

A world of opportunities for women in SCM

By RICK BLASGEN, CSCMP President and CEO | From the *CSCMP Supply Chain Quarterly*, [Quarter 3 2011](#) issue

If you want to make a difference every single day, then SCM is the field for you.

When it comes to choosing a profession, women are no longer limited by the gender roles of past decades. Today, they work in many formerly male-dominated businesses, such as medicine, law, and banking, to name just a few.

Young women who are choosing their careers recognize that more doors are open to them now than in the past. Still, many of them overlook an area where there are abundant opportunities not just for jobs but for lifelong careers: supply chain management (SCM).

The field of SCM welcomes women with open arms and seems custom-crafted for their innate characteristics: intuition, flexibility, empathy, leadership, and multi-tasking abilities. SCM offers women unlimited opportunities, including the chance to advance to the highest levels of the profession.

Here's one example. Deborah Lentz (PSU, Business Logistics 83) joined Kraft Foods' Nabisco subsidiary in 1983 at a customer service center in the United States. She held numerous leadership positions at the company, and in 2006 was promoted to vice president to lead the business process design team for Kraft's North American SAP software installation. In 2008, she was appointed vice president, customer service and logistics of Kraft Foods Europe, with responsibility for product supply, logistics operations, and customer service throughout that continent. Just recently, she was promoted to senior vice president, customer service and logistics for Kraft Foods North America. Her decision to choose SCM as a career, Lentz says, "was one of the best decisions I've ever made."

Women historically have entered professions like teaching and nursing that gave them the opportunity to make the world a better place. They can achieve this goal, and much more, by becoming supply chain managers. "If you want to make a difference every single day, then SCM is the field for you," says Professor Nancy Nix of Texas Christian University. "As a supply chain professional, you are the critical link to humanity's quality of life by making sure that people have the products and resources they need to survive and thrive." What's more, adds Dr. Nix, SCM offers the opportunity to positively impact the environment by using assets like inventory, transportation, and packaging more efficiently.

If women are looking for a fulfilling career, then they should set their sights on SCM. "The most exciting—and demanding— aspect of the profession is that we are at the center of constant change," says Ann Drake, chief executive officer of DSC Logistics. "There are always new insights, new demands from customers, new shifts in collaborative opportunities, new economic circumstances, new regulations to comply with, innovative new processes, and new strategies to manage. If critical thinking and creative problem solving energize you, then this is the perfect career choice, as you will never be bored."

That's a recommendation that's hard to beat. So if you know a young woman who's contemplating her future direction, share this article with her, direct her to the "Young Professionals" section of CSCMP's website, and offer to be her mentor. She, our profession, and maybe even the world will benefit.