



Logistics vital to get business moving

By Post Reporter

It is accepted wisdom that excellence in supply chain management (SCM) can offset the physical disadvantage posed by Ireland's geographic location. This is why the National Institute for Transport and Logistics (NITL), as Ireland's centre of excellence for SCM, promotes the development of supply chain expertise in Irish business, both private and public.

NITL achieves this through the delivery of logistics events, such as training courses, seminar series and conferences and also through research projects.

"One of the keys to future industrial success will be managerial competence in advanced SCM skills," said Claudia-Maria Wagner, senior researcher with NITL. "This is especially true of developed economies such as Ireland, where there is an increasing trend to outsource lower function manufacturing processes to lower cost locations but to retain high skill functions.

"Companies must focus on research, product design and development and can outsource the remainder, to effectively manage complex supply chains. Business will become more computer-driven and automated, shifting the demand to white-collar jobs. Consequently, collaboration is becoming the most critical capability as companies migrate from internal to extended supply chains.

"One of the main bottlenecks stifling the growth of SCM excellence in Ireland is the shortage of supply chain management professionals. Education and training has a fundamental role to play if the supply of suitably qualified people is to be addressed in a meaningful way. NITL, which is part of Dublin Institute of Technology, delivers a series of education programmes in SCM."

These are:

■ Executive Development

Programme (part-time) leading to a certificate or diploma in SCM

■ Executive MSc Programme (part-time) leading to a MSc in SCM (available in Dublin and Cork)

■ MSc Programme (full-time) leading to a MSc in SCM

■ Tailored in-house programmes

■ Company Fellowships leading to an MPhil

■ PhD programmes

On the research front, NITL's expertise is primarily based on supply chain management enabled by information and communication technologies. For example, adoption and diffusion drivers of e-Business, or performance indicators.

NITL's research interests include:

■ Organisational management and behaviour for SCM

■ Social interactions and relationships management in SCM

■ Applications in SCM

■ Human resource management issues in logistics

■ Benchmarking of the Irish haulage sector

■ Third party logistics and outsourcing

■ Supply chain partnerships

■ Incentives and performance measures

■ Reverse logistics (product recycling, disposal, and repair)

■ 'Real World' research in logistics and SCM

■ The enabling role of ICT in SCM

■ The impact of globalisation on supply chain design

Its objective is to be a resource to be used by Irish companies, assisting them to improve their competitive position through the enhancement of logistics and SCM capabilities.

NITL regularly organises a daily seminar series on key SCM topics. An annual conference gives further insights into SCM themes and serves as a knowledge forum for executives.

executives.

NITL also publishes various industry and research findings in its own in-house magazine Logistics Solutions, which is distributed free of charge four times a year through its mailing list.

With regard to consultancy services, Wagner said: "NITL has unequalled expertise in the field of logistics and supply chain management and we help our clients succeed through a combination of our specific knowledge of best practices and our tailored solutions.

"Our clients are drawn from a wide range of industries as well as the third-party logistics sector. They profit from both our innovative solutions to their greatest challenges and our understanding of the ingredients of next generation performance.

"Projects can vary in size from very small inexpensive studies and implementations, and general advice to SMEs [small to medium-sized enterprises], to large-scale projects with a multinational dimension."

For further information, visit: www.nitl.ie

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Claudia-Maria Wagner, senior researcher with NITL