

Timely evacuation is another crucial factor. Military doctrine emphasizes the “Golden Hour,” a concept where the first hour after injury is critical for a soldier’s survival. This principle underscores the need for rapid decision-making, potentially including battlefield amputations, to minimize delay in treatment. Effective evacuation procedures, therefore, are just as essential as a steady supply of ammunition and rations, considering the lead time. There were dedicated teams for replenishment, casualty evacuation, etc. The forward supply system ensured the frontline soldiers were fed with the necessary logistic backup.

To get better intelligence about what happens on the ground, Unarmed Aerial Vehicles (UAV) were deployed.

During the Battle of Mannar, these surveillance drones, primarily located in Vanni, Vavuniya, Headquarters, and Anuradhapura, offered invaluable real-time intelligence, allowing commanders and leaders to zoom in on smaller details such as vehicle license plates. Due to the small size and altitude of these UAVs, terrorists were not able to bring them down. Therefore, I asked for this equipment and was able to get it from the 5-8 Division Headquarters when I was commanding. They helped with better decision-making with real-time events.

When a battle takes place in areas such as Anuradhapura and Jaffna, there is only one main hospital in the city. When casualties occur in remote areas such as Mannar and Pooneryn, there is a logistical issue in transporting casualties to the main hospitals. Therefore, the Advanced Dressing Stations (ADSs) were established closer to the battlefields.

ADSs could attend the Golden Hour rule, which was immediate treatment. Then the wounded were sent to Medical Dressing Stations (MDS). The MDSs consisted of limited treatments. However, MDSs were able to perform such treatment that a wounded soldier could survive until he got to the main hospital for critical and necessary treatments.

Similar to those experiences, during the COVID-19 period, hospitals and Intermediate Care Centers were established. Before obtaining vaccines, there were plans made for mobile vaccination and drive-through vaccination, which were able to perform successfully.

Q Based on your comprehensive experience, what are the characteristics and skills that you believe are the most crucial in shaping a future leader?

There are many crucial characteristics and skills for shaping a future leader. A leader must make decisions promptly and at the right time. For instance, when I liberated Putumathalan, over 200,000 civilians were held hostage by the LTTE. I planned an operation to rescue them, expecting about 25,000 people based on estimates at a certain location. However, over 120,000 people emerged from this location. Despite commanding 26,000 men, I quickly allocated our soldiers' food to the civilians and requested additional food from hotels in Colombo. These decisions had to be made swiftly to ensure no one was forgotten.

Integrity is paramount, as a leader's character must be beyond reproach. In the supply chain, if people lack confidence in your character, it causes significant issues. Trust between leaders and subordinates or between suppliers and the organization is crucial. For instance, the Sri Lankan Army sources supply externally. Without the trust of our suppliers, planning becomes impossible and our operations would fail. Trust is built through consistent,

honest, and transparent actions. Adaptability is another essential trait. A leader must be able to adjust to any environment, even when it is outside their comfort zone. During the Balawegaya operation to rescue Elephant Pass, we were dropped with only one bottle of water for the entire day. We had to dig wells to find the least salty water and create reserves. This taught me the importance of being resourceful and innovative in adversity.

Resilience is critical. Leaders must stand firm in the face of defeat and be ready to improvise. During crucial times, my division had five multi-barrel rocket launchers. Each round cost around Rs 1.2 million. Decisiveness was essential. If I decided to fire, 40 rounds would be out in a minute, costing Rs. 52 million. This required careful consideration and a willingness to make tough choices under pressure. Strategic and critical thinking are vital for anticipating potential risks, challenges, and opportunities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we prepared hospitals for an influx of patients before the numbers surged. We developed a mobile vaccination system and drive-through vaccination centers. This proactive approach ensured effective handling of the situation.

Effective communication is key. A leader must communicate clearly and ensure that the message is understood. Regular training and new techniques help improve communication skills, ensuring that everyone can work together effectively. Additionally, I believe that empathy is important. Leaders must be able to understand the challenges faced by others. This fosters a supportive and motivated team.

Finally, I firmly believe that nothing is impossible. With dedication, commitment, and courage, anything can be achieved. These are the key characteristics and skills that I believe are essential for shaping a future leader.

Q Based on your perspective, in what effective ways can the existing university education system in Sri Lanka embrace the aspects of military education to improve an undergraduate's ability to effectively face the challenges that exist in the supply chain industry?

One crucial area for improvement lies in leadership development programs. Structured leadership training provides university students with the opportunity to develop essential leadership qualities through practical exercises. Unlike theoretical learning, these experiences allow students to sharpen decision-making skills in simulated scenarios, fostering confidence and resilience. This is not to advocate for military-style physical training, but for integrating leadership development modules to equip students for complex situations.

Universities can enhance graduate preparedness by incorporating strategic thinking and decision-making

“Strategic thinking plays a pivotal role in successfully navigating the complexities of global supply chains. Anticipating future trends and challenges and planning accordingly is akin to military strategy, providing a competitive edge and ensuring long-term growth.”

exercises. Similar to military “exercises without troops,” universities can create realistic scenarios that challenge students to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. While some universities use case studies, these exercises can be more dynamic and interactive. The military emphasizes resilience and stress management skills, equally valuable in supply chain management. While some universities offer such training in specific programs, integrating these skills more broadly across disciplines would be advantageous. Equipping students to manage stress and maintain resilience is critical for their success.

Furthermore, teamwork and cooperation are fundamental to any industry, including supply chain management. Effective leadership requires understanding oneself and collaborating effectively with others. By promoting a culture of teamwork, universities can prepare graduates to seamlessly integrate into the supply chain workforce.

Finally, ethics and integrity are foundational to professional conduct. Universities must instill strong ethical principles in their graduates. Supply chain professionals must adhere to the highest ethical standards. By emphasizing integrity throughout the curriculum, universities ensure graduates enter the workforce prepared to make ethical decisions and foster trust within the industry.

Q What message would you like to convey to the emerging, future supply chain leaders in Sri Lanka?

Embracing continuous learning is crucial in the dynamic and ever-evolving supply chain industry. It is imperative to continuously update knowledge and skills in technology and management practices to enhance efficiency and resilience in supply chain operations. Developing strong leadership qualities is equally vital, encompassing the ability to set a vision, inspire teams, and demonstrate integrity, accountability, and decisiveness. Prioritizing resilience and adaptability prepare future leaders to



navigate diverse scenarios and contingencies that may arise in the global supply chain.

Strategic thinking plays a pivotal role in successfully navigating the complexities of global supply chains. Anticipating future trends and challenges and planning accordingly is akin to military strategy, providing a competitive edge and ensuring long-term growth. Upholding ethics and integrity are paramount, particularly in times of crisis, to maintain high ethical standards and foster trust among peers, clients, and teams. Engaging with global trends through continuous learning and reading is essential as Sri Lanka integrates more deeply into the global economy. Understanding international market trends, regulations, and economic conditions is increasingly important for supply chain leaders to view operations from both a local and global perspective.

Being a proponent of innovation is key to fostering a culture of innovation, encouraging ideas that challenge the status quo, and persistently striving for better solutions. Embracing failures as learning opportunities and driving innovation within teams and processes are essential for progress in the supply chain industry.

As an example, the implementation of the QR code system in Sri Lanka during the COVID-19 period, particularly in fuel and payment systems, exemplifies innovation in response to a critical need. This innovation underscores the importance of continually seeking improvements and embracing new solutions in the supply chain industry. ■

EMPOWERING FUTURE SUPPLY CHAIN LEADERS: THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION TO ENHANCE ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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VSV, USP, psc, MMaritimePol, BSc (DS)

Vice Chancellor

General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

Interviewed by: Kevin Perera, Swetha Costa, Sarindu Sihasara, Sriratnam Lakshan

Q How would you define the role played by General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University in the empowerment of future leaders, and the enhancement of both academic and professional development of undergraduates?

First of all, let me extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for giving this opportunity to talk to you and express my understanding on this vast subject area. There is no question that the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU) plays a crucial role in the empowerment of future leaders and the enhancement of both academic and professional development of its undergraduates. The hybrid nature of KDU provides a unique and enriching educational environment by bringing together military officers and civilian students in the same classroom. The combination of military officers and civilian students fosters a rich exchange of ideas and perspectives. Military officers bring practical, discipline-focused experiences, while civilian students contribute diverse viewpoints from various fields of study. This diversity enhances classroom discussions and promotes a deeper understanding of course material. Hence, the hybrid nature of KDU,

combining military officers and civilian students in the same classroom, creates a unique and advantageous educational environment. This approach not only enriches the academic experience but also prepares students to become well-rounded, effective leaders capable of navigating complex and diverse professional landscapes.

Further, KDU offers a unique blend of academic programmes blended with military experiences, ensuring that students receive a holistic education that encompasses both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. This dual approach equips students to handle leadership roles in various fields, particularly in their respective fields.

Our university emphasizes leadership through various programmes that foster discipline, strategic thinking, and decision-making abilities. This focus prepares graduates to lead in high-pressure and dynamic environments. Not only that, we offer your course curriculums aligned with industry standards and requirements, providing students with the necessary skills and competencies to



excel in their careers. This includes technical and hands-on training, internships, and exposure to real-world challenges through exercises and simulations.

