



2025

A large, three-dimensional white "2025" is centered on a background of blue and white diagonal arrows pointing upwards and to the right, creating a sense of motion and progress.

Annual SAPiCS Conference **Review**



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FOREWORD

by SAPICS President Thato Moloi

“ I was honoured to have the opportunity to open this year’s 47th SAPICS Conference in Cape Town and welcome the more than 700 attendees who represent the heart of supply chain excellence in South Africa, across the continent and beyond. ”



To everyone who joined us – delegates, speakers, partners, sponsors and friends – thank you! The energy, enthusiasm and excitement at this year’s conference is testament to the ever-increasing importance of our profession. There is no doubt that supply chain has moved from the back office to the boardroom and is taking its rightful place at the forefront of Africa’s growth, resilience and transformation.



This year’s conference took place at a critical time. As global trade routes shift and geopolitical tensions rise, Africa’s supply chains, which are already vulnerable, must rapidly adapt. And while we continue to face challenges - from infrastructure constraints and climate shocks to skills shortages and fragmentation - we are equally faced with extraordinary opportunities. SAPICS 2025 reminded us that the solutions we seek lie in innovation, collaboration and leadership. The conversations sparked, knowledge shared and partnerships formed at this conference have the power to change the future of our profession and the trajectory of development across Africa.

When supply chains falter, the effects can be devastating. Weak supply chains mean delayed healthcare, constrained small businesses, food insecurity and stalled economic progress. But when supply chains are strong, integrated and inclusive, they become powerful levers for prosperity. That's why this event matters so much.

As you read this post-conference edition of our eZine, I hope you are inspired by what took place over those few days - not just by the presentations and panels, but by the curiosity, passion and shared purpose of everyone who attended. May it remind you that you are part of a powerful community united by work that is meaningful, urgent and connected to every aspect of people's lives. SAPICS is more than just a conference, it is a community that I am proud and honoured to be part of.

On behalf of SAPICS and the organising team, including conference organiser Upavon Management, thank you for making SAPICS 2025 truly memorable.

Thato Moloi
SAPICS president



AWARD WINNERS

At the closing dinner that ended the 2025 SAPICS Conference on a festive note, prizes were awarded to the following outstanding speakers and exhibitors.

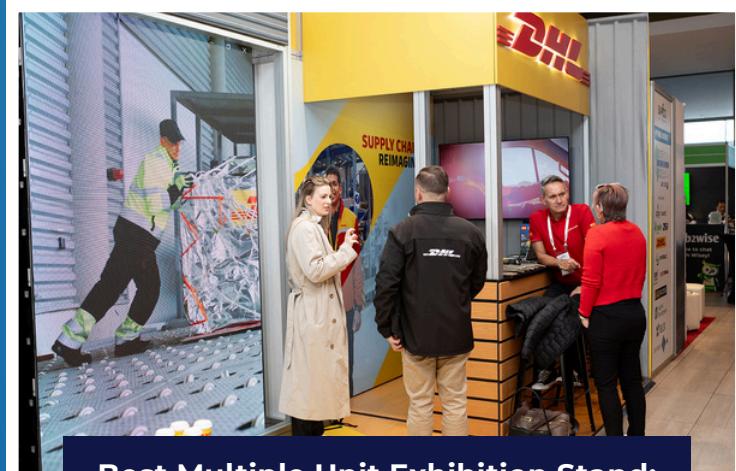
THE WINNING EXHIBITORS

Thank you to the independent panel of individuals who made up the exhibition stand judging. This year was a mammoth task. They assessed the stands against the following criteria:

- Appearance of stand and stand personnel
- Attitude and product knowledge of stand personnel
- Relevance of products to delegates
- Novelty value
- Value-add to delegates
- Most sustainable stand
- Conforming to exhibition terms and conditions
- Pre-event administration and adherence to deadlines



Best Single Unit Exhibition Stand:
b2wise



Best Multiple Unit Exhibition Stand:
DHL Supply Chain

THE WINNING SPEAKERS



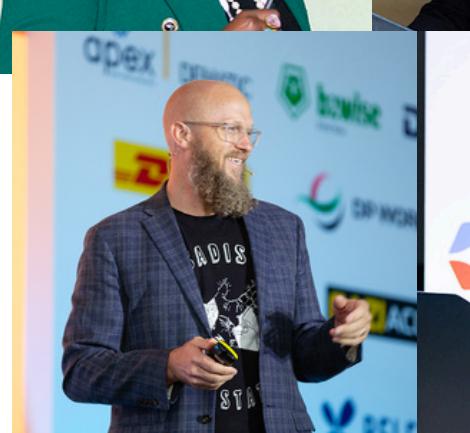
Best Speaker:
Carol Ptak
*Demand Driven Institute,
United States*



