

Supply Chain Management: Career Path

Addy Kristel Cano

Reading and Writing for the College Bound, Third Hour

South Lyon East High School

Abstract

This paper is a general overview into the career option of supply chain management and the impact it has on international business in today's economy. The topics discussed will be the requirements and responsibilities as well as the expectations to be marketable to companies in the look for majors in supply chain management. Another topic that is prevalent in this paper is how much one can earn by obtaining a job in this field and how that allows or limits the expenses one is able to engage in. The close look into this major consists in discovering if the overall aspects will be a match to a person's desired lifestyle and working conditions. I consider this career path to be an adequate choice for me due to the standard guidelines that apply to each state/country that provides the flexibility of moving and the aspects such as competitive and data driven that surround the major itself.

Keywords: Industry, Market, Supply Chain

Career Research Paper

The field of business can be a very multifarious starting from accounting, finance, real estate, etc. Business is what moves the world and essentially the starting point for the prosperous economy of the future. Many branches of business have been created since globalization became a large component in the last two decades and trade began to expand. According to SCM (2017) Supply chain management is one of the fundamental reasons why trade around the world and production is made more efficient. This career offers a non monotonous lifestyle within the workplace and allows one to expand in problem solving as well as critical thinking.

History

The way this career has evolved overtime has depended largely on the markets and the taxation/economy regarding raw materials mainly being imported or exported to different countries. Supply chain management is a relatively new concept that surrounds the idea of efficiency and productivity.

“One of first instance of the term supply chain management appeared in the early 1980s, in an article of The Financial Times, although it wasn’t until the mid-1990s that the concept gained mainstream recognition” (Kolenko, n.d)

Many factors that have contributed to major change in this field have been accredited to new methodology such as the way systems are managed in the industry especially automotive (auto parts). Today, supply chain management is a much larger area and holds more value in companies than it did when it started.

On The Job

Supply chain management is the flow of goods and services that could be within a country or around the world. This area of business is dedicated to movement of raw materials or products efficiently in order to ensure a company's success when manufacturing or selling a product. The appeal for this career is that it is never tedious in the sense that it is not repetitive. This job is made for people who like to solve problems and come up with ideas to find the right solution "The degree of how well a supply chain can serve their customer ultimately defines it's competitive edge in the market" (Lu, 2011, p. 10). Supply chain managers not only work in the logistics and purchasing inventory but they also make sure to provide with suggestions to improve productivity, quality, etc. According to Investopedia the focal responsibilities consist mainly on 5 parts:

1. "The plan or strategy
2. The source (of raw materials or services)
3. Manufacturing (focused on productivity and efficiency)
4. Delivery and logistics
5. The return system (for defective or unwanted products)" (2018).

Work Environment and Daily Duties

There are some tacit characteristics of working in supply chain management for instance relying greatly on good customer service, taking calls, sending emails, and having group discussions. However, there are some that are important to elucidate before assuming the responsibilities that one may have in this specific job. Some of these less implied aspects are the close deadlines and abrupt decision making instances that are presented (What do Supply Chain

Managers Do, n.d). This can become difficult to work with if the person isn't used to managing stress and making situations work for the overall benefit of the company. Generally, employees work more than 40 hours a week and have a “routine” schedule meaning that they have days from 8:00 AM to 5PM. This is a typical day for someone in any business area working office hours and is very convenient for most.

Required Skills and Qualifications

In order to become a successful supply chain manager, a person needs to have the right skills and leadership qualities to contribute to a company's prosperity. One of the most important skills needed for this field is cost accounting skills. This is necessary and especially required for financially making transactions such as importing or exporting materials needed to fabricate a product. Another important skill, as stated by expert in supply chain Hanks (n.d), is the ability of unprecedented speed of communication. In this career field it is especially necessary to “communicate effectively through presentations, email, one-on-one, and team discussion”(SME, 2002), this can show leadership and apply to understanding what a customer's expectations may or may not be. As a neophyte, these skills will slowly but surely develop with persistence and tenacity. It is important for a person in this field not to be impetuous in decision making. Everything must be well thought out in a sagacious fashion in order to ensure a better flow for the business. There are no specific age, gender, or physical expectations meaning that almost anyone with drive and a business oriented mentality is capable of going down this career path.

