

**30  
UNDER  
30** SUPPLY  
CHAIN  
STARS

A ThomasNet & ISM Recognition Program

DEFINING  
A NEW  
GENERATION



MEET THE  
**30 UNDER 30**

RISING SUPPLY CHAIN ROCK STARS

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# 30UNDER30

Rising Supply Chain Stars

by Merrill Douglas

Announcing the 2014 winners of the 30 Under 30 Rising Supply Chain Stars program. Meet some of the brightest new lights in our industry's firmament and see what makes them shine.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:  
ISM • ThomasNet

#### ABOUT ISM

Institute for Supply Management® is the first supply management institute in the world. Founded in 1915, ISM's mission is to enhance the value and performance of procurement and supply chain management practitioners and their organizations worldwide. By executing and extending its mission through education, research, standards of excellence and information dissemination – including the renowned monthly *ISM Report on Business*® – ISM maintains a strong global influence among individuals and organizations. ISM is a not-for-profit educational organization that serves professionals with an interest in supply management who live and work in more than 90 countries. ISM offers the Certified Professional in Supply Management® (CPSM®) and Certified Professional in Supplier Diversity® (CPSD®) qualifications.

#### ABOUT THOMASNET

ThomasNet provides solutions that make it easier for buyers and engineers to partner with the right industrial suppliers. For nearly a century the Company's "big green books" – the Thomas Register – were considered indispensable to B2B buyers and manufacturers alike. Today, ThomasNet offers tools to facilitate every step of the buying process. These include industry's leading supplier discovery platform, free online at ThomasNet.com.

# A

s more baby boomers reach retirement age, supply chain executives are looking with trepidation at a looming talent gap. To stay strong, the industry needs an influx of fresh faces, especially professionals drawn from the millennial generation — people born between 1982 and the early 2000s.

By 2025, millennials will make up about 75 percent of the supply chain workforce, researchers say. To groom these supply chain leaders, companies must attract the brightest and most innovative members of that generation today.

Luckily, millennials are already making their mark on the supply chain profession. Brimming with energy, at ease with technology, skilled in leadership, and adept at collaboration, the best among the newcomers have already emerged as rising stars.

To bring attention to those young luminaries, and to show millennials how wonderful, rich, and rewarding a supply chain career can be, ThomasNet, the Institute for Supply Management (ISM), and *Inbound Logistics* teamed up to create a recognition program — 30 Under 30 Rising Supply Chain Stars. The program honors 30 professionals who are 30 years or younger, and already making their mark in the purchasing/supply chain management field. These include one Megawatt Star who is receiving additional honors.

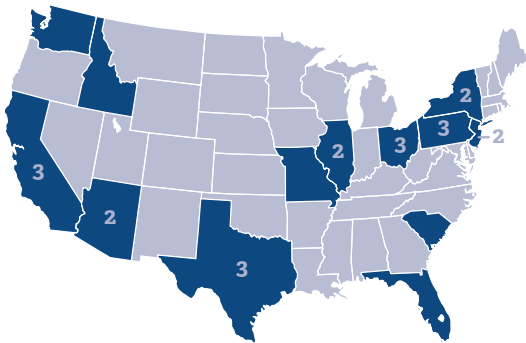
Advancing the purchasing/supply chain management profession has been a shared goal of ThomasNet, a leading free resource for supplier discovery and product sourcing, and educational association ISM, dating back more than 100 years. That's when Elwood B. Hendricks, a salesman for the Thomas Register of American Manufacturers (ThomasNet.com's predecessor) saw a need for a national organization to help purchasing agents advance. His vision led to the formation of the Purchasing Agents' Association of New York in 1914 (now ISM-New York), a springboard for the national ISM.

To select these rising supply chain stars, ThomasNet and ISM invited the supply chain community to nominate outstanding supply chain practitioners, 30 years old or younger, for recognition. Each nomination detailed the candidate's stellar qualities and described their most extraordinary achievements. A selection committee evaluated more than 225 entries to choose the 30 Rising Stars, including one top-ranked Megawatt Star. Winners were chosen for their notable accomplishments and their demonstration of initiative, collaboration, innovation, and/or leadership — at work as well as within ISM and other industry associations.

Each winner receives a complimentary, one-year membership to ISM and a pass to ISM's 2015 annual conference, May 3-6, 2015, in Phoenix. In addition, our Megawatt Star and her nominator win an all-expenses-paid trip to the conference.

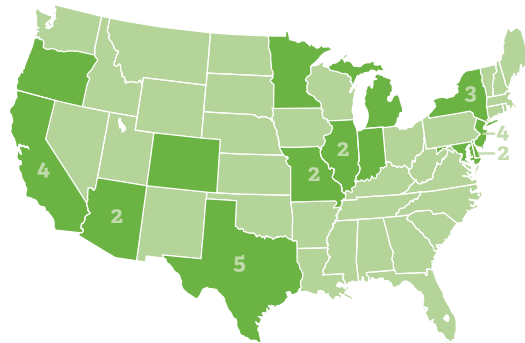
Consider how much our Megawatt Star has already achieved at 29 years old. Katy Conrad Maynor, Category Manager, Finished Lubricants/

#### WHERE THEY HAIL FROM



Beyond the continental U.S., four of this year's selectees were born in India, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and "between Costa Rica and Germany," respectively.

#### WHERE THEY WORK



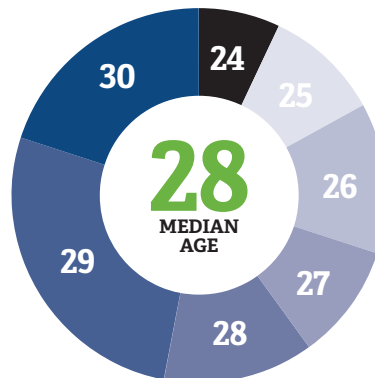
Beyond the continental U.S., two of this year's selectees work in the United Kingdom, and another works in Malaysia.

#### GENDER BREAKDOWN



Women make up exactly two-thirds of this year's selectees.

#### AGE BREAKDOWN



B2B with Shell Oil in Houston, runs procurement and negotiates contracts for Shell's Global Commercial business. Her achievements at Shell are too numerous to list, but among them:

- Developed a new approach to one supplier relationship that yielded big savings across half that vendor's portfolio.
- Built a regional sourcing strategy for Shell's business-to-business products.
- Co-led the creation of a successful contracting model.

By highlighting the achievements of our Megawatt Star, and our Rising Stars, ThomasNet, ISM, and *Inbound Logistics* want to demonstrate

how exciting and rewarding a career in supply chain management can be. We hope that our 30 Under 30 will become role models, inspiring other talented millennials to choose careers in our industry, and give more of a "cool factor" to a profession that has been off their radar.

But attracting millennials is far from easy. People from this generation often land jobs in the industry accidentally, or consider a supply chain career only after trying out several others. For example, one of our Rising Stars learned about the profession from a roommate, and decided to explore it.

Moreover, many millennials are unaware that supply chain management careers empower them



to make a difference—to foster sustainability/green practices, for example. Our Rising Stars say that their positions enable them to:

- Improve access to vital products and services—from medicines for hard-to-treat diseases, to clean energy.
- Make a big financial impact—saving their organizations money, helping them work more efficiently and strategically, and improving corporate profitability. Collectively, this group has helped their companies save millions of dollars.
- Be a key player in strategic projects where top management has a stake.
- Work overseas and navigate different cultures.
- Hone their negotiating, management, and leadership skills.

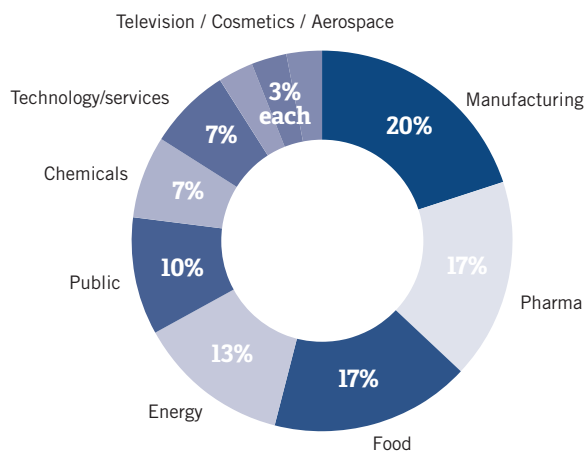
■ Learn about different functions, products, and industries.

■ Do something new every day.

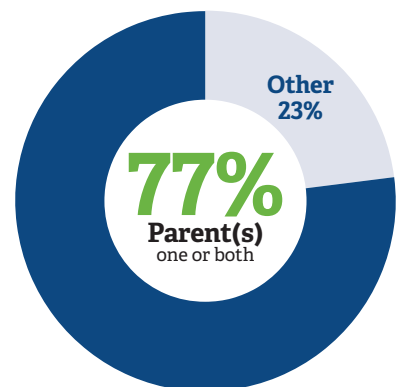
Many don't know how well the jobs in this industry pay, either. ISM's 2014 Salary Survey shows that the average pay for a supply chain professional with up to four years on the job is \$72,119 annually. This is on par with engineering, which was recently ranked as one of the highest paying positions starting out.

Although they work in many different industries, and reached their current roles via all sorts of routes, our Rising Stars have a lot in common. Nearly all say they love their work because it touches every aspect of the company. They love the variety they find in their jobs, pointing out

## INDUSTRIES THEY NOW INFLUENCE



## WHO THEY MOST ADMIRE



Among the other most admired people cited were Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, Indian cricketer M.S. Dhoni, Oprah Winfrey, and Steve Jobs.

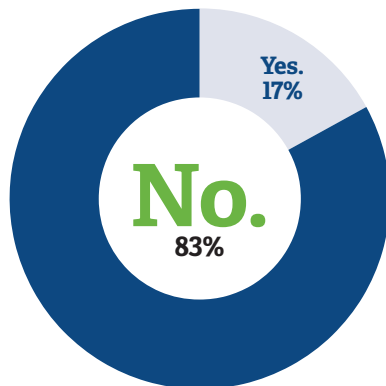
## IN THEIR BLU-RAY COLLECTIONS...

*Dead Poets Society* (1989), *Dirty Dancing* (1987), *Elf* (2003), *Forrest Gump* (1994), *Good Will Hunting* (1997), *Inception* (2010), *The Intouchables* (2011), *The Lives of Others* (2006), *Mary Poppins* (1964), *My Best Friend's Wedding* (1997), *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (2002), *The Notebook* (2004), *Pride and Prejudice* (2005), *The Princess Bride* (1987), *Rocky* (1976), *Sound of Music* (1965), *Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi* (1983), *Steel Magnolias* (1989), *The Usual Suspects* (1995), *The Wizard of Oz* (1939)

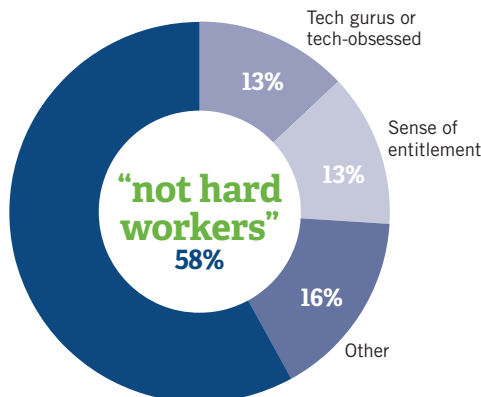
## ON THEIR PLAYLISTS...

The Avett Brothers, Bon Iver, Billy Joel, Kings of Leon, LCD Soundsystem, The National, Max Richter, Coldplay, Arcade Fire, Malpais, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Radiohead, Pink Floyd, Coldplay, Darius Rucker, Frank Sinatra, Beyonce, A.R. Rahman, Dave Matthews Band, The Script, Dispatch, Shania Twain, Kenny Chesney, The New Basement Tapes, Ed Sheeran, Carrie Underwood, John Mayer, Justin Timberlake

#### CHOSE SUPPLY CHAIN AS THEIR CAREER?



#### BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION ABOUT MILLENNIALS?



that no two projects are ever the same. They enjoy working with people and building relationships. And noting the abundant and diverse opportunities available, every one of them recommends a career in supply chain management to other millennials.

