

2023
30
UNDER
30

**Rising Supply
Chain Stars**

ismworld.org/30under30

Institute for Supply Management®

30 Under 30

Rising Supply Chain Stars

ABOUT THE PROGRAM & WINNERS

Dynamic. Skilled. Impressive.

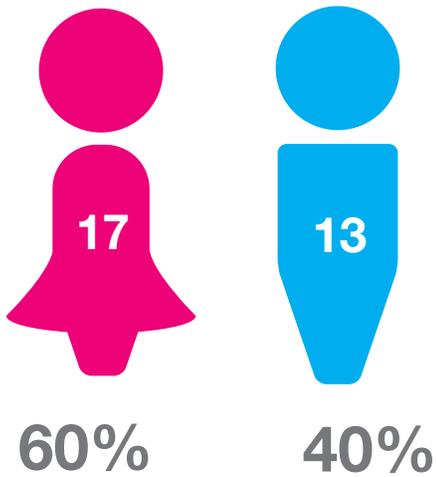
The winners of Institute for Supply Management®'s (ISM®) 30 Under 30 Rising Supply Chain Stars program can be described by those words — and many more. The program, in its tenth year, showcases the exceptional talent and remarkable achievements of 30 emerging supply management professionals, who were selected from hundreds of worthy nominees.

The 2023 award recipients come from diverse backgrounds and contribute diverse perspectives to the small- and mid-sized companies or multinational corporations they represent. Each winner has taken a different career path, but all have a common interest — supply management. They are an impressive lineup who demonstrate passion and creativity in their contributions to their companies.

Join us in celebrating the achievements of this year's 30 winners and see how they have individually advanced the profession.

The 30 Under 30 honorees receive complimentary one-year membership to ISM, complimentary registration to ISM World 2023 Annual Conference in Las Vegas, a complimentary ticket and onstage recognition at the ISM Awards Gala, as well as recognition in our membership magazine, *Inside Supply Management*®, and in other media.

Gender Breakdown

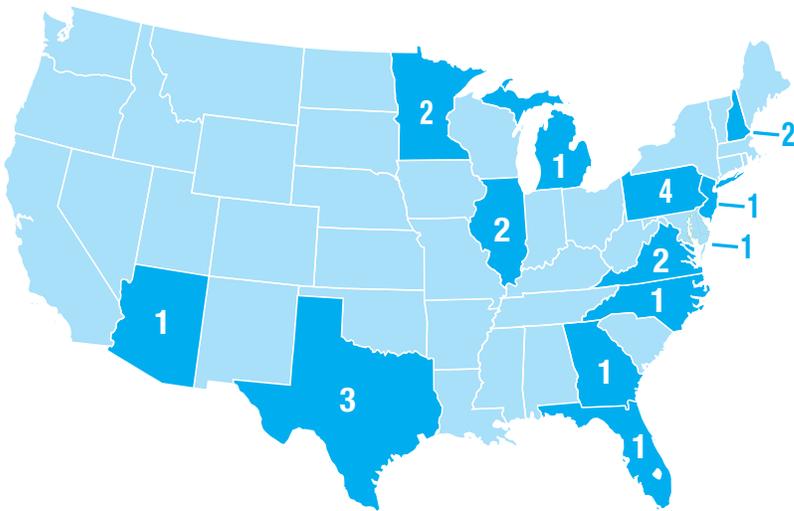


Age Breakdown

25	5
26	2
27	4
28	3
29	6
30	10
Total	30

Median Age: 29

Where they live



Industries They Work

Aerospace & Defense	3
Business Services	4
Financial Services	1
Hospitality	1
Manufacturing durable	7
Manufacturing non durable	4
Medical Devices/Pharmaceuticals	5
Oil & Gas	2
Operating Services (engineering, transportation, communications)	3
Total	30

Beyond the continental U.S., Belgium 1, Brazil 1, India 2, Singapore 1, United Kingdom 1.

MEET THE WINNERS



Aubri Applegren, 26

Strategy consultant | Caterpillar Inc. | Irving, Texas

Aubri Applegren has shown exceptional performance in the areas of initiative, collaboration, innovation and leadership during her nearly five years of service at Caterpillar Inc. In line with the company's goal to double services revenues by 2026, Applegren led program development and execution for a procurement team, which covered 75 suppliers with significant spend. She implemented more than 20 strategies in 2023 and exceeded her target of spend under contract. Furthermore, to improve the employee experience in one global division, Applegren established an employee insights action team. She led the effort to collect employee feedback and identify barriers to improvement, proposed defined actions to the leadership team for approval and commitment, set tangible actions and approaches, and presented quarterly reports. In addition, she was named program lead for a buyer skills assessment and development program, earning excellent feedback from buyers and category managers. She has also led several enterprise initiatives focused on talent development and long-term strategic growth across procurement for her segment.

