



# How Carnival Cruise Line Builds Supply Management Expertise

In today's complex and frequently shifting business landscape, supply management professionals must increasingly ensure they are bringing best practices and an objective lens to their function. Norbert Dean, Vice President of Strategic Sourcing, Supply Chain and Site Services for Carnival Cruise Line, knows this well. He has enhanced his career by leveraging Institute for Supply Management® (ISM®) as a trusted resource for objective educational material.

## About Norbert Dean

Mr. Dean's finance-management role with a global consumer electronics and entertainment company expanded to include supply chain through an ERP implementation. His career progression included senior leadership roles in sourcing and procurement for one of the world's most notable entertainment conglomerates, a major themed entertainment company

and the world's largest cruise line organization.

## The Pain Point

As early as 2010, Mr. Dean recognized the criticality of sound methodology and a robust certification process to the supply management practices of global organizations. He turned to ISM's Corporate Program for research, analysis, and expertise to improve the level of sophistication for his team members, whether they were new to the field or long-time practitioners.

## The Solution: CPSM

One of the most important components of Mr. Dean's decade-long relationship with ISM is enabling his team's pursuit of their Certified Professional for Supply Management® (CPSM®) credential. "I began using ISM when the premier supply management certification was migrating from Certified Purchasing

Manager (C.P.M.) to CPSM. I immediately appreciated how valuable the certification process can be, like the CPA for accountants.”

### The Solution: Mastery Model

Before encouraging each member of his current 12-person team to pursue a CPSM designation, Mr. Dean introduced them to the ISM Mastery Model® Assessment. This comprehensive assessment framework benchmarks user knowledge against a codified set of essential supply chain know-how. According to Mr. Dean, “Laying out the Mastery Model with 16 end-to-end core competencies provides professionals with a detailed roadmap to master. The model sets the baseline, allows people to self-assess, and provides a customized training program for each person.”

Mr. Dean expanded on the benefit of the Mastery Model for different levels of expertise. “We had two groups of people that gained from this: people new to supply chain and people with experience, but more accustomed to transactional buying,” he said.

For those newer to supply management, the breadth and depth of multiple categories and levels of material provides invaluable learning opportunities. “With 16 core competencies, and the ability to move up from the basics in each of them,” Mr. Dean explained, “people quickly realize, ‘This is what I’m trying to learn, this is my career path, and I want to learn more about supply chain management.’ This experience also increases their desire to get certified because they realize what certification means. It also provides a better understanding and appreciation of the professionalism and community behind supply management.”

For those with more experience, but more practiced in transactional buying, Mr. Dean says, “It wasn’t about pure understanding, but rather how this model is different from what they’ve been doing.” The experience was “eye opening”, he adds: “This allows them to see how things were different. ‘Have you done a market analysis or vendor analysis? Have you developed a negotiation plan? This is what source-to-pay is about.’ They then realize that they had been looking at the process too narrowly.”

### The Results

Mr. Dean’s team has received the results of his team’s maturity assessment and will continue to support its professional-learning cycle. The onset of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has delayed plans to set up lunchtime study groups and in-person CPSM testing, but looking ahead to 2021, Mr. Dean plans to ramp up the certification program, eventually extending it to the broader 70-person fulfillment group.

For Mr. Dean and Carnival, another improvement gained from use of the Mastery Model was how it, he says, “really started to benefit us as a team.” Adding new supply management practitioners to an existing group created a variety of backgrounds and a bit of natural tension. Thanks to the assessment model and tools, “we had more of a team conversation with common

understanding,” Mr. Dean says. “They got the team concept, and that went a long way to creating cohesion.”

In terms of economic benefits, Mr. Dean says, Carnival’s cost savings have increased, and its order efficiency improved. There was at least one example, he adds, where delivery time went from 35 days down to one day.

### Bonus: Corporate Program Provides Continuous Development

In addition to helping build internal teams, ISM’s Corporate Program offers broader interactions through in-person and online training, conferences, and networking. For Mr. Dean’s group, this is where the team, he says, “can meet others and learn more about the profession. This isn’t just the process of buying items for our business. It’s a profession which applies to all different industries.”

### Key Takeaways

- Both experienced and newer supply management professionals use the ISM Mastery Model® Assessment to gauge their specific strengths and gaps.
- Employees leverage custom study plans to build their knowledge.
- Teams with diverse practices and backgrounds gain common understanding over a unified and objective framework, boosting morale.
- ISM Corporate Program networking events, both virtual and in-person, broaden employee perspectives and deepen appreciation for the sourcing profession.
- After working through their tailored curriculum, employees will pursue their Certified Professional for Supply Management® (CPSM®) designation.
- Through continued use of Corporate Program resources, Carnival Cruise has experienced improvements in efficiencies, cost savings, and fulfillment times.

### About ISM’s Corporate Program

As a nonprofit organization, ISM’s mission is to work with companies to advance the practice of supply management. With over 100 years of experience, ISM offers best-in-class education and content to further develop teams and their leaders. Our Corporate Program is specifically designed to help organizations develop and retain their talent by giving them to the gold standard in education, professional certification, leadership development and research. We help organizations, like yours, to identify your team’s skill gaps and enable its strengths so that you can align educational needs to your priorities and desired outcomes. As your partner, we want to help ensure your team remains your greatest competitive advantage.

**Interested in learning more about ISM and how we can partner our organizations? Contact us [CorpInfo@ismworld.org](mailto:CorpInfo@ismworld.org) or call us at 1.480.752.6267, opt 9.**