

HEADLINE: UQ establishes itself as a leader of supply chain education

LEAD IN: Successful competition in a global marketplace requires companies to better manage their supply chains. Today, there is a greater reliance on technology, as well as a need to develop practices that enhance supply chains processes. Rebecca Byfield talks to UQ Director of Executive Education, Rob Douglas about the university's new Supply Chain and Logistics Management Course.

BODY:

There's no denying it. Over the last couple of years, supply chains have become increasingly complex. The world might be smaller place, but that just means supply chain activity occurs on an even more global scale, obtaining resources from further and further afield.

It's no longer enough for industry professionals to learn their skills on the job. They need multifaceted practices and process that enhance leaner systems, organisational agility, product development, innovation, and sustainable operations.

In short, they need targeted education specific to the supply chain industry.

That's where the University of Queensland (UQ) comes in. As one of Australia's leading providers of professional development and post-graduate study opportunities, UQ are ideally positioned to provide the targeted education the industry requires.

Two years ago, they created the Supply Chain and Logistics Management Course in conjunction with the Supply Chain & Logistics Association of Australia (SCLAA).

"UQ Business School recognises and supports SCLAA's vision to continue the development of skills and cutting-edge practice for supply chain and logistics practitioners," Douglas says.

The course targets middle managers wanting to address issues, and create a cohesive workforce that strives for improved supply chain management.

"It helps strategic decision makers and operational managers in both domestic and international markets to manage logistics successfully across their business."

Taking place over four days in August, participants learn vital skills to enable them to identify current challenges and issues within their own organisations.

"We teach them best practice and future directions in supply chain management, how to create lean systems and organisational agility, as well as how to solve problems using a range of practical tools," Douglas says.

Topics cover dynamic new product development, stock, transport and total-cost function modelling, innovation leadership, and sustainable operations.

“They learn how to put in place seamless processes for manufacturing and logistics, as well as redefining supply chain processes and optimising resources.”

Douglas has a strong background in business to business marketing, as well as significant experience interfacing between academia and the business community.

Prior to his current role, he was the Director of External Relations and Commercial for UQ Business School and, in partnership with UniQuest (UQ’s main commercialisation company), oversaw the School’s relationships with industry and commercial operations.

He has led management and leadership development programs for companies such as AAPT Australia, Westpac Banking Corporation, Telecom NZ Ltd, Bank of New Zealand and ZESPRI International.

Speaking of his vision for the course, Douglas says he hopes to reach a stage where all facets of business and industry further understand the role and impact of supply chain management.

“So many organisations focus on topics such as procurement, but fail to address strategic issues across the entire supply chain. Businesses have a silo approach in this area without analysing all of the factors that bring it together, or giving staff the broader vision for all of the facets that interact.”

Two of the industry’s leading professionals – Dr David Parker and Liam Stitt – facilitate the course.

Dr Parker, a senior lecturer at the university, specialises in project management, operations management, supply chains, and lean systems. He has worked with numerous international firms and is the author of two books: *Managing Projects*, *Managing People*; and *Service Operations Management* – the total experience.

Liam Stitt is a supply chain, logistics, and process improvement practitioner. Stitt’s underlying expertise is in change management and business improvement, while his principal strengths lie in developing strategic concepts and translating these visions into reality.

“At completion, participants will have discovered keys to successful supply chain management, developed tools and models to examine their current system, have the skills to transform their organisation to a process orientated system, improved their performance in international and domestic markets, and learned how successful leaders engage others in the supply chain process,” Douglas says.

Douglas believes the course, coupled with UQ’s Services and Supply Networks Research Club, play an important role in improving Australia’s supply chain industry.

Offering access to a wide range of research with leading companies, members are introduced to world-class services delivery systems and supply chains to create and sustain competitive advantage.

“The Research Club provides opportunities to set the agenda for applied research, as well as the chance to network with other industry professionals and business leaders. By identifying and discussing issues of importance to club members, our research agenda is directly influenced by the needs of managers,” Douglas says.

Anyone wanting more information on the Research Club can visit <http://ssnrc.business.uq.edu.au/>

BREAK OUT BOX:

ATHOL CARTER:

Another aspect of the partnership between UQ and SCLAA is a National Scholarship for the Supply Chain and Logistics Management Course.

The scholarship is open to SCLAA members currently working in the supply chain, logistics or transport industries. It covers tuition, course materials, and all associated costs to complete the course, as well as tickets to attend the Queensland Supply Chain and Logistics Conference.

This year’s recipient is Athol Carter, Transport Operations Coordinator for Ostwald Bros Transport in Dalby, on Queensland’s Western Downs.

“I’m a third generation road transporter. Both my dad and my grandfather worked in road transport, which means I’ve pretty much been exposed to the industry my whole life,” Carter says.

Growing up 160 kilometres north of Brisbane in Gympie, an area famous for its goldfields, Carter completed primary school in his hometown before heading off to the big smoke for boarding school, attending Brisbane’s Nudgee College.

Once he started his career, his long exposure to the industry really started to pay off, winning him a “truckload” of awards and honours.

In 2006, Carter was named Queensland Trucking Association’s Professional Driver of the Year award.

In 2007, he won the Driver of the Year award for Truckin Life, and was State finalist for Scania’s Young Australian Truck Driver.

The following year, Carter was a finalist in SCLAA's Young Transport & Logistics award, as well as the winner of their Transport & Logistics Future Leader award.

Yet despite his many accolades, Carter remains genuinely surprised at being awarded this year's UQ/SCLAAA Supply Chain Scholarship.

"I've got no idea how many people I was up against but I do know I was competing against people Australia wide," Carter says.

"If I had an edge in winning, I think it was probably my passion and dedication to the industry."

When we spoke to Carter, he had already started the course.

"I knew straight away it would strengthen my knowledge and open me up to new ideas."

Carter believes the information he is learning is practical rather than daunting.

"The teachers are great at sharing their industry knowledge. I've learned all kinds of new information on change management and how to implement it in the workplace, as well as a whole heap of new logistics and supply chain processes."

Thanks to consumer needs in both the international and domestic markets, Carter sees a strong future for the supply chain industry.

"We're experiencing a period of rapid growth, with many in the industry predicting it to double."

It is for that reason that Carter thinks the scholarship is a great initiative and encourages everyone in the industry to apply.

"It's all about learning practical tools and applications that you can apply to your everyday business."

Conclusion:

The combination of the management course, the Business School/SCLAA scholarship, and the research club means UQ is set to be a vital part of Australia's supply chain future.

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