

# THE NETWORKED SUPPLY CHAIN PROFESSIONAL

*Networks, so what! Is being networked really that important to ensure success?*

*Brian Cartwright, Logistics Executive Group's Middle East Managing Director outlines just why investing time into conferences, events and knowledge sharing platforms not only leads to success, but is critical for tomorrow's supply chain executive.*



**Ensuring** you remain well networked within the People Supply Chain is key to success for many Supply Chain professionals.

Networking experience and ability should be a no brainer for people in commercial management roles, but what if your whole career to date has been focused on operational management functions in the Supply Chain and you haven't been making a conscious effort to build your business networks.

The truth is that if you are a Supply Chain professional with a pure operational focus you are probably already be an excellent relationship builder and networker as your working week will involve dealing with many stakeholders both internal and external, including people from Government entities to MNC's, local organizations and SME's.

You will have been regularly building working relationships as well as influencing, supporting, and also challenging people in order to keep your part of the Supply Chain running smoothly.

## NEWS & EVENTS



### Upcoming Events

#### GLCS LogiSYM Malaysia 2015

LogiSYM Malaysia 2015 promises to be a highly unique event. Building on the success of the past 3 years, the 2015 4th Annual Global Logistics & Supply Chain Symposium will focus this year on providing a platform for mid to senior level shippers to discuss and explore innovation, excellence and what changes we can expect to see in future supply chains.  
[www.glcs-2015.logisym.com](http://www.glcs-2015.logisym.com)

#### The Future of Logistics 2015

Registrations are now open for the 3rd annual Ti Future of Logistics Singapore 2015 being held 13-14th October 2015. Ti has lined up a range of high caliber of speakers with a particular focus on new innovations that will change the Future of Logistics. To find out more:  
[www.ticonferences.com/singapore](http://www.ticonferences.com/singapore)

### Global News

#### Logistics Executive Group associate and supply chain expert Mark Millar launches "Global Supply Chain Ecosystems"

The ground-breaking new publication "Global Supply Chain Ecosystems" - a practical and informative guide for directors, executives and managers about developing competitive advantage through effective, productive and efficient supply chain management practices. Commissioned and published by Kogan Page of London, the book is packed with practical, down-to-earth advice on managing the volatility and vulnerability inherent in today's international trade and provides invaluable guidance on how to build resilient, reliable and competitive global supply chain ecosystems. Find out more: [www.logisticsexecutive.com](http://www.logisticsexecutive.com)

#### Mobile Customer Engagement white paper - FREE download for all

With the availability of high-speed wireless networks, access to the Internet is 'almost' universal. The combination of a powerful computing device (smartphone) and ubiquitous connectivity to an infinite data and computing resource, will be profound. It will impact the logistics industry in many unexpected ways. Written by Ken Lyon and Mirek Dabrowski, discusses the impacts and considerations for businesses. Download Now:  
[www.LogisticsExecutive.com](http://www.LogisticsExecutive.com)

I am willing to bet that when a Supply Chain professional has made significant improvements to an organisations Supply Chain it has been largely due to their ability to foster relationships and positively influence people from all walks of life.

Facts, figures, and overall analysis provide the visibility to know what needs to be changed or what can be improved but the only way to successfully implement these things is by winning over the people.

If you take the Supply Chain on a local, regional or even a global level I don't think we see enough operational Supply Chain professionals actively networking with their counter parts in other organizations including those from their competitors in order to understand if they are sharing the same challenges or can support one another to run more efficient Supply Chains.

Don't me wrong, there are plenty of Supply Chain focused events and conferences going on constantly around the world where SC professionals get together and briefly network during the breaks between presentations and panel discussions, there are also plenty of steering committees and industry bodies which promise to champion the cause of Supply Chain (Only a few manage to do this effectively).

That's all good, but my big question is this...

How many people in operational Supply Chain management functions make a point of getting together with their counterparts in other organizations on a fairly regular basis just to catch up for a coffee or a bite to eat and chat about the Supply Chain in general?

For the cost of a drink and some of your time I am sure there will be good advice to share and you might also highlight some challenges which



could be overcome through sharing experiences or taking action together.

The more networked Supply Chain professionals we have in the sector the better, and with enough people having these kinds of meetings a bigger picture outcome could well be improvement of global supply chain efficiencies and standards in the future!