Further, we promote research and innovation, offering students opportunities to engage in cutting-edge projects and contribute to advancements in technology and other sectors. This fosters a culture of inquiry and continuous learning, essential for professional growth. Further, we collaborate with international universities and defense institutions, exposing students to global best practices and diverse perspectives. This international engagement helps students develop a broad understanding of the

world's challenges and enhances their ability to operate in an interconnected world.

KDU places a strong emphasis on moral and ethical training, which significantly influences student behaviour towards integrity and commitment. The university's programmes are designed to instill values such as honesty, responsibility, and respect for others. This ethical grounding ensures that graduates are not only competent professionals but also individuals with a strong sense of integrity and duty. In addition, through various community service programmes and outreach activities, KDU instills a sense of social responsibility

in its students. This engagement with the community helps students develop empathy and a commitment to contributing positively to society.

Here, I am happy to mention that many of our graduates have gone on to achieve remarkable success in their careers, both in the military and in civilian sectors. These success stories serve as testament to the university's effective training and educational programmes. Alumni often hold influential positions within the Sri Lankan Armed Forces, government agencies, and private sector organizations, demonstrating the university's role in producing capable and successful leaders.

Finally, it is no secret that we contribute to the empowerment of future leaders and the enhancement of academic and professional development of its students by providing comprehensive education, fostering leadership and ethical values, and promoting research and innovation. I strongly believe that all our graduates are well-rounded individuals who make significant contributions to their fields and society at large.

Q How do you believe that the principles of Logistics and Supply Chain Management have evolved overtime?

Certainly, the principles of Logistics and Supply Chain Management have evolved significantly over time, driven

by technological advancements, globalization, a focus on sustainability, the need for resilience, lean and agile practices, a customer-centric approach, collaboration, and data-driven decision making. These developments have enabled supply chains to become more efficient, responsive, and resilient in the face of evolving challenges and opportunities whether in the military, cooperates or private sector.

Since I joined the military service, we have been extensively educated on the subject of military logistics. There is a common saying, "a soldier marches on his stomach," underscoring the critical importance of logistics. One of the ten principles of war we studied as young officers is logistics support. Historically, battles have been lost solely due to inadequate logistics, which directly impacts soldiers' morale. It is worth noting that one of the key factors in our victory during the last humanitarian operation conducted by our military was the effective logistics support provided by our logisticians. However, the principles and understanding of logistics have significantly evolved in modern warfare compared to the past.

With the advent of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT) has revolutionized logistics and supply chain management. These technologies have improved efficiency, accuracy, and transparency, allowing for real-time tracking, predictive analytics, and better decision-making. Further, the globalization of supply chains has increased their complexity, necessitating more sophisticated logistics strategies not only for public and private sectors but for the military sector too.

Risk management and resilience is also another important aspect in modern logistics. It was a classic example that we all have experienced recent disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic, and have highlighted the importance of risk management and supply chain resilience. Now it is high time to be more focused on building flexible and adaptable supply chains that can withstand disruptions in the military as well. This includes diversifying suppliers, investing in buffer stocks, and implementing robust contingency plans.

In the present-day concept, waste reduction and efficiency, have been widely discussed area in supply chain management. These methodologies need to adopt into the military in addition to the organizations respond quickly to changing customer demands and market conditions.

Establishing of collaboration and partnership in modern supply chains are increasingly demanding and companies forming strategic partnerships with suppliers, distributors, and even competitors are extensively visible.



Therefore, collaborative practices such as sharing data and resources help optimize supply chain performance and drive innovation and need more attention.

Q How do you envision bridging the gap between the theoretical knowledge and practical application in the field of Supply Chain and Logistics, particularly within a university setting?

As per my understanding to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in the field of Supply Chain and Logistics within a university setting could be effectively achieved firstly, by incorporate real-world case studies into the curriculum to provide students with practical examples of how supply chain and logistics theories are applied in various industries. I strongly believe that analyzing real-life scenarios helps students understand the complexities and challenges faced by professionals. Secondly, simulations and role-playing exercises that reflect real supply chain and logistics operations. This hands-on approach allows students to experiment with decision-making in a controlled environment, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Establishing strong partnerships with industry leaders to offer internships and co-operate programmes will be the third strategy I want to highlight. These opportunities will enable students to gain hands-on experience, apply their theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, and develop professional networks and help to achieve career goals as well. Fourthly, provide training on industry-standard software and tools used in supply chain management, such as SAP, Oracle, and advanced analytics platforms and include into the course curriculum is also on the card. Familiarity with these tools enhances students' technical skills and job readiness.

Thereby, integrating these strategies, universities can create a dynamic learning environment that effectively bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in the field of Supply Chain and Logistics. This approach not only enhances students' understanding and skills but also prepares them to meet the demands of the industry with confidence and competence.

Q Can you share with us a pivotal moment from your career in the Sri Lankan Navy, where your expertise in Maritime Logistics played a crucial role in achieving operational success?

Certainly, as I mentioned previously, during my career in the Sri Lankan Navy where we all have experienced and witnessed in crucial role played by naval logisticians in achieving operational successes in numerous occasions during the Sri Lankan Civil War against the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam). We were not experienced any shortage of supplies and repairs on our ships and craft. What we needed; it was supplied with lot of hardships but later we understood that how it was hard for them to maintain the supply chain.

The other side of the story is how the LTTE tried to achieve their logistics. The LTTE relied heavily on smuggling arms, ammunition, and supplies via sea routes. However, the Sri Lanka Navy has managed to curtail the supplies to them and in the final stages of the war, the Navy was tasked with stopping and to cut off these vital supply lines, thereby weakening the LTTE's operational capabilities.

I am sure, you may appreciate the operational area included vast stretches of coastline and open sea, making it challenging to monitor and intercept smuggling activities. However, we had to rely on timely and accurate intelligence to identify and intercept LTTE supply vessels, which were often disguised as fishing boats or merchant ships. Therefore, sustaining a prolonged period out at sea by our ships and craft required efficient logistics to ensure our naval vessels remained operationally ready and well-supplied. In order to achieve the logistics function Navy has collaborated closely with intelligence units to confirm the location and expected route of the LTTE supply ship. Assembled a naval task force comprising fast attack craft, offshore patrol vessels, and surveillance aircraft to monitor and intercept the target, then, established a robust command and control system to coordinate the task force's movements and actions, ensuring seamless communication and real-time decision-making. Finally, implemented an efficient supply chain to keep the task force continuously supplied with fuel, food, medical supplies, and ammunition. Pre-positioned supply points were established at strategic locations to facilitate rapid replenishment. Ensured that repair facilities and technical support were readily available to address any mechanical issues, minimizing downtime and maintaining operational readiness.

Hence, I am reaffirmed that the successful execution of the naval operation conducted out at sea amply demonstrated the indispensable role of maritime logistics in naval warfare. It underscored how theoretical knowledge of logistics, when combined with practical application and real-time decision-making, can lead to significant operational achievements. This experience reinforced the importance of logistics in achieving strategic objectives and operational success, shaping my approach to logistics management in both military and academic contexts.

Q What initiatives do you believe that universities can implement to construct students to face logistical challenges in modern warfare; and logistical challenges in the ever-evolving global logistics industry?

If I very briefly address your question as the Vice Chancellor, I believe universities can implement several initiatives to equip students to face logistical challenges in modern warfare and the evolving global logistics industry by establishing partnerships with military organizations, defence institutions involving in military logistics,

and logistics firms to provide students with hands-on experience in real-world logistical operations in the 21st century. Make all possible avenues for students to apply theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In addition, encourage interdisciplinary collaboration on projects that address logistical challenges, allowing students to gain insights from diverse perspectives. Further, provide access to logistics simulation software that allows students to simulate various scenarios and test different strategies in a controlled environment and steps have been taken to establish industry advisory boards comprising representatives from military, defense, and logistics sectors to provide guidance on curriculum development and industry trends. Finally, it is recommended to establish research centers focused on military logistics, humanitarian logistics, and emerging trends in the global logistics industry, providing opportunities for students to engage in cutting-edge research in the university.

“Leadership is not just about achieving personal success, but about empowering others, fostering innovation, and creating positive change. Embrace the challenges that lie ahead with courage, resilience, and determination, knowing that you have the potential to shape the future of supply chain and logistics management.”

Hence, my strong belief that implementing these initiatives, universities can prepare students to tackle logistical challenges in modern warfare and the global logistics industry effectively. By integrating practical knowledge, advocating case studies and problem-based learning, utilizing technology, fostering industry partnerships, focusing on leadership and ethics, and promoting research and innovation, universities can empower students to become future leaders in logistics, capable of addressing the complexities of an ever-evolving landscape.

Q What advice would you share with aspiring young undergraduates; on the skills and characteristics they should cultivate to become productive future leaders in Supply Chain and Logistics Management?

As you embark on your journey into the dynamic field of Supply Chain and Logistics Management, I urge you to cultivate a set of skills and characteristics that will not only make you successful professionals but also impactful leaders in the industry.