ThomasNet, ISM, and *Inbound Logistics* will continue to spread the word to the millennial generation: Supply chain is a place where you can innovate, make a difference, and build an ever-changing career that lasts a lifetime.

So, turn the pages to meet our 30 Under 30 Rising Supply Chain Stars, and get ready to be dazzled!

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# Supply Chain Rock Star

**Katy Conrad Maynor**

**AGE: 29**

*Category Manager, Finished  
Lubricants/B2B, Shell Oil, London, U.K.*

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Nominated by David Allen, Operational Excellence—  
Functional Excellence Lead, Shell Oil



**How she shines** Katy Conrad Maynor isn't just a rising star—she's a rock star, says nominator David Allen. A superb negotiator and born leader, Maynor displays a special flair for uniting people with conflicting goals, guiding them toward solutions that pay off for all. Among her many achievements at Shell Oil since 2008: She devised a new approach to one supplier relationship that yielded big savings across half that vendor's portfolio; built a regional sourcing strategy for Shell's business-to-business (B2B) products; and co-led the creation of a successful new contracting model.

**Why supply chain?** Maynor was a business major at Ohio State, headed for a marketing career, when an on-campus talk by a member of the Limited Brands' logistics team gave her a look at life on the supply side. "Getting the product to the end consumer, and matching demand to what is available, sounded like a fascinating challenge," she says. Later, a 12-week internship at Shell sold her on the supply chain, and especially on procurement. One big draw was the chance to make a direct impact on the bottom line. "If businesses can get this right—an optimized supply chain with constructive relationships—it can be a source of competitive advantage," she says. "It's exciting to be part of that effort."

**Her job today** Maynor negotiates contracts and manages suppliers for Shell's Global Commercial business. "I also work with our businesses to help make our supply chain run more smoothly and gain efficiencies," she says. It's a global role that Maynor usually fills from Houston. But in 2014, Shell sent her on special assignment to London, where she focused particularly on European suppliers. She also started tackling new duties, procuring services for a team that develops long-term strategies for Shell.

**Rewards of the job** "I love working with smart engineering and business professionals," says Maynor. "They challenge me. They make me sharper." She

also loves solving tough problems—for instance, balancing the pros and cons of different sourcing options, uncovering hidden costs and risk factors, to reach the best possible solution. "The rewarding part is when we make a real change that improves our business, and makes our team stronger as a result," she says.

**ISM activist** "Katy has a passion for connecting new professionals with experienced supply chain practitioners," says Allen. That's why, as part of the ISM-Houston affiliate, she took a lead role in creating the organization's first Emerging Professional's Group (EPG), building a network of 250 members. "We want to encourage a constant pipeline of new talent coming into ISM and into the supply chain management discipline," Maynor says. The Houston group now serves as a role model for other ISM affiliates.

**Outside the office** Maynor enjoys time with family and friends. She also loves to travel, indulging her curiosity about various world cultures. She mentors college business majors, and in her downtime she relaxes with mysteries and biographies, and takes Pilates. A figure skater growing up, she also continues to enjoy that sport.

**On leadership** "Lead from wherever you are," Maynor recommends. That's her own modus operandi. Whether she's the

designated leader, or simply a member of the team, Maynor knows how to influence a group to achieve its best. That often takes courage. "When something doesn't look right, or you have to deliver a message that is the right message but isn't popular, you need to communicate it respectfully and stand behind it," she says.

**Advice to new supply chain professionals** "Take risks. Being willing to move to a new city or country, or take on a challenge I've never faced before, has led to some of the most valuable and rewarding experiences of my life."

#### IN HER OWN WORDS

**What do you hope to accomplish in the next 10 years?** To continue growing as a supply chain professional, and learning from inspirational leaders so I can be more effective within teams and as a leader. **Would you recommend a supply chain career to someone under 30?** Yes. The chance to make a direct impact on the bottom line is rewarding.



## A Quick Study

**Nicholas Ammaturo** | AGE: 30

*Director, Profit Improvement and Procurement, Hudson's Bay Company, New York, New York*  
Nominated by Robert Odomirok, Senior Manager, A&M Procurement, PepsiCo Inc.

**Up for any challenge** If variety is the spice of life, Nick Ammaturo's career is a feast of flavors. He has worked in the food and beverage industry, facilities maintenance, beauty products, and now—with a recent move to the Hudson's Bay Company—in retail.

Wherever he lands, he excels. In part, that's because he knows how to make a quick but thorough study of any challenge he's about to tackle. "Nick believes in knowing the business cold to make informed decisions," says nominator Robert Odomirok.

**Where he has been** At his last job at Avon Products, Ammaturo wore two hats. In one, he led an initiative to implement a global supply chain collaboration system. "I was the project manager, overseeing IT, finance, planning, engineering—all the stakeholders," he says. With his other hat on, he focused on logistics, leading a series of RFPs for linehaul transportation management and order fulfillment services.

### IN HIS OWN WORDS

#### **Most challenging part of your job?**

Demonstrating how procurement process and strategy can unlock value to the organization. **If you could start over, would you still choose this profession?** Definitely. You gain skills that you can apply outside of work. This profession teaches you to ask the right questions and be informed in many areas.

**Lighting to lobsters** One of Ammaturo's most memorable projects occurred at FM Facility Maintenance. The mission was to source a wide range of services—plumbing, lighting, elevators, food equipment, lobster tanks—for a national supermarket chain.

He had to master tons of information at the start. "For a few months, I just hit the road," he says. "I visited at least 100 supermarket locations, learning about every aspect of the business, then trying to understand the costs, and how to add value." The project started in September and had to wrap up by February.

Not only did Ammaturo get the contracts squared away, but he also implemented training to help the stores cut costs by operating more efficiently. In the end, the project saved the client about 15 percent.

**The next generation** Ammaturo got into supply chain management by chance. He was interning in Beijing as a marketing analyst when a recruiter called to offer him a position in global procurement at PepsiCo. "I had no exposure to the field until I happened to get that phone call," he says. That's why he likes to return to his alma mater, Villanova University, to talk to management classes about the supply chain: he wants to make sure students hear about this profession he loves.

He also reaches out to younger people as president of the ISM-7 Counties chapter. With his urging, the group recently launched a new, more dynamic website that is optimized for mobile devices as well as PCs. Ammaturo has been recruiting business professors in New York to write articles for the site and, in turn, to bring in chapter members to talk to their classes.

**Baking his way to the top** An avid cook, Ammaturo ran a food blog, *Fork to Cork*, through 2011. "One recipe has gotten me promoted several times," he jokes. "Every place I work, I bake that blueberry tart, and everyone remembers it."

# The Juggler

**Natalie Andrasko** | AGE: 29

*Senior Procurement Specialist, ConAgra Foods, St. Louis, Missouri*  
Nominated by Jami Bliss, Director of Procurement, Teva Pharmaceuticals

**Agile and quick** Versatility might be Natalie Andrasko's middle name. "Natalie has transitioned between industries, companies, and roles in the past five years, and hits the ground running each time," says nominator Jami Bliss. She has worked for business units that make products as diverse as baby powder, narcotic medications, and popcorn. As a demand planner for Johnson & Johnson's baby products division, she improved forecasting accuracy metrics by 23 percent. At ConAgra Foods, one recent achievement was using a new e-sourcing tool to conduct a procurement for paper packaging that saved the company \$17 million.

**How she got here** Andrasko's supply chain career began with a casual visit to a career fair at Penn State, where she majored in biological engineering. "I figured I'd go to the fair just to practice my networking skills," she says. "But I landed a co-op with Johnson & Johnson, as a supply planner."

She later joined Johnson & Johnson's Global Operations Leadership Development Program. Rotations through roles in laboratory work, acquisitions work, and demand planning showed her that her true interests lay with the supply chain.

**Why supply chain?** "I want to continue to be challenged," says Andrasko. "Supply chain is a fabulous career because it's so dynamic. You touch so many different areas of the organization that your opportunities are endless."

**Challenge and reward** In her last role in package sourcing, Andrasko faced the tough task of collecting information she needed from multiple ERP systems. That data was crucial, for example, in the sourcing event that saved \$17 million. "Often, the systems didn't have the data we needed, so we had to go to the plants and internal business partners to hunt it down," she says.

That project—and all her work in packaging—brought Andrasko tremendous satisfaction. "When you finish a project that saves millions of dollars, it's rewarding to know that you've made such an impact on the business."

**Latest project** Andrasko recently switched to a new role focused on averting obsolescence. When ConAgra produces products for sale under retailers' private labels, she makes sure they get to market well before their sell-by dates. This takes a great deal of coordination with teams in demand forecasting, warehousing, distribution, and many other functions.

**Finding balance** It's important to set boundaries between business and personal life, Andrasko says. "When I get home, I leave my phone in my purse and do my best to unplug from work for the day...at least until my two-year-old son goes to sleep."



## IN HER OWN WORDS

**Most significant career accomplishment to date?** I facilitated a paper packaging sourcing event within the procurement group that netted large savings for the company. We hit our savings goals for the year as a result. **If you could start over, would you still choose this profession?** Yes. I feel like my work matters, and that gives me the confidence to continue developing as a leader.

# A Bundle of Energy

**Alejandra Baptista** | AGE: 27

*Vendor Master Specialist, NuStar Energy, San Antonio, Texas*

*Nominated by Cheryl Foster, Supervisor, Contract Administration, NuStar Energy*



## IN HER OWN WORDS

### Most significant project to date?

I conducted a thorough invoice analysis of a top supplier and found it had not been applying the negotiated discount. My efforts led to a \$158,000 credit. **Does your job have a significant impact on your company?** Absolutely! I know what I do helps create revenue, impacting the top and bottom lines.

soccer game in 2010, she pursued rigorous physical therapy and training to prepare for the 2013 San Antonio Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon.

In 2014, she joined the board of ISM-San Antonio as secretary. She's also an active community volunteer—for instance, with the Junior League of San Antonio's Family Endeavors program. "We do crafts with moms and their children who need supportive interaction," she says. "It has been very rewarding."

**Her many talents** Don't try to pigeonhole Alejandra Baptista. She has worked as a buyer, but she has also probed the depths of enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, mastering several different versions of SAP. Baptista has become so adept at using the software that she became a trainer, and lent support to users during a system upgrade.

In her current role at NuStar Energy, Baptista maintains the crucial vendor master database. In addition, she works with accounts payable to make sure vendors are paid correctly and on time. But when a chance arises to help NuStar in a new way, she grabs it. For example, "Alejandra has stepped out of her box to maintain records for most of our contractors that are required to hold insurance," says nominator Cheryl Foster. "She is eager to learn and always volunteers for new projects."

**Sharp-eyed auditor** Baptista started making her mark in her earliest days at NuStar, soon after she graduated from Baylor University. Her project was to scrutinize invoices to make sure they adhered to the terms of suppliers' contracts. She soon zeroed in on one vendor that wasn't always applying the promised

discounts. So she started a full-scale analysis.

"I pulled invoices over the course of our contract period, and created a spreadsheet to document each invoice and where the discounts were not being met," she says. Armed with the facts from Baptista's presentation, management worked with the vendor to set things right. "We got back about \$158,000," she says.

**Pleasures of the job** "It's fun learning what goes on behind the scenes with our vendor records," Baptista says. "And it's rewarding to know that what I do makes other people's jobs easier. For example, because I set up the records correctly, we can meet payment terms that win us discounts from our vendors."

**Outside the office** Baptista is devoted to staying active. "If I hear about a company-sponsored team, I'll be on it—practically any sport," she says. It's hard to stop her. After tearing her anterior cruciate ligament during a company



# A Breath of Fresh Air

**Matthew Bauer** | AGE: 29

*Procurement Administrator, City of Mesa, Arizona*

Nominated by Steve Dahle, Strategic Procurement Officer, Maricopa County, Arizona

**Guinea pig** Maricopa County, Ariz., hired Matthew Bauer as an experiment. Could an inexperienced graduate fresh from Arizona State's supply chain management program succeed as a government procurement officer? The answer was yes—with a vengeance. In fact, when the county procurement supervisor retired two years later, Bauer stepped into that role.

