



**Materials  
Management  
Group**

# ISM Materials Management News

*February 2009, VOL 5, ISSUE 1*

## DEPARTMENTS IN THIS ISSUE:

### Materials Management “Managing Careers vs. Chasing Jobs”

Sheila Petcavage, C.P.M., 216-987-5571  
[sheila.petcavage@tri-c.edu](mailto:sheila.petcavage@tri-c.edu)

### Purchasing “The Engineers Among Us”

Richard G. Weissman, C.P.M. 978-232-2269  
[rweissma@endicott.edu](mailto:rweissma@endicott.edu)

### Supply Management Month

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### **About ISM**

Founded in 1915, the Institute for Supply Management™ (ISM) is the largest supply management association in the world as well as one of the most respected. ISM's mission is to lead the supply management profession through its standards of excellence, research, promotional activities, and education. ISM's membership base includes more than 45,000 supply management professionals with a network of domestic and international affiliated associations. ISM is a not-for-profit association that provides opportunities for the promotion of the profession and the expansion of professional skill and knowledge.

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## MANAGEMENT ROLE

### MANAGING YOUR CAREER versus CHASING JOBS

**Sheila Petcavage, C.P.M.**

Professor of Management and Supply Management

Cuyahoga Community College



I constantly lecture my students on the difference between managing a career and chasing down a new job. I ask them which process puts them in control of their lives. This economy drives this point home better than any lecture I could ever give! Those who have carved out a career in supply management are in a better position to buy a new car or look for a home, even in these times of tight credit. Those who have chased one buying position after another may be struggling to maintain the home they currently own, let alone hope to get approved for a new auto loan.

“So how do I become a career manager?” you ask. The main differences between managers and chasers are how you approach your continued education, pursue challenging experiences, and take control of when you start and when you leave a position.

Rene G. Rendon, DBA, CPSM, C.P.M., in the January, 2009 issue of ISM’s *NewsLine*, tells us “that a proper balance between education and experience is needed for a successful career in supply management. Focusing too much on one at the expense of the other will be detrimental to your career. In many leading organizations, the requirements for entry-level positions in supply management include a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution, typically in a business administration, technical, legal or other related area. Without this college degree, résumés and job applications are quickly sent to the circular file. On the other hand, employees with college degrees who do not increase the depth and breadth of their supply management experience are ultimately directed to the exit doors and told not to return.”

Rene goes on to say that a college degree has a shelf life of approximately three years. During that time, the supply management professional must be garnering solid experience to enhance one's value to the field. "Freshly minted college graduates starting their careers in supply management should concentrate on obtaining the most valuable job experience in their organization. Asking for the most challenging assignments and tasks, and volunteering for the tough projects, add to the fullness and richness of their job experience." (*NewsLine, January 2009*)

Dr. Michael A. McGinnis, CPSM, C.P.M., Associate Professor of Business at Penn State University New Kensington Campus, has been espousing the importance of additional credentials in leveraging your formal education and supply management experiences. In particular, we have learned much about the CPSM designation from his many contributions published in this newsletter. Over the past months, Dr. McGinnis has contributed articles examining the make-up of these examinations, providing us with a guideline in preparing for each of the three parts of the test.

Professional credentials are the best option for improving the value of your education. "The Certified Professional in Supply Management<sup>®</sup> (CPSM<sup>®</sup>) qualification requires both formal education (a four-year college degree) as well as real-world supply management experience (three years of full-time, professional supply management experience). Additionally, the continuing education requirements for the CPSM<sup>®</sup> ensure that this qualification will not go stale or lose its value." (*NewsLine, January 2009*)

It is success in the first two steps of the process of career management that allow you to be in control of your career moves. The credentials supporting the experience and the experience reinforcing the credentials, allow you to manage your career advancement and success.

In many ways, buyers have inside information on the financial health of their organization. The schedule of payments to our suppliers, allow us to gauge how well we are doing from the money side. I once worked for a company that eventually filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Many in the organization were flabbergasted. We in purchasing were arranging C.O.D. with suppliers in order to keep the production lines going. Based on this "insider" knowledge, while we looked for money to keep the lines up, we were also looking for our next career move.

