

Fostering Innovative Supply Chain Professionals

C. H. Robinson invests in employees to gain competitive advantage

Founded in 1905, C. H. Robinson is a Fortune 500 company and global provider of multimodal logistics services, fresh produce sourcing, and information solutions. The firm serves approximately 110,000 customers through a network of more than 280 offices and 13,000 employees. In addition, C. H. Robinson works with about 68,000 transportation providers worldwide.

Company leaders strongly believe that their employees are the key to helping C. H. Robinson meaningfully improve the world's transportation networks and supply chains. As such, senior managers are always looking for opportunities to help people develop skills and knowledge that can enhance offerings. "In our industry, we must keep up and



C. H. Robinson's Chicago Central office is a hub for the company's North American surface transportation division.

adapt to constant changes resulting from the global economy, market conditions, new technologies, regulations, and more," says Carmen Smith, human resources manager. "By continuously keeping [employees] up-to-date on the latest industry best practices, we can be flexible in providing solutions to our customers' logistics challenges."

In order to do that, decision makers regularly examine the latest professional development methods that can support employee

development. One major initiative involved tapping into APICS offerings as a secondary training curriculum. "We were familiar with APICS and the strong reputation it has behind its curricula and certifications," Smith says. "We budgeted to support the training and the [Certified Supply Chain Professional] (CSCP) program the following year, [and] we now have over 125 employees certified and plan to certify 20 or more people every year."

Ray Blackwell, director of sales, says C. H. Robinson employees are viewed as "trusted advisors" by their customers, so it's critical that the workforce stays informed about the various disciplines and functions that make up client supply chains. "APICS offers a distinguished certification that teaches our employees to identify continuous improvement opportunities within our customers' supply chains and bring forth new, innovative solutions to address challenges they are encountering," he says. "And the training helps distinguish our employees as industry experts with specialized, high-level knowledge and skills. This investment in our people is one way in which we gain a competitive advantage by offering the industry's most forward-thinking, innovative, and talented logistics professionals."

Sponsoring employee success

C. H. Robinson provides APICS CSCP training through an on-site classroom curriculum with an APICS CSCP master instructor, peer collaboration group study sessions, learning system materials, and online portal access. The organization also renews memberships, financially supports employee participation, and offers in-house training opportunities designed to bolster recertification efforts.

"It's important that our employees can offer customers the best service, reliability, and communication around complex and constantly changing supply chain management issues," Smith says. "We are committed to investing in our employees and helping them accelerate their professional growth, and a CSCP designation is one way we do that."

Company leaders report that the CSCP educational undertaking is helping to fuel

their people's entrepreneurial drives and inspiring them to search for new ideas that challenge norms. "After participating, we see that participants increase their understanding of integrated supply chains and can speak articulately with a supply chain vernacular," Blackwell says. "They also have a stronger ability to recognize opportunities to help customers solve their problems and diagnose supply chain issues."

Added applications

In addition to supply chain management applications, C. H. Robinson has incorporated much of the APICS body of knowledge into its sales training. In addition, Smith reports that its learning and development team members were thrilled to hear that APICS is adding the Certified in Logistics, Transportation and Distribution designation to its curriculum.

"We are working toward building a development strategy around the APICS logistics certification so we can open new doors and create new opportunities for both employees and customers," Smith adds. "By gaining a thorough understanding of [logistics practices], our employees will gain the tools to create and execute strategies to meet customer needs, reduce costs, and drive bottom-line results."

Does your organization exhibit superior performance and dedication to advancement in supply chain management? Contact Managing Editor Elizabeth Rennie at erennie@apics.org to be notified when APICS begins accepting submissions for the 2017 awards. In the meantime, you can learn more about the program at apics.org/awards.

APICS announces the new APICS Certified in Logistics, Transportation and Distribution (CLTD) program. The designation is designed to equip individuals and teams with essential knowledge to reduce costs, increase customer satisfaction, and achieve recognition as a logistics expert. Learn more at apics.org/cltd, and view the CLTD demo at learncltd.com.

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