So if you aren't already an avid networker then please don't just wait for the formal industry conferences and events, I would suggest being proactive and reaching out to some of your counterparts with the aim of getting together for a chat once in a while, if nothing else I am sure you will be able to share some useful information about the market!

The Supply Chain only works because of the people involved!

The majority of people are not natural networkers and many simply lack the confidence to put themselves in a networking environment, so where do you start and how can you get the most out of business networking or even just building more confidence?

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There are many online resources and there is lots of advice available with hints and tips on how to network, you should definitely take the time to read up as much information as possible but remember ultimately at some point you will just need to throw yourself in at the deep end as the best experience will come from getting out there and doing it for real!

I have been attending, supporting and leading networking events for years now but I don't believe I was a natural when I started. I just got better at it by ensuring that I was regularly attending as many events as possible and as a result I believe I have done enough networking and have been successful enough to be able to share some of my advice and experience with others.

If my advice helps just one or two people to improve their networking skills or encourages them to get out there and network more then it's been a success in my view!

Here's the Brian Cartwright guide to business networking.

1. The cardinal rule - always be genuine, effective business networks work on trust so be yourself.
2. Pay it forward - Don't just think what can others do for me? Think instead what support you can offer to others, your efforts will be rewarded at some point as it will come full circle one day!



3. Be clear on what you want to achieve – Why do you want the new contacts? Is it about learning or sharing challenges and issues? Do you just want to staying on top of what's happening in your market? Is it more about keeping up to speed on regulatory changes etc? It could be all of these or simply that you want to spend time with like minded understanding people who go through the same day to day ups and downs and face the same business challenges as you.
4. Network in the right places – Once you know what you want to achieve you can think about

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- which types of networking events you would likely get the most benefit from, do your research.
5. Understand that every group of people and event is different – Bear in mind that the dynamics of networking events and groups can be drastically different even in the same industries as the types of people attending are often very different, so try out various events and groups until you find the right group of people for you.
  6. Stay connected after the events – Use your calendar to ensure you keep in touch with the people who you meet where there is mutual value to be gained from the relationship.
  7. Don't just wait for the next formal event – Aim to catch up in person with people between events for one on one discussions (coffee, breakfast or lunch always works well).
  8. Never sell to, or pressure people – There is nothing worse than going to a networking event to be bombarded by someone looking for commitment right there and then for some kind of product or service.
  9. Be professional – Represent yourself and your business appropriately at all times, its business networking after all and even if the environment at some events may appear quite casual bear in mind that everyone is ultimately there for business purposes.
  10. Be honest and consistent - If your networking efforts are honorable, and regular you will ultimately create an ever expanding circle of trusted professional contacts who become your business referral network as well as your support network (See number 1. The cardinal rule).

**Logistics Executive**

[www.logisticsexecutive.com](http://www.logisticsexecutive.com)

Australia

Sydney Ph: +61 2 8262 9800

Melbourne Ph: +61 3 9863 9488

Brisbane Ph: +61 3 9863 9488

Asia

Shanghai Ph: +86 21 6427 6697

Singapore Ph: +65 6692 9202

Hong Kong Ph: +852 3125 7654

Mumbai Ph: +91 22 6608 9532

New Delhi Ph: +91 124 469 6680

Chennai Ph: +91 44 4202 4819

Middle East

UAE Dubai Ph: +971 4 361 6275

Europe

London Ph: +44 20 3239 7624

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Report email:

[darrylj@logisticsexecutive.com](mailto:darrylj@logisticsexecutive.com)

or

[kimw@logisticsexecutive.com](mailto:kimw@logisticsexecutive.com)

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**AUTHOR PROFILE:**

**BRIAN CARTWRIGHT**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA,  
LOGISTICS EXECUTIVE

Brian Cartwright is an experienced executive headhunter and business leader based from our Dubai office where he is responsible for managing the Logistics Executive business across the Middle East and Africa. He has over 12 years business management experience and has worked in the recruitment sector for the past 9 years. Brian has built a solid reputation within the Logistics & Supply Chain community as one of the leading recruiters for the sector since moving to the Middle East in 2008 and serves as a key member of the senior management team. Brian can be contacted on email: [BrianC@LogisticsExecutive.com](mailto:BrianC@LogisticsExecutive.com)