

amilak training center

Alumni MAGAZINE

World-Class Procurement Professionals
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Celebrating the
ACHIEVEMENTS
of the Amilak student alumni

Takalani Tshabuse
MCIPS GRADUATE

Zime Ndlangana
MCIPS GRADUATE

Reneilwe Mbatha
MCIPS GRADUATE

Terene Reddy
MCIPS GRADUATE

R.Eng Charles Kalima
MCIPS

“When I started this journey in procurement, I had no idea I'd be in my current position...”

Andiswa Mabece
MCIPS GRADUATE



Dr. Ayanda Nteta

SCM Teaching and Learning: A need for a new approach

~ DR AYANDA NTETA (FCIPS),
PULA RESEARCH AND CONSULTING

Ireen Kalima

I am delighted to introduce the Amilak Student Alumni Magazine!

~ CAMPUS MANAGER

Sarie Homan

Procurement as a recognised Profession
~ HEAD OF THE CIPS PROFESSIONAL BODY



We pride ourselves in providing
Excellence through education



Centre details

Modes of study: Face to Face & Online

CIPS Programmes: Certificate (Level 2) to Professional Diploma (Level 6)

Contact details

Phone: +27 (0) 11 672 5223
Address: 243 Ontdekkers Road, Horizon Ext 1, Roodepoort, 1724, Jhb, South Africa.
Email: info@amilaktraining.co.za
Website: www.amilaktraining.co.za

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MCIPS



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Alumni
MAGAZINE

Welcome Introduction

Ireen Kalima

+ CAMPUS MANAGER



FOREWORD | CAMPUS MANAGER



WELCOME!

July 2021

I am delighted to introduce the Amilak Student Alumni Magazine! The main purpose of this magazine is to showcase student success. It will highlight recent and past achievements of the Amilak Student Alumni. Through the student testimonies and articles, we hope to inspire the current student body not to give up, and those who have not yet embarked on obtaining any one of our qualifications to do so. It is never too late to start.

Studying towards any qualification is not easy. It requires great determination, fortitude, passion, ambition, resilience, and perseverance. This coupled with the dynamic forces of our world, one surely needs the right educational partner to achieve their educational goals. At Amilak, we pride ourselves in not only educational excellence and going the extra mile, but exceeding expectations. We do so by ensuring that only the best lecturers are available for our students and our administration staff are on hand to assist both students and corporate sponsors with any help they may need.

Apart from ensuring that students have a qualification that is useful for their corporate careers, we ensure that we assist company sponsors with the relevant support to achieve their training and development targets required for their BBBEE Certification. The South African government has made it easy for companies to train their staff. Our SETA accredited qualification attract significant tax incentives that alleviates the financial burden of training personnel. In other words, companies can no longer use the excuse of limited financial resources as the reason for not training their work force. Amilak Training Center is available to hand-hold any Training and Development Manager to help them achieve the best value for money spent on their training budget.

We look forward to being of help to you as a student or as an employer. Do not hesitate to contact me directly should you have any training related questions whatsoever.

Ireen Kalima
CAMPUS MANAGER

Reneilwe Mbatha



As a 2019 MCIPS graduate of Amilak Training Centre (Amilak), you belong to a growing community dedicated to making world class MCIPS graduates. Being a student at Amilak has been an enduring investment, I am certain that I would not have been able to step up to my current job and future promotion prospects without this qualification. In 2015 while working as a buyer, I made the decision to study CIPS to gain a greater understanding of Procurement and Supply Chain.

Being full time employed, mother and wife, my journey to MCIPS was at times very challenging, stressful, and sometimes brought me close to tears. However, I was grateful that I could broaden my knowledge, enrich my experience, and establish a network of professionals to improve my career growth, development and earn valuable friendships. Thanks to the support from the College and the incredible and experienced lecturers, I feel that I have the tool set and the network to help me create the change I want to make in my field and in my career. Although the road was long and hard, it was also rewarding. By the time I attained my MCIPS, I was on my third promotion as a Buying Manager for Middle East and Africa region for a Global ICT Company.

I believe each one of us has unique interests and goals, but what makes us be here together is the constant drive for new knowledge, skills, and the



prospects of professional excellence that come with the MCIPS status. So, to all Amilak students, keep pushing on and do not throw in the towel. Enjoy every moment of your school time to the fullest. Do not give up. If you are like me, you will enjoy having a group of study partners, that will encourage you, offer much needed support and keep you focussed. The journey is worth it in the end. Good luck and have fun!

Reneilwe Mbatha (MCIPS)



Zime Ndlangana

Email: Zndlangana@gmail.com



When did you obtained your MCIPS?

22 January 2021.

Can you tell us about your experience studying CIPS and the opportunities that the qualification has opened for you?

I was encouraged by a colleague to enrol with CIPS and I never looked back. I joined the Amilak Training Centre community and the welcoming experience there is just amazing. You have a team of experienced lecturers, supportive administrators and ambitious students having the same goal for learners - acquiring and using knowledge, pass and complete studies. I found CIPS models very useful in my own working environment especially in developing sourcing strategies thus alleviating "maverick" buying. Even the job market is favourable towards CIPS qualified employees globally therefore presenting opportunities for advancement of careers..

