



like oil and gas, in process manufacturing like chemicals, in discrete manufacturing like automobile production, in retail, and in engineer-to-order businesses like aircraft manufacturing. Personally, I think there is a lot of excitement in process industries since advances in materials science are reshaping the physical world - for example, many of our clothes are now made of petroleum derivatives like rayon, nylon, and spandex (remember the advice given to Hoffman!).

Where should I live? North America and Europe are generally mature markets.

I were young, I would focus on Innovation because it drives revenue growth and more companies will be focusing on it over time, which means it will become increasingly important as your career progresses.

How should I get there? Students can join a large company, a small company, or go out on their own as an entrepreneur. Small companies offer the benefits of being an entrepreneur while providing some of the stability that has traditionally been associated with larger companies. And the upside potential can be huge, both financially and in terms of personal fulfillment because they provide a unique platform from which to tailor your career to your own personal interests.

Who should I emulate? Lots of people

"I just want to say one word to you - just one word. Are you listening? 'Plastics.' That was the advice that Mr. McGuire (Walter Brooke) gave to Ben (Dustin Hoffman) in the 1967 classic film *The Graduate*. That advice was golden.

What is the one word for graduates today? Six considerations can help answer that question and set the stage for an exciting and successful supply chain career: What should I do? Where should I live? When should I start? What should I aim to achieve? How should I get there? And Who should I emulate?

What should I do? No matter *which function* I started in (and there are many to choose from, such as logistics, procurement, manufacturing, customer service, marketing, R&D, and engineering), I'd make sure to get exposure to new product or service development in order to have an important role in my company's future growth. Young professionals entering the supply chain field need to decide *what type of company* to work for: shippers, carriers, 3PLs, or solution providers. I would advise joining a software or solution provider at some point because an increasing share of corporate value is generated through ideas, knowledge management, and information technology, and expert solutions providers are good at all three. Finally, young professionals need to decide *which industry* to work in. Excluding academic careers, unique supply chain experiences await in extraction industries

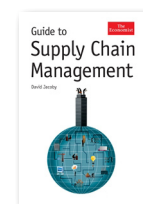
If I Could Do Anything (in Supply Chain Management): Career Advice for Young Professionals

David Jacoby

The Middle East and Latin America are both going through a very exciting growth periods, so offer unique and valuable experiences. But keep in mind that extraordinary population growth in Asia will ensure a huge demand for supply chain talent there for many years to come.


When should I start? Graduates today can choose from a range of supply chain curricula. Some of these are excellent, especially if you want to focus on operations research. However, above all go to the best university you can get into and study from the best teachers that it has. Astute learners can pick up a lot about supply chain management on the job throughout their professional careers.

What should I aim to achieve? The new supply chain book "The Guide to Supply Chain Management", by The Economist, lays out four major strategies for supply chain success: Rationalization, Synchronization, Customization, and Innovation. Companies progress through the strategies over time, and end up focusing on Innovation once they master the others. So if



come to mind, but for an icon I'd point to Fred Smith, the Founder and CEO of FedEx. Smith is not only an entrepreneur but also the leader of a major company (most

people aren't good at doing both). He has introduced loads of new ideas - many of them bold - even when the existing model seems to be doing just fine, and they have usually been successful.

In the end, chance will play a large role in your career path, and many decisions will be made for you. However, the way you make decisions throughout your career will determine where you end up at the peak of your career. So what is the one word that I would offer to students entering the supply chain field today? "Innovate." 

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