My job in three words: Impactful, fulfilling, collaborative.



Faith Bitts, MS, 26

Principal analyst, enterprise global supply chain data and analytics | Northrop Grumman | Irving, Texas

In her more than three years at Northrop Grumman, Faith Bitts, MS, has successfully leveraged her education, experience and continuous-improvement mindset to lead and support numerous challenging projects for the company's supply chain. She consistently seeks opportunities for improving business performance by providing actionable data, improving processes and delivering results. Based on her ability to build trust and relationships with colleagues, peers, executives and stakeholders, Bitts was selected to represent the corporate global supply chain organization on the enterprise-wide digital transformation team as a procurement and supply chain process subject matter expert. In 2023, she had a leading role in the startup of an enterprise global supply chain data and analytics organization, as well as the development and deployment of the company's global supply chain performance dashboard. Her comprehensive knowledge of supply chain and data analytics was critical in the development of standardized data sources, processes and concept of operations for those initiatives.

My job in three words: Innovative data solutions.



John Boyle, 24

Category manager | United States Steel Corporation | Pittsburgh

For John Boyle, communication is crucial. Having an innate ability to understand the voice of the customer, he regularly travels to plants and suppliers to gain stakeholder buy-in, brainstorm project ideas, and continue his education. He was part of a select group of procurement team members who traveled to U.S. Steel's mining location to meet with stakeholders and develop projects for 2024 and beyond. Using the kaizen approach, Boyle encouraged individuals from multiple areas of the steelmaking process to identify points of frustration and to brainstorm solutions. The projects identified have the potential to save the company millions of dollars. Boyle is leading 11 of these projects through the define, measure, analyze, improve and control (DMAIC) process. Other accomplishments include introducing and developing a new diverse supplier in the fuel category, evaluating potential hedging initiatives for U.S. Steel locations, and collaborating with a supplier's research team to increase the efficiency of U.S. Steel's electric arc furnace operations.

My job in three words: Relationship, impactful, broad.



Kingsley Bustamante, 27

Consultant | ProcureAbility, a Jabil Company | Hialeah, Florida

Kingsley Bustamante's advanced project management skill set has enabled him to effectively balance a heavy workload of high-visibility, strategic sourcing projects with varying levels of spend and complexity. He has built strong, trusting relationships with his clients, and is relied upon as a tenured and valuable resource. He has consistently demonstrated his value through strong client delivery, meeting aggressive deadlines and achieving millions in savings. Bustamante delivered above expectations for his level when tasked with soliciting a new prescription benefits manager contract for his client. He independently facilitated the RFP, analysis and negotiations processes, achieving US\$50 million in cost savings. Given his fluency in Spanish and strong analytical acumen, he was asked to travel to Mexico with the assigned delivery team to assist with a new client. The project required him to collaborate with team members he hadn't worked with before and execute project deliverables with which he had little experience. His collaborative approach to this assignment enabled him to work through ambiguity, identify problem root causes, and deliver meaningful insights to the client.

My job in three words: Engaging, impactful, valuable.



Russel Carey, 30

Material project manager | Leidos | Reston, Virginia

In his four years at Leidos, Russel Carey has had experiences across multimillion- and billion-dollar supply chain programs. A natural leader with great problem-solving ability, he learns quickly and effectively. After beginning as a material planner supporting high-visibility programs, Carey quickly mastered execution of high-volume, quick-turn order placement along with new processes for frictionless blanket purchase release orders. He also implemented a new process for cost savings tracking, including of US\$1.2 million in 2023 across the programs he supports. Carey has effectively collaborated within and outside of the organization to improve processes and create efficiencies. He continuously collaborates with key IT channel partners and OEMs, taking the lead to provide forecasting, order monitoring and staying informed on end-of-sale/end-of-life information. He also has been instrumental in the development of new talent, including helping to train multiple new emerging-level team members.

My job in three words: Engaging, fast-paced, collaborative.