Supply Managers wishing to control their careers will keep a constant finger on the pulse of their organization as well as the pulse of the job market.

# PURCHASING

## THE ENGINEERS AMONG US

**Richard G. Weissman, C.P.M.**  
*Assistant Professor, Endicott College*

Having grown up in the industrial crescent of northern New Jersey, my turnpike exit was actually on the opening credits of The Sopranos, I knew exactly where the recent emergency landing of the US Air jet took place. The skill of the pilot, the ability of the crew, the talent of the first responders, and the calm collective behavior of the passengers all worked to convert a tragedy into a miracle. We'll be talking about this one for a long time.

I recently read a letter to the editor in my local paper not only extolling the virtues of all involved at the scene, but to those behind the scenes as well. The author of the letter claimed the engineers of the jets were heroes as well. They successfully designed a jet that could make a successful water landing and stay afloat for an adequate length of time. That comment got me thinking about the engineers I've worked with over the years, some of which I'd trust with my wallet and kids. Others, well let's just say that perhaps they've made the wrong career decision. I'd like to mention a few of the ones that have had a positive impact on my career. Their names have been changed to protect their identity.....and my reputation as an engineering slayer of sorts.

Randy was a manufacturing engineer from the old school. Now I realize that there would be no need for manufacturing engineers if the design folks have done their job correctly but that is a problem to be addressed at another time. Randy was a roll up the sleeves guy who everyone liked, including customers and suppliers. His goal was to solve problems, not assign blame, and that made him a popular teammate. Randy was put in charge of supplier support for outsourcing as well as managing his own department, but he was never too busy to personally respond to a suppliers call for help. Quickly. His reputation as a supplier support person grew and suppliers clamored for his help.

I was a commodity manager responsible for electrical outsourcing and Randy and I traveled a lot, either in support of our existing outsourcing suppliers or in search of new ones. He was a great travel partner and on a first name basis with the manufacturing staff at our suppliers. They looked forward to seeing him. His engineering strength was supplemented with people skills and a practical approach to problem solving.

He listened to recommendations, agreed to most, and quickly modified prints and specifications to incorporate changes. No ego trip for Randy. Retired now, he was my best engineering friend ever.

Josh was an electronics engineer with a business head and a big heart. Painfully shy, Josh liked to support supply management in any way he could. He ran a test engineering group that transitioned from in-house test to working with suppliers, and that transition went well. Josh's staff were all experienced and reveled in Josh's leadership. What was once an isolated, back of the factory group became a very visible and cohesive team, supporting suppliers, design and manufacturing, and customer issues. And Josh was the leading force behind the transformation.

Josh and I also traveled together quite often, supporting supplier issues and performing audits. Josh liked to do financial analysis projects and often performed make / buy analysis and bill of material reviews. His analysis and recommendations were trusted within the organization, especially the financial folks. Our trips were giant brainstorming events. Josh was always looking to improve processes and get more involved in the business end of things. I was always looking to get more technical knowledge. We learned from each other. Like Randy, I trusted Josh. I see him from time to time in the local supermarket and we chat about children more than power distribution panels. I'm happy for that.

Not all engineers have to like to spin wrenches or tweak a potentiometer. Some work for software companies and play with code. Enter Kate, a software development engineer I shared an office with during a stint with a technology start-up. This was not as civilized an organization as one might expect, but Kate traveled well through the worlds of unending customer feedback, unrealistic marketing requirements, nosey venture capital folks, and backend technology gurus operating in another solar system. She kept a smile on her face, her punch list accurate, and her creative side cranking. While there was a considerable amount of time to market pressure, she didn't show it. Her work was excellent...and on-time.

