

Career Profile: Logistics Manager

A logistics manager is responsible for coordinating all the activities necessary to bring goods to consumers. There is a network of people and organizations involved in what is referred to as the supply chain process. The logistics manager has to liaise with all the parties involved in this process, namely suppliers of raw materials, manufacturers that convert the raw materials into goods, retailers that sell the goods and consumers that receive the goods. The manager also has to monitor the distribution channels between the various parties. The process is not simply one-way delivery to customers because it frequently has to cope with the return of goods. Logistics managers have to coordinate all the processes to ensure customer satisfaction and they have to do this within a dynamic economic environment. This demands an informed awareness of external influences such as legislation, fuel costs and environmental pressures and a good strategic response to these realities.

Seasonal variations such as disruptive weather conditions, crowded roads, fluctuations in currency values and demand for products or services can make the logistics processes quite complex. IT plays a key part in forecasting increasingly complex systems of stock levels, delivery times, transport costs and also performance evaluation.

Responsibilities will vary with the specific demands of the role but here are some typical activities that logistics manager could be expected to perform.

- monitor the quality, quantity, cost and efficiency of the movement and storage of goods
- coordinate and control the order cycle
- receive orders and monitor stock levels
- do costing of import shipments
- assess new or alternative logistics routes
- analyse data to monitor performance and plan improvement
- allocate and manage staff resources to cope with changing needs
- liaise and negotiate with customers and suppliers
- gain new contracts
- analyse logistical problems and come up with practical solutions
- prepare and distribute reports and relevant information on a proactive basis
- implement health and safety measures.

Education Requirements

National Senior Certificate (NSC)

For a career in supply chain management and logistics students are advised to select English and Mathematics, and to add to this a selection from the *designated* subjects. These are subjects that are particularly suitable for tertiary study.

Bachelor Degree

Bachelor of Commerce (3 years)

A three year degree programme that focuses on developing knowledge and skills for entry into careers in the field of supply chain management and logistics.

Offered at:

- [University of Johannesburg](#)¹ (Department of Management, BCom - Logistics Management)
- [University of Pretoria](#)² (Department of Business Management, BCom with option Supply Chain Management)
- [University of South Africa](#)³ (Transport Economics, Logistics and Tourism, BCom with specialisation in Logistics)

National Diploma / BTech

National Diploma in Logistics (3 years) and BTech in Logistics

These programmes focus on developing knowledge and skills for entry into careers in the field of supply chain management and logistics.

Offered at:

- [Tshwane University of Technology](#)⁴ (Department of Marketing, Logistics and Sport Management)
- [University of Johannesburg](#)⁵ (Department of Transport and Supply Chain Management, NDip and BTech Logistics Management)
- [Vaal University of Technology](#)⁶ (Faculty of Management Sciences, NDip and BTech in Logistics Management)

Possible Employers

- Government departments
- Businesses that manage their own logistics
- Providers of logistics management services, e.g. [Concargo](#), [Boss Logistics](#)⁷, [Imperial Logistics](#).⁸

¹ <http://www.uj.ac.za/study/AcademicCourses/Management/BComLogisticsManagement/tabid/8522/Default.aspx>

² <http://web.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=1086&sub=1&parentid=1055&subid=1082&ipklookid=3>

³ http://brochure.unisa.ac.za/brochure/showprev.aspx?d=1_3_2&f=p_02011LOG

⁴ <http://www.tut.ac.za/Students/facultiesdepartments/managementsciences/departments/marketing/Pages/default.aspx>

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<http://www.uj.ac.za/FieldsofStudy/Undergraduate/NationalDiploma/NationalDiplomaLogisticsManagement/tabid/13279/Default.aspx>

⁶ http://www.vut.ac.za/new/images/stories/logistics_manag.pdf

⁷ <http://www.bosslog.com/home.htm>

⁸ <http://www.imperiallogistics.co.za/>

Find out more

Find out more about supply chain and logistics management:

- The University of the Witwatersrand offers a certificate course in [Applied⁹ Logistics and Supply Chain Management¹⁰](#).
- [Barloworld's¹¹](#) work in supply chain management.
- The [Barloworld Logistics 2008 Foresight Report¹²](#) Executive summary gives a useful outline of the relationship between the complexity of a company's supply chain and its capacity to manage the issues that arise.
- A useful description of work in [logistics¹³](#).
- [Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport¹⁴](#) is a worldwide organisation.
- This document has become one of the premier references for logistics and supply management in South Africa: The [5th State of Logistics Survey¹⁵](#) published by CSIR and sponsored by Imperial Logistics.

⁹ <http://web.wits.ac.za/Prospective/Part-time/CertificateCourses/SupplyChainManagement.htm>

¹⁰ <http://web.wits.ac.za/Prospective/Part-time/CertificateCourses/SupplyChainManagement.htm>

¹¹ <http://www.zatrans.co.za/bwlogistics/content/en/africa-about-us-overview>

¹² http://www.zatrans.co.za/bwlogistics/action/media/downloadFile?media_fileid=264

¹³ http://www.prospects.ac.uk/p/types_of_job/logistics_and_distribution_manager_job_description.jsp

¹⁴ <http://www.cilt-international.com/web/pages/education>

¹⁵ <http://www.imperiallogistics.co.za/index.php?link=20090114090135>

Are you suited to this career?

This quick quiz can help you to identify whether you are suited for this career.

Quiz	YES	NO
Would you like to be involved in the supply and demand aspects of business?		
Are you computer literate?		
Are you able to deal with conflict in a reasonable way?		
Are you interested in solving problems?		
Do you enjoy working with the latest technology and machinery?		
Are detail and accuracy in your work important to you?		
Are you able to function effectively under pressure and meet deadlines?		
Can you communicate well in speech and in writing?		
Are you happy to be a member of a team?		
Are you task driven?		

If you have mainly yes answers it may be an indication that this is a career to consider.