

# HOW TO BUILD YOUR PATH TO THE SUPPLY CHAIN EXECUTIVE SUITE

The guide for advancing your  
supply chain career!

# AboutThe Authors | Rodney Apple



Founder of & Managing Partner at SCM Talent Group

Co-Founder of Supply Chain Careers

20+ years of specializing in end-to-end supply chain recruitment

Spanning 10+ years, led supply chain recruitment for 4 corporations that made the Gartner Top 25 Supply Chain list:

- The Home Depot
- Kimberly-Clark
- Cummins
- The Coca-Cola Company

Personally filled more than 1,000 professional to executive supply chain positions

ASCM (formerly APICS) Supply Chain Career Coach from 2014-2021

ASCM Magazine Author for “Professional Development” from 2017 -2021

Presenter at CSCMP and APICS global conferences on supply chain talent topics

# HineshPatel



Senior Partner at SCM Talent Group

Co-Founder of Supply Chain Careers

Near decade of experience leading senior executive searches as Principal with Egon Zehnder, overseeing initially the US Supply Chain Practice & Operations Practice, and then the US Chemicals Practice

Former SVP at Hillenbrand (NYSE: HI) leading corporate strategy and M&A, helping the company transform from an \$800M single-line company to a \$2B multi-line manufacturer

Held executive and operational leadership roles at world-class companies:

Honeywell, Eaton, Milliken & Co.

Has deep senior-level operations and process improvement experience

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# Introduction

This will help you focus your time and energy on exploring the right companies and jobs that match your interests and career aspirations, while ensuring you're targeting opportunities with companies that are stable versus unstable.

We have collectively recruited exclusively within the supply chain sector for about 2 decades, which includes many years of experience recruiting on the inside of several large multinational corporations in addition to running an independent executive search firm. Through this experience, we have gained deep and valuable insights into the world of supply chain hiring and career advancement.

Over the course of our careers, we have closely followed the careers of thousands of supply chain professionals. One group that we have closely followed is the top supply chain leaders. These are professionals that have managed to accelerate their career development within supply chain, oftentimes reaching their top career goals long before their peers with the same tenure.

In this guide, you will find what these top leaders have in common and the techniques they utilize to achieve rapid success in their careers. Whether you're an experienced supply chain professional or a college student, you'll discover some new techniques and advice that can help you with accelerating your leadership career in supply chain.

# Ways to Set Yourself Up for Success

## **Set Career Goals That Motivate You.**

Staying motivated is the key to achieving career goals. When you set career goals for yourself, they must be deemed as “important” and there must be “value” associated with achieving them. Focus on establishing goals that match the highest priorities within your career first – goals that you know will create a strong sense of urgency to fulfill and will add value once achieved.

Be sure to write down each goal along with why it’s important to you and the value you expect to receive from achieving the goal. If you have established a professional mentor, then it would be a wise idea to share your career goals with this person because it can be a great way to generate inspiration when needed.



## **Set SMART Career Goals**

**Specific**—the career goal must be well defined and describe in precise detail what it is you want to achieve.

**Measurable**—if your goals don’t include numbers, dates, amounts, or percentages, you won’t be able to track and measure your progress.

**Achievable**—avoid setting goals that are near impossible to achieve or you’ll be setting yourself up for disappointment and frustration. You should avoid setting goals that are too easy to achieve as well. The best approach is to set stretch goals – something that’s realistic and challenging. Remember, keep goals within your reach but not yet within your grasp.

**Relevant**—closely align your goals with the direction you want your career to go in as this will help maintain the proper focus you’ll need to stay ahead.

**Timely**—all career goals should have a deadline. Deadlines help to create and maintain a sense of urgency.

# Ways to Set Yourself Up for Success

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## Develop Career Action Steps

Career goals are focused on achieving a desired outcome by an established deadline. Action steps are prioritized work tasks and milestones that you need to achieve in order to obtain your goal by the established deadline.

Write down these action steps and better yet, embed them into your favorite task management system such as Outlook for example.

## Review and Track Your Progress

Working towards achieving your career goals is a steady, ongoing process that requires a lot of focus and commitment. We encourage you to set up recurring reminders on your calendar each week to track progress made towards achieving your goals. Sometimes you'll need to make adjustments when unexpected events pop up in your life or career, so know that this is okay and perfectly normal.

With that said, always strive to keep your goal deadlines in place as pushing them back can lead to bad habits such as procrastination. If you do miss a deadline, set aside some time to reevaluate what went wrong and put a corrective action plan in place.

## Write Down Your Career Goals.

If you fail to write down your career goals, you will have more difficulty in achieving them. It is imperative that you not only write down your career goals but that you keep them in a highly visible place such as your desk, mirror, and/or glued to your laptop. Be sure to frame the goal positively e.g. "I will complete my APICS CSCP in 12 months" versus "I will try to complete my APICS CSCP in the next 1-2 years". Lastly, I'm sure you keep a To-Do List so be sure to keep your goals written at the top of the list as a constant reminder.