First and foremost, embrace a mindset of continuous learning and adaptation. The world of logistics is constantly evolving, driven by technological advancements, global economic shifts, and changing consumer preferences. Stay curious, remain open to new ideas, and actively seek opportunities to expand your knowledge and expertise. Secondly, develop strong analytical and problem-solving skills. In the complex world of supply chain management, challenges are inevitable. The ability to analyze data, identify root causes, and devise effective solutions will set you apart as a valuable asset to your organization.

Next, communication and collaboration are essential skills for effective leadership. Cultivate the ability to communicate clearly and concisely, whether it's conveying complex ideas to your team or negotiating with stakeholders. Foster a collaborative spirit, recognizing the value of diverse perspectives and teamwork in achieving shared goals.

In addition, resilience and adaptability are qualities that will serve you well in the face of adversity. The supply chain is susceptible to disruptions, whether they be natural disasters, geopolitical tensions, or unforeseen market changes. Approach challenges with resilience, adapt to changing circumstances, and remain focused on finding solutions. Integrity and ethical leadership are non-negotiable. Uphold the highest standards of integrity in your professional conduct, making decisions that prioritize the well-being of your team, stakeholders, and the broader community. Trust is the foundation of effective leadership, and it must be earned through consistency, transparency, and ethical behavior.

Finally, never underestimate the power of passion and purpose. Find what truly inspires you in the field of supply chain and logistics, whether it's driving efficiency, reducing environmental impact, or improving social welfare. Let your passion fuel your ambition and drive you to make a meaningful difference in the world.

As you embark on your journey, remember that leadership is not just about achieving personal success, but about empowering others, fostering innovation, and creating positive change. Embrace the challenges that lie ahead with courage, resilience, and determination, knowing that you have the potential to shape the future of supply chain and logistics management.

With determination and dedication, you have the opportunity to become not just successful professionals, but visionary leaders who inspire and transform the world around you. ■

NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY: TRANSFORMING GRADUATES INTO SUPPLY CHAIN LEADERS IN SRI LANKA



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Education stands as the cornerstone of economic development, and within the realm of logistics and supply chain management, universities in Sri Lanka play a pivotal role in shaping the future leaders of logistics and supply chain management. The transition from classroom to boardroom marks a critical phase in the journey of individuals aspiring to become supply chain leaders in Sri Lanka. As we delve deeper into this transformational process, it becomes evident that education not only imparts knowledge, but also instills the skills and capabilities necessary for success in the dynamic world of logistics and supply chain management.

The journey of a supply chain leader begins within the confines of a classroom. Sri Lankan universities serve as bastions of knowledge, providing undergraduates with a rich tapestry of academic resources and experiential learning opportunities. Here, undergraduates are introduced to the fundamental concepts of supply chain management, tailored to the specific needs and challenges of the Sri Lankan context. The curriculum is designed to be comprehensive, encompassing both theoretical frameworks and practical applications relevant to Sri Lanka's supply chain system. Through lectures, case studies, and simulations, undergraduates gain a holistic understanding of the intricacies inherent in Sri Lanka's supply chains. Moreover, collaborative projects and internships offer them the opportunity to apply classroom theories to real-world scenarios, honing their problem-solving skills and fostering a spirit of innovation within the local context.

One of the key advantages of the university environment in Sri Lanka is its multidisciplinary approach to education. Supply chain management intersects with various disciplines, including

engineering, economics, and information technology, tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities present in Sri Lanka's economy. Furthermore, Sri Lankan universities serve as incubators of talent, nurturing the potential of each undergraduate and preparing them for the rigors of the professional world in Sri Lanka. Faculty members, often industry veterans themselves, provide invaluable mentorship and guidance, imparting not only knowledge, but also practical wisdom gained from years of experience within the local context.

The transition from high school to university marks a significant milestone in the academic journey of a Sri Lankan undergraduates. For many, it represents a newfound sense of independence and self-discovery. They are afforded the freedom to explore their interests and passions within the context of Sri Lanka's unique economic landscape, paving the way for a deeper engagement with their chosen field of study. As undergraduates progress through their undergraduate tenure, they undergo a process of intellectual maturation, refining their critical thinking skills and analytical abilities within the specific context of Sri Lanka's supply chain systems. They learn to approach problems from multiple perspectives, fostering a spirit of creativity and innovation tailored to the needs of Sri Lanka's supply chain industry.

Upon graduation, students in Sri Lanka transition from the classroom to the boardroom, where they are confronted with the realities of the local professional world. The boardroom symbolizes the dynamic landscape of Sri Lanka's corporate realm, where strategic decisions are made, and innovative solutions are devised within the context of the country's unique economic challenges.

For many graduates in Sri Lanka, the transition from university to the workforce can be daunting. They are faced with the challenge of applying theoretical knowledge to practical situations, often in competitive environments with tight deadlines and competing priorities in the specific context of Sri Lanka's economic and cultural landscape. However, it is also a period of tremendous growth and opportunity, where individuals have the chance to put their skills to the test and make a tangible impact on the organizations they serve.

In the boardrooms, supply chain leaders play a crucial role in driving organizational performance and fostering a culture of excellence within the specific constraints and opportunities present in the Sri Lankan economic environment. They are tasked with optimizing supply chain operations, reducing costs, and mitigating risks, while ensuring the highest standards of quality and customer satisfaction within the unique context of Sri Lanka's supply chain system. By leveraging their education and experience within the local context, they

develop strategic initiatives that drive value creation and sustainable growth tailored to Sri Lanka's economic landscape.

One of the key challenges facing supply chain leaders in the boardroom in Sri Lanka is the ever-changing nature of the local marketplace. With technological advancements, geopolitical shifts, and evolving consumer preferences within the specific context of Sri Lanka, supply chain management has become increasingly complex and unpredictable. Leaders must possess the foresight and adaptability to navigate these challenges successfully within the unique constraints and opportunities present in Sri Lanka's economic and cultural landscape, anticipating trends and proactively addressing potential disruptions.

Moreover, supply chain leaders in Sri Lanka must possess strong leadership and interpersonal skills, as they are often called upon to collaborate with cross-functional teams and external partners within the specific cultural context of Sri Lanka. Effective communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution are essential qualities for building consensus and driving alignment across organizational boundaries within Sri Lanka's unique cultural landscape.

In addition to their operational responsibilities, supply chain leaders in Sri Lanka also play a strategic role in shaping the future direction of their organizations within the specific constraints and opportunities present in Sri Lanka's economic environment. They are responsible for identifying growth opportunities, exploring new markets, and forging strategic partnerships that enhance competitive advantage within the unique context of Sri Lanka's economic landscape. By staying abreast of industry trends and emerging technologies tailored to Sri Lanka's specific economic context, they position their companies for long-term success within the Sri Lankan marketplace.

The journey from classroom to boardroom is not the end of the road for supply chain leaders in Sri Lanka; rather, it is just the beginning of a lifelong commitment to learning and professional development within the specific context of Sri Lanka's economic and cultural landscape. In a field as dynamic and rapidly evolving as supply chain management, staying ahead of the curve is essential for continued success within the unique constraints and opportunities present in Sri Lanka.

Lifelong learning takes many forms in Sri Lanka, from attending industry conferences and seminars tailored to the local context to pursuing advanced degrees and professional certifications relevant to Sri Lanka's specific economic challenges and opportunities. Supply chain leaders in Sri Lanka must continuously update their skills and knowledge to remain relevant within

the unique context of Sri Lanka's economic landscape. Moreover, they must cultivate a growth mindset tailored to the specific constraints and opportunities present in Sri Lanka's economic and cultural landscape, embracing new challenges and seeking out opportunities for personal and professional growth within the context of Sri Lanka.

One of the key drivers of lifelong learning in Sri Lanka is the rapid pace of technological innovation within the specific context of Sri Lanka's economic challenges and opportunities. With advancements in automation, artificial intelligence, and data analytics, supply chain management in Sri Lanka is undergoing a digital transformation tailored to the specific constraints and opportunities present in Sri Lanka's economic

landscape. Leaders must be fluent in the language of technology within the specific context of Sri Lanka, leveraging cutting-edge tools and techniques tailored to Sri Lanka's economic challenges and opportunities to optimize supply chain performance and drive innovation within the unique context of Sri Lanka's economic and cultural landscape.

Supply chain leaders in Sri Lanka must stay attuned to broader economic and geopolitical trends, such as trade tensions and tariffs and natural disasters and pandemics within Sri Lanka that can impact global supply chains. There are countless external factors that can disrupt the supply chain operations of Sri Lanka. Therefore, leaders must possess the agility to navigate these challenges successfully. ■

“GENDER SHOULD NOT LIMIT ANYONE’S POTENTIAL”

Professor Renuka Herath

Chairperson

Women in Logistics and Transport, Sri Lanka

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Q Can you give us a brief introduction about yourself?

I graduated from the University of Kelaniya, where I earned my bachelor’s degree in Marketing Management. Building on this foundation, I pursued my master’s degree in Business Administration at PIM with a merit pass. However, my academic journey took a transformative turn when I ventured to the United Kingdom to pursue a PhD in Supply Chain Management at the Newcastle University, marking a pivotal shift from my background in Marketing Management and General Business Administration to specialization in Logistics and Supply Chain Management.

During my time in the UK, attending the Annual Research Conference organized by Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) UK; the international hub for Logistics and Transport professionals, proved instrumental in shaping my career trajectory. This exposure deepened my interest in CILT and solidified my commitment to the logistics industry upon my return to Sri Lanka in 2014.

