

# 2019 STUDY: YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN SUPPLY CHAIN

## WHAT THEY THINK ABOUT

- Their Jobs Today
- The Role of the Supply Chain
- Training and Advancement Opportunities

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# YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN SUPPLY CHAIN

*Supply chain professionals under 30 are satisfied with their careers but are still hungry for growth, saying they work in a rewarding field with strong development opportunities.*

What are young professionals looking for in a supply chain career, and how satisfied are they with the work they are performing in the field today? The Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP) and Penske Logistics set out to answer these questions earlier this year when they surveyed more than 100 young professionals working in the supply chain—all under the age of 30 and either professional or student members of CSCMP. All in all, young professionals say they are satisfied with their career choice, describing the supply chain as a challenging and rewarding field that offers plenty of room for growth and advancement. Most also say they work in a supportive environment that offers a competitive salary and benefits and allows them to pursue a financially comfortable living.

This year's study is a follow-up to CSCMP and Penske's 2017 report that asked similar questions of young professionals, and it offers a glimpse at how the industry is progressing when it comes to grooming a new generation of workers. Once again, CSCMP and Penske asked a wide range of questions to get to the heart of what supply chain organizations can do to help attract, retain, and develop young talent—an especially important

task in light of today's increasingly tight labor market. The study sought to discover how young people describe their work, the value they place on it, what

## EXHIBIT 2

Which of the following best describe the company you work for?

	2019
3PL/4PL (Third Party Logistics)	21%
Manufacturing	18%
Merchandising/Retail Trade	11%
Information Technology	10%
Transportation and Warehousing	9%
Health Care	5%
Government/Military (Public Administration)	3%
Professional Services/Consultancy	2%
Real Estate (including rentals and leasing)	2%
Material Handling	2%
Accommodation and Food Services	2%
Construction	2%
Mining, Quarrying, Oil and Gas Extraction	2%
Pharmaceuticals	2%
Education/Academia	1%
Remediation Services	1%
Wholesale Trade	1%
Carrier	1%
Not-for-Profit	1%
Recruiting	1%
Finance and Insurance	0%
Management of Companies and Enterprise	0%
Administrative	0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	0%
Scientific and Technical Services	0%
Social Assistance	0%
Support	0%
Utilities	0%
Waste Management	0%
Other Services (Please specify)	6%

Percentages may add to more than 100 because multiple responses were accepted.

## EXHIBIT 1

How many years have you been employed in a supply chain-related career?

	2019
Mean	4.2

#### EXHIBIT 3

What is your gender?

	2019
Male	50%
Female	50%

they are looking for in a career, their preferred methods for receiving training and professional development, and whether or not they think their education prepared them for their supply chain careers.

What follows is a summary of the results, with comparisons to the 2017 report, where applicable.

#### VITAL STATISTICS

The typical young professional responding to the 2019 survey has worked in the industry for four years, has a bachelor's degree, and works for a third-party logistics (3PL) provider, manufacturing company, retail organization, or information technology company. (See Exhibits 1 and 2.) Survey respondents are evenly split between men and women, and they hold a bachelor's degree in either supply chain management or business administration. (See Exhibits 3 and 4.) Nearly 80% of respondents said their educational degree prepared them for the work they do today.

The vast majority of respondents are currently employed in a supply chain position, with a small percentage saying they are employed in other fields, and an equally small percentage saying they are not currently employed. (See Exhibit 5.)

These results are in line with what respondents reported in 2017.

#### SUPPLY CHAIN: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOUNG PROFESSIONALS?

Young professionals understand the role of the sup-

#### EXHIBIT 4

What was your field of study?

Bachelor's degree holders, field of study	2019
Supply Chain Management, Supply Chain Analytics, Logistics, Operations	34%
Business, Business Administration, Business Management, International Business	31%
Marketing, Communications, Public Relations	16%
Engineering - other	16%
Arts or Humanities (Art & Design, Biblical Studies, Dance, English)	6%
Social Science (Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology, Criminal Justice, Political Science)	5%
Accounting, Finance	3%
Economics	3%
Nature Science (Biology, Environmental Science, Geology)	3%
Computer Science, Computer Information Systems, Technology	2%
Engineering - supply chain specific	2%
Math, Statistics	2%
Analytics - business, other	0%
General Education, Interdisciplinary Studies	0%
Human Resources, Organizational Development	0%
Other	6%

*Percentages may add to more than 100 because multiple responses were accepted.*

#### EXHIBIT 5

Do you currently work in a supply chain-related field?

