

January/February 2009, Volume 23

Letter From the Professional Credentials Committee Chair

I am often asked by supply management professionals, “What is more important – education or experience? Should I pursue formal education or focus on improving my work experience?” This is a very common question in many dynamic professions, especially supply management. Typically, individuals asking this question are looking for an “either/or” answer – either education or experience. However, as we know in life, there are no easy answers. This also holds true in the education versus experience question, especially as it relates to the supply management profession.

The answer is that a proper balance between education and experience is needed for a successful career in supply management. Focusing too much on one at the expense of the other will be detrimental to your career. In many leading organizations, the requirements for entry-level positions in supply management include a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution, typically in a business administration, technical, legal or other related area. Without this college degree, résumés and job applications are quickly sent to the circular file. On the other hand, employees with college degrees who do not increase the depth and breadth of their supply management experience are ultimately directed to the exit doors and told not to return.

Freshly minted college graduates starting their careers in supply management should concentrate on obtaining the most valuable job experience in their organization. Asking for the most challenging assignments and tasks and volunteering for the tough projects add to the fullness and richness of their job experience. As college-degreed supply management professionals become more experienced and seek higher-level job responsibilities, the question of education versus experience must be readdressed. After all, supply management professionals can rest on the laurels of their undergraduate degrees for only so long. Research shows that today's college degrees have a shelf life of approximately three years. Professional credentials are the best option for balancing the education versus experience question. The Certified Professional in Supply Management® (CPSM®) credential requires both formal education (a four-year college degree) as well as real-world supply management experience (three years of full-time, professional supply management experience). Additionally, the continuing education requirements for the CPSM® ensure that this credential will not go stale or lose its value.

How are you addressing the education versus experience dilemma? Are you properly balanced? What's the expiration date on your college degree? Are you due for a credential make-over? I encourage all supply management professionals to seriously consider pursuing the CPSM® credential. The CPSM® provides proper balance and builds upon your formal education and supply management experience. Pursuing your CPSM® qualification is your chance to leverage your formal education and your supply management experience into career advancement and success.



Rene G. Rendon, DBA, CPSM, C.P.M.
Chair, ISM Professional Credentials Committee

Stock market volatility, foreclosures and layoffs...

Do something now to take control of your future – **Get your CPSM®.**

Save a Bundle on CPSM®

Learn how ISM's limited-time offer can help secure your future. www.ism.ws/830

As jobs become scarce, your credentials, or lack thereof, will become extremely important. Nearly 1,000 of your colleagues have already earned the CPSM®. Do you really want to be at a disadvantage when you compete with them in your next job interview?

To get you started, ISM is offering a **limited-time offer of 25% off** a bundled [CPSM® study and exam package](http://www.ism.ws/830) that includes:

- Your study materials, CPSM® Study Guide and ISM Professional Series
- All three CPSM® Exams or CPSM® Bridge Exam

All this at a **25% off savings*** through February 28, 2009. Go to www.ism.ws/830 to save 25% on the CPSM®.

*This offer is valid on orders placed December 1, 2008 through February 28, 2009. Complete package must be purchased to receive discount. Offer is not valid on prior sales of CPSM® study materials and/or CPSM® Exams or CPSM® Bridge Exams. Cannot be combined with any other offer.

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The CPSM® Distinction

What makes the CPSM® different from other certifications? It encompasses all areas of global supply management and incorporates highly strategic skill sets that are proactive instead of just reactive, tactical or operational skill sets.

The CPSM® gives you the multifaceted foundation to continuously improve and innovate in this highly competitive global marketplace. As a CPSM®, your skills in areas such as supplier relationship management, commodity management, risk and compliance issues, and social responsibility will drive value in every link of the supply chain.

You will have the capacity to effectively manage projects, whether you work in the non-manufacturing or manufacturing sector. Your additional knowledge will be relevant to improve your direct and indirect spends, making you more valuable to the organization.