Seeking to align my academic expertise with practical industry engagement, I pursued membership with CILT and subsequently joined WiLAT (Women in Logistics and Transport) as a member of its executive committee in 2017. This role allowed me to champion the empowerment and advancement of women in the logistics sector.

With a distinguished career spanning for over two decades at the University of Kelaniya, I recently embarked on a new chapter as a professor at the Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (SLIIT). Here, I continue to share my knowledge and expertise in Logistics and Supply

Chain Management, contributing to the development of future industry leaders.

Q Can you tell us more about WiLAT and its role in supporting Women in Logistics and Transportation?

Women in Logistics and Transport (WiLAT) was established in Sri Lanka in the year 2013. It is widely seen in countries with a developing economy. It is evident that the percentage of women participating in the Logistic industry is very low, and it does not make a difference in developed countries. WiLAT Sri Lanka, along with the strategic structure of WiLAT Global, its’ main goal is to empower women, letting them know what this industry is about, and show them the opportunities that lie in this industry.

They might not be aware of the job opportunities that they are open to. When one sees the nature of this industry, that individual judges that this industry does not suit women given the operational tasks that occur. But women are not limited to such tasks, and it is based on preference. As of now, there are crane operators in this industry, which are solely operated by women. In the logistics and supply chain industry, it’s important to recognize that gender should not limit anyone’s potential. Women possess the skills and abilities to excel in operational roles within this field. Our primary aim is to create awareness among women about the multitude of opportunities available in logistics and supply chain management.

There was a lack of awareness about the potential career paths in this field, especially amongst students sitting for their Advanced Levels. To address this gap, we actively



engage with universities such as KDU, Cinec, NSBM, University of Moratuwa, and Ocean University. Through mentorship programs and educational initiatives, we aim to educate students about the industry potential and promote entrepreneurship within it.

WiLATs' broader mission is to encourage women to embrace the challenges and opportunities in logistics. It's not about the competition between genders, but the reassurance that women are represented in a growing industry where they constitute a significant portion of the university population. By advocating for woman's participation and supporting their entry into the

workforce, we are shaping a more inclusive and dynamic logistics sector for the future.

Q As a professor with extensive experience in teaching University students in Sri Lanka, what are the loopholes you have identified in the existing university teaching styles in Sri Lanka?

The Sri Lankan education system is poorly designed, and it necessitates a balance between building knowledge, skills, and attitudes of undergraduates when developing its degree programs. The implementation of teaching methods primarily focuses on the knowledge component

“WiLATs’ broader mission is to encourage women to embrace the challenges and opportunities in logistics.”

and the setup of lecture halls, supporting traditional teaching methods and enhancing the overall learning experience. On the other hand, students often prefer to sit in the classroom and pretend to be listening when teachers present activities they dislike. This behavior is prevalent in both university and primary education.

To address this issue, it is crucial to train students to think critically and avoid distractions, rather than focusing on superficial aspects of learning. The industry frequently complains that its’ employees lack problem-solving skills, hindering their ability to innovate and find solutions independently. The reliance on others for advice and decision-making; leads to doubts about their actions, posing a significant challenge in the education system; particularly in higher education, as it hampers students’ independence and decision-making abilities.

Undergraduates must effectively apply their knowledge, rather than discarding what they have learned during their four or three-year degree program. To achieve a comprehensive understanding of a subject, it is essential to remember even the smallest details learned in the classroom. With ample information sources and AI tools, students can easily retrieve forgotten information. The most critical aspect of knowledge is the broader understanding gained from the subject, as understanding a concept requires both in-depth comprehension and practical application. Merely memorizing it for exams or exam preparation can result in insufficient knowledge retention. This lack of knowledge can hinder one’s ability to perform well in the industry and contribute to their overall success.

In the dynamic logistics and supply chain sector, quick decision-making is crucial for successful operations. If a plan fails, it is essential to initiate a backup plan. This requires confidence and the ability to make decisions with the right knowledge, as time is limited in such industries. Therefore, improving formal education and addressing these issues is crucial for a better future in the logistics sector.

Q In your point of view, what are the challenges you have identified are faced by women in the Logistics and Transportation Industry?

As an academic within the industry, I have observed a tendency for logistics and supply chains to be overlooked, even within university settings. Students often prioritize

other fields when selecting their specializations, posing a challenge in persuading them to consider logistics and supply chain management. While there has been progress in promoting the importance of industries like finance, accounting, marketing, and HR, many individuals remain unaware of the vast opportunities available in logistics and supply chains.

Acknowledging the existing bias in the industry, where men may perceive women as incapable of handling operational tasks, particularly in roles such as port operations, is crucial. This bias can present challenges for women, as these roles have historically been male-dominated and tailored to suit male capabilities. Despite this bias, it is essential to recognize that gender diversity is vital for the industry’s success. The challenges encountered in fields such as ports or airports are often perceived as more suitable for men due to the historical dominance of males in these sectors, resulting in low representation of women, approximately 3%.

This imbalance is perpetuated by cultural norms, both explicit and implicit, that favor men in leadership positions. While not intentionally exclusionary, these ingrained biases limit opportunities for women to advance in the industry. Despite the work’s nature not inherently posing challenges for women, cultural and structural barriers within the logistics industry hinder their progression. However, women excel in multitasking and balancing work and family responsibilities, skills honed by societal expectations. While some organizations prioritize gender equality, others may inadvertently perpetuate biases, thereby impeding women’s advancement opportunities.

Q Adding to the aforementioned question, what are your advices on overcoming these challenges, and what advice would you give to young women entering the field?

As a female professional navigating the logistics and transportation industry, encountering challenges is an inherent part of the journey. However, proactive membership in organizations such as STAR (Supporting and Advancing Women in Transportation) and engagement in industry forums such as Women in Management, Women in Shipping and Trade, and Cars serve as important platforms for initiating beneficial communication.

Through these platforms, women encourage discussions about women’s potential and are active in their participation in all aspects of the industry. By encouraging discussion and ensuring the participation of all stakeholders, including men, it is expected to progressively transform mindsets and provide more opportunities for women. The concept of inclusion should be fully established in both organizational and societal contexts. Recognizing both men and women have unique

talents and capacities, should provide equal opportunities for everyone.

Initiatives like the establishment of daycare centers and the introduction of flexible work hours demonstrate a commitment to encouraging gender equality and facilitating a work-life balance for all employees. Finally, establishing an environment that values and supports women in the logistics and transportation sectors will enable women to go forward, bringing the industry to exceptional heights of success and innovation.

Q What advice would you give to young women who aspire to work in leadership positions in logistics and transportation?

Young women who have taken on leadership responsibilities in the transport sector are involved in a variety of industry conversations and webinars, which provide insights into career options and prepare them for future challenges. Students must understand that logistics and supply chain management exceed gender boundaries; and industries open to both men and women. With so many career opportunities, women should be encouraged to pursue these opportunities.

The existence of female seafarers illustrates how women can succeed in a range of jobs within the sector. As a result, young women must familiarize themselves with the complexities of the industry and its developing dynamics before starting their professional careers. Unlike in earlier times, when logistics was not a prominent career path, the market of today is filled with options for women to pursue supply chain management positions.

Young women who have suitable school qualifications and a basic understanding of the sector can embark on their career paths with confidence and intelligence. Instead of crossing new seas, individuals can use sector-specific educational degrees to build a firm foundation for their professions. With numerous options in logistics and supply chain management, individuals can now trace their career paths, building the basis for a successful future in the industry's progress.

This emphasizes the importance of having a strong educational background, relevant qualifications, and a proactive mindset to succeed in an ever-changing industry. It highlights the importance of strength, an appropriate attitude, and the necessary set of abilities, and qualities that cross gender and can be developed through knowledge, courage, and determination. These qualities not only create numerous opportunities but also set the road for stability in the industry's future.

Q Looking ahead, what are the hopes and aspirations for the future of WILAT and the women it supports in the logistics and transportation field?



