

Focus on Workplace Training: Coca-Cola Refreshes its Supply Chain

An American icon partners with FVTC for solutions

Last year, the Supply Chain Planning team at **Coca-Cola Refreshments** (CCR) realized the 125 year-old worldwide soft drink provider faced a major challenge: Coca-Cola had just consolidated with its largest bottler into a single operating unit under one parent corporation. The result meant the company had to adapt to a leaner operation. The task was handed off to Michael Wasson, supply chain planning manager at CCR.



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The challenge was getting this enormous organization to function as one. “With this move, we now work with a large portfolio of brands with bottling companies located around the United States,” Wasson explains. “This includes energy drinks, vitamin waters, chilled beverages, juices, and teas. Each organization had their own way of doing things, and we needed to optimize our supply chain by having all our new associates speak the same language and do things the same way.”

Coca-Cola Refreshments looked to APICS The Association for Operations Management to help them accomplish its goals. An international educational organization, APICS offers certification programs, training tools, and networking opportunities in supply chain and operations management.

CCR decided upon the **APICS Certified in Production and Inventory Management (CPIM) program** for the company’s new team. The goal was to get employees from around the U.S. certified in an efficient, cost-effective manner. After considering numerous ideas, CCR chose to take advantage of FVTC’s online partnership with APICS.

“Simply put, Fox Valley Technical College is the endorsed online training provider offered through APICS,” Wasson explained. “**FVTC provides an expert platform to help us develop professionally, allowing all of our employees to come together and exchange ideas.** Plus, its program is flexible enough to ensure that everyone, regardless of schedule or work location, can stay on track.”

“Fox Valley Technical College’s online delivery format allows companies to reduce training-related ancillary expenses, such as travel, housing, meals, and time away from the office,” explains Dominic J. Longo, director of corporate services for APICS. “When supply chain and operations management professionals are located across the country, as is the case with Coca-Cola, or around the world, this is an important benefit.”

APICS and FVTC have had a strong working relationship for many years. In fact, the online version of APICS’ CPIM program was developed in 2006 by Anne Haberkorn, FVTC’s Dean of Information Technology and Distance Learning.

The partnership is proving to be a success. “We are very proud that our college is now the exclusive provider of asynchronous online learning for APICS,” Haberkorn continues. “When our students take and pass all five exams, they become CPIM certified. That’s a lot like becoming a CPA in the field of accounting.”

In today’s lean workplace, all employees must have the skills needed to be competitive. “For this reason, CPIM certification has become an important tool,” says Haberkorn.