

Testimonial #1

A Sound Investment Bayer APICS Certification Program Supports Employees' Continuing Education

Earning an Association for Operations Management Certification in Production and Inventory Management (APICS/CPIM) is considered essential for professionals involved in all aspects of production, supply chain management, quality control, materials management, purchasing and logistics. However, the significant time and financial commitments required to achieve the certification can be prohibitive to employees looking to further their professional education. Thanks to the leadership and support of two Berkeley team members, employees across disciplines are now pursuing their APICS/CPIM certification.

In the fall of 2007, Shawn Gagnon, CPIM, supervisor, Materials Planning & Purchasing, Global Supply Chain, decided he wanted to earn an Association for Operations Management Certification in Production and Inventory Management (APICS/CPIM). He researched the details of the program offered by APICS, the premier global third-party organization for operations management.

“After exploring the APICS program, it occurred to me that others at Bayer may also be interested in achieving their certification,” said Gagnon. “I felt strongly that this level of training would benefit both the employees and the company, but I was also aware that the time and financial commitments required could be daunting.”

He set out to generate internal support for a Bayer-sponsored APICS training program, and received immediate backing from Thomas Panzer, vice president, Global Supply Chain PS – Biotech, who agreed to sponsor the program and support participants in their certification expenses.

“For me, the APICS certification program was and is an absolute success for the mutual benefit of company and employees,” said Panzer. “It’s a great opportunity for the employees to develop themselves within a state-of-the-art program and an excellent benefit for the company because participants get trained in best industry practices.”

Gagnon secured a certified APICS/CPIM instructor, Christine Walter, from the organization’s local APICS Golden Gate Chapter. A seasoned professional who worked at major corporations like Clorox, Gillette and Procter & Gamble, Christine brought valuable new perspectives to the Bayer training sessions. With weekly courses offered conveniently onsite, students in attendance represented Warehouse, Global Supply Chain, Quality, Scheduling, Purchasing, Customer Service and Clinical Development.

“Christine used examples that mirrored real situations we were dealing with at Bayer, which made it that much more valuable,” commented Carol Kisling, CPIM, Global Supply Chain. “It was great to take the class with Bayer employees from other disciplines. This allowed us to share experiences, ask questions and learn about similar issues that other groups were facing. The diversity of the classes made us realize that we’re all confronted with similar challenges, and APICS training can provide solutions to multiple groups.”

When the certification program was first offered as an opportunity for employees, Todd Franklin, Materials Management supervisor, knew little about APICS/CPIM. “The more research I did, the more clear it became that I would be a fool to pass up an opportunity like this,” he said. “It is absolutely fantastic that Bayer allowed us to participate in this program, which has given me added knowledge for achieving my career goals.”

The certification program is structured so that classes are rolled out year-long, and coursework can be applied to participants’ daily work activities as it’s being taught.

“The courses were designed to allow us to apply the learnings from the previous section to our jobs while we began to study the next modules,” said Kisling. “We continued to build on the principles we’d learned and were already starting to use.”

“We designed the program so after each module, you had a couple of weeks to study and prepare for the exam, take the exam, and then catch your breath before diving into new material,” explained Gagnon.

“The completion rate of the entire series is the highest that I have taught in twenty years,” praised Walter. “By offering study sessions, review sessions, and test preparation sessions on campus, the Bayer group completed the full suite of classes that make up the body of knowledge for inventory planning and control within one year. The commitment of the students to study and take exams while working full time is to be commended, and they will continue to add value to Bayer through their APICS knowledge.”

Approximately 135 hours of class time is required to complete the APICS/CPIM certification. Factoring in the weekly courses, module work, study time and exams, the commitment can equate to roughly 170 hours per participant.

“Other companies can encourage their employees to obtain this certification, or hire new employees that already have it, but Bayer has shown it is willing to invest in the education of the staff that is already on board,” said Kisling.

Panzer attributed three key factors to the success of the Bayer APICS training program.

“You need an excellent manager like Shawn, who drove the program, motivated his colleagues and handled the administration,” he said. “You also need dedicated employees like ours who want to challenge the status quo as well as themselves. Third, you need a sponsor who prioritizes the importance of such a program, and supports the employees in balancing their educational development with their daily business responsibilities.”

For more information about the Bayer APICS/CPIM certification program, please contact Shawn Gagnon at x5399 or Shawn.Gagnon.b@Bayer.com. For more information about APICS, please visit www.apics.org.



Pictured from left to right: Thomas Panzer (Sponsor), Darrell Willis, Todd Roman, Carol Kisling, Ana Zuzanaga, Jeff Bell, Mike Dhanjal, Shawn Gagnon.
Not Pictured: Anjela Tagalan, Jacob Tesfai, Todd Franklin, Wahiba Hall, Gerald Stonebarger

Testimonial #2

Dear List Members,

I just wanted to share my experience with CPIM certification. I completed my CPIM certification when I was working as ERP (BaaN) Consultant during the year 2003. The subject knowledge gave me great advantage with peers.

However I thought CPIM is not helping me to advance my career. I did not give up. I started promoting CPIM body of knowledge whenever possible in my company. Our management slowly started realizing the benefits and gave me an opportunity to work as supply chain coordinator for a supply chain optimization project during 2005. I participated with great interest by the intention to revise my CPIM knowledge. The project was successful and company started getting benefits. I also gained knowledge in Balanced Score Card frame work by attending few trainings and self study. I was also member of strategy transformation program team for our company during 2006.

During 2006 I was promoted as ERP Project Manager. I lead the ERP optimization project in our company successfully. As I continue with my ERP career as project manager, our management promoted me to lead Planning Department in January, 2008. Planning Department has three sections, Supply Chain Planning (S&OP, MPS, and MRP), Strategy Management, and Business Process Excellence. This is senior management position directly reporting to the President.

Believe, me with many initiatives and challenges, the body of knowledge of CPIM is really helping me in day to day job. As part of my job, I am S&OP process owner, BSC coordinator, and custodian for Business Process Excellence project.

I sincerely thank APICS for helping me to build successful career. I sincerely consider CPIM is the foundation for my career.

Now we put CPIM as highly desirable qualification for all supply chain positions (Master Scheduler, Materials Planner, Supply Chain specialist etc) and I make sure that our company sponsors CPIM for interested aspirants.

Best Regards,

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