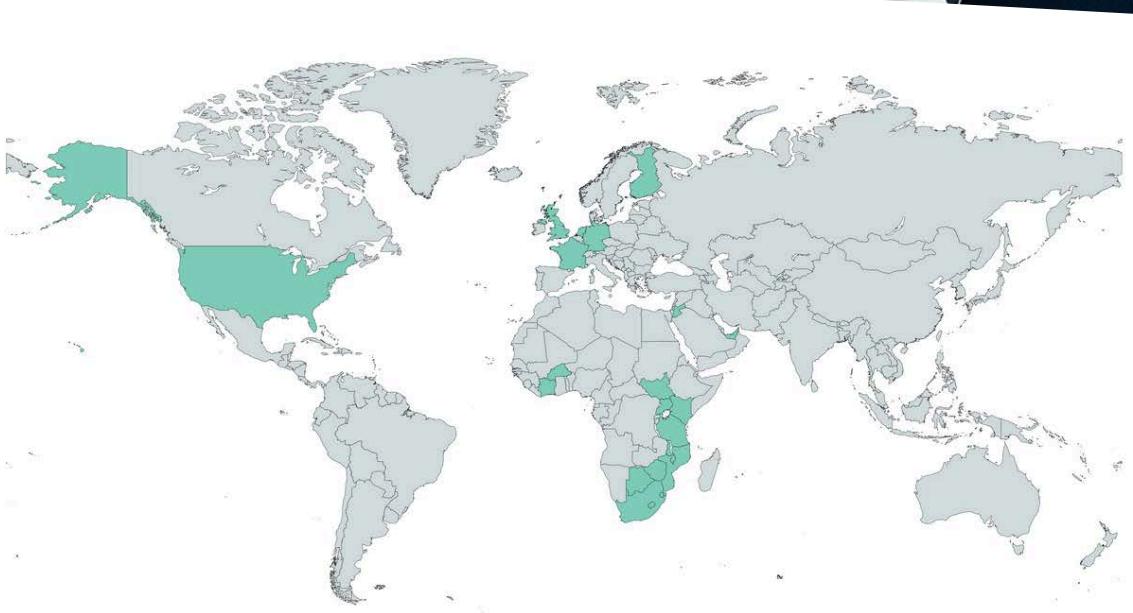
Most Innovative Presentation:
Deborah Dull
*Circular Supply Chain Network,
United States*

Thanks to all the speakers – without your expertise and willingness to volunteer your time this event would not have the reputation it has of being the leading event in Africa for supply chain professionals!

Be sure to look at the presentations which are on the conference website here: www.conference.sapics.org/presentations



COUNTRIES REPRESENTED



BOTSWANA	0,88%
BURKINA FASO	0,15%
COTE D'IVOIRE	0,14%
ESWATINI	0,59%
FINLAND	0,59%
FRANCE	0,29%
GERMANY	0,15%
JORDAN	0,44%
KENYA	0,44%
LESOTHO	0,29%
MALAWI	0,15%
MAURITIUS	0,44%
MOZAMBIQUE	0,44%
NETHERLANDS	1,03%
SOUTH AFRICA	88,27%
SOUTH SUDAN	0,44%
TANZANIA	0,59%
UAE	0,29%
UGANDA	0,29%
UK	1,17%
USA	2,64%
ZIMBABWE	0,29%



WHOVA APP STATS

EVENT APP USAGE



DOWNLOAD RATE
EVENT APP



LOVED WHOVA
% OF ATTENDEES



596

ACTIVE
USERS



589

MOBILE APP
USERS



120

WEB APP
USERS

SPONSORS & EXHIBITORS



507 935

Sponsor Impressions



304

Exhibitor Leads Collected

ENGAGEMENT



791

Community
Messages



207

Photos
Shared



6374

Attendee
Profile Views

NETWORKING



20

Meet-Ups



783

Business Cards
Exchanged



3031

1 on 1
Messages

More than 700 Delegates at SAPICS 2025



More than 700 supply chain managers from across Africa and around the world convened in Cape Town for this year's 47th annual SAPICS Conference, Africa's leading event for the profession. This year's theme was "Innovation in Motion", and delegates have rated the conference as a resounding success.

In his opening address, SAPICS president Thato Moloi stressed that supply chain management has moved from the back office to the boardroom. Supply chains today are recognised as enablers for job creation and sustainable growth. They are key to global trade and thriving economies and populations.

SAPICS 2025 brought together industry experts, thought leaders and professionals from around the world and across the supply chain spectrum to share their insights and expertise in presentations, panel discussions and practical workshops. They explored the trends, technologies and strategies that are driving the future of the supply chain management profession, to equip our SAPICS supply chain community with the skills and knowledge to thrive in today's turbulent supply chain landscape.



The Upavon Management team, led by Clive and Jenny Froome managed their 30th SAPICS Conference in 2025.

SAPICS would like to express its thanks and sincere gratitude to Upavon for the professionalism, dedication and commitment given to the Association and its conference. Upavon has been a trusted partner over this time.

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Nando's Local Roots Are Going Global By Unlocking The Full Power Of Its Supply Chains



The Nando's Group's global supply chain executive Linda Reddy delivered a keynote presentation at this year's SAPICS Conference. "Local roots going global by unlocking the full power of its supply chains" was the theme of her informative, inspiring session.

She discussed Nando's commitment to local sourcing, and shared details of how the brand proudly champions South African-made goods to support the economy and stay true to its heritage.

Reddy also spoke about South Africa's GDP and global productivity benchmarks. She gave SAPICS attendees a snapshot of where South Africa stands globally and how smarter supply chains can close the gap. The inhibitors to exporting from South Africa range from infrastructure limitations to regulatory hurdles, she said, and her insightful presentation explored what's holding exports back.

