

Supply chain problems can be solved through professionalisation, innovation, speed

“South Africa needs to become a hub of service, production, and capability. The only way we’re going to get there is when everybody does their part.” This is according to the opening keynote address at the recent 38th Annual SAPICS Conference and Exhibition for supply chain professionals delivered by Professor Nick Binedell from the Gordon Business Institute of Business Science.

Binedell encouraged attendees to “share what you know. If we don’t we can’t compete. South Africa is not a mining economy anymore; we need to become a service economy.”

The conference coincided with the 50th anniversary of the organisation and was officially opened by Mungo Park, president of SAPICS. “It is remarkable to reflect on how supply chain management has evolved,” said Park. “In its early days only a few knew about supply chain and logistics, and now it is a much sought-after profession.”

Supply chain management as innovation hub

According to Binedell, the top business challenges that can be solved by supply chain professionals are innovation and inclusivity.

Generations that will replace the current workforce are, according to Binedell, hungry for knowledge. These generations are much more comfortable with using and developing the technologies that will drive our future, but they need the guidance and experience of previous generations to gain the insights necessary for successful change.

“Innovation starts with thinking deeply on what bits of process attract value, and at what cost,” advised Binedell. “Innovation is also many times dependent on how well a company and its workforce are able to unlearn.”

Supply chain management as a driver of expansion opportunities

“The way we got to where we are is not the way we’re going to get to where we are going. South Africans need to understand that where you are geographically is much less important,” warned Binedell.

“Africa is our great opportunity, and South Africa has every long term reason to succeed. Supply chain management occupies the center stage of national competitiveness, and will do so even more in the next decade or so.”

“The challenge we all face is that the rate of change is accelerating, often not in our direct control but with major consequences for our businesses. Global and local challenges are at the heart of competitive strategy and all institutions are being forced to

confront them in an increasingly efficient and innovative way. The supply chain industry is at the center of operations in most industry value chains and therefore has a vital role to play.”

The 38th Annual Conference and Exhibition was held 12-14 June 2016 at Sun City. A selection of speakers from the conference will present their topics at the regional events scheduled for 16 August in Gauteng, 17 August in KwaZulu Natal, and 19 August in the Western Cape. More information is available at <http://www.sapics.org/events/sapics-regional-conferences/>