Sindhu Divakarla, 30

Factory manager | Hindustan Unilever Limited | Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh, India

With about two-thirds of Chhindwara Detergents Factory's employees facing retirement over five years, Divakarla took it as a challenge to recruit a diverse and inclusive workforce in the factory. She curated a training calendar for the new recruits based on their domains, fields of interest and vacancies; the calendar also included sessions on safety, quality culture, continuous improvement and digital innovation. Her efforts helped the new recruits quickly immerse in Unilever's work culture and deliver to their full potential. Despite the retirements, the plant had no disruption in operations. The culture renaissance also helped create a healthy way of working between both generations. In leading sustainability initiatives, Divakarla replaced non-recyclable wrappers with recyclable material and worked with R&D and laminate suppliers to develop a solution. This and other work efforts in the area have led to a reduction in non-recyclable materials waste.

My job in three words: Head, factory operations.



Rafael Fulton Fernandes, 29

Chief of Staff, Global Supply Chain and Manager, GSC Rotational Program | Lenovo | Apex, North Carolina

Lenovo's global supply chain rotational program, despite good intentions, needed to be revitalized. So, Rafael Fulton Fernandes stepped in. Fueled by a desire to build a strong organization and a tool kit of powerful process mapping and advanced project management skills, he set out to reinvent every aspect of the program. He adopted the employee life-cycle stage framework, which promotes adaptability and agility and is designed around the six stages of employee experience: (1) attract, (2) recruit, (3) onboard, (4) develop, (5) retain and recognize and (6) transition. This role has been a defining moment, not only for the organization but also for Fulton Fernandes. And the program has been so successful that it has been implemented in Latin America and Europe. Additionally, Fulton Fernandes is skilled in collaboration, communication and voice of the customer. He has been the leader of Hispanics and Latinx of Lenovo Association (HOLA) for the last four years and is the founder of the Lenovo Annual Mentoring Programs (LAMP), which is focused on mentoring summer interns.

My job in three words: Rewarding, challenging, strategic.



Jackson Frizzell, 27

Principal associate, supply chain | Capital One | Richmond, Virginia

As a third-party manager (TPM) within Capital One's Enterprise Supplier Management (ESM) organization, Jackson Frizzell's role is to advise and execute sourcing and supplier category strategy in partnership with business leaders within Capital One's technology organization and innovation team. Through his initiative, the digital experience business team partnered with ESM to finalize a sourcing event that will enable Capital One to enhance its digital feature experimentation capabilities. On a separate effort, when the innovation team sought to explore generative artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities, Frizzell quickly helped to define risks and subsequent mitigation activities. He partnered with internal business customers, risk stakeholders and contract managers to develop a plan to onboard a new generative AI service for testing. A peer leader, Frizzell regularly provides guidance to developing TPMs. He partnered with a sourcing associate to develop a negotiation course for the broader ESM organization of more than 350 associates. He led the project management, taking the idea to a deliverable, pulling together relevant subject matter experts, ensuring senior director buy-in, and presenting the content.

My job in three words: Challenging, rewarding, people.



Ines Khalfa, DESMA, 31 (30 at time of application)

Procurement strategy and delivery director | GSK | Wavre, Belgium

Ines Khalfa, DESMA, is a performance-driven procurement professional who thrives at enhancing existing processes and operating models. She has held a variety of roles and responsibilities within GSK Global Procurement, including helping to upgrade product launch excellence capabilities within the organization. As part of this newly established role, she partnered with the GSK Vaccines commercial team and acted as the procurement launch partner for the company's respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine for older adults. In addition to helping shape the value proposal of the new role, Khalfa led forums with peers and senior stakeholders, thus creating a community around the vaccine rollout and raising awareness on how procurement could further contribute to product launches. She also has served as GSK's head of procurement for the Netherlands, where she over-delivered on her targets. Among her other achievements is revamping the creative agencies' supplier performance framework: She developed an aligned template for supplier performance reviews, including a set of KPIs for all GSK creative agencies, that showcased procurement's value beyond savings generation.

My job in three words: Strategy, transformation, performance.