When you decide to take the CIPS journey you need to look at it as a project. The project will have breakthroughs and setbacks. Never regard a setback as failure because failure is "giving up" but a setback is a learning curve that will arm you to take a different approach in enabling your success.

Celebrating the ACHIEVEMENTS
of the Amilak student alumni

Sarie Homan

HEAD OF CIPS SOUTH AFRICA PROFESSIONAL BODY

PROCUREMENT AS A RECOGNISED PROFESSION

INTRODUCTION

No one lies awake in bed thinking, 'I wish I worked in procurement and supply.' 'Why would I want to work there?' they ask. No glamour, or money! One former CEO I worked with went further when he asked, "Isn't procurement for people who find accounting too exciting?"

The truth is that professional procurement is a smart place to be. It's one of the fastest growing professions in business, offering a broad-based business education at the heart of an organisation.

As mentioned in the CIPS salary survey report, "Despite a turbulent economic and political year, the appetite for procurement hires has continued to increase. 70% of organisations are looking to hire this year, up 6% on last year. This spans organisations in both the public and private sectors and is an indication of confidence in the market".

WHY DO WE NEED PROFESSIONAL PROCUREMENT?

When thinking of "professions", being a medical doctor, lawyer or engineer come to mind, however, the scope is far wider. A profession is a group of professionals, organised through a system of self-regulation, with special knowledge and skills built on specific research, education and training, that adheres to a set of ethical standards and that enjoys a particular social status or authority based on this status, allowing them to exercise professional judgement.

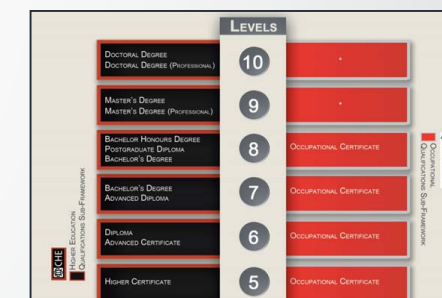
Professional procurement is a new specialisation emerging in the same way that accountancy or the law has. The modern role of professional procurement is a complex one demanding a wide range of business skills and commercial expertise to succeed. The job is as broad and as deep as the practitioner makes it and their organisation requires. Working both upstream and downstream within the procurement and supply cycle, a procurement professional can facilitate the business process, help capture the business benefits of the project, protect the business from risk and reduce lifetime costs.

Of course, professional status and involvement must be earned. Benefits have to be identifiable – preferably quantifiable. This is the greatest challenge facing our profession and many other professions as well. Working to ultimately resolve this question is an example of one of the ways that CIPS aims to help both individuals and organisations improve their procurement and supply performance.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL BODIES.

A professional body is any statutory or non-statutory body that sets professional standards and registers individual expert practitioners in an occupational field. Research has shown that independent professional bodies are indispensable for the continued health and vitality of professions throughout the world.

The National Qualifications Framework Act (NQF Act 67) changed the landscape of professional bodies in the South African education and training system substantially by mandating the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to recognise professional bodies and to register their designations on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to oversee the further development and implementation of the NQF. The NQF consists of sub-frameworks, and designations may be awarded to any qualification holders who meet the specific requirements.



The "Policy and Criteria for Recognising a Professional Body and Registering a Professional Designation" published by SAQA, demonstrates the critical role of professional bodies in quality assurance and standards development in the NQF environment to strengthen social responsiveness and accountability within professions and promote pride in association for all professions and occupations.

CIPS, as the professional body for the procurement and supply profession, is using its global standard, network, education, expertise, and charter for public good to ensure that procurement and supply chain management professionals have the capabilities and responsibility to deliver sustainability goals for their organisations. As a SAQA recognised Professional Body, CIPS (SAQA ID 816) serves the South African procurement and supply community as voice of the profession and career development partner.

Being awarded the MCIPS designation signals to other professionals and employers your procurement proficiency, giving you a significant career advantage and enabling you to earn more per annum than non-MCIPS professionals.

CONCLUSION

Procurement as a career path does not end by being a procurement manager or director but it can lead you to be a CEO of a company, and we have good examples such as Tim Cook (CEO of Apple) or Mary Barra (CEO of General Motors). Procurement and Supply professionals today are dealing hands-on with many of the biggest issues in business and they are often the first in their organisation to deal with major change.

As a CIPS Learning Partner, Amilak Training Centre will equip you to complete the international CIPS qualifications and become a procurement and supply professional which will advance your career to new heights.

Talk to us about qualifications

**Become the best
you can be**

MCIPS professional licence

Professional diploma in
procurement and supply

Advanced diploma in
procurement and supply

Diploma in procurement
and supply

Advanced certificate in
procurement and supply operations

Certificate in procurement and
supply operations

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*Leading edge
learning*

CIPS professional qualifications

*The smart choice for
your professional career
in procurement and supply*

Andiswa Mabece



LinkedIn: [Andiswa Mabece](#)
Email: andi@starmail.co.za

“ I completed a BA degree in corporate communication at the university of Johannesburg. After completing my studies, I was hired by Tsebo Outsourcing Group as a Marketing/Sales intern. After working in that department for a few months I was approached by procurement to join their department and that is how my procurement journey started. ”

Why did you decide to study CIPS?