Examining what must improve to go global, Reddy noted that agility, digitisation, skilled talent and cross-border efficiency are all on the roadmap.

The advantages of exporting from South Africa include our country's natural resources, high food and agriculture quality and entrepreneurial energy, she asserted.

South Africa has talent that's already going global, Reddy told the SAPICS audience and shared that she is proud to lead a team of supply chain and manufacturing experts based in SA who are delivering in a truly global role.

“ It's a powerful testament to the world-class talent SA has to offer. ”



South Africa's freight system stabilising, but no 'kumbaya moment' yet



The following article was written by Irma Venter for Creamer Media's Engineering News

South Africa's efforts to restore its logistics infrastructure have seen it stabilise the system, but not yet execute a big leap forward. This was the consensus among members of a panel speaking on the topic at the SAPICS 2025 conference held in Cape Town in June.

Moderator Dr Juanita Maree – South African Association of Freight Forwarders CEO – asked the panellists to adjudicate the key pillars of the Freight Logistics Roadmap as either green, amber or red. The four pillars are policy and institutional reform; infrastructure investment; operational efficiency; and private sector participation.

Freight Logistics Roadmap key author and Operation

Vulindlela rail and logistics adviser Jaap van der Merwe said he preferred to err on the side of caution when it came to Pillar 1. "This is not a kumbaya moment yet; we need to face the realities." Van der Merwe placed the progress within Pillar 1 at 40%. "We have set the policies, but we have not done the work to do the reform. We are at amber – if we are lucky."

Operation Vulindlela is a joint initiative of the Presidency and the National Treasury to accelerate the implementation of structural reforms and to support economic recovery.

As for infrastructure investment, Van der Merwe was even less optimistic, judging this pillar to be at red. "We have simply not put in the money, and, even if we put in the money now, we are two, three, four years late and the reliability curves are showing us that; so, let's be very real."

Van der Merwe rated Pillar 3, operational efficiency, as amber, as the freight system decline had been arrested from a volume point of view. "We pulled it back. We are not there yet; there is a lot of fat in the system, but it is hard to take out."

Van der Merwe believed private sector participation was still at red, as this pillar was "really still in its baby shoes".

Presidency project management office director Khule Duma was more upbeat as he rated Pillar 1 as green – "we are quite positive" and "we have seen a lot of progress".

“This is not a kumbaya moment yet; we need to face the realities.” Van der Merwe placed the progress within Pillar 1 at 40%. “We have set the policies, but we have not done the work to do the reform. We are at amber – if we are lucky.”

However, he added his voice to that of Van der Merwe in rating Pillar 2 as red, describing it as a “big problem”.

Pillar 3 was at amber, owing to the “vast improvements” made, while Pillar 4 was also at amber, “almost green”, with 2025 the year to see progress in this area.

Duma noted that some critics held the view that the current pace of progress to restore and grow the freight system was not fast enough. However, he emphasised that the sheer number of changes happening meant that this was “no small reform whatsoever”.

“What effectively we are seeing from a policy perspective is perhaps the biggest change we have seen in the hundred years since the freight logistics system was established in South Africa. We are moving, and we are moving at a very fast pace. More and more we have an understanding of what stakeholders want, and I do think we are moving in the right direction.”

The private sector’s participant, A.P. Moller – Maersk Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Islands area sales head Theo Pappas, rated Pillar 1 as amber, leaning towards green; Pillar 2 as red; Pillar 3 as amber; and private sector participation as green.

He confirmed that there had been stabilisation within South Africa’s port system, which had been in intensive care around 24 months ago. He said this stabilisation had brought about predictability, which his shipping company and its customers “could work with”, as it allowed for forward planning. However, the weak point now was the rail system.

“The hard work now is on the land side to get rail working; to do quicker handovers and move cargo quicker,” said Pappas.

Shosholoza Ports Operations CEO Innocentia Motau echoed this sentiment, noting that South Africa’s port operations had indeed been stabilised to a large degree, but that rail was now the “big elephant in the room”.





47th SAPICS Conference HALL OF FAME





SAPICS Offers Innovative Support to SMMEs with Inaugural Pitch Parade

The 2025 SAPICS Conference saw the debut of an exciting new initiative: the SAPICS Supply Chain Pitch Parade.

This was a high-energy competition that celebrated entrepreneurial talent and supply chain innovation, with a first prize valued at R80 000 up for grabs. It was introduced SAPICS to support small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) operating in South Africa's supply chain sector, and it was one of the most talked-about features of this year's conference in Cape Town.

Open to SMMEs with a turnover of less than R10 million annually, the Pitch Parade offered a powerful platform for small business owners to showcase their ideas, connect with industry leaders and potentially unlock sales and contract opportunities within the broader SAPICS community. It aligns with SAPICS's mission to advance supply chain excellence and nurture emerging talent.

After a rigorous application process managed by the SAPICS team, including financial checks and eligibility verification, 19 high-quality submissions were received. These were assessed by a panel of respected judges led by head judge Cobus Rossouw and supported by Thato Moloi (SAPICS president and area head of Maersk Contract Logistics SAI), Claudia de Jonge (DSV), Wesley Estment (SAP), Levers Mahlaule (Nebula Transport) and Alan van Vuuren (B2Wise).



