

## Mentoring – a Big Hit!

In 2003 LAA Ltd set up the first Mentoring Program whereby young practitioners were introduced to successful business people in logistics and the supply chain industry. This program was expanded in 2005 when APICS and LAA Ltd joined forces to offer a higher quality and broader, industry-based program.

The value of the program lies in the fact that it is industry-based. Pairing mentees with mentors from different organisations provides an enhanced learning environment. At the end of the 12-month program, a mentee's knowledge and experience of supply chain issues will have been accelerated by two to three years. Mentoring is an excellent way of ensuring that up and coming supply chain managers and logisticians develop the right skills.

Jennifer Noonan, Marketing Manager, Manhattan Associates, ANZ, who recently took part in the LAA/APICS Mentoring Program describes her experience.

I initially applied to be a part of the LAA's mentoring program when I was quite new to the field of supply chain and logistics. Primarily, I hoped that my involvement in the program and the relationship, I would build with an experienced mentor would help me to better understand how the industry works and how to "navigate" it better to start to build a professional network. But, by the end of the program, this proved to be only one of the smaller benefits that I gained – the rest of the results were even better!

My mentor was Tracey Azzopardi, who was just fantastic. She not only assisted me to better understand the field I now worked in, but also took the time out to work with me and help me to analyse and identify my aims and goals, and to develop plans for how I could achieve them. We talked through aspects of my performance at work (both the strategic and the mundane).

This included identifying areas where I was happy with my achievements and understanding how I could improve on these even more. Areas where I felt I was a bit lacking (e.g. – my insanely messy desk, which, no matter how often I cleaned it, always seemed to pile up again SO quickly!) and how to best tackle them. Tracey also helped me consider some of the topics we discussed from a different perspective to that which I would normally take. She was just a wealth of knowledge for any industry related questions I had while I was learning.

The rest of the mentoring program was also very worthwhile. The site visits were a great opportunity to see how much variety there can be in the way a company runs a warehouse, and to observe best practice in action. They also provided a great opportunity to compare different sites and understand why one process works well in one scenario and not so well in another. Through these and the program's other networking events I have also built up a professional network of friends and contacts in the industry. These have proven to be a great help to me when I have questions about our industry or am just after someone's opinion on an idea from outside my own organisation. They are also good value for a coffee after a breakfast meeting or when you need a golf buddy.

So a big thanks to Luke Holmick and all the folks at the LAA and APICS who made the program possible – I certainly gained a lot from it and am sure that this year's mentees will benefit enormously as well.

Article by Jennifer Noonan, Marketing Manager, Manhattan Associates, ANZ  
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Left: Mentee, Jennifer Noonan



Right: Mentor, Tracey Azzopardi