**The job** Today, Bauer is procurement administrator for the City of Mesa, Ariz., one of the youngest people in the United States to hold such a role in government. His achievements earned him the Gabe Zimmerman Award for Innovation from the Center for the Future of Arizona, and won his agency at Maricopa County the Innovations in Public Procurement Award for 2013 from the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP). "Through his innovative ideas and ability to drive change, Matthew saved local government more than \$10 million," says nominator Steve Dahle.

**Fresh ideas** "When I started at the county, I was the youngest person in the department by about 15 years," Bauer says. He seized the chance to soak up all the knowledge he could from his colleagues, procurement veterans with about 200 years in combined experience.

But Bauer also brought fresh ideas to an organization that had been doing business in the same way for 30 years. "For example, we were able to move into electronic procurement, and implemented a full e-procurement suite," he says. Early on, he also convinced his boss to experiment with the then-controversial idea of using reverse auctions.

**Going, going...** In a reverse auction, multiple sellers bid against one another online, ideally driving prices lower. When Bauer first suggested this strategy at Maricopa County, his boss resisted, claiming it wouldn't work in government. But Bauer kept pushing. When the county finally ran a reverse auction for bulk flour, that event drove the price from 38 cents per pound to 20 cents, saving nearly \$1 million over the next three years. Bauer has since used reverse auctions for other commodities, and even for unconventional procurements, such as one for employee benefits. His successes have won coverage by *Governing* and *GovPro* magazines, ABC, CBS, and other media outlets.

**The fun side** One perk of working in government procurement is the variety of unusual experiences it provides. "I watched autopsies, because I was purchasing gas chromatograph mass spectrometers for the medical examiner," he says. "I went onto Chase Field, the Diamondbacks' baseball stadium, because we did a reroofing project there. I purchased bulletproof vests and helicopters—things you'd never expect to be involved in."

**Outside the office** Bauer heads the Young Professionals Committee for the Arizona State Capital Chapter of NIGP. "I like encouraging other young professionals into supply chain jobs, especially in government," he says. He has also chaired the Scholarship Committee for NIGP's national organization. Bauer and his wife like getting out in the Arizona sunshine, going rock climbing, hiking, and playing with their dogs. "And I like to watch sports," he adds. "I'm a big Phoenix Suns fan."



## IN HIS OWN WORDS

### Most rewarding part of your job?

Implementing new ideas, such as using procurement strategies to conduct reverse auctions on employee benefits contracts. It resulted in almost \$7 million in savings. **Does your job have a significant impact on your company?** The work I do has a significant impact on the local community. The products and services I acquire allow agencies to conduct operations on behalf of citizens.



## Ahead of the Game

**Stephanie Bedard** | AGE: 25

*Business Operations Analyst, Johnson & Johnson,  
High Wycombe, U.K.*

Nominated by Jami Bliss, Director of Procurement, Teva Pharmaceuticals

**Bring it on** Pitch Stephanie Bedard a curve ball, a fast ball, a knuckleball — whatever you throw her, she'll hit it out of the park. "Stephanie has been successful in roles as disparate as consumer packaged goods, new product development, and medical device distribution operations," says nominator Jami Bliss. These days, she's embracing a new assignment in the U.K. Highly adaptive and always game to take on the next challenge, Bedard stands out for her ability to connect, lead, shape, and deliver, Bliss says.

**Why supply chain?** After her freshman year at the University of South Carolina, Bedard spent the summer studying in Europe. One day, she found herself on the floor of an automotive assembly plant in Prague. "It was just magical," she recalls. A silver minivan moved by on the line, followed by a yellow sedan. "Car doors came flying overhead, arriving from the different suppliers that were co-located with the plant. The sense of urgency and operational focus were really exciting."

That look into just-in-time manufacturing so inspired Bedard that she switched her major from economics and international business to international business, global supply chain and operations management.

**Major win** As a top performer in Johnson & Johnson's Global Operations Leadership Development program, Bedard did three work rotations. During one, she led the team that prepared a facility in Memphis to distribute product for a J&J business that makes premium equipment for cardiovascular care.

Bedard was responsible for all aspects of that project, such as developing receiving, picking, and shipping processes; arranging to make and store shipping cartons; creating an ad hoc database to track product before it became live inventory; and having cages and racks built to quarantine and store the product.

The project timeline was tight. To add even more excitement, a last-minute hiccup in the warehouse management system forced Bedard's team to go into overdrive, picking, packing, and shipping product themselves, alongside hourly associates.

"We had people working crazy overtime to make sure we could get orders out the door, so surgeries wouldn't be canceled," all while triple-checking their compliance with regulatory requirements, says Bedard. In the end, customers received their product without a hitch. "It was incredible to see the team mobilize and make that happen."

**New horizons** In October 2014, Bedard joined a global team that handles facilities management for the J&J enterprise. That job has sent her a whole new range of tasks to tackle, such as: auditing supplier performance; measuring the success of energy conservation efforts; monitoring performance of building infrastructure; and exploring how to give J&J employees a distinct workplace experience—a workplace brand, if you will.

Bedard loves the new challenge. "There's a lot to learn," she says. "That's what's most exciting about any new job."

### IN HER OWN WORDS

**How did you get into supply chain management?** In 2010, I found myself in a just-in-time Skoda Volkswagen plant outside of Prague. I was so impressed that I decided supply chain and operations was where I needed to be. **Would you recommend a supply chain career to someone under 30?** It's a dynamic and engaging field. To stay cutting edge, we need transformational big thinkers. Join us. Warning: Supply chain isn't for the faint of heart.

# Purchasing Made Perfect

**Jenna Benkula** | AGE: 30

*Purchasing Manager, Glanbia Foods, Twin Falls, Idaho*  
Nominated by Declan Dalton, Purchasing Agent, Glanbia Foods

**Better and better** Perfection is the name of the game for Jenna Benkula. At the University of Idaho, as a dual major in human resources and production operations management, she put a special emphasis on process improvement. “I wanted to apply the Lean and Six Sigma concepts to a service role,” she says.

Streamlining workflows and driving out flaws is now a major focus for Benkula at Glanbia Foods, the Idaho-based cheese and dairy manufacturer where she has worked since graduation. “Jenna’s rise in our organization is due to her drive for continuous improvement in our processes and our people,” says nominator Declan Dalton. “She constantly pushes us to identify and eliminate waste.”

**The job, part one** Like a superhero, Benkula maintains two identities at work. The first is category manager for business services, chemicals, and ingredient process aids. Within those areas, she nurtures relationships with vendors, and works with local purchasing managers who buy for their sites. “The purchasing manager handles day-to-day transactions, such as a rush order for chemicals,” she says. “When a buy is more strategic, I get involved.”

**Part two: striving for ‘slick’** Her alter ego—purchasing manager—concentrates even more intensely on strategy. “We’re focused on trying to make our processes more ‘slick,’” Benkula says. If the procurement team can do its day-to-day work more efficiently, that will free members to spend more time on innovation.

So, for example, the team is investigating how to make better use of the company’s ERP system. Members are also exploring how to consolidate Glanbia’s other software tools. “We want to consolidate into one system, so we can get a unified picture of our supplier relationships, contracts, tenders, and projects,” she says.

**Early management** Right now, Benkula is in the midst of a process improvement project based on a concept used by Glanbia’s engineering team called “early management.” This involves defining steps for people to follow at the start of a project, to keep problems from cropping up later.

One key step is to capture the “voice of the customer,” to make sure the project answers all the needs of the people it will serve. Say, for example, Glanbia needs to procure lab supplies. “You lay out a draft project scope, tell the purchasing managers at the production sites what you intend to do, and ask what they need from this process. Based on that input from your internal customers, you develop a more detailed scope of work.” Once everyone agrees on the scope, the project manager uses that document to define the products and services the vendor will deliver.

**Outside the office** “I dedicate most of my time outside of work to hanging with my family,” says Benkula. “My three brothers, two sisters, niece, and two nephews are important to me. They make everything worthwhile.”



## IN HER OWN WORDS

### Most difficult part of your job?

Getting to a place where we can move away from transactional, day-to-day tasks to focus on strategic initiatives. **If you could start over, would you still choose this profession?** Yes. There is never a boring day, and while it can be challenging, the opportunities to learn and grow as an individual make it all worthwhile.

## Taking the Lead

**Paul Boyer** | AGE: 28

*Site Head of Procurement, F. Hoffmann-La Roche, Ltd., Hillsboro, Oregon*  
Nominated by Tania Santiago-Mirabal, Latin America Indirect Procurement Manager, Millicom

**Up the ladder** A skilled leader who has proven his ability to pull teams together on complex projects, Paul Boyer has just moved up to a new challenge at healthcare firm F. Hoffmann-La Roche. Until recently, he worked as a global category manager, responsible for primary packaging for targeted therapies. Now, he is a site head of procurement, in charge of all sourcing for a manufacturing plant.

"I lead a team of people managing direct and indirect materials, specifically capital and equipment, facilities, services, and site operations," Boyer says.

Based on his track record, there's no doubt that he'll thrive in the new job. "Paul demonstrates a level of professionalism far beyond what one would expect from someone his age," says nominator Tania Santiago-Mirabal. "His management has received positive feedback from stakeholders at all levels."

**How he got here** Boyer was a business major at Miami University of Ohio when Tom Speh, a professor and past president of the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals, gave a guest lecture to his marketing class. "He talked about increasing revenues versus decreasing costs to achieve a target," Boyer says. "It provided a look at the impact procurement can make. I found it fascinating."

Boyer asked for a bit of Speh's time the following week. "We talked for a few hours," he recalls. "Then I went straight to admissions, and enrolled in the supply chain program."

**One for all** In one of Boyer's biggest projects as global category manager, he led the procurement team's participation in an effort to source a pre-filled glass syringe that would serve for most cancer therapies in Roche's development pipeline. "Before we got involved, seven or eight molecules in the pipeline had their own specifications," he says. Running a separate procurement for each, then using all those slightly different packaging platforms at the same plant, would have wasted a lot of resources. Instead, officials at Roche wanted to create a standard set of specs, and choose a standard set of suppliers. Boyer's job was to run the cross-functional sourcing team and get everyone to buy into this new approach to sourcing.

The nearly three-year effort saved Roche a great deal in resources. "And it sets us up for success as these molecules move through the development process and eventually launch," Boyer says.

**Advice to millennials** "If you're still in school, try to get a solid grounding in something other than supply chain," Boyer says. "You need specialties of your own—a unique perspective you can bring to the job. For those who are getting into the workforce now, find a good mentor."



### IN HIS OWN WORDS

**Most rewarding part of your job?** This type of work inspires and challenges. Getting out of bed in the morning, and going above and beyond, is easy to do. **What do you hope to accomplish in the next 10 years?** Continue pursuing opportunities that keep me engaged and are in line with my values and passions. Through my work, I can make a difference in the world.



# A World of Opportunity

**Christina Butterworth** | AGE: 30

*Global Supply Markets Project Manager,  
Halliburton, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*  
Nominated by Jami Bliss, Director of Procurement, Teva Pharmaceuticals

**The job** Given her expertise on the supply side, you might be surprised to learn how much time Christina Butterworth spends talking with customers. As a global supply market (GSM) project manager at Halliburton, Butterworth helps business development teams win projects ranging from \$1 million to more than \$3 billion in scope.

Her job is to make sure everyone understands the cost factors that lie behind Halliburton's pricing. Through extensive research and analysis, Butterworth builds a picture of all the costs involved—for materials, transportation, contract services, and everything else the project requires.

She often sits at the bargaining table, too. "Some business development professionals want a supply chain 'wing man' to assist in the negotiations," Butterworth says. "That's an exciting role. I'm negotiating with extremely talented supply chain professionals from some of our top customers."

**Seeing the world** Having caught the travel bug early in life, Butterworth was thrilled when Halliburton sent her to Malaysia in 2014. "It has been the highlight of my career so far," she says. Her mission was to extend the GSM concept to the Asia-Pacific market, where it hadn't been tried before.