Sharing an office, I was often Kate's focus group of one. I was able to learn a lot about GUI (graphical user interface), top and left navigations, tabs, layout, color, and linkable content. While I love the smell of cutting oil in a machine shop, or the excitement of an automatic chip insertion tool wailing away, I have to admit the things I learned from Kate, a teacher at heart, have been some of the most valuable things I've taken away from any job.

Out of all of the functional areas of a business, I find the engineering function to be the most difficult one to navigate. Perhaps some in the discipline lack people skills, embrace functional snobbery, or are unable to simplify a complex subject. Or, in some cases they need to feel that they know more than you do. Whatever, I find that breaking through these barriers are challenging and rewarding.

I collect relationships and I find that relationships with engineering tend to be deeper than those in other functions. The core of my success with Randy, Josh, and Kate was an excellent relationship. Maybe it was my respect, and envy, for their technical ability and creativity. Maybe it was because they've bailed me out of many, many supplier issues over the years through the judicious use of a well written engineering change order. Or perhaps it was because they always have something neat to play with on their desk. I could not have done my job without the support, knowledge, and relationships without all of the engineers among us.

Well, most of them.

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*Richard G. Weissman, C.P.M. is an Assistant Professor in the Van Loan School of Graduate and Professional Studies at Endicott College in Beverly, MA. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the ISM Materials Management Group.*

## ISM – Supply Management Month

EDITOR'S NOTE: It is a well known fact that purchased goods, services, and materials account for more than 15% of revenues in the service sector and as much as 55 – 60% of revenues in the manufacturing sector. The potential the purchasing and supply department has for dramatically lowering costs cannot be ignored. Too often upper management does not recognize, nor exploit the power of effective purchasing. It is the job of practitioners in the area of supply management to identify ways of informing upper management of the potential of purchasing. March has been designated by ISM as Supply Management Month, 2009. Take the time to read the article from ISM's *NewsLine*, and do your part to help promote this noble profession and its contributions to American businesses' bottom line.

### **NewsLine**

*January 2009, Vol. 21, No. 1*  
**for the volunteer leadership**

### **Spread the Word — Sharing the Value of Supply Management**

#### **Supply Management Month 2009 Materials Available Online**

Each year in March, Institute for Supply Management™ (ISM) demonstrates its commitment to lead supply management by encouraging month-long celebrations and awareness activities showcasing the importance of the profession. Supply Management Month is a time of year when everyone — regardless of job title, organizational role or even membership status in ISM — can play an important role in celebrating and promoting the profession.

In addition to celebrating with fellow affiliate members and coworkers, supply management professionals can leverage Supply Management Month to educate others in their organizations ... in the local business community ... and at local educational institutions about who they are and what they do.

A 2009 Supply Management Month poster is among the resources now available on the ISM Web site. The poster is available in several electronic art file formats and can be printed in letter or legal paper stock. Supply Management Month Information and resources are located on the ISM Web site ([www.ism.ws](http://www.ism.ws)) by selecting Members Only, Affiliate Resources, Affiliate Support and then [Supply Management Month Information](#).



The online Supply Management Month information also includes these additional resources:

- Time Frame for planning Supply Management Month
- Supply Management Month Checklist
- Ideas to Assist Your Affiliate in Enhancing Its Media Coverage During Supply Management Month
- Sample Supply Management Month News Release
- Public Service Announcements for Supply Management Month
- Special Event Ideas and Promotional Tools

Supply managers' capabilities and responsibilities have seen unprecedented growth in importance. Never before have supply managers been asked to do so much and take on as much responsibility as they do now. Get involved and participate in Supply Management Month 2009.

# MMG Nominations

## MMG Nominations for Election of Officers

Election of officers for the ISM – Materials Management/Electronics Group takes place every two years (in odd numbered years). The process for this election is outlined in ARTICLE VI: Elections of the charter shown on page 11 of this newsletter. This being 2009, is an election year.

The Nominating Committee includes Mr. Fred Lutz, immediate past Chair; Dr. Kenneth Killen, Chair; and Ms. Mary Walker, Vice-Chair. They have put forth the following slate for the 2009 election.