	2019
Yes, my current position is supply chain related	91%
No, my current position is not supply chain related	4%
I am not currently employed	5%

ply chain, using words and phrases such as “distribution network,” “product lifecycle,” “managing getting things from one place to another,” and “logistics” to describe it. (See Exhibit 6.) What's more, they describe the perfect supply chain position as having a range of responsibilities, including managing distribution networks, analyzing information, pursuing continuous improvement, overseeing logistics operations, and performing cross-functional activities, to

name the top five. (See Exhibit 7.) In addition, those currently employed in the field say their jobs largely align with their description of the perfect supply chain position. (See Exhibit 8.) Respondents said they chose to pursue a supply chain career due to a previous positive experience in the industry, because it is challenging, and because it offers a variety of career opportunities, among other reasons. (See Exhibit 9.)

Again, these results are in line with what respondents reported two years ago.

## SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT, HIGH SATISFACTION

Young supply chain professionals give their supervisors and peers high marks for creating a supportive environment where they are challenged and

can grow. When asked to describe the supervision they get on the job, the majority said their managers praise good work (85%), know their jobs well (82%), and are tactful in their leadership roles (79%). They also referred to their managers as influential (69%) and up-to-date on industry and company issues (76%). Young professionals are equally positive about their peers in the workplace, describing them as responsible (92%) and smart (87%). Fewer respondents referred to their peers as frustrating (26%) or slow (16%). These results are in line with what the research found in 2017.

### EXHIBIT 6

When you think about the words "supply chain," what is the first thing that comes to mind?

	2019
Distribution network, managing getting things from one place to another efficiently, moving goods from producer-supplier	23%
Product lifecycle, from raw materials to end customer	22%
Logistics, in general	12%
Transporting, specific types of transportation modes and-or warehousing	9%
Inventory management, inventory transportation	9%
Optimization, continuous improvement, efficiencies, intelligent movement	8%
Business critical, essentiality, strategic business approach, competitive advantage	6%
Supply and demand	5%
Manufacturing or producing goods	4%
Complexity	2%
Connecting value chain, adding value	2%
Relationships (strategic business relationships, customer relationships)	2%
Sourcing, procurement	3%
Other	16%

### EXHIBIT 7

What are the key responsibilities of a supply chain position?

Responsibilities	2019
Distribution network, managing getting things from one place to another efficiently, moving goods from producer-supplier	20%
Analyst, analyzing	18%
Optimization, continuous improvement, efficiencies, intelligent movement	17%
Logistics	15%
Cross functional	11%
Customer service, customer programs	9%
Product lifecycle	6%
Consulting	5%
Project management	4%
Manufacturing	3%
Sourcing	2%
People focused (HR, securing talent, creating teams, etc)	1%
Other Responsibilities	6%

Percentages may add to more than 100 because multiple responses were accepted.

### EXHIBIT 8

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means it does not describe your current position and 10 means it perfectly describes your current position, how closely does your current position match your description of the perfect supply chain position?

	2019
Mean	6.55

#### EXHIBIT 9

What made you interested in pursuing a supply chain career?

	2019	2017
Firsthand exposure (through internship, job, courses, etc.)	18%	19%
Challenging, always changing, fast-paced	15%	11%
Variety of opportunities, job types	13%	20%
Impact supply chain roles, tangible impact on outcomes	13%	10%
Passionate about topic, excited by it	9%	17%
Ability to advance	9%	4%
Personality aligned (logical, puzzle solver, process oriented, etc.)	6%	9%
Research, learning about industry	6%	4%
Influenced (by teacher, co-worker, manager, college program's prestige, etc.)	4%	6%
Essential to business operations, necessary in business	4%	4%
Qualifications aligned	3%	8%
Salary, earning potential	3%	4%
Word-of-mouth, networking, family involvement	3%	4%
Demand for skills, job security	2%	7%
Industry growth, increased business focus on area	2%	6%
International	2%	6%
Professional organizations	0%	1%
Other	7%	8%

Percentages may add to more than 100 because multiple responses were accepted.