CPSM® Eligibility

The criteria you need to earn the CPSM® designation are:

- Three years of full-time, professional supply management experience — nonclerical, nonsupport
- Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution or international equivalent
- Successfully pass three CPSM® Exams, OR, if you are a C.P.M. in good standing, pass the Bridge Exam
- Recertify every three years with 60 Continuing Education Hours (CEHs)

Current C.P.M.s with a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution (or international equivalent) can take one Bridge Exam to attain the CPSM®. The Bridge is a single exam covering contemporary subject matter and material not covered in the current C.P.M. Exam.

CPSM® Exam Content

There are three CPSM® Exams that cover the major areas of supply management. To see the detailed exam specifications, visit the Professional Credentials section of the ISM Web site, then select Certified Professional in Supply Management® (CPSM®) and [ISM CPSM® Exam Specifications](#).

Exam 1 — Foundation of Supply Management

165 questions (150 scored), two hours and 45 minutes allowed to test

Contracting and Negotiation	Social Responsibility
Cost and Finance	Sourcing
International	Supplier Relationship Management

Exam 2 — Effective Supply Management Performance

165 questions (150 scored), two hours and 45 minutes allowed to test

Forecasting	Materials and Inventory Management
Logistics	Organization and Department
Assessment	Product and Service Development
Planning	Quality

Exam 3 — Leadership in Supply Management

180 questions (165 scored), three hours allowed to test

Leadership	Strategic Sourcing
Risk Compliance	

Bridge Exam — Only for current C.P.M.s with a bachelor's degree

180 questions (all scored), three hours allowed to test

Areas not covered in the current C.P.M. Exams

Bridge Exam specifications

Three levels of learning are tested in the CPSM® Exams:

- Recall — Define, identify and select information.
- Comprehension — Estimate or predict based upon circumstances described.
- Application — Draw on knowledge and experience to identify the solution.

The primary focus of CPSM® Exam questions are application and comprehension, with minimal recall knowledge tested. Pass rates for the CPSM® Exams average about 65%, similar to the pass rates we have historically seen on the C.P.M. Exams.

C.P.M.s WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE TAKE ONE BRIDGE EXAM

If you are a current C.P.M. with a bachelor's degree, you have a distinct advantage to bridge the gap between where you are now and the career you intend to have. You only need to take one Bridge Exam instead of three exams. The Bridge Exam covers content not included in the current C.P.M. Exams.

Why Become a CPSM®? Read Why From Actual CPSM®s

"You're only as good as your last success — and that doesn't last too long. Getting my CPSM® shows a certain passion for the job. I think that's probably the best word for it."

ISM's First CPSM®
Michael G. Haynes, CPSM
Regional Procurement Manager—West Region
Siemens Building Technologies, Inc.



"I strongly believe that education is the key to the progress of any country, and that is especially true for Mexico. We are seeing a lot of companies moving their manufacturing facilities to this country. To add value to our products and processes, we have to have a more educated workforce at all levels. The person who gets certified increases their employability and the companies they work for can perform at a higher level through the use of the new concepts learned."

ISM's First International CPSM®
Eduardo Shelley, CPSM
Solution Specialist
Oracle LAD Industry Business Unit

"Professionals in supply management who take the CPSM® Exam will learn new material, or refresh their skills in many areas that may help to make better decisions regarding responsibilities of their position, or their organization's supply chain. It takes commitment to take advantage of this new certification process, but it is well worth it."



ISM's 500th CPSM®
Kristin Cairns, CPSM
Associate Director, Worldwide Procurement
Pfizer Inc.

[Read more on page 5](#)

How Do I Study For the CPSM® Exams?

ISM offers the [CPSM® Study Guide](#) and the [ISM Professional Series](#) three-book set to assist in preparing for the three CPSM® Exams. A CPSM® supplemental reading list is available to assist in gaining knowledge in any area where you may have a particular concern.

If you prefer face-to-face instruction, many ISM affiliates offer CPSM® review courses. Check your affiliate's calendar of events for schedules. ISM also sponsors CPSM® review courses. Check the [Public Seminar](#) schedule at www.ism.ws; select Seminars.

