

# Annie Pham – “Confidence to excel in new opportunities”

Annie Pham knew that not having any formal training for her role as a purchasing officer would be the biggest constraint to her career – so she did something about it. This is her story.

I started the role of purchasing officer at Prepared Foods (PFL) in 2010 with very little professional background or experience in this field. Supply chain management was very much a foreign concept to me.

After nine months in this role, I took the initiative to take on training in the export and distribution area as I believed it was a good way to learn more about PFL. Being able to do two jobs which covered both ends of our supply chain was very beneficial for me and it also helped grow my eagerness to learn more about supply chain management.

Though it didn't take me long to grasp the basic requirements of the jobs, I knew the fact that I didn't have any qualification nor formal training in this field would always be the biggest constraint to my career. A two-day intensive course in procurement marked the beginning of my professional career development.

### A course with a difference

After the completion of this course, I actively sought out a supply chain management course with a difference. By difference, I mean it needed to be internationally recognised, practical, applicable to my day-to-day job, and – most importantly – it had to be interesting.

I knew studying while being a mother of a two-year-old boy was also going to be a mammoth challenge, especially if I was not 100% interested and committed to the course.

I looked closely at two options: one was the Chartered Institute



Annie Pham at Prepared Foods – rising to new challenges with 100% enthusiasm and dedication

of Logistics & Transport (CILT) UK Professional Diploma in Logistics & Transport taught through the Logistics Training Group (LTG), and the other was a Postgraduate Diploma in Logistics & Supply Chain Management through Massey University. I talked to Walter Glass about these two options as he's the course director at the LTG and also a lecturer on the postgraduate diploma at Massey. Walter was objective about the two courses, highlighting the good points of both study options so I could make my own decision. Fortunately for me, I could also get a second opinion from my colleague who, at that time, had already started the diploma programme with the LTG. After months of deliberation, I decided to enrol in the same course.

### Balancing full-time work with study

Shortly after I started the diploma, I found several reasons to dismiss my worries about working full-

time and studying at the same time. It was a challenge in terms of time management, but I found different concepts discussed in the study material very relevant to what I was dealing with on a daily basis.

The first compulsory module really helped me build an in-depth understanding of the supply chain management concept. The materials were so well written that even a newbie logistician like me could easily understand and apply them to real-life situations. 'Core management' was a very enjoyable module as it confirmed my strong belief in what people management is all about.

While the two compulsory modules provided a big picture of supply chain management and people management, the two electives that I chose, 'sourcing' and 'inventory', gave me the much-needed technical tools to do my job.

Throughout the course, Tessa and Walter Glass were so helpful, and

I always felt welcome every time I went to their office to discuss any questions or look over additional study materials. Walter didn't mind spending more than an hour on the phone going through different questions that I had on a particular task.

### Perfect timing

It took me just over 14 months to complete the four modules and a business case, which speaks volumes about how much I enjoyed the course. In terms of work, it turned out to be perfect timing for me as only one month after completing the course, PFL launched two completely new projects which gave me a whole lot of opportunities to apply the knowledge that I gained on the course.

Due to the nature of my job, I took on the coordinating role between the customers and suppliers from project trials through to commercialisation. The two projects

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