Molly Knauss, 28

Senior manager, category management and strategic sourcing | Cox Communications | Atlanta

Molly Knauss's commitment to excellence and desire to move her organization forward have been widely recognized since she joined Cox Communications. She quickly assumed responsibility for the such categories as sales and field services, helping several lines of business capitalize on savings through strategic negotiations and delivering more than US\$200 million in savings and financial risk mitigation. Her outsourcing efforts included introducing contractual provisions for geo-testing: She partnered with suppliers and stakeholders to implement contract language that allowed for the testing of new geographies for 90 days with no startup costs, an innovation that was ultimately adopted and implemented with other lines of business. The solution allowed for flexibility with minimal risk and reduced speed to market for a new geography that brought the business benefits quickly. Knauss has demonstrated leadership acumen of a tenured leader, instilling values and building competencies within her team that reflect her commitment to excellence, partnership and winning.

My job in three words: Strategic, collaborative, impactful.



Kali Kobert, 24 (25 as of 5-17-24)

Category manager I – capital expenditures and services | United States Steel Corporation | Pittsburgh

In January 2022, U.S. Steel's Minntac mine in Minnesota, the state's largest, experienced an operational upset that had the potential to impact customers. Kali Kobert led the effort to (1) identify qualified suppliers and (2) execute contracts and PO placement for a new permanent system to keep the project on schedule. Partway through the project, structural steel fabrication supply chain delays pushed the timeline out by three weeks. In response, Kobert created a project tracker and scheduled "touch-base" meetings three times a week with U.S. Steel's engineering and the contractor and qualified a secondary fabrication shop that ultimately expedited the fabrication process by 2½ weeks. Kobert's project tracker continues to be used by U.S. Steel's procurement in various situations where collaboration and project management are required. Additionally, last summer, Kobert was assigned to a team with four others to focus on cost reductions with plant service suppliers. Over a four-month period, she led eight negotiations, achieving a total of US\$673,000 of EBITDA savings and \$296,000 in cash savings.

My job in three words: Challenging, investigative, informative.

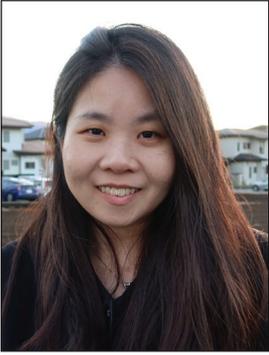


Gautham Krishnan C G, MBA, PMP, 30

Principal specialist and global category manager, logistics | Fluor Corporation | Haryana, India

Gautham Krishnan has played a vital role in revamping the logistics market intelligence and research wing for Fluor's logistics team, including experimenting, user testing and improving the delivery of the company's logistics system. He has spearheaded initiatives, including capturing project-based analytics from executed projects. These aided in better budget forecasting and scenarios for future projects. Krishnan also conducted an in-depth analysis of data, including conducting descriptive and predictive analysis on freight market pricing and behavioral trends, connecting them to macroeconomic repercussions and geopolitical and environmental trends. Collaboration is a strength as well: In addition to working internally with various functions, he engages at the industry level, speaking at events and writing about breakbulk and logistics trends on LinkedIn and for Institute for Supply Management's (ISM®) *Inside Supply Management® Weekly* e-newsletter. Among other accomplishments, Krishnan's ownership of the market research and estimation activities at the project and corporate levels has helped build a sustainable body of knowledge and straightforward estimation for various stakeholders and disciplines.

My job in three words: Thrilling, interesting, analytical.



Sylvia Lam, 30

Senior manager, regional buying content | GSK | Singapore

Sylvia Lam's proactivity goes beyond her official role responsibilities. While at Haleon (the GSK consumer health-care spinoff) in 2022, she saw unaddressed needs typical of a new company and volunteered to take on projects beyond her scope. Notably, she worked on a confidential organization model redesign project with the company's global procurement leadership, where as the only non-leadership team member, she led multiple detailed workshops. Lam's ability to see the bigger picture allows her to speak the same language as her business development team and foster effective collaboration and involvement at the right time. As a natural problem solver and one who brings new solutions to the table, Lam led the establishment of a new spend category and a new pricing model for paper packaging during her time on the GSK Future Leaders Program. Her team identified that the patient support program (PSP) category needed better governance and understanding, so Lam developed an enterprise PSP playbook that enabled procurement and stakeholders better understand the category and equip them to partner across the organization.

My job in three words: Exploratory, evolutionary, empathetic.



