

## Art Mesher Says Next Supply Chain Challenge is "Managing Resources in Motion"

### CSCMP Distinguished Service Award Winner Sees Bright Future for the Supply Chain; Becoming a Learning Organization

SCDigest Editorial Staff

Reprinted below are highlights from an address by Art Mesher, CEO of Descartes Systems, after his receipt of the Distinguished Service Award from the Council of Logistics Professionals at the CSCMP's annual conference in Denver in early October.

I am truly honored and humbled by this award, especially at this critical junction in our history as a profession.

The opportunities for our discipline to make **the world a better place** have never been greater. And this is such an honor.

Never before has our profession been more important than it is right now. It's very clear that there is a new world order upon us and that our disciplines will be the key driver to making the world a better place in the future. One constant theme is that our industry is always changing, the rate of change is accelerating and we must change with it.

30 years ago when I began my logistics career unloading trucks, we were called NCPDM and supply chains were pretty short and our science was just unfolding. The initial pioneers (**Don Bowersox, Harvey Schycon, Ken Ackerman** amongst others) were breaking ground defining a science and discipline taking our profession from the back room to the board room and the **first Triad of Disciplines** was born: Inventory, Warehouse and Transportation. At that time, I was searching for a new path in life and went to listen to the educators articulating, researching and networking.

As time went on, our center of control and span of influence changed rapidly and the second triad

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#### ***Art Mesher, CEO, Descartes Systems***

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emerged. The flow of goods with the physical flow and corresponding flow of money and information all had similar equalizing relevance and the **second Triad of Disciplines** was born. And we broadened our professional definition and as professionals we became the CLM.

As we globalized and further extended our scope the **third Triad of Disciplines** emerged. The **third triad** - Visibility, Variability and Velocity - was defined and once again we molded our identity as professionals to become the organization we are today, the CSCMP.

Our industry is changing and we must change with it. Gone are the days of insular thinking suggesting that "Manufacturers, Retailers and Distributors" are customers and "Carriers, 3PLs and Tech companies" are suppliers and never the twain should meet. Promotion is neither a sin nor a negative. Promoting our abilities and results with our discipline is the most important thing we can do.

## Art Mesher Says Next Supply Chain Challenge is "Managing Resources in Motion" (Con't)

**Listen Educate Articulate Research and Network.** It's an acronym for **LEARN**.

Today, as supply chain professionals we are now chartered with managing a global set of resources in motion. Our scope is expanding once again. People, resources, truck drivers, field services workers, merchandisers, warehouse workers. All resources in motion.

Conveyance resources, tractors, trailers, planes, trains, pallets, shipping containers are all in motion (hopefully anyway). The inventories of products and supplies, parts and business documents (such as manifests, invoices, ladings etc) are all in motion and require management. The challenge to us as professionals has never been broader in scope and never has been more important.

Not only are we now faced with a broader scope of responsibilities, we are faced with a new world order. Rising fuel costs and slowing economic activities across the G7 along with the credit crises is taking a very swift and dramatic toll and anyone whom cannot operate at the most efficient manners possible and the **speed** to which business must *"react and redesign"*. The supply chains need to compensate for this new world order, which has never been greater. The companies we serve face enormous obstacles and now it's our time as professionals to apply our disciplines and **make the world a better place** through what we do. It's not only unprecedented what's happening right now it's downright daunting.

Four and half years ago I was faced with a daunting task. Faced with insurmountable odds, I ask my dear friend and advisor **Jim Balsillie**, the CEO of Research in Motion, for some advice. He responded to me that we could overcome

any obstacle we faced if we **Learned** to work to together as a team and became a **Learning** organization.

Now just like then, each and every one of us can make a difference by embracing a framework for becoming **One Learning Team** and promote our values and successes in **making the world a better place** with our disciplines.

**Listening...Articulating...  
Educating...Researching ...Networking... LEARN**

Jack Welch has said "holding companies are only worth more than the sum of their parts if they become a learning organization. For us at the CSCMP that means that shippers, carriers, 3PLs, consultants, recruiters, educators, technology providers all have teachings we can learn from and we should never waiver from promoting our success to each other. We all have things we can teach and we all have things to **Learn** and we all need each other. We are an ecosystem.

As CSCMP professionals, we have the great opportunity to **make the world a better place**. Our science and disciplines have never been more relevant and each and every one of us can and will make a difference if we can take it upon ourselves to never give up the quests of our profession.

**Listen...Articulate...Educate...Research... and Network. LEARN.** Promote our successes wherever you go. Together as **one learning team**, we really can change the world and **make the world a better and safer place**.