I decided to study cips because I didn't have a procurement qualification and I really wanted to improve my knowledge of procurement because everything I had learnt was from doing my job. I also wanted to become a procurement professional and I knew in order to achieve this I had to study further.

Please tell us how your attainment of the MCIPS qualification has helped you in your career?

MCIPS has really set me apart from my counterparts in procurement, having the qualification almost assures the organisation looking to hire you that they are investing in a qualified procurement practitioner, this is especially helpful because in the future buyers will be required to have a license in order to practise. Attaining my MCIPS has also helped in learning hard and soft skills that are required to succeed in my role. Having access to a network of the CIPS community has really helped in supporting me through my journey both when I was a student and after completing my qualification. A very important part of my role is reduction of spend and supplier base optimization, and CIPS has helped me understand the importance of using tools like the kraljic matrix to better understand my supplier base and what strategies to apply in order to get the most value out of your supplier. Meeting other qualified buyers and sharing our experiences was probably the best part of studying my MCIPS through Amilak Training Centre. There was a lot of knowledge sharing as well as support. Which continues even after we have completed the course.

How did your choice of studying CIPS with Amilak Training Center facilitate your interaction with the wider CIPS community?

Studying through Amilak Training Center gave me access to a network of procurement professionals from different industries and with various experience. In class learning helped in facilitating this interaction.

Why is procurement your passion and career path?

I love working in procurement because procurement professionals have got the opportunity to really impact the organization in a positive way. Not only by saving money but by identifying and mitigating risk that could have an undesirable impact on the organisation.

What market are you operating in and what do you think are the biggest procurement levers you have at your disposal.

I am in the The Apparel Industry. The biggest procurement levers in my industry are; volume bundling, risk management and value chain management.

What are some of the most interesting things you have done in the world of procurement?

The most interesting thing is really having the opportunity to work in cross functional teams across different regions. Being able to source in different markets across the world has been the highlight of my career. Working both with internal and external stakeholders outside of my country has equipped me with strong problem solving skills.

Which do you think about Business Intelligence and Data Analytics? What are their benefits in the procurement department?

Some people distinguish between the two by saying that business intelligence looks backward at historical data to describe things that have happened, while data analytics uses data science techniques to predict what will or should happen in the future. I believe business intelligence is important in procurement because analyzing historical data helps the business in making informed decisions. The data collected and analyzed in this process assist procurement to build and gain sufficient business intelligence and forward insight into the decision-making process in order to minimize risk and increase competitiveness.

Looking at the procurement profession in general and how it is evolving, what are you seeing?

Many years ago, it was often said that in its primary role of interacting with suppliers, procurement worked on the 'front lines' of the business. But, while procurement continues to interact with suppliers, it has expanded its role dramatically over the past several decades, from being clerical to being strategic. Procurement has moved to the very heart of high performing businesses and this move has brought with it the areas where procurement can make a strategic impact.

What advice do you have for current students and those procurement practitioners who have not yet started their CIPS journey?

Obtaining my MCIPS has really given me great opportunities in my career. When I started this journey in procurement, I had no idea I'd be in my current position. It hasn't been easy, and I continue to put in the work, but it has definitely been rewarding. My advice to those that haven't started is to start now. I remember feeling like I had too much on my plate and that was my excuse for not wanting to study further but the amount of support I received from Amilak training centre really contributed to my success. To current students you might fail a few times but the important thing is to remain focused on your goal and keep working hard.

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MSS Design

GELPAG Advanced Technology GmbH



MSS Intelligent Primary Vacuum Switchgear

GELPAG Advanced Technology GmbH

Address: Bauhofstraße 20, 68623 Lampertheim, Germany

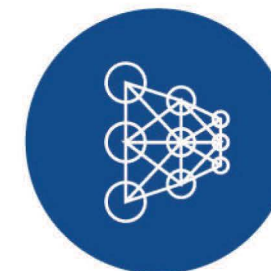
Tel: +49 (0)6206 95088 23

Fax: +49 (0)6206 95088 25

E-mail: karen.liu@gelpag.com

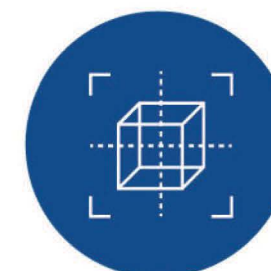
Internet: www.gelpag.com

Safe and Reliable Structure Design



Switch Structure

The switch body employs an advanced high-performance novel nano insulating material to encapsulate the primary charged body. And the switch body, busbar, and cable are all connected to the surface being grounded continuously and reliably to prevent internal arcing accidents caused by phase-to-phase and phase-to-ground short circuits.



Metal Enclosure

The enclosure of the switchgear is made of high strength and corrosion resistant double-bent aluminized zinc plates. The cable compartment and operation panel are made of high strength cold-rolled steel sheets with strong resistance to internal arcing faults and deformation.