Timothy Mansure, 28

Senior manager, advanced therapies supply chain procurement | Johnson & Johnson | Titusville, New Jersey

A graduate of Johnson & Johnson's (J&J) Global Operations Leadership Development rotation program, Timothy Mansure has worked in multiple functional supply chain areas, demonstrating his ability as a change agent. As a senior manager in new product development and supply (NPD&S), he led category strategy for the large molecule clinical supply and chemistry, manufacturing and controls (CMC) development subcategory. He worked with contract manufacturers that develop, clinically supply and help J&J launch innovative advanced therapies and monoclonal antibodies in the portfolio. As the junior member of an executive-level team, Mansure supported a complex multimillion-dollar transaction for a key multiple myeloma asset. He led additional sourcing efforts, in partnership with technical functions, that established R&D procurement's first cell and gene therapy contract manufacturing organization (CMO). He led targeted negotiation efforts for complex technical services in NPD&S, including negotiation of batch volume discounts and volume discounts, inclusive of clinical and commercial spend. His efforts delivered the highest recorded savings for the subcategory in 2023 before transitioning to a new role in advanced therapies procurement.

My job in three words: Challenging, rewarding, exhilarating.



Dalen Medina, 30

Category manager, operating supplies and equipment | Hilton Supply Management | Denver

Since joining Hilton Supply Management (HSM), Dalen Medina, who manages spend across HSM's guest room accessories, public space and wardrobe/uniforms categories, has shown tremendous initiative in collaborating with teammates and partnering with suppliers to design solutions that not only meet pre-coronavirus pandemic service levels, but exceed them. He spearheads several efforts to elevate crucial guest services and amenities, including bedside charging and guest-room illumination, which consist of many variables to be considered in order to source, purchase, distribute and implement new charging and night-light solutions across thousands of franchised hotels. Medina also helps Hilton's brands and individual properties differentiate themselves against the saturation of other lodging alternatives in the leisure market. With booking volumes now exceeding pre-COVID-19 levels, he recognizes the tremendous opportunity for hotels to lean more heavily into tailored experiences that offer travelers a refreshing sense of individualism, and he is routinely innovating new programs and product offerings to complement guest adventures and set hotel stays apart.

My job in three words: Strategic, efficiencies, negotiations.



Sai Bhargav Mettu, CPIM, 29 (30 as of April 11)

Principal specialist, supply chain business systems | KBI Biopharma Inc. | Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Throughout his career, Sai Bhargav Mettu, CPIM, has consistently been demonstrating a desire for devising inventive solutions that have yielded substantial benefits. His industrial engineering and supply chain planning operations background, data-driven mindset and expertise in such systems as ERP consistently enable him to deliver innovative solutions that drive improvements in supply chain. At KBI, Mettu introduced several automated ERP reports, reducing manual efforts and fostering data-driven decision-making culture. These automated system-driven reports and alerts helped streamline processes, enhanced data accuracy, thereby improving reporting efficiency and reinforcing the importance of data integrity in regulated environments. Mettu's collaborative expertise was instrumental in the warehouse transformation project. Leveraging his ERP system expertise and a commitment to automation, he played a pivotal role in implementing the kanban replenishment system process within the warehouse, which improved material picking and staging times. This ultimately accelerates manufacturing process starts resulting timely delivery of critical drug products.

My job in three words: Collaborative, solution-oriented, global.



Gabriela Morales Castillo, 26 (27 as of July 2)

Global data analytics manager | Velcro Companies | Manchester, New Hampshire

Gabriela Morales Castillo consistently identifies critical issues, takes proactive measures to address them through data analytics, and overcomes challenges to achieve viable solutions. When she started at Velcro Companies, she observed that the procurement team struggled to access spend and pricing data, leading it to expend countless hours creating inaccurate reports. So, she developed a procurement spend dashboard that provides real-time access to crucial data, enhancing decision-making capabilities. She led a comprehensive needs-assessment and facilitated multiple feedback collection sessions to ensure the dashboard's design catered to the team's specific requirements — and leveraged continuous improvement practices to make the solution better. In addition, Morales Castillo implemented the company's first standardized global categorization system and created its first savings dashboard. Before her methodology, the savings tracking system was not consistent throughout regions, and it did not tie into the company's financial statements. Morales Castillo created a new methodology that tracked savings and translated them onto the profit-and-loss statement. She created a new language to classify savings projects and display procurement's bottom-line value.

My job in three words: Disruptive, strategic, data-driven.