Since arriving in Kuala Lumpur, Butterworth has led her GSM team on more than 90 projects. The new posting has taught her about many more of Halliburton's products and services, and has given her the chance to visit about a dozen countries. "Learning about different cultures and eating new foods has been incredible," she says. As a bonus, she has taken the opportunity to earn her open water scuba diving certificate.

**Influential leader** Butterworth's projects are often complex, and may require cooperation from a wide range of people. That's not easy to achieve. "Sometimes you need support from various teams, with diverse priorities, to achieve a common goal," she explains.

She prevails because she has honed a skill she calls "influential leadership." Butterworth knows how to get people pulling in the same direction for the good of their company. "Throughout her career, Christina has been able to gain trust, articulate a vision, and lead a team to success," says nominator Jami Bliss.

**Helping the next generation** Along with her Houston colleague, megawatt star Katy Conrad Maynor, Butterworth played a major part in launching ISM-Houston's 250-member Emerging Professionals Group (EPG). Butterworth chaired the EPG committee in its first two years, and helped spread the word on how to create such a group at ISM's Affiliate Leadership training events in 2012 and 2013.

**Advice to millennials** "If you're in school and want to enter the supply chain field, get as many internships or co-ops as you can," says Butterworth. "You'll get a chance to see everything supply chain management can offer before you have to make a more strategic decision on your career path. Also, don't be afraid to take risks."



## IN HER OWN WORDS

**Most significant career accomplishment to date?** I was involved in the startup of ISM Houston's Emerging Professionals Group. I chaired the committee for two years. One year, the group grew to more than 250 members and held four events. **Would you recommend a supply chain career to someone under 30?** Yes. My advice would be to take calculated risks in your life and career. You lend yourself to more opportunities, and won't feel the need to look back and think you should have done something a different way.



## Sourcing for Success

**Erica Canlas** | AGE: 25

*Sourcing Lead, Commercial and Business Services Procurement, Johnson & Johnson Consumer Products Company, a Division of Johnson & Johnson Group of Consumer Companies Inc., Skillman, New Jersey*  
Nominated by Eliza Gonzalez, Director, Global Procurement and Talent Management, Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies

**Wide reach** Since joining Johnson & Johnson (J&J) as a co-op in 2010, and a fulltime employee in 2011, Erica Canlas has wielded an extensive shopping list. Check in with her at different times, and you'd have found her cultivating value for the company across everything from advertising to shrink wrap.

Today, Canlas still handles an impressively complex portfolio, supporting procurement of professional services (consulting and temporary labor), auto fleets for sales reps, travel, meetings, event planning, and point-of-sale retail displays. She keeps making an impact. "In only four years at J&J, she has amassed an incredible list of accomplishments in procurement, and has earned the respect of leaders in marketing, logistics, sales, and finance," says nominator Eliza Gonzalez.

**Change agent** One of the top challenges Canlas faces in her job is overcoming resistance to change. "People get used to the way they've been doing things, or they're used to working with an existing supplier," she says. When she spots a chance to source an excellent product or service better, faster, or at a more competitive price, it can be hard to influence people at multiple levels, inside and outside the company, to embrace that change.

That's where her experience with many different categories comes in handy. "It is rewarding to think about what I've learned in one role, and share those lessons with stakeholders in a different category," she says.

**Success story** Shrink wrap offers a great example of Canlas's sourcing prowess. As a sourcing analyst for logistics, Canlas pored over every line in the operating budget of the third-party logistics (3PL) companies that served J&J, looking for opportunities to add value. "One area that I tackled was shipping supplies," she says.

In particular, one distribution center in California was buying shrink wrap from a supplier that had a good track record, and met the company's supplier diversity goals. But Canlas believed that J&J could buy the product for less. So she sat down with the supplier, the 3PL, and stakeholders within Johnson & Johnson to talk about how the material worked, its connection to raw goods, how much the company used, and what future demand might be. "We also did

benchmarking, looking at pricing for comparable material from other suppliers," she says. Those negotiations yielded major savings, while preserving the partnership with a strong supplier.

**Outside the office** While she works hard, Canlas also makes sure to devote time to family and friends. She also keeps active. "I exercise regularly, and I enjoy hiking and other outdoor activities," she says. "I also enjoy cooking and experimenting with new recipes." On top of all that, she's working toward an MBA at Rider University, N.J.

### IN HER OWN WORDS

**Most significant career accomplishment to date?** I led efforts to deliver savings for distribution center shipping supplies while maintaining operational and quality requirements. I engaged the supplier, 3PL, and business stakeholders to benchmark pricing for comparable materials from suppliers, and yielded major savings while maintaining the incumbent supplier relationship.



## Relationship Builder

**Robert Cassin** | AGE: 25

*Specialist, Global Procurement,  
Ingredion, Westchester, Illinois*  
Nominated by Bhart Sarin, Global Procurement,  
Business Services Team, Ingredion

**Man in high demand** A natural relationship-builder known for his integrity, Robert Cassin has earned the trust of colleagues and stakeholders throughout Ingredion. “This, combined with strong analytical and project management skills, has made him a highly sought-after talent in the company,” says nominator Bhart Sarin.

Since joining the food ingredients company in early 2012, Cassin has delivered so much value that in 2014 he was chosen for a special six-month assignment in Shanghai. There, he helped Ingredion’s procurement team in China implement best practices and tools developed at the company’s headquarters.

“I was focused on procurement, but a huge part of my work was to establish relationships with the leadership team at that site,” says Cassin. Those ties continue to pay off. “Now I can serve as a primary resource for anyone who’s trying to get something done in China.”

**His work today** Back in Illinois, Cassin leads procurement for human resources services, and works on other strategic sourcing projects case-by-case. “Those projects fall into a variety of categories—logistics, chemicals, or packaging,” he says. The projects focus mainly on the needs of Ingredion sites in South America and the Asia-Pacific region. “I’m involved in the entire sourcing process—from developing ideas for an opportunity all the way through contracting and execution,” he says.

**Pleasures of the job** An avid solver of problems and puzzles, Cassin brings that enthusiasm to all the projects he tackles. “The most attractive part of procurement is coming up with solutions, and being able to realize different opportunities,” he says.

**Major win** One of Cassin’s biggest successes at Ingredion so far was a project that developed stronger packaging for transporting a key product from manufacturing plant to customer. “Working closely with our suppliers, who are experts in the field, we came across a new opportunity using high-performance extensible paper rather than natural kraft paper,” he says. After performing extensive tests and some trials, the team—which Cassin led—decided to create packaging based on this material.

That choice produced several benefits. “We developed a solution that uses less transportation, requires less warehouse space for storage, and is more sustainable—using 33 percent less paper,” Cassin says. The new packaging reduced Ingredion’s impact on the environment while also saving money. “The project was so successful, it was a finalist for our internal CEO Awards program,” Sarin adds.

**Advice to millennials** “If you get the chance to work globally and to travel abroad, take it,” Cassin says. “It’s an incredible experience to see different cultures and learn how the business operates in other areas of the world. You’ll expand your network as well.”

And definitely consider a career in supply chain. “If you’re passionate about learning and growing, gaining new experiences and skills that you can call upon in the future, this work offers an unbelievable opportunity,” he says.

### IN HIS OWN WORDS

**Does your job have a significant impact on your company?** Yes.

My role allows me to deliver savings that help drive profits for my organization. **If you could start over, would you still choose this profession?** Yes, my profession has given me the opportunity to live and work all over the world. I find my work extremely rewarding.

## A Sweet Feat

**Erin Clancy** | AGE: 30

*Commercial Manager, Mars Chocolate, North America, Hackettstown, New Jersey*  
Nominated by Cheryl D'Cruz-Young, Managing Director, Diversified Search

**Dandy gig** There's no question what's most fun about Erin Clancy's job. "We're producing chocolate!" she says. At the company that brings the world M&M's, and other brand chocolates, Clancy manages relationships with third-party manufacturers and co-packers. Helping to design supply chains, and making sure that partnerships yield improved results, she handles a constantly changing portfolio worth approximately \$50 million.

**From start to shelf** Part of Clancy's role is to help Mars bring new products to market. One stellar example was M&M's Milk Chocolate Snack Mix, a blend of M&M's, cookies, pretzels, and nuts that *Confectionery News* named the #1 Innovative Product of 2012. "I was part of the product team from development through execution," Clancy says. "Seeing the product on the store shelf, and knowing how much I had to do with creating it, was the most rewarding experience I've had at Mars."

### IN HER OWN WORDS

**Does your job have a significant impact on your company?** Absolutely. Supply chain creates value every day by supporting multiple products across multiple brands. **Would you recommend a supply chain career to someone under 30?** Yes. Success in supply chain management can boost a company ahead of its competitors.

**The importance of allies** A BS from the University of Maryland in logistics, transportation, and supply chain management, plus operations and quality management, gave Clancy much of the knowledge she needed to launch her career. But only when she took a seat in Mars Chocolate's open-plan office did she absorb another crucial lesson about supply chain success—the importance of exchanging information with allies throughout the company.

"You have to form the right relationships with people from your own function and throughout the business," she says. When you keep people in the loop about your projects, there's no telling who will turn up with crucial advice at just the right moment. "Suddenly, it's the advice that will make or break your project," she says.

**Having a field day** Clancy is a big proponent of engagement, the principle that people are most excited to come to work when they feel connected, valued, and supported. A member of the Mars Engagement Leadership Team, she was the driving force behind the annual Mars Field Day, which began in 2011. "The idea was to have the various functions compete outside the office, like field days we had in grade school," she says. Clancy won the needed buy-in from management, planned the activities, and was delighted to see co-workers compete in events such as volleyball, tug-of-war, a water sponge relay, and a 10-legged race.

**Personal best** Just as she drives herself to new heights of excellence at work, Clancy loves striving for the best in the competitive sport CrossFit. "I apply what I learn in the gym to my professional life, always pushing harder and setting and achieving new goals," she says. She also teaches CrossFit classes, and loves seeing her students shine. "It's extremely satisfying watching members do a movement they never thought they could do, run farther or faster than they ever thought possible, or lift more weight than they imagined they could."







## The Dean of Hard Work

**Brian Dean** | AGE: 26

*Purchasing Agent,  
General Dynamics  
C4 Systems,  
Scottsdale, Arizona  
Self-nominated*

joy, embracing every new experience as a way to build his strength. If he doesn't know the answer to a question, he'll pull out all the stops to find it. If a project turns tough, he'll work late into the night to get the job done right and on time. No wonder one of General Dynamics' (GD) strategic suppliers singled him out for praise after an annual contract negotiation. "We have never seen a buyer work as hard on anything as Brian did on those agreements," the vendor said.

**The job** As a purchasing agent for GD's G4 Systems, Dean buys radio frequency and microwave components used in radios, encryption devices, and other products for military communications. His special challenge is balancing day-to-day purchasing with his strategic procurement mission: finding ways to drive out costs. The key to success, he says, is to stay in touch with engineers and material planners, and keep a sharp eye on the future. "If we know about a project ahead of time, then we can see what relationships we have with potential suppliers, or forge new ones," Dean notes.

**Resident expert** At GD's Scottsdale facility, Dean is the sole person responsible for buying products through the "gray market"—the network of brokers who are not official sources of a manufacturer's components. Often, these are replacement parts no longer made by the original equipment manufacturer (OEM), but available as excess or re-sold inventory.

GD goes to the gray market only as a last resort, and buyers must work with special care so that they never buy counterfeits. "I was part of the team that wrote our company's stringent guidelines for using the gray market," Dean says. In fact, he's the Scottsdale facility's resident expert on the subject. Colleagues at other GD businesses often seek his advice on how to work successfully with reputable gray market suppliers.

**Big win** Dean scored one of his major successes on a team that integrated purchasing for GD Canada and other businesses into the Scottsdale operation. He shouldered the workload of multiple buyers, and took charge of streamlining existing businesses processes. The work paid off handsomely. For instance, the team cut GD Canada's supplier base from about 50 to just three. "And because we were buying in bigger volumes, we got better pricing," Dean adds. Also, for high-volume components, the team found new opportunities to buy directly from OEMs, rather than from distributors.