The supportive environment means that young professionals remain positive about their jobs overall—even more so than researchers found two years ago. More than 80% of respondents characterized their jobs as “enjoyable” or “better than most” (compared to more than 70% who said so two years ago), while 94% characterized it as “good” (compared to 88% who said so two years ago). Similarly, fewer people reported having a negative view of their job compared to 2017. (See Exhibit 10.)

In addition, respondents reported higher job satisfaction levels in this year’s survey, with half saying they are “very satisfied” with their current employer and 41% saying they are “somewhat satis-

#### EXHIBIT 10

How would you describe your current job?

	Yes		No		?	
	2019	2017	2019	2017	2019	2017
Good	94%	88%	3%	6%	3%	5%
Better than most	82%	74%	11%	16%	7%	10%
Enjoyable	82%	72%	11%	17%	7%	10%
Makes me content	73%	69%	18%	21%	9%	10%
Excellent	48%	44%	35%	41%	17%	15%
Undesirable	5%	13%	92%	82%	3%	5%
Disagreeable	4%	10%	88%	82%	8%	8%
Poor	5%	9%	93%	86%	2%	5%

Percentages may add to more than 100 because multiple responses were accepted.

#### EXHIBIT 11

Overall, how satisfied are you with your job?

	2019	2017
Very satisfied	50%	40%
Somewhat satisfied	41%	46%
Not very satisfied	7%	11%
Not all satisfied	2%	3%

#### EXHIBIT 12

Think of the work you do. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your work?

	Yes		No		?	
	2019	2017	2019	2017	2019	2017
Good	91%	86%	2%	5%	7%	9%
Satisfying	79%	76%	9%	17%	12%	7%
Rewarding	61%	67%	21%	24%	18%	9%
Exciting	65%	60%	27%	30%	8%	11%
Fascinating	59%	56%	27%	33%	14%	11%
Uninteresting	12%	17%	80%	74%	8%	9%

Percentages may add to more than 100 because multiple responses were accepted.

fied.” Fewer respondents reported low satisfaction levels as compared to 2017, as well. (See Exhibit 11.) Young professionals have similar views about the work itself, with most using words such as “good,” “satisfying,” “rewarding,” and “exciting” to describe their daily work activities. (See Exhibit 12.)



## OPPORTUNITY ABOUND

The study also found that young professionals are growing increasingly satisfied with the opportunities a supply chain career affords them. They pointed to promotion opportunities within their companies as a key example. More than half of respondents said their companies offer a good opportunity for promotion, with more than 70% saying their companies offer a “fairly good chance” for promotion. A small percentage said they would characterize their position as a “dead-end job”—fewer than those who said so two years ago. (See Exhibit 13.)

Respondents to this year’s survey are slightly less willing to relocate for a new position than in the past. Just 31% of respondents said they would be “very willing” to relocate for a new opportunity,

compared with nearly 50% who said so two years ago. Those who said they are “somewhat willing” to relocate remained the same—around 40%—while more people reported being unwilling to relocate. (See Exhibit 14.)

Respondents also said they are less eager to extend their daily commute for a better opportunity. Just 23% of respondents said they would be “very willing” to add commuting time to their day for a better job, compared with 32% of respondents in 2017. About half of respondents said they would be “somewhat willing” to do so, the same as two years ago. (See Exhibit 15.)

Once again, young supply chain professionals say they are eager to continue their education on the job. And once again, they say they want to do it the old-fashioned way, via face-to-face training sessions. When asked whether they would like to receive training/education via online media or through in-person training/development sessions, the majority said they prefer in-person training, as they did two years ago, delivered through mentoring or task-

### EXHIBIT 13

How would you describe your opportunity for being promoted?