After careful deliberation, three outstanding finalists were selected:

- Renko Bergh (Ctrl Fleet)
- Lethlohonolo Mpshe (Atarah Solutions)
- Nyeko Mathebula (Procure Africa)

The top three were invited to attend the SAPICS Conference in Cape Town, with flights and accommodation included. Those who didn't make the finals were awarded individual SAPICS memberships as a token of recognition.

Pitching for the future

At the conference, the main stage was transformed into a live pitch arena. Each finalist had five minutes to present their solution, followed by a Q&A session with the judging panel. Conference delegates were then invited to vote for their favourite via the SAPICS Conference app.

“It was inspiring to see the up-and-coming projects and the energy behind them. It’s such a valuable platform for engagement and innovation.”

After a round of spirited presentations and audience voting, Nyeko Mathebula of Procure Africa was announced as the winner and awarded a prize valued at R80 000, presented on stage by Cobus Rossouw. The runners-up received a SAPICS SME membership and complimentary attendance of the CILTSAs ESG event.

Feedback from attendees and participants has been overwhelmingly positive. One finalist stated: “I had the honour of being a finalist in the SAPICS Pitch Parade and, wow, what a moment to remember. A big thank you to the SAPICS team for the opportunity to pitch. I genuinely enjoyed every part of it.”

Another attendee praised the energy and fresh perspective the competition brought to the event: “It was inspiring to see the up-and-coming projects and the energy behind them. It’s such a valuable platform for engagement and innovation.”

The Pitch Parade also added a lighter, dynamic element to the SAPICS Conference programme. As one participant put it: “It was great to have some vibes and bring an element of fun to the event. Great idea!”

The inaugural SAPICS Supply Chain Pitch Parade was a resounding success and looks set to become a firm fixture on the supply chain community’s calendar.



For the first time this year, Demand Driven World was held as part of the SAPICS Conference. Demand Driven World is the world's top convention focused on Demand Driven methods and applications. Combining it with SAPICS 2025 gave attendees a unique opportunity to attend two globally recognised events at the same time, in one location. The following powerful sessions formed part of Demand Driven World:



Adapt To Ongoing Disruptions Or Become A Dodo, Supply Chain Expert Warns

Businesses that do not adapt to ongoing disruptions risk extinction. This was the message delivered by world renowned supply chain expert and author Carol Ptak in her opening keynote session.

Her SAPICS Conference presentation emphasised that globalised supply chains are no longer "chains" at all, but complex adaptive systems. "They are fragile, fragmented and elongated webs of interconnected parts that defy linear thinking.

United States-based Ptak delivered a bold wake-up call to an industry facing a new reality: ongoing disruptions. From global pandemics to geopolitical instability and climate shocks, the frequency and severity of disruptions is increasing. Organisations must adapt to this or risk becoming extinct, like the dodo, she stated.

In a world marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity - the so-called "VUCA World" - traditional forecasting-driven approaches must go, Ptak stressed.

Forecasts start out wrong and then, the longer the forecasted time range, the higher the error rate. A further truth about forecasts is that the more detailed they are, the higher the error rate is."

Flow Over Forecast

Ptak urged SAPICS attendees to abandon outdated planning tools - including the master production schedule - and instead focus on managing the flow, which she defined as "the rate a supply chain converts material to saleable product required by a customer".

Drawing on Plossl's Law, she explained that all operational benefits are directly linked to the speed of flow. Faster, smoother flow results in better service, lower costs and greater resilience. A particularly damaging myth was also challenged: the belief that better customer service requires more inventory.

“That’s a deep truth. Everyone believes it, but it’s false,” Ptak asserted. “You don’t need more inventory. You need better flow. Better flow leads to better customer service with less inventory.

Rethinking Cost and Resilience

Cost should not be the starting point in supply chain management, according to Ptak, but a consequence of flow. Organisations and leaders obsessing over cost efficiency often sacrifice the very resilience that would protect them from disruption. “We can no longer build business and supply chain models based on profit maximisation strategies that ignore risk,” she told SAPICS delegates. “We must assume that disruption is inevitable and design for it.”