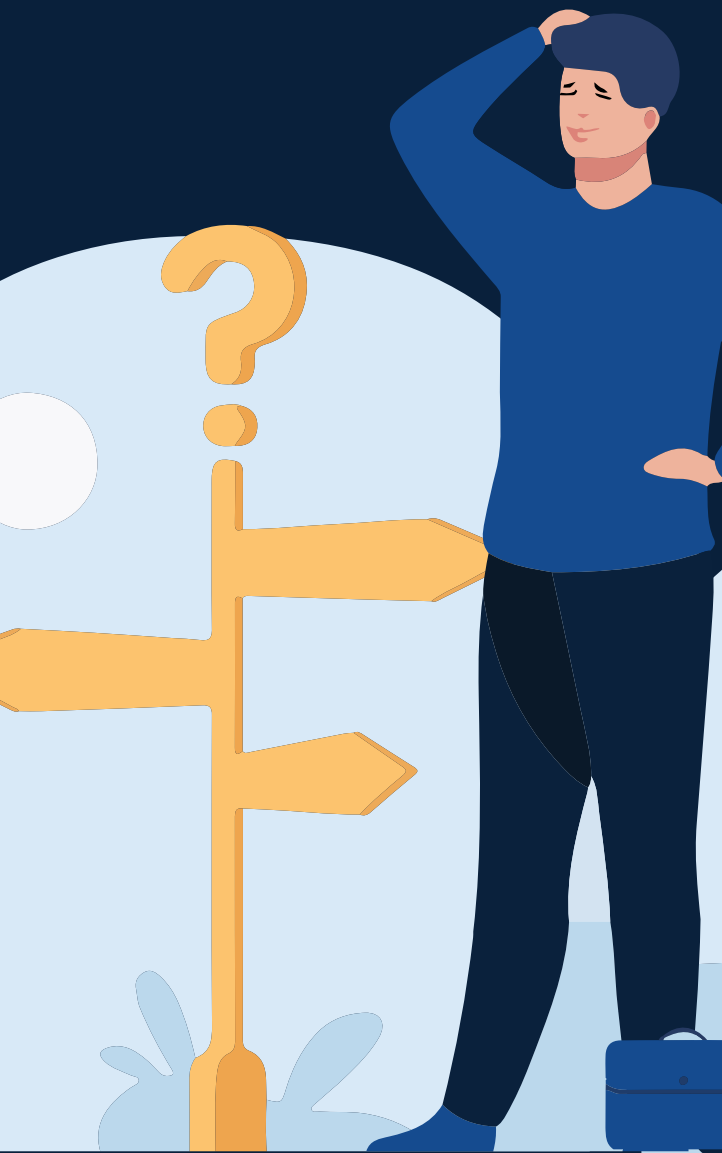
WiLAT conducts numerous programs, such as webinars, lectures, and guest lectures, to educate members on logistics because it is a broad industry that collaborates with various industries. It aims to share knowledge with various programs and avenues such as visiting factories and making field visits. We are also working to increase our membership base to create an impact on women in the industry.

We as an organization plan to expand and reach the school level, making it more accessible for students sitting for their Advanced Levels. This is because students in developed countries are already aware of the field since subjects like logistics and supply chain are included in their school curricula and they can benefit from the knowledge gained from these educational institutions before going on to pursue their higher education or careers.

In the upcoming year, the focus will be on increasing awareness about the logistics supply chain in schools, not only in Colombo but also in other areas of the country. The logistics industry is crucial for a country's economy because it ensures the smooth flow of economic activities and is vital for foreign investors to invest in infrastructure.

We plan to actively involve ourselves in schools to discuss logistics and supply chain, as current awareness is limited to suburbs. If we are able to create the necessary awareness and promotion of the industry, it will help drive the economy forward and attract foreign investors. WiLAT will also explore other opportunities to promote the logistics supply chain industry in the country. We are looking forward to contributing to policy development, collaborating with other organizations such as CILT, and enhancing the uplifting of the industry, which will be a priority for the next few years as we plan to work on this topic. ■

FIRST JOB: A NIGHTMARE OR A DREAM COME TRUE?



A. Sandali S. Perera

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A major turning point in an individual's career path occurs when he or she moves from the carefree setting of university classrooms to the dynamic and structured realm of corporate boardrooms. This is the point at which theoretical knowledge is applied in practice. Whether it is from classrooms to boardrooms or from backpacks to briefcases, it is just not about the paycheck one receives, yet the challenges one encounters are worthy of examination. The following section presents some of the commonly identified challenges faced by interns and entry-level workers at their places of work.

Team Dynamics: It might be difficult to get used to the dynamics of a new team. Individuals may have challenges in comprehending communication styles, adjusting to established group dynamics, and managing diverse personalities.

Imposter syndrome: Many beginners suffer from imposter syndrome, which makes them feel unworthy even in the face of proof of their skills. This self-doubt can erode confidence, especially in settings where coworkers possess greater experience.

Learning curve: There is frequently a high learning curve involved in adjusting to the demands of a new role. The volume of information to process, the difficulty of the job, and the unfamiliarity of the workplace can all make people feel overwhelmed.

Nervous energy: Taking up a new job can induce anxiety. People could have anxiety related to meeting expectations, presenting a positive image, and communicating with superiors and colleagues.

Criticism: Receiving constructive criticism is essential for professional growth, but it may be difficult, particularly for those transitioning into new responsibilities. When



given well, criticism can offer insightful information for development and progress. On the other hand, it might increase anxiety and worsen the emotions of imposter syndrome if not expressed delicately.

Time constraints: It might be difficult to juggle professional requirements with other commitments, just like the individual did at school or university. Effective time management and fulfilling deadlines can lead to stress.

Overcoming the above hurdles is necessary for the growth of one's leadership. Effective management of team dynamics can be achieved by individuals through proactive engagement with team members and the cultivation of positive connections. Overcoming obstacles, getting feedback, and boosting self-esteem all aid in the fight against imposter syndrome. Growth and development are facilitated when one approaches the learning curve with resilience and a growth mindset. Stress-reduction strategies and self-awareness are essential to managing nervous energy. A culture of constant learning is fostered by accepting constructive criticism, and productivity is maximized by efficient time management. By using these tactics, people develop the abilities, self-assurance, and leadership traits required to succeed in their careers and become influential figures in their industries.

According to Christopher's book *Logistics & Supply Chain Management*, people go from knowing theories to applying them in boardrooms as they go from classrooms. Supply chains are intricate, requiring not only a foundational understanding of logistics, but also the ability to navigate a variety of obstacles with smart planning and smooth operation. Thus, as beginners undertake this shift, they apply the knowledge they have gained from books and articles, prepared to enhance, and simplify supply chains in practical applications.

Moving from classrooms to boardrooms is a continual

process of professional development and learning, rather than an isolated occurrence. To be competitive in the market, logistics professionals need to stay up-to-date on best practices, technology developments, and industry trends. To increase their knowledge and abilities, they could go to conferences, acquire certificates, or take part in networking activities. Students study operational concepts, supply chain management tactics, and logistics principles in the classroom. As they go into boardrooms, they are expected to use this theoretical understanding to address the logistical issues that businesses encounter. This could entail planning distribution networks to satisfy consumer demands, effectively managing inventories, or optimizing transportation routes.

Undergraduates need more than just education to get ready for the demands of the real world. They are thrown into the fire of real-world experience when they enter the world of internships and entry-level jobs. They gain knowledge of how to handle all the complexities involved in supply chain operations, from distribution and inventory management to logistics and procurement. They also gain knowledge of the difficulties involved in international trading, the subtleties of communicating across cultural boundaries, and the value of cooperation and teamwork.

An important turning point in one's career path is the first job. It is a mixture of hopes fulfilled and obstacles encountered, and it is filled with exhilaration and anxiety. Similar to walking into a new stage, you're excited to show off your abilities and leave your mark. However, there is a maze of fresh experiences to find your way through in between the excitement of independence and the temptation of a salary. Every day has its own set of successes and setbacks, from figuring out new responsibilities to building relationships with coworkers. Yet, do not worry as there is priceless learning and development to be found in these hardships. ■

“LONG-TERM CAREER PROGRESS REQUIRES BUILDING REPUTATION AND TRUSTWORTHINESS”

Dr. Kalpana Ambepitiya

Director

Career Guidance Unit

General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

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Q How do you define effective leadership within the context of supply chain management, particularly in transitioning from academia to corporate boardrooms?

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, having a strategic vision is crucial in leadership. To achieve this, it is essential to track market trends and develop systems to identify opportunities. Leaders must align supply chain strategies with overall business objectives to ensure seamless operations. These focus areas are vital in developing a strategic vision in the supply chain.

Adaptability is another vital aspect of strategic leadership, particularly regarding change management. As globalization continues to shape the supply chain, considering market dynamics and technological advancements is essential. Data-driven decision-making is crucial as businesses rely heavily on technology, emphasizing the importance of real-time data in making informed decisions and highlighting its critical role in future leadership.

Proficient relationship management is also required, necessitating coordination with both internal and external stakeholders. Creating a climate of innovation and continual improvement encourages employees to propose new ideas, aligning innovation with supply

chain processes. Ethical leadership guarantees fair treatment of employees, adherence to legal and regulatory standards, and a dedication to environmental sustainability, equality, and the pursuit of sustainable development goals.

This comprehensive strategy improves organizational effectiveness and links supply chain operations with broader social ideals, promoting long-term viability. Relationship management is another important practice that leaders must cultivate, collaborating with various internal teams and external stakeholders. By empowering employees to come up with new ideas, organizations can embrace innovation and align it with supply chain practices. Ethical leadership ensures fair treatment of employees and compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements related to the supply chain, including environmental responsibility and promoting equality and sustainable development goals.

Q What key skills and competencies do you believe are essential for future supply chain leaders to possess in order to navigate complex business environments?

The ever-evolving dynamic nature of the modern business world is prone to multiple complexities. In that



matter, the leaders in the supply-chain industry must be constructed with the best set of skills to effectively navigate the complexities the industry has to offer. Out of these possible skills a leader can attain, strategic thinking emerges as one of the most important skills, offering leaders the capacity to conceptualise the entire business function and synchronize supply chain strategies harmoniously with organizational objectives. This ability not only enables leaders to envision and adapt to the shifts in the industry, but also helps foster innovation and proactive problem-solving, essential for staying ahead in today's competitive landscape.