	Yes		No		?	
	2019	2017	2019	2017	2019	2017
Fairly good chance for promotion	72%	60%	15%	28%	13%	13%
Good chance for promotion	51%	54%	26%	35%	23%	12%
Good opportunities for promotion	52%	53%	29%	34%	19%	13%
Opportunities somewhat limited	45%	52%	48%	42%	7%	5%
Regular promotions	30%	33%	52%	51%	18%	16%
Dead-end job	7%	14%	88%	79%	5%	7%

Percentages may add to more than 100 because multiple responses were accepted.

### EXHIBIT 14

How willing are you to relocate for a new opportunity?

	2019	2017
Very willing	31%	49%
Somewhat willing	41%	39%
Not very willing	18%	8%
Not at all willing	10%	5%

### EXHIBIT 15

How willing are you to extend your commute for a new opportunity?

	2019	2017
Very willing	23%	32%
Somewhat willing	53%	50%
Not very willing	15%	15%
Not at all willing	9%	3%

### EXHIBIT 16

How would you like to experience education/training opportunities in your company?

Online = 0  
In Person = 10

	2019	2017
Mean	7.0	7.5

#### EXHIBIT 17

Please rank each of the following in terms of their importance to you in an employment opportunity.

	2019		2017	
	Mean Rank	Rank Order	Mean Rank	Rank Order
Pay and benefits that are competitive with other local companies	4.5	1	4.9	1
Positive working relationship with manager	4.7	2	5.6	2
A work/life balance	4.9	3	5.7	3
Freedom in decision making	5.8	4	6.2	5
A clear development track in my career field	6.0	5	6.4	6
Training opportunities to develop the skills to succeed	6.4	6	6.1	4
Co-workers with whom I enjoy working	6.5	7	6.7	7
High importance placed on the tasks I am given	7.5	8	7.5	8
Variety of skills used on the job	7.7	9	7.6	9
Feedback about my performance on the job	7.9	10	8.0	10
The best supplies and equipment to do my job	9.0	11	9.2	12/13
Travel opportunities	9.0	12	8.1	11
Closely related to my education	11.0	13	9.2	12/13

based activities that can be completed at their own pace (either individually or in a one-on-one setting). (See Exhibit 16.)

#### WELL COMPENSATED

Young supply chain professionals list a range of factors that are important to them in a job, and first and foremost are competitive pay and benefits. They also seek a positive working relationship with their manager, work/life balance, the freedom to make decisions in their daily work, and a clear career development path—in that order. Their priorities have shifted slightly in the last couple of years: The top three requirements (competitive pay/benefits, positive relationship with manager, and work/life balance) are the same as they were in 2017, but

#### EXHIBIT 18

How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your present pay?

	Yes		No		?	
	2019	2017	2019	2017	2019	2017
Enough to live on	87%	72%	7%	23%	6%	4%
Comfortable	76%	64%	16%	29%	8%	8%
Underpaid	28%	40%	62%	52%	10%	7%
Well paid	49%	38%	41%	51%	10%	11%
Barely live on income	6%	25%	89%	68%	5%	7%
Bad	4%	13%	88%	79%	8%	8%

*Percentages may add to more than 100 because multiple responses were accepted.*

freedom in decision making and a clear career development path jumped in the ranks, pushing demand for training opportunities a bit further down the list. (See Exhibit 17.)

Looking closer at pay, young professionals remain satisfied with the compensation they receive, even more so than they were in 2017. More professionals reported being either “well paid,” “comfortable,” or having “enough to live on” in 2019, while fewer reported being underpaid. (See Exhibit 18.)

#### IN SUMMARY

All in all, young supply chain professionals say they understand the role of the supply chain in today’s business world and are well prepared to fill the variety of opportunities available to them at companies across the country. Competitive compensation, a positive and supportive work environment, and the opportunity for advancement are the key elements they seek in return.

*In early 2019, the Council for Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP) and Penske Logistics conducted an online survey of CSCMP members under the age of 30 for their Young Professionals in Supply Chain report. More than 100 responses were analyzed in aggregate; individual responses were kept confidential. For more information on CSCMP, visit [www.cscmp.org](http://www.cscmp.org).*