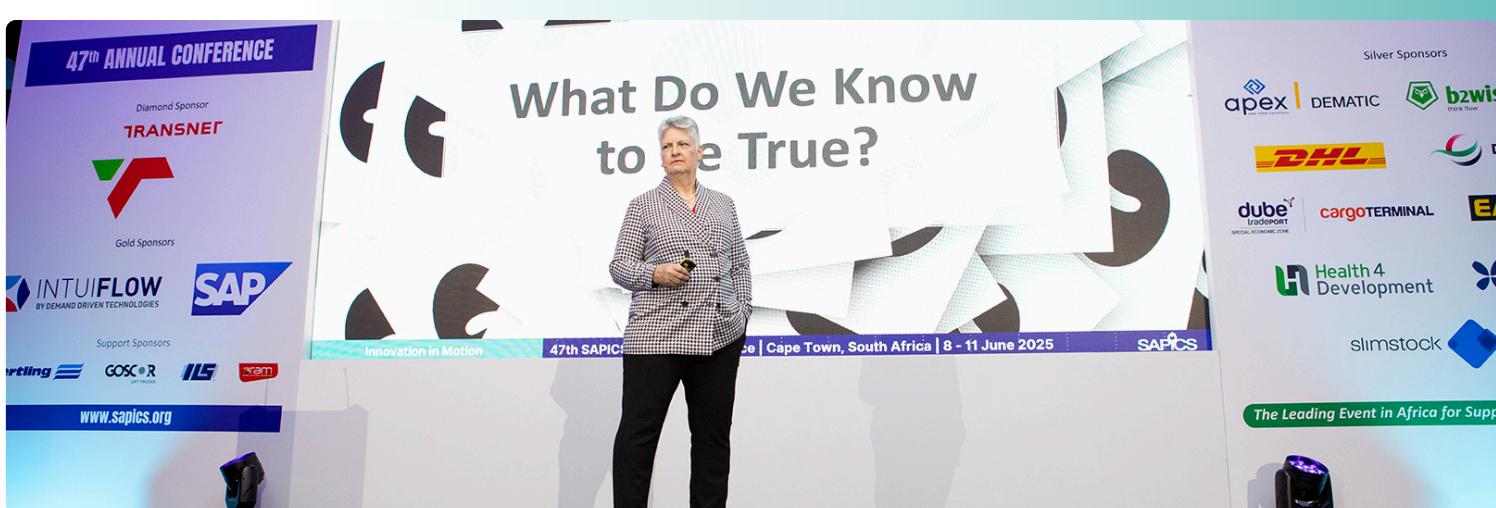
This means building supply chains that are not just efficient, but resilient – meaning they are able to recover quickly – and robust – meaning that they are strong enough to withstand disruptions and will not break.

Resilience doesn’t come from stockpiles and spreadsheets. It comes from adaptable systems, dynamic interaction and smart prioritisation. Crucially, this includes recognising that so-called “C” items – which are low-cost, low-priority parts – are just as vital as “A” items. “A single missing ‘C’ part can bring a whole production line to a standstill,” Ptak said. “It’s not just about what costs more – it’s about what stops flow.”

Adapt or Die

Ptak used the words of Leon Megginson, paraphrasing Darwin, to leave SAPICS delegates with a powerful key message: “It is not the strongest or the smartest who survive, but those who adapt best to change.”

Carol Ptak is a partner with the Demand Driven Institute, a global organisation that was founded in 2011 to advance and proliferate Demand Driven strategies and practices. She has written and co-authored numerous articles and books on Demand Driven principles, finance and information and planning systems.





Huda Beauty's Demand-Driven Success Story in The Spotlight

Huda Kattan, a beauty blogger who built a billion-dollar makeup brand, has enthralled millions of TikTokkers and Instagram users who clamour to buy Huda Beauty's latest products as soon as they are launched. The delegates at this year's SAPICS Conference were captivated by a compelling presentation on this rapidly growing business's supply chain challenges and how they are being solved using demand-driven material requirements planning (DDMRP) methodology.

Emmanuelle Cohen, Huda Beauty's senior vice president for Supply Chain shared her insights and experiences.

Huda Beauty has more than 67 million followers on social media. The organisation has 250 employees, offices in Dubai, London and New York, and four distribution centres. Huda Beauty products are sold in 97 countries. It is one of a growing number of beauty brands leveraging the power of influencer marketing. But this comes with big challenges in demand planning and forecasting.

Many supply chains would collapse as a result of what Cohen called the "viral effect".

One example that she cited of the viral effect, which results in high demand volatility, was when a TikTok influencer made a viral video about Huda's Easy Bake powder and drove record, exponential sales growth. Overall, the business's growth has been extraordinary - in four years, Huda Beauty has grown 20 times.

Other challenges that Cohen said impact Huda's supply chains, sales and operations planning and forecasting are the ongoing launches of new products and phasing out of old ones. "This is a highly innovative market, with a short lifecycle – less than three years on average. At any time, 47% of products are new and 47% of our SKUs (stock keeping units) are at the end of their life."

Outsourced production with long lead times and a "push" distribution model were among the issues that Huda needed to address in a transformation



“ **We needed to build an agile supply chain to support the business scale up, Cohen explained.** ”

project that would enable the business to scale up for rapid growth, Cohen told SAPICS delegates.

Decreasing service levels, overstock and the expense of rebalancing stock between distribution centres were some of the consequences that Huda Beauty was dealing with.

The solution was found in DDMRP. Using this methodology in its sales and operations planning, Huda Beauty drastically improved service levels - from 68 to 81% to 95% consistently. Stock rebalancing costs were reduced by 75%. SKUs needing emergency rebalancing dropped from 4% to 0.6%. “Flow was accelerated thanks to the daily checks and the visibility,” Cohen expanded. She said that the success factors in this transformation project included accurate master data, a dedicated team and effective change management.



Supply Chain Innovators are Charting A New Healthcare Future for Africa



A powerful healthcare-focused panel discussion spotlighted Africa's emergence as a creator of health supply chain innovations with global potential.