John Nixon, MSCM, 27

Semiconductor supplier leader | General Motors | Detroit

Since joining General Motors during his last semester at the University of Michigan, John Nixon has led and directed critical responses to more than 400 unique supply shortages across 20+ Tier-1 suppliers. He is regarded as an expert in solving supply constraints for his respective semiconductor suppliers. Nixon prioritizes external relationships among his suppliers and unique Tier 1s, while maintaining a high level of communication and collaboration within GM's purchasing organization. As part of a six-member semiconductor supplier leader team, Nixon quickly established frequent communication standards with semiconductor suppliers. Due to rapidly increasing critical threats, he created a new forum where any GM purchasing commodity team member could be present in weekly meetings with the semiconductor supplier. This change was pivotal in solving constraints threatening GM production. Nixon also leads a cross-organizational project with GM South America, facilitating a global benchmark among the steel commodity teams within the four GM regions. His team is determining common corporate specifications to better compare prices across the globe.

My job in three words: Collaboration, crisis, visibility.



Maroufath Ogoussan, MPA, CPPB, 30

Contract specialist | District of Columbia, Office of Contracting and Procurement | Washington, D.C.

Maroufath Ogoussan, MPA, CPPB, has displayed exemplary leadership skills in managing complex procurements and contracts. Hired as a junior contract specialist, she quickly showed the knowledge, competencies, ability and skills to serve in a larger leadership role as a contracting officer and lead contract specialist. As a result, she was awarded a US\$1 million contracting officer warrant for the procurement of goods and services and the execution of contracts on behalf of the government of the District of Columbia. Ogoussan now serves as the contracting officer for the District of Columbia Rapid Rehousing for Individuals (RRH-I) Program, managing a portfolio of annual contracts worth \$5.8 million that provide services for around 600 Washington, D.C., residents. She is also the contracting officer for the Crisis Beds for Pregnant and Parenting Youth 21 and Under program and the lead contract specialist for the D.C. Short Term Family Housing (STFH) Program. She says her greatest achievement has been to help improve D.C. residents' lives through contracting with providers to serve vulnerable and homeless individuals and families, to ensure they receive the assistance they need to get and stay out of homelessness, get a job and change their lives for the better.

My job in three words: Rewarding, exciting and fulfilling.



Austin Pieper, 28

Supply chain manager | Titan International, North American Wheel | Quincy, Illinois

Upon being promoted to MRO purchasing supervisor, Austin Pieper initiated efforts to increase efficiency and implemented competitive bidding for several areas to reduce costs and supplier pricing. After reviewing the company's industrial supply and consumable program and identifying supply and customer service improvement requirements, he worked to improve the current supplier's performance while requesting bids for a new supplier. Ultimately, Pieper transitioned all industrial supplies and consumable inventory to a different supplier, which not only reduced costs, but also improved facility efficiency. Among other efforts, following a competitive bidding process, he negotiated a 22-percent price decrease from the company's current liquid paint supplier and an 11-percent price decrease from its powder paint supplier. Pieper helped spearhead an effort to reduce water consumption within the company's facilities. With the installation of solenoid valves, water usage was cut by 45 percent — or 10.5 million gallons of water saved and a cost savings of US\$64,000.

My job in three words: Dedicated, strategic, accountable.



Diana Popoca, 30

Supply base manager | The Boeing Company | Mesa, Arizona

Diana Popoca's diverse supply chain background — including experience in indirect procurement operations, transportation, warehousing, logistics and supplier account management — was built on a foundation of initiative that continues to drive superior business outcomes. At Boeing, she has held multiple roles that demonstrate her motivation to tackle tough problems. An example is her impact on Boeing Transportation, Warehousing and Logistics (TWL) during a period of significant disruption and supply chain volatility. Popoca dove into the roles of (1) enterprise air transportation subject matter expert, (2) third-party logistics (3PL) business integration management lead and (3) operational excellence consultant for TWL, creating the team's warehouse scenario modeling tool. As the TWL warehousing transformation project leader, she led the Mesa 3PL implementation, partnering and integrating with cross-organizational stakeholders, business partners and 3PL suppliers to efficiently transition warehousing functions to the 3PL company. This project served as a benchmark for future efforts and is saving Boeing Mesa millions of dollars a year. With an understanding that teamwork is the heart of innovation, Popoca focuses on facilitating buy-in by leveraging her knowledge, first-hand experience and passion for continuous improvement.

My job in three words: Challenging, innovative, impactful.