- Chair – Mary Walker
- Vice Chair – Karl Harward
- Secretary/Treasurer – Rick Rivers
- Immediate Past Chair – Kenneth Killen

The election will be held at the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors. This meeting will take place at the Annual ISM International Supply Management Conference in May, 2009. (See below for more information on the conference.



[94th Annual ISM International Supply Management Conference and Educational Exhibit](#)

May 3-6, 2009

Charlotte, North Carolina

## ARTICLE VI: ELECTIONS

- (a) The election of Officers shall occur during the Annual Meeting in odd numbered years and shall be by majority of votes cast by Executive Committee members present at scheduled face-to-face or electronic meeting.
- (b) The Chair shall, 90 days prior to the Annual Meeting in odd numbered years, appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of the immediate past Chair or the most recent past Chair available, who shall chair the Nominating Committee and two current members of the Executive Committee.

Prospective nominees shall be members of the Board of Directors and shall affirm willingness and ability to accept the responsibilities of office if elected.

The Nominating Committee shall submit the names of the nominees for Officers at the above noted Annual Meeting.

- (c) The election or confirmation of Officers will immediately follow the report of the Nominating Committee and the new Officers shall officially take office at the end of the Annual Meeting next following the election.
- (d) In the event of a vacancy occurring during a term of an Officer, such vacancy shall be filled by appointment of the Chair with the approval of the Board of Directors.

# MMG LEADERSHIP

## **CHAIR**

Dr. Ken Killen, C.P.M.  
Rocky River, OH  
[drkenk@earthlink.net](mailto:drkenk@earthlink.net)

## **VICE CHAIR**

Mary Walker, C.P.M.,A.P.P.  
CPP, CPPM, CISCAM  
Dallas, TX  
[mewalker@hagemeyerna.com](mailto:mewalker@hagemeyerna.com)

## **SECRETARY / TREASURER**

Richard C. Rivers  
East Rochester, NY  
[rick@riversorg.com](mailto:rick@riversorg.com)

## **PAST CHAIR**

Fred Lutz, C.P.M., CIRM, A.P.P.  
Rochester, NY  
[fredlutz@hotmail.com](mailto:fredlutz@hotmail.com)

## **DIRECTORS**

John Guju, MBA, C.P.M.  
Seattle, WA  
[johng@psbc.org](mailto:johng@psbc.org)

Karl Harward, MBA  
Salt Lake City, UT  
[karl.harward@slcgov.com](mailto:karl.harward@slcgov.com)

Ray Hopkins, C.P.M.  
Memphis, TN  
[r.hopkins@speerproducts.com](mailto:r.hopkins@speerproducts.com)

## ***MEMBERSHIP CHAIR***

## **DIRECTORS (cont.)**

Tony Noe, C.P.M., A.P.P.,  
CIRM  
Hopkinsville, KY  
[scpro@att.net](mailto:scpro@att.net)

Sheila Petcavage MBA, C.P.M.  
Cleveland, OH  
[sheila.petcavage@tri-c.edu](mailto:sheila.petcavage@tri-c.edu)  
***NEWSLETTER CHAIR***

Bob Smith, C.P.M.  
Chicago, IL  
[robert.smith@ttbweb.com](mailto:robert.smith@ttbweb.com)

Richard Weissman,  
Beverly, MA  
[rweissma@endicott.edu](mailto:rweissma@endicott.edu)

## **NEWSLETTER DEPARTMENTS**

Dr. Brad Hull  
[bzhull@jcu.edu](mailto:bzhull@jcu.edu)

Dr. Michael McGinnis, C.P.M.  
[Mam47@psu.edu](mailto:Mam47@psu.edu)

Joe Shannon  
[jvshannon@profitorsavings.com](mailto:jvshannon@profitorsavings.com)

## **ADVISORS**

Marilyn Gettinger, C.P.M.  
Tom Traub, PE, C.P.M.  
Robert A. Kemp, Ph.D.,  
CPSM, C.P.M.