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Primed for a Thriving Supply Chain Career

Using APICS certification to unlock the possibilities

Rosemary Cheung, CSCP, has been employed for seven years at global energy and petrochemicals group Shell Hong Kong Limited, which delivers petroleum and chemical products to Hong Kong, Macau, and South China. She began her career there working in organizational design and then moved to a regional role, where she dealt with base oil supply. At present, Cheung manages global key accounts in Northeast Asia.

“My role is about strategic support, so I always need to use innovative and out-of-the-box thinking,” she says, adding that—after more than 20 years in the business world—she sometimes felt “drained” of new ideas. “So, when I received information about APICS, I found it to be the perfect way for me to refresh my supply chain skills and knowledge.”

Recognition and validation

Cheung’s APICS affiliation began with her pursuit of the Certified Supply Chain Professional (CSCP) designation. Her company sponsored her membership in March 2013. She then started taking CSCP courses in May 2013 and was certified in August of that same year.

She says that the CSCP learning program she and many of her coworkers followed—a course that combined web-based and textbook study—was fun and challenging. However, Cheung admits that she first had very mixed feelings. “When the study materials arrived, there were six, one-inch textbooks [which seemed like] a very heavy workload,” she says. “Every week, we had to finish

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the online assignment, which would be graded and commented on by the course tutor and members of a small study team of colleagues. This continued for 10 weeks, so you can imagine that it was hard work.”

In the end, Cheung eventually decided that she just had to “have faith and grow to love the course.” She explains that these goals were aided by well-organized course materials that provided clear examples of supply chain best practices, technologies to drive improvement, techniques for maximizing organizational efficiency and bottom-line

results, and methods for reducing risk and failure. “I could cross-reference my daily work with the examples quoted in the study materials and think of . . . different ways to approach the same problems,” she says. “My eyes were opened to many options that I had overlooked in the past.”

For example, Cheung recently wanted to identify the optimal logistics strategy that she could offer her customers in order to generate the best value for the company. By referring to the CSCP textbooks that were right on her desk, she says that she was able to apply lessons from the course materials and think in a much broader perspective. Importantly, Cheung adds that having these industry best practices available at all times offers her a new approach that enriches her credibility and recognition in the workplace.

Important takeaways

Beyond the personal growth Cheung experienced, she also enjoys the enhanced teamwork, professional development, and career advancement that have occurred as direct results of her organization’s CSCP initiatives. Cheung explains that the teams at Shell that have pursued the APICS CSCP program together now have “a consistent foundation and structure, common vocabulary, and an understanding of the underlying information technologies to collaborate on cross-departmental business solutions.”

Furthermore, she believes that she will continue to progress professionally thanks to her ability to make more valuable contributions and be highly effective at her day-to-day activities—all of which, she adds, means that she is better equipped for a career in supply chain.

“I would definitely encourage others to take the APICS CSCP courses in order to develop and enhance their skills, to create and execute a global supply chain management strategy that meets customer needs, to reduce cost, and to increase profits,” she says. “The knowledge is yours. Use it, share it.”