MEGAWATT STAR

Zain Rauf, 31 (30 at time of application)

Supply chain lead, renewable fuels | Shell | Houston

Zain Rauf is the sole supply chain lead managing Shell's second-generation ethanol portfolio, which involves a first-of-its-kind licensed technology for the company. He has established a new supply chain for development of a multimillion-dollar pilot scale facility, which will be extended into multiple commercial scale plants worth more than US\$1 billion in the next five years. Rauf sourced all new suppliers for the project's engineering, procurement, construction and operations phases by collaborating with internal and external stakeholders. He established a cost-tracking mechanism with cost planners, developing first of its kind technical scopes of work with the project team, and negotiated complex T's & C's with first-time suppliers. Additionally, Rauf identified creative solutions for sourcing of critical equipment with long lead times while operating in a new geography with labor shortages. The activities included optimization of engineering designs, detailed supplier evaluations, testing new commercial models and leveraging cross-business learnings from similar projects. He has helped deliver cost savings of \$3 million, which help enable testing of new processes during operations.

My job in three words: Dynamic, fun, purposeful.



Jordyn Roman, 24

Category manager I — energy and metals | United States Steel Corporation | Pittsburgh

Jordyn Roman manages more than US\$500 million in spend for U.S. Steel, with responsibilities that include developing energy and zinc sourcing strategies, negotiating short- and long-term contracts with suppliers, and managing supplier relationships. She also leverages additional revenue streams for the company by overseeing sales of renewable energy credits (RECs) generated via byproduct gas generation at U.S. Steel's Mon Valley Works. By monitoring and analyzing the Pennsylvania REC market, Roman optimizes the sales of these RECs to provide the most value for U.S. Steel, achieving a 305-percent increase compared to 2022 sales. Additionally, Roman has worked on electricity demand response programs and evaluated renewable energy opportunities for several plants. She also collaborated with the company's center of excellence team to create electric utility supply maps. She mapped more than 30 electric generators — solar and wind farms, natural gas and coal-fired generators, and nuclear facilities — as well as their Tier-2 suppliers to create a report, which can be used to assess supply chain risk should events occur.

My job in three words: Strategic, collaborative, rewarding.



Lucas Sardenberg, B.S. Mechanical Engineering, 30

Supply chain specialist delivery and assurance | Shell | Rio de Janeiro

Lucas Sardenberg drives transformative initiatives with a commitment to sustainability and innovative problem-solving, fostering collaboration by bridging diverse teams and initiatives for shared success. This collaborative mindset has contributed to the success of such projects as Shell's supply chain integration in Brazil and the Aramis Carbon Capture Storage project in the Netherlands. Recognized for his leadership capabilities, Sardenberg was appointed to the Future Energy Leaders global board by the Shell Leadership Team; there, he served as a communication focal point for the West region. He says that one of the most surprising and impactful aspects of working in supply management has been immersive experiences with a front-line team early in his career. "Spending substantial time with them in the field has left a lasting impression on me," he says. "I am continually amazed by their strong sense of connection, the genuine joy they bring to their work, and the depth of care they exhibit for each other."

My job in three words: Logistics, safety, innovations.



Tyler Smith, 30

Category buyer | Caterpillar, Inc. | Chillicothe, Illinois

Tyler Smith has led many collaborative projects during his career at Caterpillar, including creating visual aids for the company's global parts discovery tool. His work visualizing the classification of more than 1.5 million parts spanned multiple functions and helped (1) eliminate duplicate parts, (2) reduce engineering and downstream effort, and (3) enable better cost analysis by part type. As a buyer, Smith identified new sources of supply in a constrained category, allowing the company to improve its agility and velocity to better serve customers. He created a strategy to mitigate category risk through dual sourcing, raising inventory holding levels and developing redundancy manufacturing plans. In a newly created position in the leadership development program, Smith developed an efficiency improvement system by assigning a color to each physical part to identify those most in need of attention. He then created an escalation process to funnel challenging audits to experts for faster resolution and improved part storage. These actions resulted in time savings of 50 percent for material movement, double-digit improvements to auditing productivity, and near-elimination of negative assembly line impact.

My job in three words: Making a difference.



Ian Speers, MPH, CPH, EMT, 29

CEO and co-founder | Pacto Medical, Inc. | Washington, D.C.