Terene Reddy



LinkedIn: Terene Reddy
Email: terene@hotmail.com

Boitumelo Molopyane



IT REQUIRED DEDICATION, PERSISTENCE
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY SELF-DISCIPLINE
AND SACRIFICES.



“

I looked forward to every lecture, and the interaction from the lecturers to the students.

Students are not just a name or number but personal relationships are created and networking that still continues outside the college today.

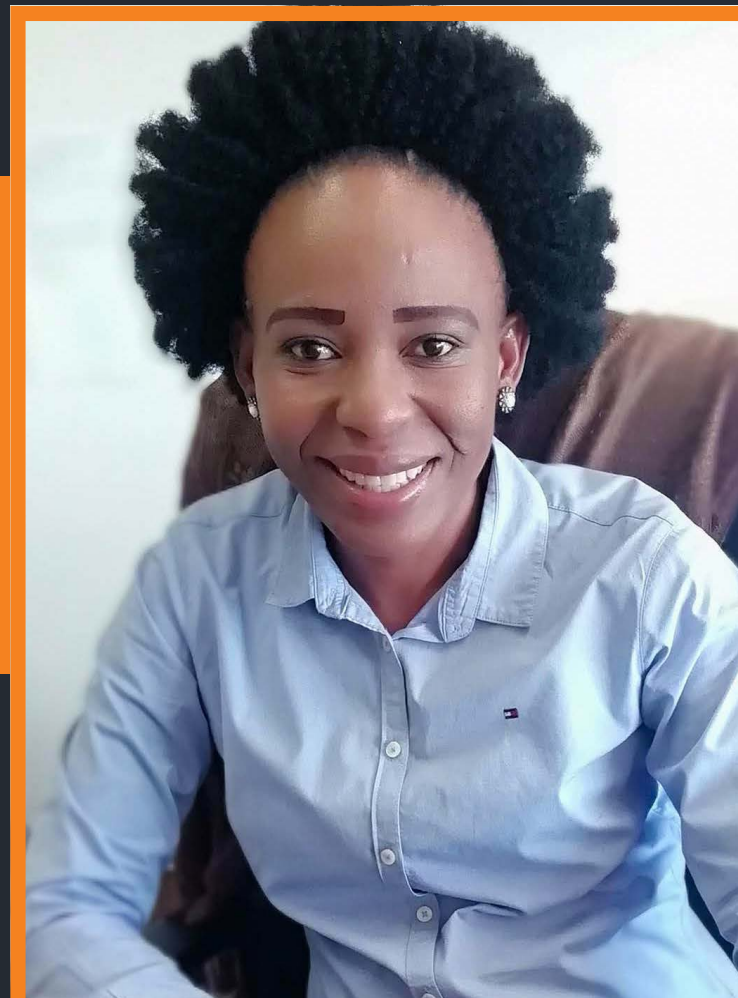
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motivate and support me in my studies even in my most difficult times until I achieved my goal of MCIPS in Nov 2020.

I am really blessed to have had the opportunity to study with them.

The learnings I got has helped me to grow in my professional role as a Global Operations Manager at POINT an International Marketing Materials Procurement Company.

I would highly recommend anyone wanting to study CIPS qualifications to go through Amilak Training Centre Family.



Studying CIPS while working full time was not an easy journey. It required dedication, persistence and most importantly self-discipline and sacrifices. The support structure that I had at home and at the campus contributed greatly to my success. Preparing thoroughly for assignments and tests, taking part in class discussions and study groups kept me going when motivation and energy level were too low at times.

The key for me was to make sure that I plan my time accordingly, as tired as I was from my work commitments I always made sure that I am psychologically prepared for class.

CIPS qualifications did not only reinvigorate my career, but my life too.

The knowledge and skills acquired improved my confidence in executing my day to day activities, my mental aptitude has also improved as well as career prospects.

The qualification definitely sets me apart from my peers, the efforts I put in and hard-work earned me good grades. That opened doors for me to qualify as a Lecturer, a career I never dreamed of in my entire life. Who says you are too old to venture into something new?

Researchers have found that the learning process stimulates the creative side of the brain, improves problem solving abilities and encourages thinking. These are the skills highly sought after in the modern workplace. Therefore; I would like to encourage you to embark on this journey whole heartedly, it might seem difficult and impossible, don't give up in the end it will definitely pay off. You will be an asset to your employer and to oneself.

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Application of Artificial Intelligence in Procurement



Manav Sachdeva
Associate Partner at Letsema Consulting

Perhaps nothing humans have ever done will have as much impact on our future as artificial intelligence (A.I.). It is a hidden revolution silently omnipresent in our lives. We speak to our phones and they speak back. We rely on a digital map to not only guide us to a location but to get us there in the quickest possible time. From criminal threat detection to medical diagnostics, the areas where A.I. is improving our lives are many and growing each day.