The ISM Knowledge Center will be adding an online CPSM® Bridge Exam Review course in February 2009 (see page 4 for details) and the online CPSM® Exam Review course will be available in summer 2009.

The CPSM® Diagnostic Kit is currently in development and will be available during the first quarter of 2009.



Shop the Online Discount Sale

[New markdowns up to 75% off! Get them while they last.](#)

CPSM® Exam Registration — Online Makes It Simple

Have you been studying diligently for your CPSM® Exams? Well, now you are ready to register for them with ISM. There is an online registration process. It's quick, it's easy and you get your confirmation fast.

To get started, just decide which exam you are ready to take — 1, 2, 3 or the Bridge. You may take as many exams as you like at one time. Register with ISM in one of the following ways:

Online: www.ism.ws; select Professional Credentials, Certified Professional in Supply Management® and then [Register for CPSM® Exams](#).

Phone: Call ISM Customer Service at 800/888-6276 or +1 480/752-6276, option 8. Please have your credit card number and ISM ID number ready.

Fax: Transmit completed registration form with credit card information to +1 480/752-2299.

Mail: Complete the registration form and mail with check or credit card information to ISM Exam Registration, P.O. Box 22160, Tempe, AZ 85285-2160.

Re-Testing Exams: There is a required 30-day minimum wait before you are able to retake an exam.

Computer Exam Fees: **\$180 USD per exam for ISM members** and \$265 USD per exam for nonmembers.

Registrations are valid for one full year from the date you register with ISM. Once you have registered with ISM, you will receive an e-mail confirmation within 24 hours that will include scheduling instructions with Pearson VUE Testing Centers.

CPSM® Exams Now Available at Pearson VUE

Once you register for your CPSM® Exams (Exams 1, 2, 3 and Bridge), you can schedule and take them at Pearson VUE's worldwide professional testing centers. Your registration is valid for one year from the date of registration.



Within 24 hours of processing your registration, you will receive a confirmation letter from ISM with instructions on how to schedule an exam and locate the test center near you on Pearson VUE's Web site; <http://pearsonvue.com/ism/>.

Exam fees are **\$180 USD per exam for ISM members** and \$265 USD per exam for nonmembers. For any questions, contact ISM Customer Service at 800/888-6276 or +1 480-752-6276, option 8 or custsvc@ism.ws.

CPSM® Study Tips

Put your career into high gear by studying for the CPSM® Exams.

Critically evaluate your work experience as if you were a hiring manager to make sure your strengths outweigh any weaknesses. Keeping your experience updated can help you retain the job you have or give you a competitive edge against other job candidates if you had to look for a new job.

As you study for your CPSM® Exams, you will gain knowledge in all the areas of supply management that many supply professionals don't have. And, you will be able to prove it once you become a CPSM®. Here are a few studying tips from actual CPSM®s:

The first CPSM®, Michael Haynes, CPSM, C.P.M. says, "It all came down to taking the time and working it into my schedule," he recalls. "That was the aggressive part."

The first international CPSM®, Eduardo Shelley, CPSM, from Mexico offers two pieces of advice for his peers pursuing the esteemed qualification. "First, don't try to memorize the study guides — understand the concepts," he suggests. "Second, focus on the topics you don't know or have little practical experience with."

Our 500th CPSM® credits regular lunch-time study sessions with colleagues as one aspect of her success. "I suggest reviewing all of the materials and study tools that ISM recommends, paying close attention to those sections that you aren't as familiar with or have less experience in," advises Kristin Cairns, CPSM.

Can you compete if you had to look for a new job? Don't let your résumé get taken out of the running because your competition has a certification and you don't. [Register for your CPSM® Exams](#) and start studying now.

For more information on the CPSM®, visit the Professional Credentials section of the ISM Web site or call ISM Customer Service at 800/888-6276 or 480/752-6276, option 8.

Find a CPSM® Trainer

To find a [list of CPSM® review instructors](#) that have taken ISM's Train-the-Trainer course, go to the Professional Credentials section of the ISM Web site and select Certified Professional in Supply Management® (CPSM®) and then select Download a spreadsheet of CPSM® Review Instructors.

