

# Why upskilling your supply chain is critical for sector growth

According to Tonya Lamb, business development executive at Sapics, The Professional Body for Supply Chain Management in Southern Africa, when the US President turned his attention to supply chains, it was a compelling confirmation that the profession is important.



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This acknowledgement galvanised supply chain professionals around the globe, including the South African supply chain community.

"The Covid-19 crisis thrust supply chains and supply chain management into the spotlight like never before. It is heartening for the profession to get validation like this through President's Biden's executive order to review the global supply chains used by four key industries in an effort to avoid the shortages in medical equipment, semiconductors and other goods seen as critical during the pandemic.

"Supply chains and effective supply chain management don't just get goods from A to B. They have the power to save lives, to save the planet and to ensure brighter futures for individuals, organisations and communities," states Lamb. "Those of us working in the supply chain profession always knew this. US President Joe Biden's acknowledgement of the vital role played by supply chains and supply chain professionals during the Covid-19 crisis has inspired, uplifted, united and raised the spirits of the global supply chain community.

"We faced a novel virus and novel supply chain challenges. We rose to the challenges. We continue to do so every day as the world continues to battle Covid-19. We have had to deal with knock-on effects and bullwhip effects. Some commentators noted that the Covid-19 crisis was not just a black swan event, but that the supply chain profession, in particular, was dealing with a 'bevy of black swans'.

"We worked to keep toilet paper on shelves; and in South Africa, we had to keep alcohol flowing, and then not flowing, and then flowing, and then not flowing, and then flowing. On a much more important and serious note, though, supply chain professionals have been the heroes behind the scenes, supporting our frontline workers and helping to keep people safe and healthy by getting PPE (personal protective equipment) to where it was needed, when it was needed."

## **Challenging and fulfilling profession**

Lamb contends that, right now, the supply chain profession is one of the most exciting, challenging and fulfilling fields to be working in. "We at Sapics are immensely proud to be supporting the important work and achievements of supply chain professionals."

"We cannot relax and rest on our laurels now, though, as our profession is still dealing with one of the greatest pandemic challenges yet: the distribution of the Covid-19 vaccine. Effective supply chain management is the key ingredient needed to roll out the vaccine successfully," Lamb asserts, noting that this will be one of the supply chain and logistics profession's greatest endeavours ever.

"We have never needed professional, suitably qualified supply chain professionals more than we do right now. It has also never been more important for supply chain professionals to keep learning, growing and sharing knowledge; so that we can beat Covid-19 and we are ready for whatever other disruptions and crises the future holds," she stresses.

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