The session brought together trailblazing African entrepreneurs who are transforming medicine access, patient safety and healthcare supply chain systems across the continent. It was moderated by Stella Kivila, director of Healthtech Strategy & Impact at Salient Advisory, which is advancing African-led healthtech and innovations through strategic partnerships with forward-thinking industry, foundations and governments.

Kivila opened the session with insights drawn from Salient's work tracking more than 1 000 healthtech innovators across Africa. "We are seeing a new generation of African entrepreneurs tackling one of the continent's most pressing problems: fragmented and inefficient medicine supply chains," she said.

The Cost of Fragmentation

Across Africa, public sector healthcare distribution systems are overburdened.

Most consumers rely on fragmented private sector supply chains that drive up costs and compromise quality. Kivila noted that this fragmentation often adds as much as 60% to the final price patients pay for medicines. A further concern is that patients are left with little guarantee of quality or availability and there is a significant risk of counterfeit and substandard products entering the system.

But as she explained, African-led innovators are working to close these gaps through technology, data and new business models. Two standout examples - Dawa Mkononi from Tanzania and Meditect from Côte d'Ivoire - took centre stage at SAPICS 2025 to share their journeys.

Dawa Mkononi: "Medicine in the Palm of Your Hand"

Dawa Mkononi means "medicine in the palm of your hand". For Dr. Joseph Paul, the business's founder, the road to innovation began with heartbreak. While assisting a mother during childbirth in a rural Tanzanian village, he found that the essential drug needed to accelerate labour was unavailable.

Six hours later, the family returned with a medicine that sadly proved ineffective. It was likely a counterfeit. That moment sparked a mission. As a medical doctor with a passion for software engineering, Paul developed a digital platform and distribution model that delivers medicine within hours in urban areas, complete with inventory services and demand prediction. His business now supplies pharmacies, clinics and hospitals with safe, verified medicines and flexible credit financing.

Meditect: Restoring Trust in Medicines

For Dr. Arnaud Pourredon, founder of Meditect and a former surgeon in Côte d'Ivoire, the decision to leave his clinical career was similarly rooted in a moment of despair. "I couldn't buy malaria treatment for a three-year-old child. That's when I knew we had to fix the system," he recalled.

Meditect provides digital tools that support drug traceability, supply chain visibility and pharmacy management. With a focus on Francophone Africa, where populations are growing rapidly and infrastructure often lags, Meditect is helping to leapfrog traditional barriers through technology. "By improving access to quality medicine and enhancing transparency, we can increase life expectancy in Africa by 10 years," Pourredon said.

Investing in Innovation: The i3 Model

Both Dawa Mkononi and Meditect are part of the Investing in Innovation (i3) programme, a value-creation network launched in 2022 to help scale commercial African supply chain innovations.

Investing in Innovation: The i3 Model

Both Dawa Mkononi and Meditect are part of the Investing in Innovation (i3) programme, a value-creation network launched in 2022 to help scale commercial African supply chain innovations. Rather than acting as a traditional accelerator, i3 connects promising local innovators with donors, governments and the private sector to champion both economic and health outcomes. In its first 24 months, i3 has provided \$3M in direct grant funding to 60 start-ups across 18 African countries. Sponsored by the Gates Foundation, MSD, Cencora (formerly AmerisourceBergen), Endless Foundation, HELP Logistics (a subsidiary of the Kühne Foundation) and Sanofi's Global Health Unit, i3 provides risk-tolerant funding, tailored market access support and opportunities to partner with governments, donors and major healthcare organisations.

"Africa doesn't lack ingenuity. It lacks systems to support and scale it," Kivila emphasised. "Africa's healthcare future does not have to be imported. It is being built here - by Africans, for Africans, and increasingly, for the world," she concluded.



Reimagining Supply Chains for a Disrupted World



It is time to reimagine how we build, manage and leverage supply chains - not just to survive disruption, but to grow stronger because of it.

This was the key message in an insightful 2025 SAPICS Conference presentation by Andries Retief, DHL Supply Chain's chief commercial officer for EMEA. Retief explored how today's volatile global landscape, which is being shaped by geopolitical conflicts, technological advances and constant disruption, demands bold new thinking. "In calm times, logistics is the quiet engine of growth. But in disruption, it becomes something more: a strategic lever," he stated.

"We are living through an inflection point. Trade lanes are being redrawn. Governments are investing in strategic autonomy. Sustainability is now a prerequisite. The pandemic was merely a stress test for what came next, and the shockwaves are still being felt across industries ranging from e-commerce to bio-pharma," he told SAPICS attendees.

Looming over all of this is cybersecurity, which Retief said is a threat that keeps businesses up at night.

Amid this turbulence, however, lies

opportunity, according to Retief. "Supply chain leaders who see the current forces at play as headwinds will fall behind. Those who harness them as tailwinds and align their supply chain strategy to these global shifts will accelerate toward sustainable growth."

The presentation highlighted some concerning statistics. A staggering 92% of organisations struggle to mitigate supply chain risk due to a lack of visibility and collaboration with trading partners. And while 75% now check if key suppliers have continuity plans, 68% say they're constantly responding to high-impact disruptions, often without enough time to recover before the next one hits.

Retief outlined what can be done differently. "In today's landscape, strategy can't be confined to balance sheets and boardrooms," he stressed.

