

SAPICS

Presentation by Dr Alicia Weber

Shaping Industry-Ready Graduates: Essential SCM Values for Young Professionals



Under Discussion

1. Background
2. What are soft skills and values?
3. Latest research
4. The intersection between soft skills
and your professional brand
5. Three Core SCM Values/Soft Skills
6. MiniMaster Classes
7. Q&A

Background

“Graduates lack soft skills”

At the 2024 SAPICS conference, industry participants indicated that graduates are often not "industry-ready" and struggle to adapt to workplace realities.

Outcome:

Insights gained at the conference led to the creation of a collaborative partnership between SAPICS and UNISA to host MiniMaster Classes.



What are soft skills or values?

Soft skills are **personal** and **interpersonal** skills that help people work well with others and adapt to different situations. Unlike technical skills, soft skills are not job-specific but essential for workplace success (Cambridge Dictionary, 2025).



Problem-solving

Communication

Adaptability

Dependability

Team work

How does the industry view soft skills?

97%

Employers consider soft skills essential.

(SAGEA Employer Benchmarking 2024)

Entry-level employees do not possess the necessary soft skills.

(SAGEA Employer Benchmarking 2024)

85%

70%

Prioritise hiring candidates with strong soft skills over technical skills.

(Pumble, 2025)

HR managers believe that due to the increased use of AI – soft skills will become essential.

(Statista, 2024)

58%



How Does Industry See Gen Z?

13 - 28 years

74%

Believe GenZ is more difficult to work with than other generations.

(Resume Builder, 2023)

“Easily offended”

“Tech-savvy”

“Learning-oriented”

“Socially conscious”

“Entitled”

“Unreliable”

Education has not prepared GenZs enough for the workplace.

(British Council, 2024)

51%



The intersection between your professional brand and soft skills

Ask yourself?

- What is my professional brand as a young graduate?
- What interpersonal skills (soft skills) set me apart?

Your soft skills don't just support your professional brand—they define it!



Three critical soft skills/ values

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Solutions-driven

Graduates with the ability to focus on finding solutions rather than dwelling on problems.

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Committed

Graduates who are self-motivated to achieve goals deliver results and continuously improve their skills.

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Moral

Graduates who adhere to strong ethical principles and values concerning what is right and wrong.



Solutions-driven

Problem-solving is a crucial soft skill for SCM graduates because it enables them to analyse complex challenges, optimise processes, and find efficient solutions in a fast-paced industry. Supply chains are dynamic and often face disruptions which require innovative solutions. Graduates with strong problem-solving skills can adapt and respond quickly.

99.7%

Being able to solve-problems

Grebe (2024:297)

Resourceful

Proactive

Critical Thinking

Adaptable

Results-driven

What Obama said...



Challenge:

Becoming solutions-driven

The No-Complaint Day

Commit to an entire day of no complaints. When you notice an issue, instead of complaining, identify one actionable step you can take to fix it. Whether improving your workspace, managing your time, or addressing unclear communication, focus on solving one frustration at a time.

1

Reverse the Problem

Take a challenge you are currently facing and reframe it as an opportunity. Write down how this challenge could help you grow or learn something new.

2

This builds proactive thinking and helps you approach problems with confidence.

Committed

Being committed is a crucial soft skill for SCM graduates, as it reflects a dedication to **continuous improvement**, lifelong learning, and excellence in a dynamic industry. Committed professionals stay **updated on industry trends**, **manage time effectively**, and **remain reliable**.

99.3%

Being self-motivated is essential for personal growth, skill development, and continuous improvement.

Grebe (2024:296)

Dedicated

Reliable

Hardworking

Motivated

Loyal

Challenge:

Becoming more committed

Weekly Improvement

Commit to improving every week by focusing on one professional skill that will advance your career, like leadership or communication.

Dedicate 1 hour a week to learning or practising that skill, whether through an online course (such as LinkedIn Learning), watching a YouTube video, or listening to a Podcast. Track your progress each week because, by the end of the month, you will have spent 4 hours learning a new skill.

Committing to self-improvement and continuous development fosters a growth mindset.

Moral

Being ethically driven is essential for SCM graduates, ensuring they uphold **integrity, accountability**, and fairness in decision-making. Graduates who adhere to strong ethical principles and values can responsibly navigate complex supply chain challenges, build trust with stakeholders, and contribute to sustainable and transparent business practices.

Honest

Ethical

Trustworthy

Responsible

Principled

99.4%

Being honest and trustworthy

(Grebe, 2024:297)

95%

GenZ finds “workplace cheating acceptable”.