# Key Skills to Develop Early in Career

## **Communication.**

For many supply chain leadership roles, strong communication and soft skills can be equally as important as having deep expertise in a particular field. Here are few skills to develop or sharpen as it relates to becoming an effective communicator:

**Active Listening** -listen with the intent to understand, as opposed to reply

**Empathy** -putting yourself into others shoes to understand and act genuinely

**Adaptability** -tailor your communication style to align with the audience or situation

**Clarity** -succinct, to-the-point communication style, avoiding rambling and tangents

**Confidence** -firmly believing in yourself and exuding confidence

**Constructive Feedback** -being able to both give and receive helpful feedback

**Emotional Intelligence** -identifying and managing others emotions and your own

**Interpersonal Skills** -building rapport and developing relationships with others

**Non-Verbal Communications** -understanding and responding to non-verbal cues

**Open-Mindedness** -understanding differing perspectives and the ability to change your mind

**Simplifying** -converting technical or complex topics into layman's terms

**Storytelling** -engaging and captivating your audience through telling genuine stories



# Key Skills to Develop Early in Career

## Project Management Skills

Skills such as communication, organization, and time management are essential for project management. These skills are also valuable in many other career paths.

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# Key Skills to Develop Early in Career

**Communication and teamwork** are key skills for success in the workplace. These skills are essential for effective collaboration and problem-solving.

**Time management** is another crucial skill. Being able to prioritize tasks and meet deadlines is a valuable asset in any profession.



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# Key Skills to Develop Early in Career

By Steve and Joyce



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# Key Skills to Develop Early in Career

## Develop Your Network

Building a strong professional network is one of the most important skills you can develop early in your career. It can help you find job opportunities, gain mentorship, and learn from others in your industry. Start by reaching out to former colleagues, professors, and industry professionals. Attend networking events and conferences to meet new people and expand your contacts.

## Stay Current in Your Field

The field of work is constantly evolving, so it's important to stay current in your industry. This means keeping up on the latest news, trends, and technologies. You can do this by reading industry publications, attending seminars and workshops, and taking courses or certifications. Staying current will help you stay competitive and make a positive impression on your employers.

## Get Your Mentorship

Mentorship is a valuable experience that can help you learn from someone who has more experience than you. A mentor can provide you with advice, guidance, and support as you navigate your career. To find a mentor, look for someone in your industry who has the skills and experience you want to learn from. Reach out to them and explain why you would like to be mentored.

## Develop Your Communication Skills

Communication is a key skill for success in any career. It's important to be able to clearly express your ideas and listen to others. This includes both written and verbal communication. You can improve your communication skills by practicing writing and speaking. Take courses or workshops that focus on communication, and seek out opportunities to practice your skills in a professional setting.



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## Conclusion



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# Why SCM Talent Group

SCM Talent Group has filled 1,000+ supply chain, operations and related positions ranging from executive-level in corporate headquarters settings to leadership and staff-level roles across large networks of manufacturing and distribution facilities throughout the United States.

Searching for a new role can be stressful and frustrating, especially if you're struggling to get through the online application black hole. SCM Talent Group has a long history of connecting supply chain talent with diverse clients that include manufacturers, retailers, wholesale distributors & logistics service providers.

While filling supply chain jobs for our clients is at the core, equal value is placed on providing expert-level advice that can help you accelerate your career in supply chain.

## Partial List of Positions Filled

Chief Supply Chain Officer  
President • VP of Procurement

- EVP of Global Supply Chain
- VP of Supply Chain
- Dir. of Supply Chain Management
- VP of Logistics
- VP of Distribution
- VP of Transportation
- Dir. of Global Warehousing
- Dir. of Transportation
- Dir. of Global Quality

- Chief Operating Officer
- VP of Sourcing
- Dir. of Global Sourcing
- Dir. of Demand Planning
- VP of Supply Management
- VP of Inventory Management
- Dir. of Replenishment
- VP of Manufacturing
- Dir. of S&OP
- Dir. of Continuous Improvement



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## Contact Us!



# Why Supply Chain Careers

Supply Chain Careers has recently just launched in 2021 and is working towards becoming the premiere career hub for the supply chain community, spanning all industries and functional areas that commonly exist under the supply chain umbrella.

Supply Chain Careers features a specialized job board that is updated daily with brand new supply chain job opportunities throughout the United States.

The Supply Chain Careers Podcast features conversations with supply chain practitioners and executives, with a focus on topics pertaining to career development and building high-performing supply chain organizations.

Our ultimate mission is to serve as a career advisory partner to Students & Professionals in advancing their supply chain careers, while helping Employers improve their ability to hire, develop and retain supply chain talent.

**Click to Join the  
Supply Chain Careers  
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