"Look at the advantages that the geographic diversity of Africa can offer, such as proximity to key resources, proximity to key markets, access to transportation networks (like ports, highways and railroads), favourable trade agreements and access to resources," he urged the SAPICS audience.



“It must start with a clear-eyed view of a network - where it’s strong, where it’s vulnerable and how it responds under stress. We can do this by considering geographic and strategic tailwinds.”

“Through geographic diversity, businesses in South Africa and Africa, as well as foreign companies investing in the continent, can optimise their supply chains and increase their speed to market.

“To harness strategic tailwinds, organisations should align their supply chain operations with mega trends in e-commerce, global fulfilment networks and life sciences, as well as sustainability imperatives.”

Retief said that diversification is key and he shared highlights from a recent trend report emphasising the urgent need for supply chain diversification. “This is not a new concept, but one that is now sharply in focus,” he stated. “Diversification includes multi-shoring and omni-sourcing. Spreading supplier and manufacturing bases across countries or continents reduces dependency on one location and mitigates geopolitical or environmental risk. Increasing the number of suppliers - even within the same region - creates built-in resilience should any one vendor fail to deliver.

“Diversifying logistics operations – with a distributed network of warehouses and distribution centres - improves supply continuity and responsiveness in the face of localised disruptions.

“Multi-modal transport is also part of the mix. Relying on a mix of air, sea, rail, road - and even bicycles for last-mile delivery - ensures flexibility across the entire transport chain.”

Finally, supply chain orchestration must be the glue that holds it all together, Retief stressed. “This is the coordinated management of all elements - processes, people, technology and data - to ensure seamless, efficient operations across increasingly complex, global supply chains.

“The environment we live in today doesn’t just call for better supply chain management, it demands strategic reinvention. The supply chain must be reimagined, not as a cost centre, but as a competitive advantage: agile, diversified and ready for whatever comes next,” he concluded.

Survey Highlights Gender Discrimination, Salary Suspicion Gap And Perception Problems In Supply Chain Profession

Coinciding with Women's Month in South Africa, leading supply chain industry body SAPICS has shared the results of its latest survey on Women in Supply Chain Leadership. Both men and women participated and one of the most troubling findings is a significant difference in how workplace equity is perceived by each gender, SAPICS says.



The results show that women and men have quite different realities on workplace fairness, with 89 percent of men asserting that career advancement opportunities are equal for both genders and only 57 percent of women surveyed feeling the same way. More than a third of the women respondents strongly disagreed with this statement.

This disconnect raises red flags, according to SAPICS. "If male leaders don't see a problem, it's harder to solve one."

The gender pay gap and perception problems

The survey also highlighted major disparities in perceptions of pay equity. While 63% of men believe salaries are largely equal, only 25% of women feel the same. A concerning result is that 45% of women suspect that men are paid more for the same work. This divergence, or salary suspicion gap, as SAPICS has dubbed it, points to potential issues with pay transparency

and the persistence (or strong perception) of a gender pay gap. "Men's general confidence in equality contrasts sharply with women's widespread suspicion of disparity. This underscores the critical need for organisations to proactively ensure and clearly communicate equitable compensation practices," SAPICS states.

Transparency is also an issue in 2025, according to the survey results. Three quarters of the male respondents think that their organisations have transparent pay policies, but only a quarter of the women agree. This suggests a dangerous gap not only in policy, but in trust, SAPICS contends.

Misplaced assumptions about barriers

Another striking insight is that 46% of men believe "family commitments" are the biggest challenge facing female leaders. But only 10% of women agree. Instead, women identify limited opportunities (41%), a male-dominated

industry (33%) and gender bias (29%) as their greatest challenges.

SAPICS notes that this shows that support strategies must be based on real barriers not assumptions. "If we're trying to fix the wrong problems, we're wasting time and reinforcing inequality."

