

## Sustainable supply chain programme unlocks tertiary study opportunities for employees

**A new supply chain training and education programme will provide customers of Nestlé South Africa with enhanced service, insight and engagement from supply chain staff.**

The Nestlé Supply Chain Development Programme aims to provide sustainable value creation for Nestlé customers such as Pick n Pay, Shoprite, Spar, Massmart and Woolworths. Simultaneously it provides a solution to education inequalities that affect Nestlé supply chain staff that were previously unable to pursue suitable university studies.

The initiative came into existence when the company identified that its supply chain operation will only remain progressive and relevant if employees are empowered as 'supply chain graduate professionals'. This vision encouraged the Nestlé Supply Chain College and education delivery partner, NMMU Business School, to design and deliver a unique programme. It offers training for the likes of supply, factory network and demand planners, operational and strategic buyers, warehouse, transport, stock control, freight managers and supply chain analysts.

Last year, Nestlé successfully launched the programme, placing fifteen supply chain staff across South Africa in its one-year, part-time Supply Chain Development Programme. The initiative was launched on 20 August at the Nestlé Longmeadow Distribution Centre in Johannesburg, where programme delivery takes place. To relieve after-hour study pressures on employees, the programme is presented during work hours with full backing and support from stakeholders. Nestlé sought to provide authentic levels of a formal academic learning environment to provide student motivation and engagement.

"Programme modules have been customised to meet Nestlé's requirements without becoming excessively FMCG-orientated. This rationale was followed to



*The programme steering committee consists of: (from left to right) Rajee Chaitoo, Prof Gideon Horn, Leon Mouton, Dr Tony Domingo, Charles Hopkins and Joey Staphorst.*

create a university learning experience for supply chain staff," says Joey Staphorst, NMMU Business School head of business development.

"Extensive consultation and collaboration between NMMU Business School and the Nestlé Supply Chain College took place for programme customisation and contextualisation in order to adhere to Nestlé's global best practices," he continues.

The programme comprises nine modules covering the disciplines of lean manufacturing, finance, operations, management, leadership, demand and supply chain planning, warehouse management, logistics and procurement. The programme focus is seventy per cent biased to supply chain functional development, while the remaining thirty per cent is focused on management, leadership and financial development.

"The strong functional focus was intentionally engineered into the programme to assist professional growth that would equip the staff to deal with South African supply chain complexities and its spill-over effect into the retail industry," says Prof Gideon Horn, department head NMMU Logistics and academic head of the Nestlé Supply Chain Development Programme.

Nestlé South Africa supply chain development manager, Charles Hopkins explains the importance of the programme as keystone for Nestlé's organisational and human resources development in the supply chain division.

"Today, our challenge is to integrate our supply chain with the chains of our customers and suppliers. ERP systems allow companies to create their own internal supply chains, but the emphasis has now shifted to finding synergy, reducing waste and increasing responsiveness by

integrating disparate supply chains across companies. The manufacturer who does it best first, gains the competitive advantage of reduced transport and warehousing costs, reduced waste and reduced inventory levels, whilst having a better on-shelf-availability position. The net effect will allow us the possibility to improve market share and to increase numeric distribution in an industry of thin margins with tremendous input cost pressures from commodities."

Hopkins said that Nestlé considered the social realities of supply chain staff, especially those who weren't able to study at universities. "We wanted to unlock future study opportunities for employees who weren't able to attend tertiary education, and devoted our organisational resources to address this."

"Our supply chain programme is designed in such a manner that it equips our leaders with the required levels of capabilities to continuously 'learn-unlearn-relearn' innovative techniques, that would advance Nestlé's agenda in today's ever growing, complex, volatile, ambiguous and uncertain world. I am delighted to state that we are now seeing very good results emerging through the first cluster of employees that are part of this programme," says Nestlé supply chain director, Dr Tony Domingo.

He concludes: "Given the huge challenges associated with the sustainability of business as a whole, shareholders' growing expectations, compounded by the compressed economies and intensified competitive landscape, I have no doubt that the NMMU & Nestlé's integrated Supply Chain Management Programme is one of the fundamental keys to our success. From a group point of view, I think we are now well geared." 