The concept of A.I. is not new however, and it has come a long way since its early inception around the 1950s. Despite the initial enthusiasm, research and development in A.I. languished over 30 years, suffering from twin obstacles of lack of data to work with and computers that were too slow to effectively process the data they were presented with. However over the last 10 years, due to massive amounts of data about our world being created and stored, and computers reaching a level of speed and power where these massive amounts of data sets could be processed, A.I. has found a new life. To the extent that that it now dominates the corporate discussions across functions and industries.

Used extensively in varied applications such as image processing, data processing, or language processing, A.I. is now entering several new functional areas, aiding in organizational decision support. According to estimates published by IDC, worldwide spending on A.I. is expected to reach \$110 billion in 2024, growing from \$50.1 billion in 2020.

When almost all industries are looking to leverage A.I. for strategic benefits, can procurement be left behind? Procurement executives that have paid close attention to investments in digital procurement platforms would have witnessed considerable benefits being accrued. And while the benefits of digitization have been impressive, it is negligible compared to what is coming next. Digitization only takes the benefits so far. The challenge that presents itself now is extracting maximum value from the data that digital platforms can create and store.

As such, the procurement function is poised to take its next big evolutionary step forward as it faces unprecedented demand for cost-reduction, risk mitigation and increased efficiencies. A recent Gartner survey (2020) showed that 67% of CPOs interviewed indicate A.I. as one of their top 3 priorities over the next 3 years.

Why is A.I. such a big deal in procurement? The applications of A.I. are immense and already span across multitude of processes within the supply chain, from predictive demand forecasting to automating supplier payments, and everything in between. A.I. is either used to reduce or outright avoid manual and repetitive tasks or conduct predictive analytics on large data sets to produce deeper insights and more accurate predictions. A recent article published by Zycus, a global leader in A.I. powered source-to-pay platforms, states that at a high level A.I. helps procurement organisations achieve the following outcomes:

- 1. Enhanced delivery commitment** – Reduction in manual interventions and processing windows and the associated errors or variation brought on by manual tasks.
- 2. Expedited processes** - Optimisation of processes and increased data processing capabilities with enhanced productivity
- 3. Accelerated scalability** - Deployment of scalable and flexible virtual workforces at marginal costs
- 4. Deeper insights** - Provision of real-time and more accurate insights with granular visibility through dynamic dashboards

There is not a single organisation, particularly post the pandemic, that isn't trying to achieve at least one (if not all) of the above outcomes. As such, let us look at how end-to-end procurement and supply chain processes have been enhanced through the use of artificial intelligence. While this list is in no way exhaustive, its purpose is merely to give the reader a sense of the art of the possible with A.I.

DEMAND FORECASTING

Demand forecasting or planning is one of the most, if not the most, critical activities within the supply value chain. It serves as the starting point (bullwhip effect) of many other activities such as price forecasting, ordering, warehousing and inventory management, logistics and transportation, and requires accurate forecasting data on customers' needs.

A.I. applies complex mathematical algorithms to automatically recognize demand patterns, determine correlation and complicated relationships between demand signals and external data such as weather, macroeconomic indicators, income data, social media campaigns, etc. Apart from analyzing huge volumes of unstructured information, smart systems continuously retrain models, adapting them to changing conditions thus addressing volatility. These capabilities enable A.I. software to produce more accurate and reliable forecasts in complex scenarios over time.

What does more accurate really mean? In 2020, a South African beverage producer increased its demand forecasting accuracy from 60% to 85% within three months of implementing machine learning. In addition, the demand planning team doubled its productivity by getting rid of time-consuming and manual adjustments and calibrations to its legacy demand forecasting model.

Application of Artificial Intelligence in Procurement



SPEND ANALYTICS

Spend analysis is the foundation of procurement performance and is a critical first step to establishing a truly effective procurement organisation. However, organisations continuously struggle with mis-classified data from multiple sources that prevents them from effectively consolidating, classifying and analyzing their spend data. The usual methods are to classify spend manually, or to use rules-based software on supplier names and keywords in the free text. These processes are labour-intensive and typically result in accurate classification of up to 75 percent of spend. This approach also limits sub-categorization due to reliance on supplier names vs. material descriptions.

A.I., more specifically machine learning classification algorithms, can automate the consolidation, enrichment and classification of spend data with an accuracy of 95% or more. Some algorithms can classify and enrich data at the speed of over 200,000 transactions per hour, thereby eliminating the need to spend hundreds of man-hours every month on data transformation.

A.I. also scans for anomalies in the dataset to identify potential savings opportunities by highlighting purchase price variance, payment terms variance, rationalization and aggregation opportunities at supplier and category level, contract compliance, etc.

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

Contracting is a common procurement activity, but it is one that very few organisations do efficiently or effectively. International Association of Contract and Commercial Management (IACCM) research has evidenced that poor contract lifecycle management costs organisations an average of 9% of annual spend. The research also revealed that over 60% of contracts in any organisation lack visibility of performance milestones and renew automatically.