**Advice to millennials** "Find a boss who is as committed to your growth as you are, someone who gives young people opportunities to take charge of things that other companies might not," Dean says. "And once you're in a job, don't be afraid to put yourself out there and offer creative solutions. Younger people often have a different mindset, compared with the way things have been done in the past. That's a huge asset."

**Whatever it takes** Brian Dean throws himself into challenges with

### IN HIS OWN WORDS

#### **Most difficult part of your job?**

Adapting between meeting the day-to-day requirements of the job, while still working toward big-picture opportunities that could benefit the company in the long run. **If you could start over, would you still choose this profession?**

Yes, but I would double-major in finance. You should understand not only how goods move throughout an organization and the world, but how money moves as well.



## The Lone Arranger

**Laura Dearborn Stearns** | AGE: 26

*Supply Chain Business Analyst,  
Cisco Systems, San Jose, California*

Nominated by John Hutton, Manager, Supply Chain Operations, Cisco Systems

**Sharp intelligence** The way you might squeeze juice from an orange, Laura Dearborn Stearns squeezes value from data. In one of her roles as a supply chain business analyst in Cisco's Global Manufacturing Operations, she builds reports that show how well components flow from suppliers to the partners that manufacture Cisco's products.

Do deliveries arrive on time? If demand for a part exceeds supply, do the supplier and manufacturer work together well to solve the problem? Stearns' tools extract the answers from a business intelligence (BI) system. Then she presents the information in ways that quickly tell users all they need to know.

"I make sure the data is available, accurate, and displayed in a usable format," she says. "Reports have to be useful to internal users, partners, and suppliers—

people with a variety of roles and priorities."

**On her own** The most impressive aspect of Stearns' BI work is that she leads the effort on her own, says nominator John Hutton. "She does not have co-workers or internal IT support to lean on for assistance." Instead, Stearns works directly with the software vendor to customize the BI platform for Cisco's particular needs. Stearns had no formal training to prepare her to work with this IT tool. "It was all on-the-job learning," she says.

She continues to create new reports, metrics, and dashboards, each one helping her team work a little smarter. "This effort is driving innovation, and creating more efficient ways to share information and collaborate," Hutton says.

**Early warning** Stearns also uses the BI system herself, to keep an eye on how suppliers and manufacturers collaborate to avert component shortages. She ensures that everyone sticks to established processes, and sounds the alarm when things seem to be veering off course. "For example, a lot of shortages could indicate that things aren't going well industry-wide or for a certain commodity," Stearns says. "So I make sure management is notified."

**Rewards of the job** "I enjoy telling a story with data to give people new insights," Stearns says. "Then they can use that information to do a better job for the business."

**Do it right** Keeping tabs on a highly complex supply chain with many moving parts isn't easy. Stearns succeeds because she knows how to focus on the big picture and on a project's smallest elements. "I'm detail-oriented," she says. "I have an organized approach. And I like to look at the quality of the impact I'm having. I don't want to do something just to get it done. I want to get it done right."

### IN HER OWN WORDS

**Most challenging part of your job?** Managing the complexity inherent in the supply chain, and the needs of all stakeholders in a given project or process. **Most exciting career accomplishment to date?** Leading the business intelligence for our supply collaboration platform. I pioneered the development and implementation of reports and dashboards that enable stakeholders to gain new information and drive action for increased efficiency.

# Always in Motion

**Christina DeKoning** | AGE: 28

*Material Analyst, Northrop Grumman Systems Corporation, San Diego, California*  
Nominated by Corey Moore, Vice President, Global Supply Chain Program Management, Northrop Grumman Systems Corp.

**Striving for excellence** Nothing stops Christina DeKoning. “I constantly challenge myself and those around me, asking, ‘Can we do this better or smarter?’” she says. That drive for excellence has propelled her into a variety of roles at Northrop Grumman, including her current job as leader of the Global Supply Chain organization’s supply chain affordability initiatives. “Her work ethic, and dedication to success are evident in everything she does,” says nominator Corey Moore.

**The job** DeKoning serves as liaison between Northrop Grumman’s manufacturing programs and its Global Supply Chain organization, leading efforts to drive down costs. “I work with all the functions within the supply chain—subcontracts, procurement, goods movement, logistics, and planning,” she says.

In the quest for greater affordability, DeKoning focuses not just on one-on-one supplier relationships, but also on broader strategy. For instance, she created an annual event called the Supplier Sustainability Affordability Summit, where major vendors discuss ways to cut costs while still delivering superior products. “For example, if we find an opportunity with one supplier, we ask if we can apply it to others,” she says.

**The thrill of victory** One highlight of DeKoning’s career to date was the project that won her Northrop Grumman’s Timely Award Plan Certificate. DeKoning’s assignment started when the company secured an important contract with a customer. DeKoning spent nearly three years getting everything in line with suppliers to support that product. “We were under significant pressure to meet our deadline,” she recalls. “The project involved months of travel and living on-site, working through the challenges with various companies. But, we got it done, and I flew home two days before Christmas.”

She returned exhausted, but also triumphant. “The customer was happy. The company was happy. And all the stakeholders involved were ecstatic,” she says. “It was an all-hands-on-deck job, and we got it done.”

**So-called downtime** DeKoning brings the same high energy to her personal life. She works out and recently ran a half marathon. “But my real passion outside of work is horses,” she says. A rider since the age of three, she keeps horses on her property and competes in barrel races. “I’ve tried relaxing, but it’s not really my thing,” she notes.

**Advice to millennials** Definitely consider a career in supply chain. “The opportunities are broad, and demand for supply chain expertise is through the roof,” DeKoning says. “Professionals who understand the entire supply chain lifecycle are hard to come by.”



## IN HER OWN WORDS

**Would you recommend a career in supply chain management to someone under 30?** Absolutely. The opportunities are endless, and there are multiple roles and options within the field. **If you could start over, would you still choose this profession?** Yes. This profession has taught me about organizations and how they operate. A strong supply chain gives a competitive edge that is crucial in today's global economy. Companies can't function without a supply chain.



## The Human Touch

**Aubrey Edwards** | AGE: 26

*Category Specialist,  
Alliance Data, Plano, Texas*  
Nominated by Tyler Werneke, Senior Manager,  
Strategic Procurement, Alliance Data

**Gaining consensus** Aubrey Edwards has a special flair for building relationships, says nominator Tyler Werneke. That's a crucial skill in her job as category specialist at Alliance Data, a global provider of data-driven marketing and loyalty programs for companies that serve consumers.

Edwards' prime mission is to hunt for ways to gain more value for Alliance while also cutting travel, financial services, and

marketing costs. These projects usually serve the whole enterprise, and it can be hard to get people with different perspectives and needs to agree on one solution. "You have to take the time to develop relationships with individuals, so they'll trust your opinion," Edwards says. "And the more you learn about a category, the greater the chance that you'll come up with insights that others couldn't have reached themselves."

### IN HER OWN WORDS

**Most significant project to date?** I led the project team for a software license management solution. Through the RFP process and successful negotiations, we achieved more than \$500,000 in savings. **What do you hope to accomplish in the next 10 years?** I'd like to make a positive impact on procurement and supply chain by bringing new ideas and innovations to the table.

**Early wins** During 2013, just seven months after she joined Alliance Data, Edwards achieved more than \$261,000 in savings. In those early days, she also played a key role in procuring the technology behind a new employee recognition program. "The system operates like a Facebook news feed," she says. It provides a forum where managers can praise employees for good work, and colleagues can "like" the news.

"The system has been hugely successful—and I know it will keep employees at Alliance satisfied for years to come," Edwards says.

**Bringing everyone together** More recently, Edwards worked her consensus-building magic in a project to choose a tool for managing the company's many software licenses. "I knew in my heart which solution would best get the job done for everyone," she says.

But individuals from different lines of business had their own ideas about what they needed, depending on their specific technical requirements. Gaining buy-in from everyone took a lot of legwork. "I flew to different locations, held

meetings, and conducted demonstrations," Edwards recalls. Eventually, her work paid off. "We landed on the supplier that my team had been hoping for from the beginning," she says. "Then, in negotiating the contract, we got the pricing down substantially, saving more than \$500,000. It was a big win."

**Outside the office** Edwards participates in her local ISM affiliate, but says she's basically a homebody. "I was married in April 2014, and I spend a lot of time with my husband and our golden retriever," she says. Edwards makes frequent trips from her home in Plano, Texas, to visit family in Houston. She also enjoys hanging out with friends, trying new restaurants, going for walks, and watching college football. "My newest guilty pleasure," she adds, "is watching *Shark Tank* on Friday night with a glass of wine."





## Schooled in the Art of Purchasing

**Leah Halvorson** | AGE: 28

*Director of Procurement and Supply Chain Development, Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis, Minnesota*

*Nominated by Sherry Bakken, Executive Assistant to the COO, Minneapolis Public Schools*

**Fast ascent** “Leah Halvorson is incredibly wise beyond her years,” says nominator Sherry Bakken. And once she started working for the Minneapolis Public Schools, Halvorson was quick to rise. Just one month after she joined the district as a senior buyer, tasked with implementing new contract management processes, Halvorson applied for—and won—the newly open job of director of procurement. Clearly, she had already made a big impact. “Even in a setting where she is not the ‘designated’ leader, people gravitate to her and automatically take direction from her,” Bakken says.

**Her mission** Before Halvorson arrived, purchasing at the Minneapolis Public Schools was a transactional affair. “It didn’t matter if a product could be purchased at a better price, or we could get a volume discount,” she recalls. Nor did it matter if staff bought similar products from 20 different vendors. The department simply turned each requisition into a purchase order. Tapping her private sector experience, Halvorson has been transforming the district’s purchasing department into a strategic operation that seizes every chance to reduce cost and waste.

**Pizza slices** To increase those opportunities, Halvorson has brought asset management, travel, contract management, sourcing, purchasing cards, records management, the document center, and vendor management under the procurement umbrella. By hunting down new chances for improvement, her department has made gains, including a partnership with a local vendor that cut the school district’s \$60,000 annual pizza bill in half. Savings have added up quickly. “She and her department were able to achieve \$883,000 in cost savings in fiscal year 2013, and \$2 million in 2014,” Bakken says.

**Soaking it up** Halvorson honed her negotiating skills early in life. A member of debate teams in high school and at the University of Florida, Gainesville, she learned to get into the minds of opponents and anticipate their arguments. Later, she learned about vendor management by watching her boss in action at Life Time Fitness, where Halvorson worked as purchasing project manager. “I used the opportunity to be a sponge,” she says. “I also asked if I could be a fly on the wall when he met with executive staff and the board, so I could learn how to interact with that level of management.”

**The right stuff** “It takes a certain kind of personality to work in procurement,” Halvorson says. “You have to be assertive, because you will have tough conversations at times.” You also have to keep pushing your standards higher. “Often, the procurement department is expected to accomplish what looks to be the impossible,” she says. “Once you do, that becomes your new norm. I enjoy that. You have to keep upping your game.”

### IN HER OWN WORDS

**Most difficult part of your job?** Being a change agent.

I am constantly looking for process improvements and cost efficiencies, and with that comes change. **Most significant career accomplishment to date?** I opened

our Document Center (DC) that was previously unsuccessful.

The DC saved about \$350,000 in its first year, \$1 million in the second year, and is projecting to hit about \$1.5 million in its third year—representing about a 33-percent increase.

## Bread Winner

**Stephanie Kessler Thayer** | AGE: 29

*Manager, Development Purchasing,  
Panera Bread, St. Louis, Missouri  
Self-nominated*

**Back in the spotlight** Winning a place on a list of up-and-coming young professionals is getting to be a habit for Stephanie Kessler Thayer, who appeared in the *St. Louis Business Journal's* 30 Under 30 list in 2014. An accomplished project manager, Kessler Thayer is the go-to person for furniture, fixtures, and equipment in more than 1,800 Panera Bread cafés across half the United States.

When it's time to open a new café, replace existing equipment, or roll out an innovation—such as electronic kiosks for placing orders—Kessler Thayer makes sure everything comes together correctly and on time. She creates and maintains work plans, budgets, scopes of work, and rules of engagement for \$27.5 million worth of rollout and replacement activity.