In addition to strategic thinking, adaptability, flexibility, and change management are also essential skills that supply chain leaders must possess. These skills enable leaders to manage disruptions and changes in the market, as well as embrace new technologies that increase efficiency and effectiveness. By staying updated about the latest trends and being open to change, supply chain leaders can ensure their organizations remain competitive and relevant.

Data-driven decision-making is another vital skill that future leaders must have, as it enables the analysis of real-time information to make informed decisions.

With an understanding of data-driven decision-making, supply chain leaders can leverage the power of technology to optimize their supply chain processes and drive business outcomes.

Having a global perspective is also critical for supply chain leaders to succeed in the future. This includes understanding international markets, suppliers, procedures, standards, legal requirements, and ethical considerations. By being well-versed in global best practices, supply chain leaders can gain a competitive edge and ensure their organizations remain relevant on the global stage.

Building a strong network within the supply chain community and continuously learning and developing new skills are also key to success. By collaborating with

“Continuous learning is key in staying ahead of these risks and filling any knowledge gaps.”

other industry professionals, supply chain leaders can remain at the forefront of the industry and ensure their organizations are well-positioned to succeed.

Moreover, supply chain leaders have a responsibility to manage crisis and minimize imbalances in resource sharing. This includes managing natural and man-made disasters, pandemics, epidemics, and economic downturns. By utilizing the supply chain as a bridge, leaders can help fill the gap in resource sharing and ensure a smooth-running organization.

Q From your perspective, what are the biggest challenges faced by future supply chain leaders, and how can educational institutions help students overcome these challenges?

Geopolitical uncertainty and globalization are major challenges that affect the future of supply chain leaders. Global political tensions among economically powerful nations hinder supply chain flow through varying geopolitical practices and trade regulations, impacting international markets and currency fluctuations. Conflicts such as those involving Iran, Israel, Palestine, Ukraine, and Russia directly affect organizational supply chains. Additionally, cultural differences play a crucial role in international trade.

Supply chain disruptions from natural disasters, pandemics, and political unrest, like the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasize the need for crisis and disaster

management skills in future leaders. Rapid technological advancements in machine learning, AI, and robotics present challenges for developing countries, which may struggle to compete internationally without access to these technologies.

Sustainability and environmental concerns are critical for future supply chain leaders. Organizations face pressure to reduce environmental impact, carbon footprint, and emissions, meeting complex environmental requirements and customer expectations through sustainable initiatives while balancing economic considerations.

Talent management and addressing the skills gap between academia and corporate needs is another challenge. Collaboration between universities and the corporate sector is essential to align graduate skills with corporate expectations. Developing curricula that cover technology, supply chain best practices, and real-world projects is vital.

Interdisciplinary education integrating engineering, business, data science, sustainability, and logistics prepares students for industry challenges. Experiential learning through internships, industry projects, and field visits provides hands-on experience. Networking with the corporate sector helps apply theoretical concepts in practice. Interpersonal skills like negotiation, leadership, problem-solving, and communication should be part of the curriculum. Research collaborations between students and lecturers addressing corporate issues help bridge the gap between academia and industry.

Q Can you discuss any innovative teaching methodologies or curriculum approaches that you believe are effective in cultivating leadership skills among supply chain students?

Team-based projects related to the supply chain encourage us to rectify the challenges in the supply chain. They encourage collaboration, communication, and teamwork among the students. They can work together to solve very complex problems and identify suitable, timely solutions while developing leadership skills, teamwork, building up skills and other skills like delegation, conflict management, and project management skills. There are lots of benefits when having team-based projects.

Another method is simulation games. Students are given a real-world scenario in an experiential learning environment. They can simulate various aspects of supply chain management like demand forecasting, inventory management, and distribution planning. By using real-world examples, we allow them to work freely, and independently without interruption which will help to come up with solutions for such problems. Therefore, creativity, innovation and knowledge relevant to practical

applications will also be enhanced. Students will learn how to make correct and effective decisions in supply chains and help the corporate sector to make strategic decisions and those outcomes of strategic decision-making can be used in the corporate sector.

Also, in case-based learning, students can analyze and come up with solutions, develop discussions, and set up classroom debates and several practices based on the case study. Industry partnership, leadership development in the supply chain, technology integration into the supply chain subjects and curriculum revision are important, rather than teaching methodology. When considering teaching, we must get feedback and reflection. Feedback from industry and students should be evaluated, and the evaluation results should be reflected in the next practice. If there are negative feedback comments from students, then we must avoid those aspects in teaching, and we must correct it and do it properly the next time.

Encouraging students to reflect on their leadership experience, challenges, and achievements helps students to develop a deeper understanding.

Q In your opinion, what emerging trends should future supply chain leaders be aware of and be prepared to handle?

The fourth industrial revolution has brought a new era of technology that can work independently without human intervention. With the integration of digital technologies such as AI, machine learning, the Internet of Things, and block chain into supply chain management, leaders can improve efficiency, effectiveness, and decision-making within the supply chain. However, the increase in globalization, geopolitical tension, natural disasters, and cybersecurity issues pose risks to the supply chain that hence requires strategic risk management. Continuous learning is key in staying ahead of these risks and filling any knowledge gaps.

As future leaders, it is essential to be aware of Environment Society and Governance (ESG), because there is a growing pressure on organizations to be sustainably oriented in all practices, especially in supply chain management. Environmental impacts, ethical sourcing, fair labor practices, and social responsibility must be considered when designing supply chain practices.

The circular economy is a sustainable solution to the increasing competition for resources. In addition to sustainability, transparency and traceability are crucial for the modern supply chain. Future customers will scrutinize product manufacturing, and e-commerce and omni-channel retailing must meet the demand for faster delivery times, inventory optimization, and seamless customer experiences. Minimizing human



interference in retailing is possible, as seen with the Amazon Dash Cart, which scans products when placed in the cart and allows for payment with a single click. Talent management and digital skills will be crucial for future supply chain leaders to cater to the complex individualized requirements of customers. Personalized data analytics, optimization of supply chain processes, and managing customer satisfaction and loyalty will bring more businesses in the future. The future supply chain is becoming more customer-centric, and leaders must understand customer needs and leverage data analytics to personalize offerings.

Q What Career Development resources are available within General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University for students to help them secure leadership positions in the supply chain industry after graduation?

General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU) is committed to providing an education that extends beyond the classroom. Recognizing career development is critical to student success, and KDU has established a Career Guidance Unit to enhance student career skills. The Faculty of Management, Social Science, and Humanities

(FMSH) offers a recognized Logistics Management degree program and a Management and Technical Sciences Degree program. Each year, the Career Guidance Unit prepares a tailored career development plan for all faculties, focusing on industry skills.

A key event for logistics students is the annual Logistics Day, providing interaction opportunities with industry experts and it also provides students an insight into the latest trends. The faculty has partnerships with industry leaders to support leadership development programs. Additionally, the Career Guidance Unit offers a program to build leadership skills, preparing students for corporate careers. The Entrepreneurship Club, under the Entrepreneurship Cell, offers activities, seminars, workshops, incubators, and mentoring programs to enhance entrepreneurial and leadership skills.

KDU's degree-oriented career development program ensures logistics-focused career development, preparing students to be corporate-ready. The university's commitment to providing essential career resources highlights its dedication to excellence and the importance of career development in today's world.



Q As a senior lecturer with extensive experience, what advice would you give to undergraduates in our University regarding the development of essential skills needed for career advancement in today's competitive job market?


A diversified skill set and a proactive attitude towards personal and career development are essential for leaping academics to the professional world in today's dynamic and intensely competitive employment market. The foundation of this journey is self-awareness since proper preparation for the difficulties that lie ahead requires that people have a deep understanding of their strengths and flaws. Teams in the business world benefit greatly from the leadership and teamwork skills that promote cooperation and team spirit, which in turn leads to group success.

Long-term career progress requires building reputation and trustworthiness, which can only be achieved by upholding professionalism, honesty, and a strong work ethic. Effective decision-making, interpersonal communication, and the development of meaningful professional relationships are possible by soft skills like critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and networking. To prosper in the

“Team-based projects related to the supply chain encourage us to rectify the challenges in the supply chain.”

face of changing market trends and technological breakthroughs, one must acquire and keep up-to-date with skills and information that are pertinent to the sector. In today's environment of swift change and uncertainty, the capacity for adaptation and resilience becomes essential, allowing people to flourish in the face of hardship and overcome obstacles with greater ability.