A.I. enabled contract management software is able to easily extract contract metadata and contents such as renewal dates, renewal notices, annual increases, renegotiation terms, payment milestones, etc., and is able to organize all this information in a structured and accessible manner. The software also helps companies review third-party contracts more rapidly by comparing third-party clauses with company's standard clauses and identifying risk, thereby decreasing the potential for contract disputes and reducing contracting cycle times.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE (AP)

Accounts payable was one of the first successful use cases of robotic process automation (RPA) using the OCR (optical character recognition) technology. While template-based OCR delivered strong results and automated a large part of invoice processing, it was costly to implement and required continuous fine-tuning. Enter intelligent process automation (IPA) that combines OCR with machine learning. IPA eliminates dependency on invoice templates and enables 'touchless' accounts payable whereby the entire process from receipting of invoices, 2/3-way matching, invoice approval workflow and payment can be automated without manual intervention. Additionally, IPA goes beyond simple process automation to continuously monitor every transaction, examine every vendor, check every purchase order, audit every invoice and scrutinize each payment.

In 2018, NASA implemented intelligent process automation in its AP department and by 2020, 86% of NASA's invoice transactions were 'touchless', i.e. without any human intervention. NASA's AP chatbot was able to resolve 36% of supplier queries directed at its AP department. Overall, NASA reduced 40% of its AP costs within the first two years of implementing IPA.

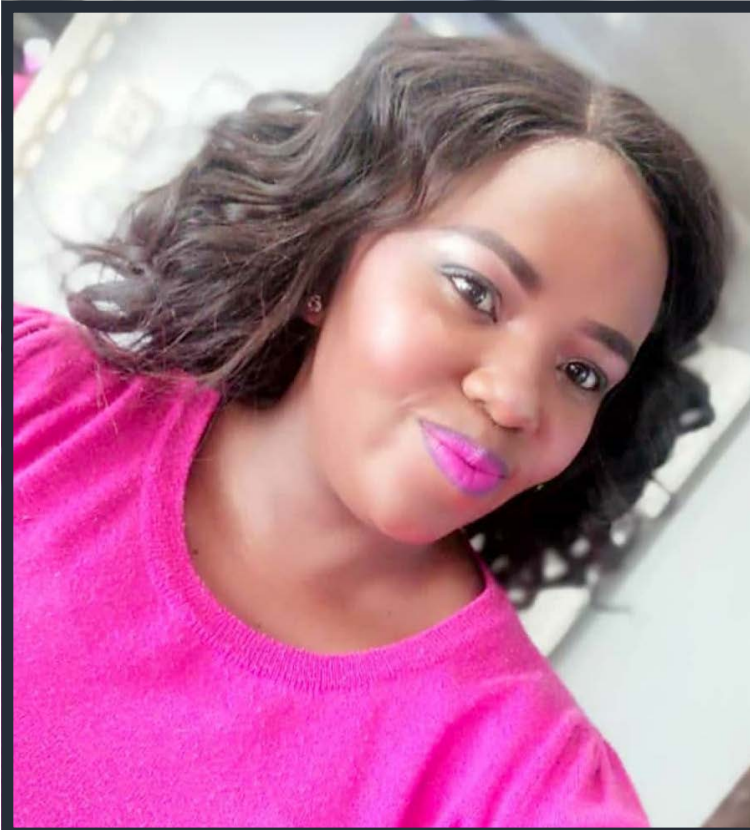
Post the Covid-19 pandemic, organisations are facing more pressure than ever to deliver cost savings and efficiencies. By exploring pragmatic A.I. use cases, procurement teams can introduce enhanced agility, visibility, and predictability to offer tangible and sustainable value. As digital technologies evolve and machines become more 'intelligent', organisations will witness newer business models and methods to leverage the true advantages of A.I. in procurement and associated functions. While the journey to being an A.I. enabled procurement organisation takes time and effort, it is well worth the investment. After all, anything that can be automated, will eventually be automated.

Manav Sachdeva is an Associate Partner at Letsema Consulting and practice lead for Procurement Advisory and Digital Procurement. To find out how your organisation can embark on the journey to reap the benefits of A.I.,

contact Manav at:
+27 81 729 1092 or
manav.sachdeva@letsema.co.za

Moipone Mosiapane

The support of my family has been critical in helping me to attaining my qualification from the point I started this journey even when I felt like giving up.



As the saying goes, "it takes a village" to raise a child. A child needs, depends, and relies upon all members of their family and various members of the community throughout their life in order to grow. In my case, it took support from friends, family and colleagues. I needed to acquaint myself with people that had similar dreams to mine.

I had to be self-motivated in order for the support to be functional. I planned study session where we would share jokes so it could be fun. I set realistic goals (although at times it was hard to attain those goals).

My drive came from realizing how far I have come for me to give up. I started this qualification in May 2013 where my peers completed it between 2016-2017. I kept telling myself I have worked so hard to get this far & the least I could do for myself is to finish what I started. I preserved till 2019 where I wrote my last module during November sitting. With the continuous support, help and patience from the Lectures at Amilak Study Center together with the whole admin staff, the zeal to complete was conceivable. By God's Grace after 7 years of struggle my prayers were answered and I completed my MCIPS Qualification. Immediately after completing my studies the door of employment opportunities was opened. I am appointed as a Buyer which I believe with the great qualification I have it will only be a matter of short period to the climb the ladder of success

I must admit the journey has been a roller coaster ride. It gave me sleepless nights & stress but the end goal for me was bigger than my fears, anxiety & stress.