Gender discrimination remains widespread

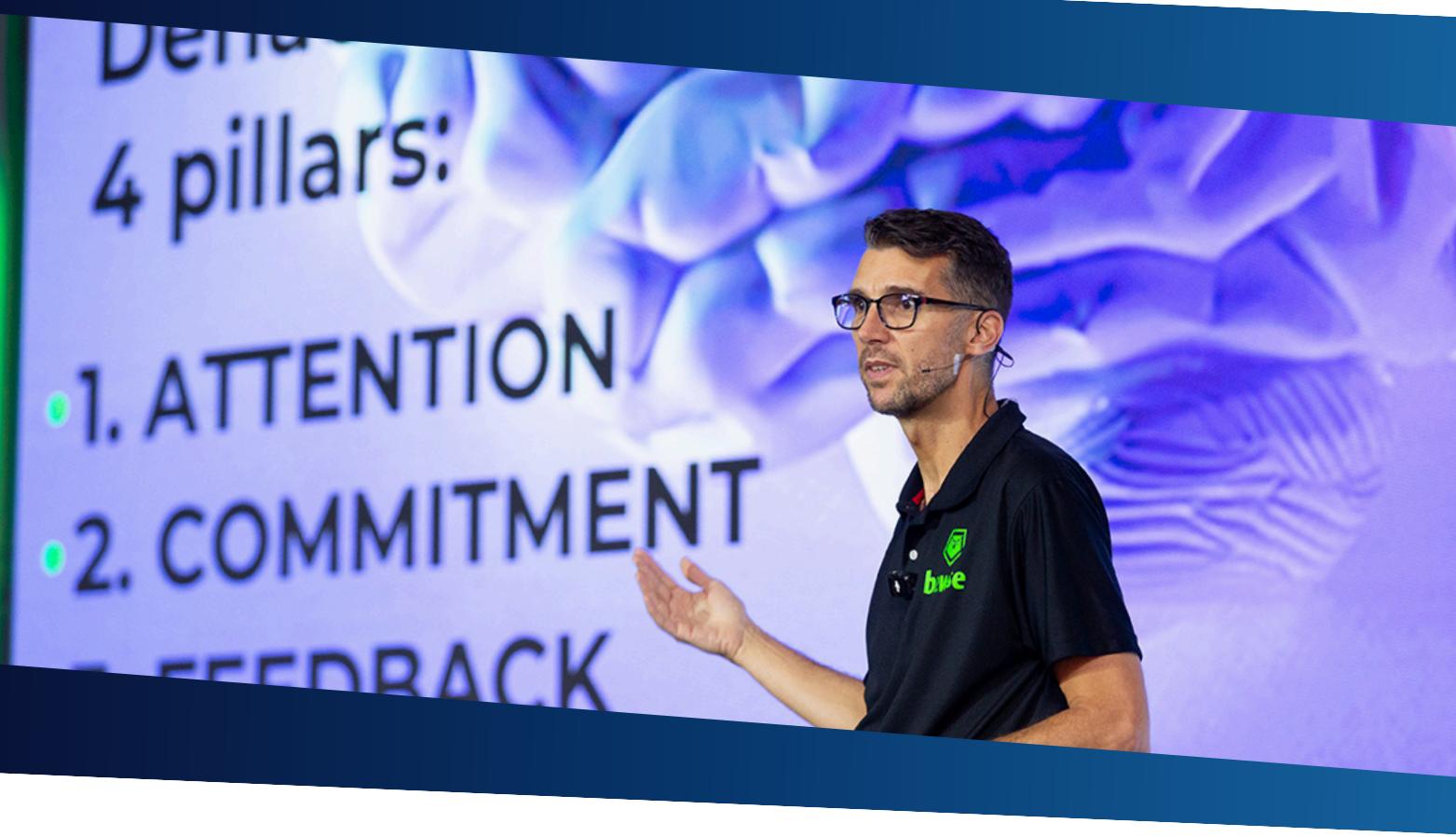
The 2025 SAPICS Women in Supply Chain Leadership Survey showed little change in the statistics around gender discrimination. Almost two thirds of the women surveyed report witnessing or experiencing it. Only 17% of men reported this. This signals not isolated incidents but systemic issues and sharply different workplace realities, according to SAPICS. Additionally, 85% of women reported experiencing resistance when leading male teams. This is a slight improvement from 2024 (96%) but still alarmingly high.

Despite growing global awareness and clear evidence that gender equity fuels innovation and profitability, the results of this survey underscore how much work needs to be done to break down barriers for women in supply chain leadership, SAPICS states. "Gender equity is not just a box ticking exercise, it makes good business sense," the organisation stresses.

"A study involving 21 980 companies across 91 nations, conducted by the Peterson Institute for International Economics, found that having a greater number of female leaders in senior management roles correlates with a 15% rise in profitability for an average firm.

A McKinsey & Company report has consistently found that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on their executive teams are more likely to have above-average profitability than companies in the bottom quartile. Research published in Harvard Business Review indicates that companies with a higher-than-average diversity in their leadership teams report a greater share of revenue from new products and services. The diverse experiences and viewpoints of women can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of consumer needs and market opportunities. A study by the American Psychological Association highlighted that gender-diverse teams are better at complex problem-solving. Women often bring different perspectives and a more collaborative approach, which can challenge groupthink and lead to more creative and effective solutions."

Based on the findings of its latest Women in Supply Chain Leadership Survey, SAPICS is calling on supply chain decision makers to really listen to women's lived experiences in the workplace. "We need to start by acknowledging the disconnect in perceptions and experiences across genders. Then, organisations must renew their commitment to actively combatting discrimination and providing safe, trusted reporting structures. There must be transparency and accountability around pay and promotion."



Play to Learn

Playing is the best way to learn, according to SAPICS 2025 speaker Laurent Vigouroux. In his Demand Driven World session on “The Future of Learning: Games and AI in Supply Chain Training”, the France-based supply chain expert examined the reasons for the phenomenal success of the LEGO-based supply chain game DDBrix.

Vigouroux, who is the executive vice president and global brand ambassador of b2wise, explained that traditional supply chain training often struggles to engage participants and drive real-world results. Gamification and AI are transforming the learning experience, he said. DDBrix is earning praise around the world for its success in simplifying complex concepts, fostering collaboration and boosting retention. SAPICS attendees were introduced to a recent addition to the DDBrix game concept, an AI agent called Wisey that supports learners.

“According to Vigouroux, the future of supply chain education is “playful, personalised, and powered by purpose”.

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**See you there!
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