What's Happening to the C.P.M.?

The C.P.M. is transitioning into recertification-only status. Potential C.P.M.s will need to be aware of several important milestone dates.

In 2009, you can no longer register *new* C.P.M. Exams. Only the registration of C.P.M. Exam **retakes** will be available.

As long as you registered your exams in 2008, you have *one year* from the date you registered to complete your exams. Just remember that our testing provider, Prometric, fills up very quickly during the last half of the year. **Make sure you don't get caught in scheduling issues. Schedule and complete your exams early in the year.**

For information on the transition of the C.P.M., call ISM Customer Service at 800/888-6276 or 480/752-6276, option 8, or visit the Professional Credentials section of the ISM Web site under [C.P.M. FAQs](#).

(Employers who *already* provide on-site testing will also be able to offer retakes to their employees during 2009. For on-site testing information and requirements, call the ISM Sales Department at extensions 3061 or 3086.)

Last Chance to Take C.P.M. Exams

You have one year from the date you registered in 2008 to take your C.P.M. exams. But don't wait until the last minute to actually take them. ISM recommends that you complete all your C.P.M. Exam modules as soon as possible to avoid any scheduling issues. Don't get caught in the rush — get your C.P.M. now.

C.P.M. Application Deadline – December 31, 2013

The last day to postmark C.P.M. Original/Original lifetime applications is December 31, 2013. After that, the C.P.M. designation will be in recertification-only status. At that time, ISM will only accept C.P.M. recertifications and will no longer accept new C.P.M. original applications.

Dues Relief Options

Just a reminder: ISM offers assistance for unemployed members. Options vary depending on membership type and other factors. For more information, contact ISM Customer Service at 800/888-6276 or 480/752-6276, option 8.

What If I Don't Pass?

If you do not pass one or more modules, you will be able to retake the module(s) (as space is available at the test site) that you failed throughout 2009. However, the last day that anyone can take a C.P.M. Exam, whether it is a first time or a retake exam, is December 31, 2009. If you tested as part of an on-site program, contact your employer for information on retesting.

Quantities Limited on C.P.M. Study Materials

Many C.P.M. study materials are still available and are now at **25% to 50% off** the regular price. Don't wait to order your C.P.M. study materials. Many items are available only while supplies last and are limited in quantities.

The CPSM® Bridge Online Review Course (#3968) Is Almost Here

Are you a C.P.M. waiting for the CPSM® Bridge Exam online review course? Your wait is over. The CPSM® Bridge online review course is available February 2009 in the [ISM Knowledge Center](#).

This is the review course for current C.P.M.s with a bachelor's degree to prepare for the CPSM® Bridge Exam. This course enables candidates to assess their knowledge acquired through education and experience against the content tested in the CPSM® Bridge Exam. It is not intended for those planning to take the full CPSM® Exam.

Participants get an in-depth review and assessment of the material in the CPSM® *Study Guide* by tailoring the course to their specific study needs. This interactive course includes sample test questions, case studies, and bonus supplemental content developed by subject matter experts. This bonus content gives candidates additional study material for tasks with more questions on the Exam. Get immediate feedback with this online review course to customize your personal study program.

Register today at www.ism-knowledgecenter.ws. The online review course for the full CPSM® will be available in Summer 2009.

Close the Gap

CPSM®
BRIDGE
EXAM

C.P.M.s only take *ONE* exam to close in on goals.

Don't Forget — Your C.P.M. Counts as College Credit

Did you know that your C.P.M. can count for up to 12 college credits at many universities and colleges? What a great way to get a jump on a bachelor's degree. Remember, with a C.P.M. and a bachelor's degree you can participate in the CPSM® program.

To download the evaluation from the National Program on Non-collegiate Sponsored Instruction (National PONSI) and a transcript request, go to the ISM Web site at www.ism.ws and select Professional Credentials, Certification Forms and then [College Credit Information and Transcript Request](#). Transcript requests can take up to three weeks to process, and there is a nominal fee for the service.