If you put your mind to achieving something, you have to be willing to go the extra mile to achieve it. If life throws you lemon's make lemonade out of it or make a funny face from the sour taste to make people laugh. The important thing is either way you have to make a CHOICE.

**Celebrating the
ACHIEVEMENTS
of the Amilak student alumni**

Takalani Tshabuse



LinkedIn: [Takalani Tshabuse](#)
Twitter: [@SimplyTK](#)
Email: chabuse@mail.com

When did you obtained your MCIPS?

I obtained my MCIPS status in the beginning of 2020. It was a culmination of a 3-year journey that had started in 2016.

Can you tell us about your experience studying CIPS and the opportunities that the qualification has opened for you?

The journey was challenging but fun and very rewarding. Challenging in a sense that you have to juggle both work and study demands. But it was worth every effort and every cent spent. The knowledge and skills I acquired through CIPS is purely world class. Through CIPS I have seen my career progressing significantly within a short space of time. In my procurement field I have managed to move across industries, from manufacturing to mining, with ease.

Furthermore, the application of CIPS knowledge and skills in my work has consistently made me a shining star in every company I have worked for.

Why choose being "average" when you can be a star? If you aspire to become a world class procurement practitioner, then CIPS is the course for you. I cannot think of any better course out there. Simply put, procurement has never made more sense. Go for it!



Supply Chain Management Teaching and Learning:

+ A Need For A New Approach

Dr Ayanda Nteta
(FCIPS)

Supply Chain Management (SCM) remains at the forefront of the COVID-19 pandemic. It started at the beginning of the pandemic when stores were unable to meet customer demand, and shelves ran empty. The logistics system all but collapsed as the world came to a standstill. Throughout the pandemic issues of procurement, logistics and demand management continued to plague organisations. Recently, as the world starts to roll out the COVID-19 vaccine, SCM challenges are exposed. The world is calling for robust, sustainable and agile SCM. However, the question remains, where are these SCM practitioners, who will be able to implement agile and sustainable SCM based on the SCM lessons learnt from this pandemic. Furthermore, are higher education institutions ensuring that they are producing SCM practitioners relevant to this new world order.

Prior to the pandemic, there was already a disjuncture between the students exiting university with a supply chain qualification and the SCM competencies required for industry. As a result, students entering industry are often subjected to compulsory in-service training, almost providing an alternative set of skills from the ones that were obtained at university. Industry argues that the students that exit formal higher education training lack problem solving and critical thinking. This makes them unable to solve existing problems that they encounter in industry, particularly within the context of the pandemic.

The pandemic has intensified the pressure on higher education institutions to develop relevant SCM practitioners. The traditional approach still employed in most universities emphasises memory, through the regurgitation of learning that has occurred, and not application of knowledge in a manner that is more authentically applicable to real work scenarios. In order to adequately prepare students, higher education institutions need to urgently change their teaching and learning approach in several ways. Higher education institutions need to:

- include learning that represents the type of tasks that students would encounter once in the work environment and not an exercise in memorising terms and concepts. The classroom must address the gap by tying classroom material to real-life situations thus empowering students with mastering of the required industry competencies. The tasks must mirror the activities, environment, and interactions involved in professional practice. The tasks must be relatable to the practice and students;
- develop a cross disciplinary approach that integrates past and present learning across disciplines. This cross-disciplinary nature is useful for supply chain teaching and learning as supply chain is a cross sector discipline;
- must understand the relationship between learning and work and select appropriate content to enable an assessment of complex thinking. The student's cognitive ability relating to analysis, comparison and problem solving of a professional performance demonstrates the epitome of complex thinking relevant to industry; and
- facilitate student learning based on the premise that acquisition of information itself does not bring about learning but rather what we do with the information, in terms of thinking and structuring of the information is what brings about learning.

The above approaches infuse work-place relevance into the teaching practice, while developing cognitive skills through problem-based learning, and furthermore, encouraging students to take ownership of their learning. Once students take ownership of their learning, they are more inclined to engage in deeper and more meaningful learning. The resultant outcome is a learner that is more equipped with the SCM skills required and the ability to adapt, particularly in light of this pandemic.

While higher education institutions grapple with the challenge of developing industry-ready learners, SCM training centres have an important role to play. SCM training centres are, through their proximity to industry, able to infuse work-place realism into the classroom. SCM training centres allow the lecturer to journey alongside the students guiding their learning and emulating the realities that exist in the working world through the extended instruction and the breaks that enables the learner to reflect and implement learnings at the workplace. The learnings and challenges encountered during application of knowledge at the workplace can be reflected upon in the classroom once the student returns. Students are afforded the time to problem solve, learn and be guided along the way. This guided approach emulates the working world where work peers work alongside each other problem solving and adjusting, in transit, based on the learnings that occur during the execution of the task. Therefore, this approach closely replicates the future experiences. Therefore, the proximity to industry and guided learning makes SCM training centres more effective than the current higher education teaching model. It is imperative that we move away from the traditional approach and engage in a model that allows for an infusion of the practicality of supply chain management. In this manner, we are more likely to attract more practitioners to the discipline, that is already strained for new entrants.