**Why supply chain?** Before earning her MBA and embarking on a supply chain career, Kessler Thayer majored in international relations at Webster University. But even as an undergraduate, when she first heard about supply chain management, she felt the attraction. “I discovered that supply chain involved all my professional passions—negotiation, estimation, working with people, and finding common ground,” she says.

### IN HER OWN WORDS

**Does your job have a significant impact on your company?** From maintaining supplier relationships to implementing cost-savings initiatives, procurement has a significant impact on a business' ability to operate and grow efficiently. **Would you recommend a supply chain career to someone under 30?** I highly recommend it. If you love numbers, people, and exciting projects, supply chain is a great field.

**Success story** Before joining Panera in 2013, Kessler Thayer worked at Ralcorp, later purchased by ConAgra. As a procurement specialist in packaging, she quickly spotted a problem with the inventory data used to forecast product demand.

“I noticed some severe forecasting inaccuracies,” she recalls. “The database was missing some information, and that provided an opportunity to improve the process.” Further investigation revealed that the database was missing about 30,000 item numbers that hadn't carried over during a system conversion five years earlier. “That was skewing the data sets by about 20 percent,” she notes.

Once Kessler Thayer pinpointed this, and other errors in the database, she and her colleagues were able to address them. Then she invented a new, hybrid forecasting method that took better account of factors such as seasonal demand. “We streamlined that supply chain process, making sure we were not missing the data that was so valuable for our suppliers and our plants,” she says.

**Outside the office** As busy as her job keeps her, Thayer Kessler also invests energy in her community. She serves on the boards of the St. Louis Public Radio Young Friends, and the Young Friends of the Missouri Botanical Garden. She also volunteers at the Academy of Science—St. Louis.

For fun, she and her husband rebuild 1970s-era motorcycles. “You should see me clean a carburetor!” she says. “And I bake because, after all, I work for a company that prides itself on bread and pumpkin muffins. I spend most Saturday afternoons in the kitchen—after my run, of course.”



# Catching a Code

**Sarah Klemsz** | AGE: 24

*Supply Chain Analyst, The Boeing Company, Portland, Oregon*  
 Nominated by Derek Westfall, Supply Chain Analyst, The Boeing Company

**Why supply chain?** “I’m a big nerd—I can’t help myself!” laughs Sarah Klemsz. She’s a whiz with computer code, and she likes to base decisions on hard data. But it was the relationship aspect of supply chain management—observed during a summer internship at Boeing—that lured her into the field. “I liked that the buyer group was the interface between the shop and engineering,” she says. “It’s all about coordinating with people to optimize.”

**Welcome to the 21st century** After graduating from University of Portland, Klemsz joined Boeing as a supply chain analyst, responsible for relationships with 15 suppliers and about 1,100 parts, all used to make controls that pilots use to fly commercial aircraft. Before long, she had also created an extra role for herself: modernizing how Boeing’s Portland supply chain group generates reports.

Before Klemsz came along, reporting was largely a manual process. Team members hunted down data they needed in Boeing’s ERP system and other sources; then they rekeyed the information into a spreadsheet or database program. That didn’t make sense to Klemsz. “It’s the 21st century. We’ve 3D-printed a car, we’ve landed a probe on a comet, and we’re paying people to type?” So she started writing code to automate those reports.

**Labor savings** Her efforts made a dramatic impact. For example, an automated tool now runs a components shortage report every morning. It updates managers with real-time information, while saving the supply chain analyst team one hour every day, which they devote to more mission-critical work. “The tool saved \$526,000 in labor costs and was recognized by the Portland site as the largest cost saving project in 2013,” says nominator Derek Westfall.

To keep the ball rolling, Klemsz pulled several tech-savvy colleagues into a new Supply Chain Information and Technology (SCIT) team. “We started getting together to bounce around ideas, and share the code we had already developed, so information would flow seamlessly among our homegrown systems,” she says.

**Pleasures of the job** “I love the Aha! moments in my work, when everything falls into place,” Klemsz says. She’s especially fascinated by risk management—how a business turns uncertainty into a course of action. Come port strike, blizzard, or tsunami, the supply chain stands ready. “We know what will happen, and we’ve got the plan,” she says.

**Michigan bound** By the time you read this profile, Klemsz will be at the University of Michigan, working on a master’s degree in supply chain management at the University of Michigan. After that, she hopes to return to Boeing, she says, and maybe also pursue another advanced degree—in data analytics.

**Outside the office** A hiker and kayaker, Klemsz also volunteers as a Girl Scout leader. She’s especially proud of the two high school students she has been supporting in their work toward the Gold Award, the Girl Scout’s highest rank. “I started with the students when they were in middle school,” she says. “It’s rewarding to be along for their journey.”



## IN HER OWN WORDS

**Does your job have a significant impact on your company?** Yes. Each time we streamline a process, it makes the work easier, and saves the company money. **Would you recommend a supply chain career to someone under 30?** Absolutely!

Businesses are putting more emphasis on their supply chains. It is an exciting time to join the field.





## Power Player

**Andrew Lattof** | AGE: 27

*Buyer, Xcel Energy, Denver, Colorado*

Nominated by Karen Cook, Purchasing Manager, Xcel Energy

**Top scorer** Andrew Lattof has cleared hiking trails in Alaska, and built homes for Habitat for Humanity. Today, he slashes costs for Xcel Energy, racking up more than \$500,000 in savings by the time of his 30 Under 30 nomination. “Andrew had the highest savings contributions of any buyer in 2013,” writes nominator Karen Cook. And he’s poised to climb even further. “He is a high-potential leadership candidate,” she adds.

**Total transformation** It’s impressive enough when a purchasing team hoists itself from the bottom of the performance ladder to the top. When Lattof joined the group that supports Xcel’s transmission

### IN HIS OWN WORDS

#### **Does your job have a significant impact on your company?**

Yes. When I find ways to save the company money, it opens up new opportunities for us to reinvest. **Would you recommend a supply chain career to someone under 30?** I would recommend it, because it allows you to see the big picture view of your company.

and distribution business, he led that transformation while also shouldering a double workload.

His key strategy? Communication. “We worked with the engineering teams to give them more accurate lead time information, so they could better plan their products and order materials,” Lattof says. Enhanced planning netted a 100-percent improvement in on-time, in-full deliveries, with fewer costly expedited shipments.

**New mission** In 2014, Xcel chose Lattof for a special assignment: negotiating master service agreements with contractors who make repairs at the company’s power plants. Because these agreements set up the terms and rates for services in advance, Xcel can call a maintenance contractor on short notice and get a quick response.

Learning the intricacies of all the equipment and services involved, so he can negotiate effectively, presents a big challenge. “I can use training modules to educate myself,” Lattof says. “But what’s even more helpful is to talk to the engineers.”

**Curiosity pays** One secret behind Lattof’s success is that he loves to ask questions. It’s how he learns which processes could do with an efficiency boost, and it’s also how he powers his negotiations with vendors. “You never know what you’re not getting unless you ask for it,” he says. Sometimes all a buyer needs to do is inquire whether there’s any way to lower a price. “It’s surprising how often you can find additional value for your company and for the relationship with the contractor,” he notes.

**From novice to trainer** When he first came to Xcel, Lattof’s penchant for questions also led him into conversations with colleagues about their jobs—what they did and how they did it. Soon, new hires started seeking him out, and those informal chats morphed into training sessions. “While initially in a junior role, he contributed to the training of all subsequent new hires in our purchasing team, as well as in our material coordination and supply chain hotline teams,” Cook says.

**Outside the office** Lattof volunteers for the Colorado Outward Bound School, and has run an aid station for the Leadville 100, a long-distance, high-altitude trail race. He revels in Colorado’s outdoor opportunities. “I enjoy skiing and ice hockey in the winter,” he says. “In the summer, I go fly fishing, hiking, and camping.”





## Live and Learn

**Ryan Mulcrone** | AGE: 27

*Senior Buyer and Category  
 Manager, E.I. DuPont de Nemours &  
 Company, Wilmington, Delaware*  
 Nominated by Thomas Weisenbach, Executive  
 Buyer, E.I. DuPont de Nemours & Company

**Quick study** Ryan Mulcrone never stops learning and never stops teaching. As one of the youngest in his MBA program at Ohio State, he absorbed all the knowledge he could—not just from classes, but also from older classmates who had worked in the corporate world.

Since arriving at DuPont, he has been paying it forward, gaining know-how and passing it along whenever he can. “At first, I spent my year as a capital buyer, learning how we buy,” Mulcrone says. “When I became enough of an expert, I started revising training documents, and teaching the project process to others at DuPont.”

**Houston turnaround** His talent for instruction led to one of Mulcrone’s big successes at DuPont. As a senior buyer and capital sourcing liaison, he spent nearly two years in Houston helping to transform a sourcing team there—part of a larger team of contractors—from laggard performers into stars.

His first step was to learn where the group was falling short. “I got involved in weekly project meetings,” he says. “I designed and set up a ‘voice of the customer’ survey to get feedback on what they were lacking, and I shared it with them.” Then, rather than dictate what to change, he asked team members to design their own improvements. “I also upgraded many of the training documents and databases, and retrained the team,” he says.

When DuPont switched to a different contractor, a new sourcing team stepped in to use the processes Mulcrone had helped to put in place. “I was heavily involved in ensuring a seamless transition from one contractor to another,” he says. “Before I left, the director of engineering told me that sourcing had become a bright spot within the office.”

**His job today** Since May 2014, Mulcrone has been managing relationships with companies that supply construction, maintenance, and engineering services to multiple DuPont facilities. His portfolio is worth \$500 million annually.

“The site operations and engineering teams, and the contractors, come to me with contractual or billing questions, or other issues related to the overall master agreement,” Mulcrone says. He also works on strategic planning, helping make decisions such as how many contractors DuPont should use for site services, and how to divide the work among different suppliers.

**Perils of personality** Overseeing service contracts is a special challenge because it involves “buying” people rather than products, Mulcrone says. “Emotion and personality are involved,” he notes. “You have to juggle the opinions and mindsets of many different people.”

How does he do it so well? “I try to listen more than I talk,” Mulcrone explains. “I always hear people out before I jump in to agree or disagree.”

**Outside the office** Mulcrone relocated from Houston to Delaware in August 2014, and got married in September. Since then, he and his wife have been shopping for a home. “When I’m not working, I’m house hunting,” he says.

### IN HIS OWN WORDS

#### Most rewarding part of your job?

Getting to work across sourcing, operations, engineering, plant sites, and external suppliers, and helping to solve problems every day. No one day is the same. **Would you recommend a supply chain career to someone under 30?**

Yes. It’s a quickly growing field that is demonstrating more value to companies.



## Master Builder

**Arun Raman** | AGE: 29

*Supply Chain Performance Engineer,  
Caterpillar, Peoria, Illinois*

Nominated by Javier Zarazua, Black Belt, Caterpillar; Betty Kelly, Six Sigma Black Belt, Caterpillar; Angela LaMere, Supply Manager, Caterpillar

**Taking it up a notch** Arun Raman is an outstanding builder and shaper. “He has taken supply chain design and transformation to a whole new level for our business,” says colleague Betty Kelly, a Six Sigma Black Belt. Case in point: when Raman designed the supply chain for a new Caterpillar product—the general duty undercarriage—he slashed manufacturing costs so effectively that his process became a new model for the company. “Over the past few years, my strategic sourcing process has been used in 94 projects, saving Caterpillar \$56 million,” he says.

**The job** Raman leads strategic sourcing for the Caterpillar unit that makes undercarriages—the moving parts that drive the company’s bulldozers, harvesters, and other machines. His influence is strong: peers and managers regularly look to him for ideas and information. “Arun has quickly established himself as the resident expert on strategic sourcing on our team,” says Angela Mare, supply chain manager at Caterpillar.

**Why supply chain?** “I’m good at math, which is used everywhere in the supply chain,” says Raman. He majored in information technology in college, then homed in on supply chain management while working for his M.S. in industrial engineering at Penn State. For Raman, though, the lure of this career goes way beyond numbers. “I like to be challenged every day,” he says, and the supply chain satisfies that need. He also loves the chance to work with suppliers all over the globe. “In the morning, I talk with Europe, at night I talk with China,” he notes. “That excites me.”