Clocking out early, napping or using corporate software for personal reasons

(PapersOwl, 2025)



Challenge: Becoming more moral

South African News Volume 10, Issue 3 August 2024

SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGER ACCUSED OF COVERING UP MULTI-MILLION RAND FRAUD: SCANDAL ROCKS MAJOR RETAILER

Dr. Weber, Supply Chain Manager at Retailer X, Accused of Taking Bribes and Manipulating Contracts in Scandalous Scheme



In a shocking turn of events, Dr. Alicia Weber, a prominent supply chain manager at Retailer X, has come under fire following allegations of accepting bribes and manipulating supply contracts. The accusations, which surfaced after an internal audit, have sent shockwaves through the retail industry, raising serious concerns about the ethical practices within the company. Sources close to the investigation reveal that Dr. Weber allegedly accepted substantial bribes from select suppliers in exchange for securing lucrative contracts. These suppliers, reportedly involved in multi-million rand deals, are accused of delivering substandard goods at inflated prices, costing Retailer X millions in losses.

Dr Alicia Weber
Supply Chain Manager at Retailer X

Retailer X has launched an immediate investigation into the matter, stating that they take the allegations very seriously. "We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity in our operations," a company spokesperson said. "Any actions that undermine our values will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately."

Dr. Weber, known for her extensive expertise and previously stellar reputation in supply chain management, has not yet commented on the allegations. However, industry experts warn that the fallout from this scandal could have lasting repercussions on her career and the reputation of Retailer X.

9

Publicity Test

For the next week, before making a decision that could have ethical implications (big or small), ask yourself:

"Would your actions change if this decision was made public?"

Think of a time when you were asked—or tempted—to compromise your ethics, even slightly. Apply the publicity test: Would you be okay if your decision became public? If not, write down how you wish you had acted and keep that note as a reminder. Now, the next time you're faced with an ethical dilemma, apply the publicity test before deciding.

Being ethically driven empowers you to make decisions that are rooted in integrity.

Three critical soft skills/ values

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Solutions-driven

A large, stylized, 3D-effect letter 'C' in a light teal color with a white outline and a drop shadow, set against a red rounded square background.

Committed

A large, stylized, 3D-effect letter 'M' in a light teal color with a white outline and a drop shadow, set against a red rounded square background.

Moral

MiniMaster Classes

In partnership with SAPICS, these online classes equip young SCM students and recent graduates with essential soft skills to enhance their professional adaptability. Industry experts host the classes and provide real-world insights and hands-on skills for the workplace. The initiative also promotes lifelong learning, fostering continuous skill development and career growth for graduates and young professionals, preparing them for success in the SCM sector.

MINIMASTER CLASS SERIES
SERIES 1: SESSION 1



Nikita Reddy
SCHOOL SCM MANAGER - MANCOSA
SAPICS BOARD MEMBER

DATE
TUESDAY, 13 AUG

TIME
12:00 - 13:00

Personal Branding WEBINAR

Strategic Personal Branding in Supply Chain Management: A Catalyst for Enhancing Graduate Employability

UNISA  REGISTER NOW

Regina Naicker
HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: AFRICA
CASTROL

Dikeledi Sathreke
BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION:
COCA-COLA



DATE
THURSDAY, 5 SEP

TIME
12:00 - 13:00

Personal Agility WEBINAR

Navigating the Fast Lane: Enhancing Personal Agility

UNISA  MINIMASTER CLASS SERIES
SERIES 1: SESSION 2

Alvin Kalideen
HEAD OF SOURCING: SANDVIK GROUP

Tony Mthethwa
PRINCIPAL DATA AND AI SPECIALIST:
MICROSOFT



DATE
TUESDAY, 1 OCT

TIME
12:00 - 13:00

Artificial Intelligence WEBINAR

Balancing Tech and Talent:
Skills for Success in AI-Enhanced Supply Chains

UNISA  MINIMASTER CLASS SERIES
SERIES 1: SESSION 3

DATE
TUESDAY, 18 MARCH

TIME
12:00 - 13:00

Thando Maseko
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT INAYO
MINING



WEBINAR

Personal Development

UNISA  MINIMASTER CLASS SERIES
SERIES 2: SESSION 2



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Next session – 18 March

Join us for upcoming sessions



Scan the QR or use link to
join



<https://forms.office.com/r/dsVxxS9gTz>

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Questions?

THANK
YOU

Find me on LinkedIn



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