CPSM®s Tell Why, cont'd from page 2



"I was interested in the fact that it dealt with more than just one facet of the supply chain. A credential is a symbol on a piece of paper: Its value lies in the knowledge gained; its worth is proved with every successful negotiation; its reward is in every dollar saved. Having a CPSM® says to the world, here I am, ready for the future, bring it on..."

First Canadian CPSM®
Terry Volpel, CPSM
Senior Manager—Strategic Procurement
ATB Financial

"The main intention in obtaining the CPSM® certification is to build individual advancement, industry respect and recognition, and have a way to extend your professional network. Having been certified as CPSM®, I plan to continue pursuing my career into higher-level positions in supply chain management and to have an opportunity in other areas of business planning and management."

The First CPSM® in Hong Kong
Sheree S. Lee, CPSM
Center for International Trade
Development

"An ISM certification is held in great esteem. The knowledge which I have gained while studying for the exams provides a very thorough grounding as well as a better perspective on the roles and responsibilities of a supply manager who is eventually a part of the bigger picture of supply chain management."

The First CPSM® in United Arab
Emirates
Sunder Ramachandran, CPSM
Buyer
Acer Computers ME Ltd

On-Site Testing and Review CPSM® and CPSM® Bridge Exam

On Your Schedule — At Your Location

Get your team certified at your company's location and on the schedule that meets your business needs. With on-site reviews and testing, you control the environment and create the atmosphere that best matches your organizational culture.

A team of certified and accredited professionals translates into organizational effectiveness, efficiency and overall operational success. From the bottom line to the top ranks, the entire organization benefits from the impact of certification.

To save time, travel and money on review preparation and testing, contact:

Kathy Braase or Trish True at 800/888-6276 or 480/752-6276, extension 3061 or 3086, or by e-mail at kbraase@ism.ws or true@ism.ws.

Networking Just Got Easier

As the supply management profession expands, so does the need to network, share best practices and stay connected. The Institute for Supply Management™ (ISM) has established supply management groups within **LinkedIn.com**, **Facebook.com**, **Twitter.com** and **Plaxo.com** to make building your network easier than ever before!

Register Now
[ISM's 94th Annual International Supply Management Conference](#)
May 3 -6, 2009
Charlotte, North Carolina

International Degrees

For degrees earned outside the United States, ISM has reviewed many international Ministry of Education university listings. ISM has begun to give general approval and will continue to review and update the list of approved universities on its Web site. There are instances when a degree may require further evaluation.

ISM's Professional Credentials Department Contacts

ISM Customer Service: Questions about exam registration, 800/888-6276 or 480/752-6276, option 8

Certification Information line: extension 3027

E-mail: certification@ism.ws

Althea (Al) Levine: Questions regarding certification and application process, extension 3094

Lyndsey Ferro: Administrative support, extension 3044

David Migliore: Concerns related to on-site and computer based testing, extension 3074

Karen Collins: Manager, extension 3123

Andrea Waas: Vice President, extension 3011

C.P.M.s Applying for the CPSM®

If you are a C.P.M. who has completed the CPSM® Bridge Exam and are now filling out your CPSM® application, you do not need to redocument your work experience. All you need to do is note "C.P.M. Experience on File" in the experience section of the application.

Work Experience

Do you need help telling your human resources department, or former employer, what to include in a work documentation letter? Your letter should include the following information: each job title, the beginning and ending month and year for each title and the responsibilities of each position.

Work Documentation Letter Sample

This letter is being issued at the request of James Jones. It verifies his full-time employment, job titles and duties while employed at XYZ Company. He has held several positions within the supply management organization. Each is discussed below:

Title: Sourcing Manager

Dates Title Held: 11/99 to 5/02

General Description of Duties: Identifies and selects suppliers, negotiates contracts, manages supplier performance, and perform all other duties necessary to...

Title: Global Sourcing Director

Dates Title Held: 6/02 to 5/08

General Description of Duties: Oversees and directs the sourcing efforts for the organization ensuring...

If you have any questions, please call me at (phone number).

Samantha Smith
Human Resources Manager
XYZ Company