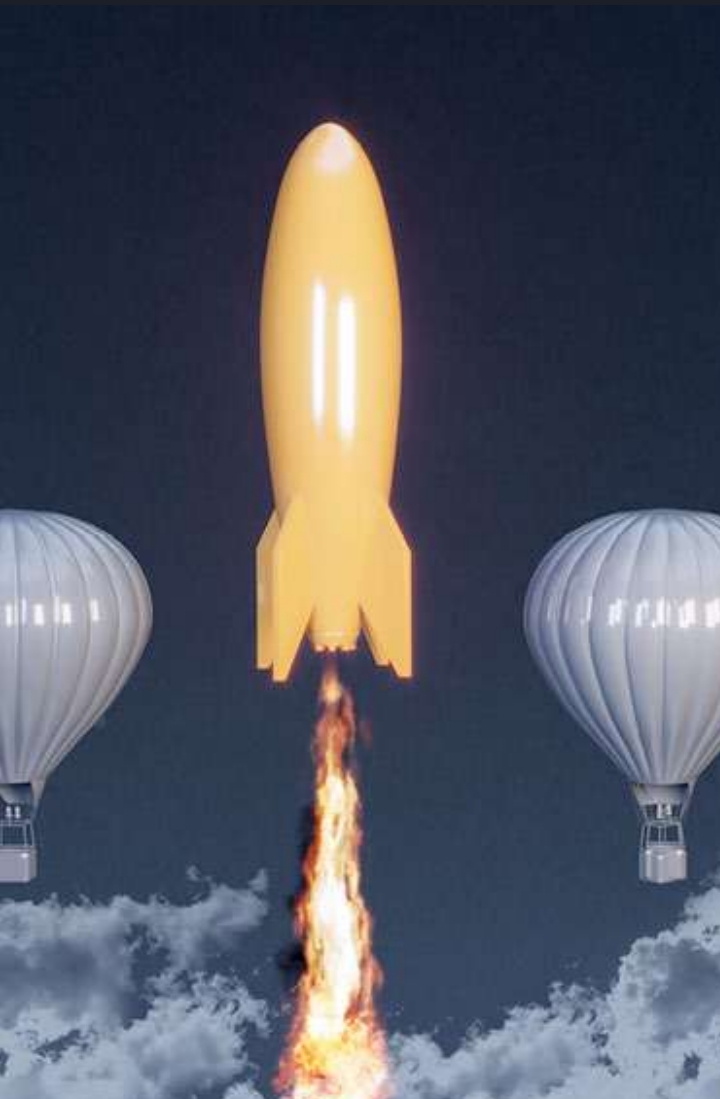
A focus on the value of ongoing education enables people to take advantage of chances for career progression, develop new skills, and be up to date with developing trends. To foster meaningful relationships, cooperation, and general efficacy in the workplace, effective communication is fundamental to successful professional interactions. Undergraduates may forge a trajectory of continuous success and equip themselves with the tools needed to succeed in today's competitive job market by cultivating these vital abilities and making the most of readily available resources, including seminars, extracurricular activities, and mentoring programs. ■

A person is sitting at a light-colored wooden desk, writing in a spiral-bound notebook with a blue pen. They are wearing a white knit sweater with red cuffs and blue jeans. The background is blurred, showing a brown bag and the legs of other people in a room.

***“Leadership is
the capacity to
translate vision
into reality.”***

- Warren Bennis

OPTIMIZING SUPPLY CHAIN LEADERSHIP IN THE DIGITAL AGE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN EDUCATIONAL REEVALUATION



BHI Cooray

Postgraduate – Intake 37

BSc. In Management and Technical Sciences

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“As supply chains have become more integrated and agile, they have the power to drive economic development, create jobs, and alleviate poverty in emerging markets.”

- Jim Yong Kim (The 12th President of the World Bank)

Supply chain management plays a pivotal role in shaping the economies of developing countries by driving job creation, trade facilitation, and cost efficiency. The logistics industry accounts for a market size of USD 7.78 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach USD 9.93 billion by 2029. Disruptions caused by the pandemic such as supply chain disturbances and consumer behavior changes have both fast-tracked and reshaped the trajectory of global supply chain growth, which results in increasing globalization, technological advancements and increasing demand for efficient logistics and distribution networks. The global logistics industry is projected to have an increase of USD 4.08 trillion by 2028.

Why Educational Transformation?

The Sri Lankan educational system places a disproportionate emphasis on theoretical learning with limited opportunities for practical, hands-on trainings. It fails to cultivate the essential soft skills such as critical thinking demanded by employers. It includes little to no information on integrating new technologies into the industry's operations. Therefore, graduates often lack the necessary technical skills and familiarity with cutting-edge tools. Perhaps these can be contributing factors related to the low-income contribution of the Sri Lankan logistics industry despite its potential. According to the website of the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan logistics industry only contributes around 2.5% of the nation's GDP which is USD 2 billion, while it is 25% and 10% in Vietnam and Thailand, respectively.

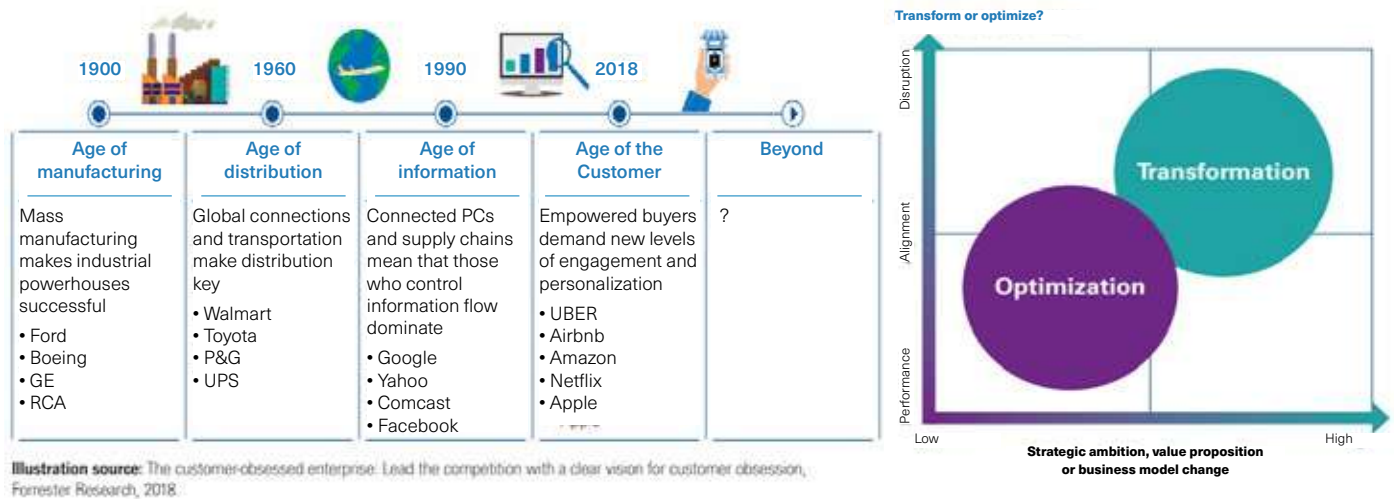


Figure 1 The Customer-obsessed enterprise. Source: Forrester Research, 2018

Logistics education should also address the existing industry gender gap. Currently, few women enter the field due to stereotypes around STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and limited opportunities and access to logistics-focused education for women. There seem to be general perceptions such as that the industry is physically demanding, and male dominated. Addressing these factors is crucial to tapping into a wider talent pool and unlock the industry's full potential.

Reforming the Sri Lankan Supply Chain Education

Traditional higher educational institutes are at crossroads as it is necessary to explore if they transform into new kinds of entities or if they optimize their existing operations to suit the challenging landscape.

Re-evaluating the Outdated Curriculum

Industry professionals should be involved in designing and reviewing curricula to ensure their alignment with industry standards. Cross-disciplinary collaborations between academic departments can address complex problems that require diverse perspectives, expertise, and industry innovation (IT and logistics).

Use of Advanced Analytics and Big Data

Supply chain leaders must be skilled in leveraging data-driven insights to inform strategic decisions. This can be achieved by increasing the use of virtual education, employing foreign instructors, and enhancing competitiveness. Currently most supply chain education is privatized. Therefore, the government and educational institutions must prioritize equitable funding, providing targeted support for marginalized communities.

Increase Research and Development

Upgrading existing research centers as innovation hubs is of utmost importance. This can be achieved with the collaboration of leading foreign institutes, and it would strengthen the capability to transfer the new research and development work. Academic research can be commercialized, and research translation centers could

facilitate the conversion of academic knowledge into industry.

Building Academic Industry Partnerships

Universities should focus on the personal as well as professional development of students by promoting student association memberships (e.g., CILT). The establishment of live projects by the industry and conducting business plan competitions jointly sponsored by industry and academia can reduce the theory-application gap. Furthermore, establishing industry specific programs like the Google Student Ambassador program, MIT Delta V and PwC's Talent Academy could further aid the above.

Increased Focus on Leadership Development

There should be a focus on developing leadership styles, emotional intelligence for navigating complex situations, strategic thinking to make informed decisions, and ethical decision-making to navigate challenges with integrity. In addition, supply chain leaders must be educated to embrace ethical and sustainable practices, ensuring that operations are aligned with environmental and social responsibility principles.