**The big challenge** The dynamics of the global economy guarantee more than enough complexity to keep Raman’s job compelling. For example, in the past 18 months, the Japanese currency has weakened by 25 to 30 percent. Two years ago, Raman advised moving manufacturing out of Japan. “But maybe that’s not such a good idea, now that we can get some of our components there for 30 percent less,” he says. Staying flexible in a volatile world is never easy. But helping to define the manufacturing footprint for the next 10 to 15 years is one of the enjoyable aspects of his work, he says.

### IN HIS OWN WORDS

#### **Most difficult part of your job?**

Dealing with business uncertainties, such as exchange rates and external factors, which can disrupt the supply chain. **Does your job have a significant impact on your company?** Absolutely. I have led sourcing studies that had a large impact on direct material costs, resulting in bottom-line savings.

**Endless opportunities** Active in APICS since his student days, Raman now uses that organization to advocate for the rising generation. Not only does he serve as director of student chapter affairs for the Lincoln Land Chapter of APICS, but he has earned a spot on the APICS national board. As student/young professional director, he works to ensure that APICS is serving the interests of millennials.

“Making a difference in people’s lives makes me happy,” Raman says. “So it’s a pleasure to introduce young people to the endless possibilities found in a supply chain career.”

From the food we eat to the huge machines that build our homes and roads—everything needs to move from supplier to consumer,” he says. “The supply chain is literally everywhere.”

# The Tool Maker

**Thomas Raterman** | AGE: 28

*Contract Administrator, Strategic Sourcing, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Chevy Chase, Maryland*  
 Nominated by Judith Smith, Associate Director, Strategic Sourcing, Howard Hughes Medical Institute

**Building a toolkit** There's no end to the items in Thomas Raterman's toolkit. As soon as he arrived at Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) as a procurement analyst, he started creating instruments such as a supplier scorecard, a log for tracking savings, procurement metrics, a supplier information database, and a method for benchmarking the prices HHMI pays for various items.

"We're using these tools because we do not have a supplier relationship management application to monitor supplier performance," says nominator Judith Smith, Raterman's boss. Raterman's databases, metrics, and reports fill the gap.

**Sourcing for science** These days, Raterman uses those tools in his work as a contract administrator, part of a team responsible for procuring general lab supplies. A science philanthropy, HHMI supports the work of researchers at more than 70 host institutions in the United States. HHMI's sourcing department strikes deals with suppliers for products and materials those researchers need in their labs.

Raterman is part of the team responsible for those agreements. "We set up contracts, work with pricing, and manage the relationships," he says. "We leverage our spending as best we can to ensure that we're getting the best price, quality, and service for the scientists." He also works with suppliers to clear up any issues that arise involving price, service, or delivery.

**Major win** In 2014, Raterman played a key role on a team that decided to contract with a primary vendor for general lab supplies, then conducted a procurement to choose that vendor. "My role was to help guide that conversation, provide key data, and answer questions to help drive the team toward consensus," he says.

"In addition to doing a spend and market analysis, Tom also created a sophisticated and detailed evaluation matrix for the group to score the suppliers' proposals," says Smith.

Once the group chose a supplier and negotiated a contract, Raterman created several tools to help scientists in the labs easily find the equipment they needed. The impact of his work extends well beyond that particular project. "These tools are now sourcing templates that will be used time and again," Smith says.

**What's cool about the job** "The Institute's mission is awesome," says Raterman. "It's rewarding to see the great things we're doing." He points to scientist Eric Betzig of HHMI's own Janelia Research Campus, a co-winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2014. "He did all the hard work, of course, but it's great to support that kind of mission," Raterman notes.

**Advice to millennials** "Be open to trying new things," Raterman says. "You can take many paths in supply chain—logistics, warehousing operations, procurement. If you have an opportunity, try each of them. It will help you discover what you enjoy most."



## IN HIS OWN WORDS

**Most significant career accomplishment to date?** Working to set up a primary vendor relationship with a key supplier through an RFP process. This yielded several positive benefits, and was a big change for the organization. **Does your job have a significant impact on your company?** Yes. We enable end users to order supplies efficiently. Overall price, quality, and service improve by developing strategic relationships with key suppliers.



#### IN HER OWN WORDS

**Does your job have a significant impact on your company?** Yes.

Spearheading the effective management of our strategic third-party suppliers and measuring them on key metrics enables us to deliver on our goals. **If you could start over, would you still choose this profession?** Yes. I feel I was born to do this profession because it combines strategy, operations, and strong management skills.

## Embracing the Entrepreneurial Spirit

**Tania Santiago-Mirabal** | AGE: 30

*Latin America Indirect Procurement Manager, Millicom, Coral Gables, Florida*

Nominated by Jami Bliss, Procurement Director, Teva Pharmaceuticals, and Sandy Lukaski, Executive Director, R. Gene & Nancy D. Richter Foundation

**Moving up** These are exhilarating times for Tania Santiago-Mirabal. After working for two renowned corporate giants—IBM Global Business Services and Pfizer—she recently moved to a very different setting. In September 2014, she became manager of Latin America indirect procurement for Millicom, a Stockholm-based firm that provides mobile, cable, broadband, and other services in Latin America and Africa.

From her office in Miami, Santiago-Mirabal is responsible for all of Millicom's indirect purchases in Latin America—legal services, marketing services, office supplies, and a great deal more. It's a big change from her previous roles. "As a consultant at IBM, and at Pfizer, I managed a particular category," she says. "Here, I have it all." She's also developing global and regional procurement strategies for the seven Latin American countries where Millicom operates.

**A look back** Santiago-Mirabal came to Millicom with a remarkable resume. At Pfizer, one project was recommending new marketing categories for procurement teams to support. She created a category called market access—services that Pfizer uses while developing a new drug, to gauge what the market might be willing to pay for it. Building a list of preferred suppliers, she then negotiated and executed a series of contracts. "We were able to reduce hourly rates for these niche providers by 11 percent, which generated significant savings for the organization," she says.

A more unusual challenge came when Santiago-Mirabal led the deaccession of a corporate art collection by a renowned American painter, choosing an auction

house to handle the transaction with extreme confidentiality. "The sale of artwork generated significantly more than the initial targets set by the CFO," says nominator Jami Bliss.

**'I feel like an owner'** "Tania exemplifies innovative spirit," Bliss says. Millicom—which started small but is growing fast—offers room for that spirit to soar. "The company encourages entrepreneurship," says Santiago-Mirabal. "I feel like I'm an owner."

She is excited that in 2015 she'll start visiting Millicom's Latin American markets. "I'm passionate about Latin America," she says. "It's a market that's growing significantly, and quickly, especially in the telecoms realm."

**The bride drives a bargain** So deeply has Santiago-Mirabal absorbed the lessons of supply chain management, she used an RFP to choose a venue for her June 2013 wedding in San Juan, Puerto Rico. That strategy yielded some big wins, including \$2,000 in savings on beverage service and complimentary music.

**Award-winning volunteer** Santiago-Mirabal inherited a tradition of community service from her parents. She got involved with New York Cares, which runs volunteer programs for nonprofits, government agencies, and public schools, and led a music and art therapy program for children with autism. That work won her a leadership award from New York Cares. She also served on the board of Tender Care Human Services, which helps people with developmental disabilities.





## Changing the Channel

**Amy Schwantner** | AGE: 29

*Manager, Strategic Sourcing,  
CBS Corporation, New York, New York*  
Nominated by Mike Smyklo, Vice President,  
Strategic Sourcing, CBS Corporation

**Fearless** Looking at Amy Schwantner's achievements, you'd never guess that she has been working in procurement for fewer than three years. It took her just 18 months to rise from

analyst to manager at CBS. Part of her secret is the way she plunges into whatever challenge comes her way. "It's rare for an employee of Amy's experience level to show so much fearlessness in successfully managing complex projects and intricate work environments," says her boss, nominator Mike Smyklo.

**Many players** Schwantner's bailiwick at CBS is sourcing professional services. She leads projects to choose suppliers, and to find opportunities to reduce costs in areas such as employee benefits programs, payroll services, and outside legal counsel.

Perhaps the hardest aspect of her work arises from the fact that CBS is a multifaceted and decentralized company with two dozen business units involved in television, radio, Internet, print media, and more. "Many projects I work on involve 10 to 20 internal stakeholders," Schwantner says. Executives have their own goals, priorities, and personality. Schwantner must help this large group arrive at a solution that pleases everyone.

**Recent challenge** She handles those initiatives with flair. Take, for example, a recent project focused on payroll services for CBS's entertainment divisions. It was an especially sensitive assignment because it involved so much spending and affected so many divisions, and only a few suppliers offer the service that CBS required.

Schwantner's job was to collect data on the relationship with the current provider—an incumbent of more than 20 years—analyze that information, and identify ways to gain better terms. She would also develop an RFP based on new specifications and run the procurement.

**Building trust** The project got a lot of pushback from division executives who weren't pleased about the prospect of change. So Schwantner embarked on a trust-building mission, recruiting those stakeholders into the project to make sure the results addressed their needs. "It took months to develop this cross-functional, cross-divisional team," she says.

In the end, everybody won. CBS stuck with its existing provider, but on much better terms. "The initiative will result in cost savings in the millions," Smyklo says. The new contract has also provided a model for agreements between this important vendor and its other clients in the entertainment industry.

**Outside the office** Schwantner spent much of 2014 planning an October wedding. Then she and her husband took off for a honeymoon in South Africa. Her hometown is a popular beach spot on Long Island, and she's a Superstorm Sandy survivor. Each year, with her sister, Schwantner joins a two-day walk around New York City to raise money to fight breast cancer.

**Rewards of the job** "My work is never repetitive or mundane—it's always something new," Schwantner says. "And I love the opportunity to work on high-level, strategic projects that drive real change."

### IN HER OWN WORDS

**Most rewarding parts of your job?** High-level and strategic projects, vital to business operations, that result in significant savings and change across the organization. **If you could start over, would you still choose this profession?** I would because it drives real change.



#### IN HER OWN WORDS

**What is the most rewarding part of your job?** Knowing how everything I do contributes to our nation's security and helps our men and women in the armed forces do their jobs and come home safely. **If you could start over, would you still choose this profession?** A day hasn't gone by when I wished I was in a different profession. I love the responsibility that comes with being a procurement analyst, and knowing the impact I have on the company and the country.

**Outside the office** "My number-one hobby is travel," Ton says. "In 2013, I visited Morocco, Portugal, and Spain. In 2014, I took a trip to the United Kingdom and Ireland, and in 2015 I'm planning a Mediterranean trip." She recently took up yoga, and she admits to one guilty pleasure: "I love reality TV, especially *The Voice* and *The Bachelor*."

## Ton of Talent

**Pamela Ton** | AGE: 26

*Procurement Analyst, Northrop Grumman Systems Corp., El Segundo, California*

Nominated by Andy Grider, Procurement Manager, Northrop Grumman Systems Corp.

**Buyer, leader, mentor** Managers and colleagues at Northrop Grumman sing the praises of Pamela Ton for her work both as a buyer and as a leader. "Key stakeholders regularly recognize Pamela for her outstanding support and customer service," says her boss, nominator Andy Grider.

While handling procurements, mainly for electronic components, Ton has also taken a lead role on engagement projects for her buying group. And she has been training and mentoring new buyers, who have excelled under her guidance. "The extensive support she has provided is the best I have seen in my 10 years at Northrop Grumman Aerospace Systems," Grider says.

**Making connections** In 2013, Ton was chosen to take part in a Leadership Development Program, designed to help employees understand how their work connects to Northrop Grumman's overall vision. "We were assigned to mentors who reported directly to our global supply chain vice president," Ton recalls. "We attended program reviews and specialized courses that usually only managers attend."

The program's many meetings and dinners gave Ton a chance to talk with high-level managers throughout her organization, based all over the United States. "These managers now know me by name," she says. The relationships she forged have helped greatly in her work.