Required Education

The required education for supply chain management consists of four years of the major to graduate. Some of the courses that are expected are classes such as: Logistics and Transportation, Industry Applications, Customs, and Compliance and Security, that provide essential learning skills for the job itself (Supply Chain Management, n.d). There is no specific minor needed in this area of business but the most popular for people to choose is logistics and or any financial related minor. According to statistics shown (Figure 2), it is much better to have a master's degree, this ensures to show much more capacitation in the area. This makes it easier for a prospect to find an adequate job regarding the career faster than if just applying with the regular four years of study. In general, for most cases a four year bachelor's degree would suffice to start a successful career. Ancillary education is recommended as well; characteristics such as internships or volunteer opportunities within the field are very well seen by employers.

Earnings and Expenses

Many times, looking at how much a career may lead to earning is difficult considering the large variety of things one can do in a particular field. According to MSU employment results, the average base salary earned in supply chain management is \$101,836 per year and the average signing bonus is about \$18,411 (2017). This means that the career falls within the upper range of highest salaries in the business field majors. It also shows how demand for the job and the complexity of it may be the reason for it's higher pay. With this annual salary, the lifestyle that one can expect is that of an upper middle class person/family. This can include the

possibility of going on trips, living in a better area and thus offering overall stability. Another factor of this higher pay may signify a better chance of a comfortable retirement with matching as a contribution to a 401K. Many look for these desired traits when looking for a job in any field. However, these are not guaranteed aspects, some if not all are earned depending on the company and or industry one may be working for.

Conclusion

Overall, the career of supply chain management is a field that provides many employment opportunities in today's world given the fact that it is one of the factors that greatly impacts the economy not only in the U.S but everywhere else (Figure 1). I consider this to be a right fit for me because I have the drive and energy to provide with ideas regarding efficiency and transportation.

“At the end of the day, supply chain management is optimized when you are delivering what your customers want, when they want it — and doing that by spending as little money as possible” (Marion, n.d)

Having a predilection for jobs that offer a unique approach to solving problems and implementing creativity, I consider this to be an appropriate field for my personality type.

Another reason I am interested in this job is due to the international opportunities offered and the similar guidelines it has wherever I may go. International relations and business ethics are two things im passionate about and are very much used when working in supply chain management.

Next Steps

After analyzing this as a career option and determining the benefits and requirements as well as the daily duties, I wish to pursue this title. The next steps I will take in order to ensure everything is in place is to go to Michigan State University, that has one of the best programs for this field and obtain my bachelor's degree as well as later continue to pursue my master's and get involved with possible employment opportunities and internships during and after school.

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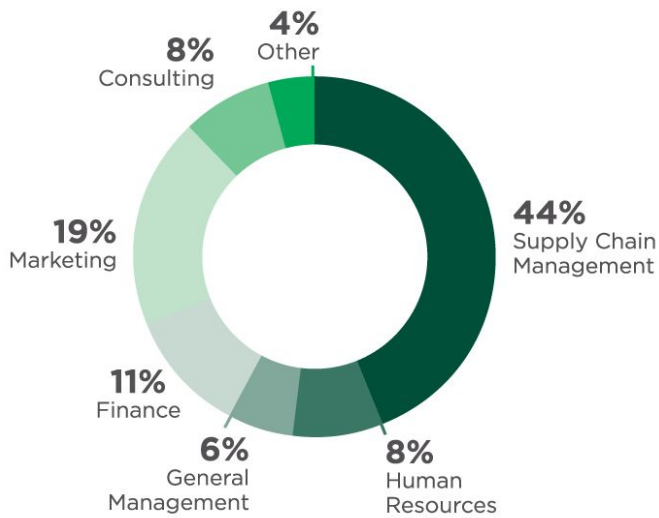


Figure 1, Jobs Available in the Business Field. This chart depicts the careers that provide more job opportunities in percentages

Full-time workers age 25 to 34 in 2011



Figure 2, Why Go To Graduate School: SCM. This graph shows the different starting pay one can obtain with a bachelor's vs. a Master's degree.