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SAPICS Inspires Young Graduates And Students To Tackle Supply Chain Profession's Skills Gap

Reflecting its commitment to attracting and developing a pipeline of talent to address the critical skills gap in the supply chain profession, SAPICS, The Professional Body for Supply Chain Management, recently hosted its 4th annual Young Professional and Student Conference in Johannesburg.

SAPICS president Mungo Park says that the event is aimed at young professionals and students who want to gain insight into the supply chain profession from the conference's practical perspective. *"Several universities were invited to send students to the one-day event, including the Universities of South Africa, Johannesburg and Pretoria, North-West University, and the Tshwane and Vaal Universities of Technology. These students were mainly third or final year students studying supply chain management or related topics,"* Park explains. The young professionals who attended are currently working in related fields, in their first or second years of graduate programmes or learnerships.

The event's varied programme included speakers from diverse backgrounds who gave the young delegates career path guidance as well as insights into the supply chain management profession's many facets. *"Because it is sometimes misunderstood and undervalued, the profession is not attracting the young, emerging talent that it needs,"* Park states. *"Events like this are vital to inform graduates and students of the opportunities that exist in this exciting and dynamic field, which is constantly evolving and leveraging new technologies."*

The latest technologies that are revolutionising supply chain management include blockchain, and the SAPICS Young Professional and Student Conference featured a presentation by Kamendran Govender and Toni Nobre of Letsema Consulting-Next-

Generation Operations, on blockchain technology's possibilities for supply chain.

"Blockchain technology has been touted as one of the next big disruptors of industries and business models, and has attracted enormous media coverage and public interest. In this presentation, Kamendran and Toni examined what the technology means for procurement and supply chain capabilities specifically, considering the 'hype' versus the reality of the technology, and what can be learnt from various supply chain use cases. Delegates learnt that 70% of cocoa beans are purchased from plantations that use child labour and that 20% of diamonds sold around the globe are still blood diamonds; and that blockchain will help to address this," Park expands.

The conference's corporate sponsors - Barloworld Logistics, Imperial Logistics, Transport Education Training Authority (TETA), Trackmatic and Transnet – had the opportunity to interview the students during the day, exposing the young attendees to practical career guidance and opportunities.

Demand driven material requirements planning (DDMRP), digitisation and Quality Assurance in pharmaceutical storage and distribution were other topics on the agenda. Chantal Kading, owner of The People Shop, facilitated a practical, interactive session allowing attendees to take a holistic view on their career paths, personal and professional branding. *"Chantal, who recently summited Kilimanjaro, also shared lessons that she learnt on this journey and how these could help the young professionals and students to create their own successful futures. She told delegates that vision, preparation, execution and celebration are the fundamentals to summing their careers. Based on the hugely positive feedback that SAPICS received after the conference, it looks like the young attendees have been motivated to continue their climb, and hopefully consider careers in supply chain management,"* Park concludes.

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For more information:

Tel: +27 (0) 11 023 6701

Email: info@sapics.org.za

ABOUT SAPICS: <http://www.sapics.org>

Since its foundation in 1966, SAPICS, The Professional Body for Supply Chain Management, has become the leading provider of knowledge in supply chain management, production and operations in Southern Africa. SAPICS builds operations management excellence in individuals and enterprises through superior education and training, internationally recognised certifications, comprehensive resources and a country-wide network of accomplished industry professionals. This network is ever expanding and now includes associates in other African countries. SAPICS is proud to represent APICS (the global end-to-end supply chain association) as its exclusive premier channel partner in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Established 40 years ago, the annual SAPICS Conference is the leading event in Africa for supply chain professionals. The 2019 SAPICS Conference takes place in Cape Town, from 9 to 12 June.