**Treat suppliers as friends** Relationships with suppliers are also key in Ton's job. That's especially true when someone from a program she supports calls needing a part—tomorrow. Because many electronic parts have lead times as long as one year, Ton starts scrambling to get a replacement fast. "I take it personally if I can't get a part tomorrow," she says.

To live up to that personal commitment, Ton takes a personal approach with her suppliers. "I treat them as if they are friends," she says. "I ask about their personal lives, and they ask about mine. So when I need to ask a favor in an emergency, they're always willing to help."

**Rewards of the job** The most enjoyable aspect of Ton's work is its variety. "I meet new people all the time, working with colleagues and suppliers around the country, and working on a new assignment every day," she says. The most rewarding part of her work, though, is the serious purpose it serves. "I like knowing that my daily work contributes to our nation's security, and helps our men and women in the armed forces do their jobs and come home safely."

# Eye on the Big Picture

**Maren von Platen** | AGE: 29

*Sourcing Manager, Bayer HealthCare, Whippany, New Jersey*  
 Nominated by Kristina Rey, Senior Manager, Strategic Sourcing, Daiichi Sankyo

**Pharma star** Combining sharp analytical skills with a talent for building relationships, Maren von Platen has won admiration for her work in every stage of her career. “Maren has received accolades and praise from many of her peers,” says nominator Kristina Rey, von Platen’s boss at Daiichi Sankyo. “Her colleagues and managers from Merck and Schering-Plough all cite her consistently excellent performance.”

In October 2014, von Platen accepted a new challenge: becoming a sourcing manager at Bayer HealthCare. She loves the pharmaceutical industry because of its mission. “Pharma is about saving lives,” she says.

**Creative focus** Having already sourced direct and indirect products, as well as various services, these days von Platen focuses on creative agencies. Her work goes far beyond choosing partners to manage marketing campaigns. One big goal is to encourage innovation in the way the internal teams that promote Bayer’s brands use marketing services.

“I have to get them to focus on the big picture—how we use marketing to generate revenue, how marketing teams can launch new programs, and how they can improve the way they work with strategic suppliers, so they get better and faster results,” she says.

**What’s great about supply chain?** Experience in supply chain management provides tools that will serve you well in just about any industry. “It helps you hone skills, such as discipline and patience, that you need to solve complex problems,” says von Platen. “It also teaches you to be thorough and plan ahead.”

**Building from the ground up** One of the proudest moments in von Platen’s career came after a previous employer, Schering-Plough, merged with Merck. Von Platen was assigned to a project to combine the companies’ sourcing organizations in Latin America. Her fluent Spanish (she was born in Germany but raised in Costa Rica) made her a natural for the job.

“Our task was to develop a single organization that included all the roles, responsibilities, and pipelines of the two companies, and create a roadmap for how it would operate over the next three years,” von Platen says. “We also wanted to make the Latin American organization shine against other regions. Its purchasing volume was small, but we hoped to make the region a force for innovation or process improvement.”

Von Platen helped design regional sourcing teams, each responsible for a category across Latin America. Along with her boss, she harmonized the information systems and cleaned up the data, providing a single view of spending across the region. They also developed an action plan for process improvement.

“I loved helping to create an organization and define how it would work,” von Platen says. “The project also exposed me to the entire product lifecycle, from research and development to manufacturing to go-to-market. And I worked with brilliant people. It was unbelievable how much I learned.”



## IN HER OWN WORDS

**Does your job have a significant impact on your company?** Yes. Anyone who is part of an organization is part of the generator that impacts the business. **Would you recommend a supply chain career to someone under 30?** Absolutely. This career gives you the discipline and patience to solve complex projects, along with planning techniques and strategy.





## Diving in With Both Feet

**Jamie Walker** | AGE: 24

*Sourcing Buyer, Raw Materials, E.I. DuPont de Nemours & Company, Wilmington, Delaware*  
Nominated by Rhonda Bradley, Sourcing Manager,  
E.I. DuPont de Nemours & Company

**Deep dive** The ink on her degree in supply chain management and information systems from Penn State was barely dry when E.I. DuPont made Jamie Walker a sourcing buyer for equipment and services. She took charge of capital equipment purchases totaling more than \$50,000, and services such as engineering, design, construction, and maintenance, for 14 North American production plants. Walker developed sourcing strategies, qualified potential buyers, conducted procurements, analyzed bids, recommended awards, and generated purchase orders.

That's high-level work for someone fresh out of college, but DuPont often asks new hires to dive into the deep end of the pool. "The learning curve was overwhelming and slightly intimidating, but it has been a fantastic experience," she says. In that sink-or-swim environment, she performed like an Olympic medalist.

One key to Walker's success was building strong relationships. "I networked with everyone I could, so I always had someone to turn to no matter what problem I was facing," she says.

### IN HER OWN WORDS

**Most satisfying part of your job?** When I successfully complete a project that results in significant savings, or when I finalize a difficult terms negotiation. **Most significant career accomplishment to date?**

I completed 127 projects that saved more than \$5.7 million for DuPont during my first two years as a sourcing professional.

**Entrepreneurial spirit** Not only did Walker work on 56 projects in her first year as a full-time buyer at DuPont, but she saved the company \$3 million on a spending portfolio of \$18 million; that's nearly 17 percent. Creativity and persistence helped her rack up those achievements. "Even when the opportunities weren't easy to see, I took the initiative to go the extra step and find them," she says. Supportive mentors at DuPont helped, too, she adds.

**New job** In September 2014, Walker took on a new assignment: sourcing metal powders used in DuPont's microcircuit business. "I work with the buyers to get those raw materials to the locations where they're needed, ensuring short lead times," she says. Besides negotiating pricing with suppliers, she identifies second sources for key materials, so if the primary source can't deliver, DuPont still has a steady supply.

**Devoted to diversity** Walker has also distinguished herself as a champion of diversity. In 2014, she represented DuPont at the National Minority Supplier Development Council Leadership Awards and at the ISM Supply Chain Diversity Summit. "That networking helped Jamie award more than \$2 million to small and diverse suppliers in 2014," says nominator Rhonda Bradley. In 2013 and 2014, DuPont's Sourcing and

Logistics organization started an initiative to make more purchases from small and diverse suppliers. Toward that end, Walker started to require that every bid event she ran include at least one small or diverse business. If such vendors didn't step up on their own, Walker went out and found them. "It took a lot of research, but we have tools at DuPont that help us identify those suppliers," she says.

**Blue ribbon volunteer** Having grown up riding horses with a 4-H Club, Walker now returns the favor as a volunteer team leader with her local 4-H. "I go to the horse shows with the younger members and do what the older members used to do for me," she says. "It feels good to give back."



# Signed, Sealed, Delivered

**Wesley Whitney** | AGE: 29

*Sourcing Specialist, Enterprise Products, Houston, Texas*  
 Nominated by Claire Allison, Sourcing Specialist, Enterprise Products

**Top communicator** One reason Wesley Whitney is so good at his job is because he knows how to connect. “His communication skills are unmatched by anyone I have ever worked with,” says nominator Claire Allison. “He can relate to our contractors in the field, then turn around and have an executive-level meeting in the blink of an eye.”

That talent is crucial to Whitney’s job at Enterprise Products, where many products and services he sources are used in blue-collar environments.

“A contract isn’t worth the paper it’s written on if the end user and suppliers aren’t willing to execute what we put in place,” Whitney says. But when you’re sitting in a skyscraper in Houston, it can be hard to understand the needs of people turning wrenches in the field. So, when he starts a new project, Whitney always sits down with his stakeholders to learn exactly what they’re looking for. Then he crafts a contract that delivers.

**Building value** As a sourcing specialist, Whitney looks for chances to gain greater value from suppliers by forging strategic agreements. He has scored some serious savings—for example, 12 to 15 percent on \$4 million worth of annual spending on industrial cleaning, and 17 to 25 percent on water filtration.

His efforts focus on far more than lowering costs. “Anybody can cut costs,” Whitney says. “The challenge is doing it with service-based commodities.” That’s when other types of value move to the foreground. Factors such as efficiency, consistency, timely delivery, and safety don’t show up on invoices, but they’re crucial to meeting the needs of Whitney’s stakeholders.

**How he got here** Whitney was a case manager for a law firm when he decided he wanted a career in the energy industry. “My dad was a roughneck on an oil rig; the oil business has been in my family for three generations,” says the Texas native.

A friend who held a supply chain job at Hess Corporation filled Whitney in on the opportunities available in sourcing. Then a family friend and mentor helped him get an interview with Enterprise, which yielded his current job as a sourcing analyst.

Whitney arrived with no background in supply chain, but he was determined to excel, and his manager and director gave him the chance to learn on the job. Long talks with his friend at Hess also got him up to speed on topics such as sourcing processes and key performance indicators. “I felt like I got a crash course in supply chain—almost an associate’s degree,” he says.

**Outside the office** Getting married and buying a home have kept Whitney busy recently. “There’s nothing like six-figure debt to make you feel like you’ve grown up,” he says. He and his wife work out, participate in CrossFit, and do a lot of hunting and hiking. They also mentor high school students in Houston through a program called Young Life.



## IN HIS OWN WORDS

**Does your job have a significant impact on your company?** Absolutely. We’ve only just begun to tap the value our strategic sourcing group can bring to the company. **Would you recommend a supply chain career to someone under 30?** Without hesitation. You can obtain a breadth of skills that cross several industries.



## Wolff at the Door

**Jennifer Wolff** | AGE: 30

*Supply Chain Strategy Manager,  
Masco Cabinetry, Ann Arbor, Michigan*  
Nominated by Joe Ceccoli, Managing Director, Supply Chain, Masco Cabinetry

**Bring it on** “I’ve never turned down a challenge, at work or in my personal life,” says Jennifer Wolff. That’s one reason she relishes her job as supply chain strategy manager at Masco Cabinetry. It’s a project-based role, so she never knows what new adventure she’ll embark on next. “My boss has come to me with some off-the-wall requests, and I’ve embraced them,” she says.

**Big win** Embraced and aced, one might add. Consider the time Wolff took charge of closing down a Masco plant that made cabinet components. She had to identify which Masco or third-party facilities should take over which portions of that plant’s output, then complete the transition by a firm deadline.

During the move, Wolff couldn’t let any components go out of stock or excess inventory pile up. “That required detailed follow-up and many visits to the receiving plants,” she says. “The key to finding the right balance was to move things slowly. That let us fine-tune processes at the receiving plants, and home in on quality.”

The results were terrific. “Because she was willing to work outside her comfort zone, and could drive change in a difficult environment, Jennifer brought extraordinary value to our company,” says Wolff’s boss and nominator Joe Ceccoli.

**Get out on the floor** Wolff learned about supply chain management through a management development program at Chrysler. Her first rotation put her at a Chrysler Sebring plant, where she supervised union drivers who delivered materials to the production line.

“That program was a game changer for me,” Wolff says. “It taught me a lot about leadership.” Managing people who aren’t required to cooperate with you takes creativity, she says. She also learned firsthand how crucial it is to think about the needs of production workers when designing a supply chain process. “It’s easy to make decisions that look good on paper without considering the impact those decisions will make on the people who receive the deliveries or work with the materials,” she says. Anyone headed for a supply chain career in manufacturing

should try to work on the production floor as early as possible, Wolff advises.

**Opening doors** “Jennifer has a strong passion for helping others to succeed,” notes Ceccoli. That’s why she started a supply chain internship program from the ground up at Masco, and why she continues to recruit and mentor students for that program.

**Outside the office** With a new baby at home, Wolff and her husband are embracing a whole new set of challenges. They also continue to work on their 100-year-old house. “We’re doing what we can to preserve its original beauty while making it functional for a modern family,” she says. When she needs to unwind, she goes for a long run. “We have some beautiful parks in Ann Arbor,” she says. “I like to get lost in them.”

### IN HER OWN WORDS

**Does your job have a significant impact on your company?**

Absolutely. Not only do I have a direct impact on the bottom line, but changes in the supply chain affect business operations. **If you could start over, would you still choose this profession?** Yes. I’ve grown especially fond of the purchasing function, and enjoy being a professional negotiator.



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