Female leadership should be inspired through mentorship programmes and encouraging the achievements of women leaders in the supply chain industry with awards and informing female leaders about successful role models. For example, Ginni Rometty, who was IBM's CEO from 2012 to 2020 steered the company towards Cloud computing and AI for logistics. Rometty's leadership led IBM to develop innovative logistics solutions such as blockchain-based supply chain management platforms and AI-driven predictive analytics tools. Sri Lanka's future depends on strong supply chain leaders; therefore, universities must bridge the gap between theory and practice by enhancing the necessary skills of undergraduates. Collaboration between universities, businesses, and the government is key to creating a system that fosters future leaders that will enhance Sri Lanka's potential as a leader in supply chain excellence. ■

TIMELINE



Logistics Day 2023 – 22nd of June 2023

KDU Logistics Day 2023 was held on the 22nd of June for the 9th consecutive year under the theme “Re-engineering Supply Chains towards Sustainability: Assuring Survival and Coexistence.” Major General Milinda Peiris, the former Vice-Chancellor of KDU, and Mr. Ariyathilaka Wepitiyage, General Manager Operations at Ceylon Biscuits Limited, served as the Chief Guest and Guest of Honor, respectively. This event featured the launch of the 8th edition of the Logistics Times, Sri Lanka’s first ever logistics magazine. A panel discussion with industry experts provided insights on sustainable supply chains. The Inter Faculty Article Competition, a new addition, brought input from multiple disciplines. Attended by academics, military officers, industry representatives, and student delegates, the event concluded successfully, highlighting students’ potential and professionalism.

22nd June 2023

4th January 2024

Introduction of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the TSMS - 4th January 2024

On January 4th, 2024, we introduced the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the Technical Sciences and Management Society (TSMS) to the junior intakes, Intake 40 and 41. This significant event was organized to acquaint the new students with the TSMS, its objectives, and its activities. This session aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of TSMS and its pivotal role in fostering academic and professional growth amongst the students. The key highlights of that day included detailed explanations about the TSMS, the annual Logistics Day, and the Logistics Times Magazine. The Executive Committee and Board of Directors engaged with the juniors, sharing insights about their roles and responsibilities within the society. They emphasized the importance of active participation in activities of the TSMS to enhance their learning experience and professional development. Overall, the event successfully spread awareness amongst the junior intakes about the TSMS, encouraging them to become active members and contributors to the society’s ongoing success.



Disaster Management Exhibition – 24th of January 2024

“GreenTech’23”, the KDU disaster management exhibition, was held on January 24th, 2024, at the KDU premises for the 9th consecutive year. Organized by the Department of Management and Finance, the event showcased technological advancements in disaster management. The exhibition featured innovative solutions by undergraduates of Intake 40, pursuing the degrees; BSc in Logistic Management, and BSc in Management and Technical Sciences, under the guidance of Dr. Kalpana Ambepitiya. The present Vice Chancellor of General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Rear Admiral H.G.U Dammika Kumara honored the event with his presence. The exhibition highlighted technologies used in managing both man-made and natural disasters such as civil wars, tsunamis, storms, pandemics, and floods. The students demonstrated how modern technology could address these challenges, emphasizing the importance of continuous innovation in disaster management strategies.

24th January 2024

30th March 2024



The Food Fiesta – 30th of March 2024

The Interfaculty Cricket Tournament Finals were held at the KDU grounds on 30th March 2024, accompanied by a vibrant Food Fiesta organized by the TSMS to raise funds for the Logistics Day 2024. Led by the dedicated undergraduates of FMSH, the Food Fiesta showcased culinary creativity and skills with a wide array of meals and beverages. The event offered an ideal platform for students to display their talents, foster innovation, and expand their social networks. The food kiosks catered to all tastes, contributing to the event’s success. The dynamic atmosphere was enriched by enthusiastic participation from the faculty and students. The combination of an exciting cricket match and delicious snacks created a lively and joyful experience, promoting a strong sense of community and support for a worthy cause.



SUNFO International Summit for Sustainability – 31st of March 2024

KDU undergraduates from Intake 39 in the Department of Management and Finance participated in the SUNFO International Summit for Sustainability at BMICH, organized by the SUNFO Global Federation. This event, celebrating International Women's Day and World Water Day, facilitated vital discussions on sustainability, gender equality, and water conservation. The students engaged with diverse professionals and experts, gaining invaluable insights and contributing to significant dialogues. This experience broadened their understanding of pressing global issues and provided opportunities to network with industry leaders.

31st March 2024

2nd April 2024

The KDU Young Entrepreneurs 2024 Exhibition – 2nd of April 2024

The KDU Young Entrepreneurs 2024 Exhibition, held on April 2nd, 2024, at the FGS Auditorium, showcased innovative ideas from undergraduates of Intake 40, pursuing the degrees; BSc in Logistic Management and BSc in Management and Technical Sciences. Under the guidance of Dr. Kalpana Ambepitiya, the Director of Career Guidance Unit students presented cutting-edge projects demonstrating their entrepreneurial skills and creativity. For the first time, the exhibition was an open category event, attracting a broader audience and fostering a dynamic environment. The Vice Chancellor, Rear Admiral H.G.U Dammika Kumara, graced the event through his presence, highlighting the university's commitment to nurturing talent and innovation. The exhibition provided a platform for students to showcase their ideas, emphasizing the practical impact of their studies and celebrating creativity, collaboration, and the entrepreneurial spirit.



Sustainovation 2024 at the NIBM School of Business – 5th of April 2024

The NIBM School of Business hosted "Sustainovation 2024" on April 5th, 2024, where KDU team secured the distinguished 1st runner-up spot. Under the theme "Unveiling the Future of Sustainability: A Visionary Perspective", the undergraduates from Intakes 39, 40, and 41 of the Department of Management and Finance presented their project "Sri Lankan Sustainable Fashion Goals – 2039." Their showcase included a compelling video and informative infographic, highlighting creativity and passion. Competing in such events enhances critical thinking, teamwork, and real-world application of academic knowledge. Participation allows undergraduates to innovate and solve practical challenges, preparing them for professional roles. The team's dedication and enthusiasm set them apart, securing this prestigious accolade and showcasing their commitment to sustainable innovation.

5th April 2024

16th May 2024



Engagement with the Chief of Defence Staff, 16th of May 2024

The TSMS had the honor of interviewing General Shavendra Silva WWV RWP RSP VSV USP ndc psc MPhil, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) – Sri Lanka, on May 16th, 2024, for the 9th Edition of the Logistics Times Magazine. In this exclusive interview themed "Empowering Future Supply Chain Leaders: Reflecting on Thirty Years of War," General Silva shared profound insights from his military career, highlighting the evolution of military logistics during the conflict and its lessons for civilian supply chain management. He emphasized the need for integrating civilian and military logistics, contributing significantly to understanding the synergies between military discipline and civilian logistics innovation. This interview fosters a new generation of supply chain leaders, bridging the gap between classroom learning and boardroom execution.

TIMELINE



Engagement with the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, 28th of May 2024

Interviewing the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence in Sri Lanka, General G.D.H. Kamal Gunaratne (Retd) WWV RWP RSP USP ndc psc MPhil, offered us unique insights into the intersection of military and civilian leadership in supply chain management. With honors of WWV, RWP, RSP, USP, ndc, psc, and an MPhil, General Gunaratne's career highlights the strategic and operational skills military leaders bring to civilian roles. The interview explored how his military background in strategic planning, risk management, and logistics translates into efficient supply chain leadership in the civilian context today. It also covered crucial leadership principles fostering flexibility and resilience in high-stakes situations. This discussion provided valuable advice for aspiring future supply chain leaders and emphasized the benefits of diverse leadership experiences in enhancing operational and strategic capabilities.

28th May 2024

30th May 2024

The FMSH Career Fair, 30th of May 2024

The FMSH Career Fair, organized by Dr. Kalpana Ambepitiya, Director of the Career Guidance Unit at KDU, and Mr. Lahiru Gunathilake, Faculty Career Guidance Advisor, was held on May 31, 2024. The event aimed to help students secure internships, attracting many leading local and foreign companies. Students had the opportunity to meet representatives from various industries, offering a wide range of positions. This allowed them to explore different career paths and find internships that matched their interests and skills.



The Networking Session – 2024, 30th of May 2024

The TSMS and the KDU Career Guidance Unit collaboratively organized the inaugural Networking Session at the FGS Auditorium on 30th May 2024. The event featured 15 renowned organizations discussing real-world industry challenges, which will serve as research problems for future projects by Intake 40 students in the Department of Management and Finance. This initiative provided a unique opportunity for students to engage directly with industry professionals and apply their academic knowledge to practical issues. Companies benefit from fresh perspectives and innovative solutions from the academic community. This collaboration bridges the gap between academia and industry, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship that enhances student learning and industry advancement.

30th May 2024

30th June 2024

Engagement with the Vice Chancellor of General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University - 30th of June 2024

On June 30th, 2024, members of the TSMS had the esteemed opportunity to interview the Vice Chancellor of General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Rear Admiral H.G.U Dammika Kumara, VSV, USP, psc, MMaritimePol, BSc (DS) for the Logistics Times Magazine. This interview was conducted under the theme "Empowering Future Supply Chain Leaders: The Role of University Administration to Enhance Academic and Professional Development." During this insightful session, the Vice Chancellor shared his valuable perspectives on the critical role of university administration in shaping the future of supply chain leaders. He elaborated on the university's strategies and initiatives aimed at enhancing both academic and professional development for students, where his insights underscored the importance of integrating practical experiences with academic learning to prepare students for the dynamic challenges of the supply chain industry. The interview provided our TSMS members with a deeper understanding of how university policies and leadership directly influence their educational journey and career readiness. This engagement not only enriched the content of the Logistics Times Magazine but also inspired students to leverage the resources and support available to them for their professional growth. The interaction with the Vice Chancellor was a significant highlight for the TSMS, contributing to the ongoing dialogue on academic excellence and professional development within the university.

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