When Ian Speers, MPH, CPH, EMT, sees missed opportunities, injustices or overlooked issues, he confronts and addresses them. During his 12 years of emergency medical services, public health and medical logistics/supply management work, he encountered many medical devices and supplies that were supply chain inefficient, as well as ill-designed for users and the low-resource settings where they are most needed. As a result, he co-founded Pacto Medical, which creates better alternatives. The company's flagship and patent-pending product is a compact and resource-saving pre-filled syringe with a 40-percent smaller packaging footprint compared to traditional pre-filled syringes. As part of his previous work at a nonprofit where he managed public health and emergency response efforts in Africa and the Middle East, Speers brought together diverse stakeholders to provide input on and test a more sustainable supply chain management and logistics software system. Speers is also director of public health emergency response innovation at Global Resonance Technologies; supporting the company's public-private partnership with the U.S. government, academia and industry partners to develop nuclear/radiological disaster preparedness and mitigation technologies and systems. He is a certified emergency medical technician who serves in public health emergencies.

My job in three words: Collaborative puzzle solving.



Emily Taplin, 28

Senior manager, tech procurement — AI and analytics | GSK | London

When artificial intelligence (AI) — particularly, generative AI — emerged in early 2023, Emily Taplin took the initiative to learn more: She performed a gap analysis of what this would mean for procurement activities. She designed and has led GSK's AI procurement program, which is expected to drive huge value for the company and its patients. She proactively sought-out learning opportunities with external organizations, such as through her membership in Women in Data, and with internal AI experts to be able to balance the needs of GSK with the fast pace of AI innovation. Taplin is driven by a continuous improvement mindset, which is exemplified in her being a three-time recipient of GSK's annual award for innovation, performance and trust. She has built trust and strong partnerships throughout GSK's organizational chart, from data engineers developing critical platforms to senior leaders setting corporate strategy. Her skills have enabled her to engage stakeholders and influence strategic sourcing decisions. Additionally, Taplin has sought talent-management opportunities.

My job in three words: Fun, challenging, rewarding.



Sam VanCura, 26

Senior sourcing analyst 1 | H.B. Fuller | Vadnais Heights, Minnesota

Sam VanCura has directly managed over US\$70 million in spend across 11 raw material categories with more than 320 materials at H.B. Fuller. She serves as the sourcing partner for global e-power and Americas insulated glass units, demonstrating not only expertise in raw materials, but also an ability to learn about the markets and long-term needs to drive success. She identifies key risks for the business and takes initiative by ensuring cross-functional partners are involved in developing solutions to support innovation in emerging markets. When supporting an emergency localization project, VanCura worked with R&D to adjust the formula so readily available raw materials could be used, improving the project timeline by eight weeks. She took the lead and alerted other sourcing managers to ensure new raw materials were in-house to support the business. When the production team faced operational inefficiencies, she collaborated with vendors to supply raw material in alternative packaging to improve H.B. Fuller's production process. This localization ensured supply to customers and supported \$500,000 in sales.

My job in three words: Empowering, impactful, challenging.



Lewis Washington, 27 (28 as of 6-3)

Procurement agent III | The Boeing Company | St. Louis

When faced with sourcing issues that could potentially disrupt program schedules, Lewis Washington explores various sources and identifies capable suppliers that may not have had previous bidding opportunities. His willingness to go the extra mile ensures that the company's projects stay on track and untapped resources are utilized effectively. Washington's initiative extends beyond immediate projects. He challenges the status quo by advocating for small and diverse companies, emphasizing inclusivity in the organization and its supply chain ecosystem. Washington's ability to foster productive partnerships helps him stand out. In a recent project, he worked with the design group to identify partners capable of expediting the acquisition cycle for purchased services. Through this collaboration, he gained valuable insights into roadblocks hindering procurement flows and implemented an action plan that engaged all stakeholders and streamlined the process, resulting a 50-percent reduction in processing time.

My job in three words: Strategic, negotiator, efficient.



Jari Zoller, 24

Strategic sourcing analyst | H.B. Fuller | St. Paul, Minnesota

Jari Zoller has demonstrated strong collaborative, innovative and leadership skills at H.B. Fuller. In leading a project involving a unique raw material with no alternatives, he aligned with the operations, quality, sales, inventory and operations planning (SIOP), technical service, and commercial teams to identify and implement additional supply options. None of the resources required fell under the same reporting structure. Zoller exercised the relationships he had built with cross-functional colleagues to explore creative solutions to meet the needs of each function. "Leading a team that does not report to you and has different motivators than you can be a challenge, but Jari understood the right way to incentivize each function and drive the project to a successful conclusion," the nomination states. In another instance, Zoller led a global negotiation to extend payment terms with a key global supplier, collaborating with internal and external colleagues to gain alignment and drive a successful conclusion.

My job in three words: Best total value.