Buyer: the 'last-man-standing' in the world of automation

R.Eng Charles Kalima (MCIPS)

When you talk about procurement, most people think it is just as easy as walking in a shop, pick up the item you need, swipe your credit card and off you go with your item. With this understanding one would easily imagine that procurement can easily be done by anyone and the old-fashioned Buyers as we know them today replaced or fully automated.

Please, do not get offended that I called you a 'Buyer'. Some of you have fancy titles such as Procurement Specialist, Procurement Officer, Commodity Manager, Category Manager, etc. I am aware of that, but I am one of those who like sticking with old practices – and is there a better single terminology to describe everyone responsible for the procurement process than Buyer?

Well, there could be, but I like the term Buyer. I remember introducing one of my procurement officials as Buyer to several people that we were invited to address; he was quick to correct this by saying he was a Procurement Manager. When he heard me referring to myself, his boss, as a Buyer, the guy got more comfortable with the term when I referred to him again as Buyer for the second time. Alright, now you understand who I am referring to when I use the term Buyer, right?

I was introduced to the procurement function in my very first job that I got when I stepped out of university with a Mechanical Engineering degree. I worked for a private company which really did not have a procurement department. Procurement was done by the Finance Department. My initial role was to design capital equipment used in the manufacturing of products that we sold to our customers. The role later evolved to include procurement of prototypes and samples and in some cases, procurement of the whole piece of equipment upon completion of designs. In more recent years, I have found that many of my procurement colleagues had their first degree in a field unrelated to procurement like me. We somehow entered the procurement field by default and once we were there, we got hooked and advanced our academic and educational career in this field and stayed there. From my experience, procurement allows a graduate to use more aspects of his or her training that any profession. I have been able to apply economics, accounting, mathematics, engineering, law and other academic aspects of my training in my procurement career than I did as a design engineer.



This is the story of many procurement practitioners of my age – and I am not going to review it just in case you are wondering how old I am. Just know that I am old enough and have been there, done that and I got the T-shirt.

The question I want to address is: how much job security does procurement offer in a world of so much technological advancements? We have seen the advent of mass access to the internet as data costs become cheaper globally. This has given rise to innovative ways of shopping for personal and corporate use. Information and communication systems along with the associated hardware are now being deployed in supply chain management to fulfil different roles. They aid the decision-making process, help to monitor and control operations, create simulated systems, store and process data, and aid communication between individuals, companies and machines. With all this technology advancement, what is the future of the Buyer? Is procurement in the 21st century a career that is still relevant and useful to the global economy?

The scope of the Buyer's responsibility holds the key to answering the questions we have raised in this article. Gone are the days when Buyers were only required to place orders on a supplier that has already been determined by the internal customer. The responsibility of the Buyer spans from identification of a need in the organization right up until the item or service has been delivered and the supplier is paid. This responsibility gets amplified when an organization adopts a Supply Chain Management approach to their operations. We appreciate that the introduction of automation and artificial intelligence in the Procurement and Supply Chain Management will enhance data integrity relating to costing information, order quantities, stock holdings and so on. However, there is a role required by procurement that no automation can do. There are places that procurement practitioners need to go to ensure the security and integrity of supply. In these places the decision to buy or not to buy have to be made and the reasons for the decisions cannot be analysed using computer algorithms. They require applying of one's mind.

Apart from adding value through the five rights of procurement, buyers are gatekeepers for their organisations to ensure that their organisations act ethically and operate sustainably throughout the whole supply chain and supply chain networks. This responsibility cannot be automated. It requires individuals to judge between right and wrong behaviours of organisations in both their downstream and upstream supply chains. With this judgement, decisions can then be made on whether a supplier should or should not be used in a Buyer's supply chain.

Decision must be made on whether or not a potential participant in the supply chain has put in place and is practicing appropriate policies to curb human trafficking, child labour, slavery, bribery and other forms of exploitation of people. Such decisions are made by Buyers. The integrity of the supply chain with all supply chain networks connected to it is of uttermost importance for the reputation of a buying organization. There are certain organizational actions that can destroy a buying organization if they are allowed to happen whether knowingly or unknowingly. For example, procuring products that were proceeds of crime; or procuring from suppliers who are connected to a supply chain network in which one or more participants use child labour or slave labour. Avoiding all these and other misdemeanors that are found in the supply chain for any organisation is another key function of the Buyer. The functions cannot be automated. They need a trained Buyer to execute and ensure that the mind share that the organization enjoys among the community and other stakeholders is that of positive thought and good will.

With this you will understand that the role of the Procurement Practitioner or using my favourite term – the Buyer – will always be needed in every organization.



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CONTACT US

Email : info@amilaktraining.co.za
Address : Amilak Training Center, 243
Ontdekkers Road, Horizon Ext 1, Roodepoort,
1724, Johannesburg, South Africa.

TO PLACE AN ADVERT:

Email : info@amilaktraining.co.za
Phone : +27 (11) 672 5223
www.amilaktraining.co.za