



VOICES OF OUR FUTURE

Promoting career management,
knowledge development and
networking opportunities



**The Chartered
Institute of Logistics
and Transport**





The Young Professionals Forum (YPF) has been established to promote career management, knowledge development and networking opportunities for our members aged 35 and under. An inclusive forum that supports members from across CILT's 9 sectors, we hold national and regional events throughout the year to facilitate your development.

ANDREW STOUT



Andrew Stout MILT, Depot Manager, Calor Gas, and Secretary, Thames Valley Group, CILT, tells *Focus* what he loves about the logistics and transport profession, offers his top tips to students who want to make an impact and explains why young professionals should make use of their CILT membership sooner rather than later.

What is your opinion of the logistics and transport profession?

Transport and logistics are unfortunately stigmatised as neither sexy nor glamorous, but it is a sector that is essential to our everyday lives. What I love about transport and logistics is that it is the ultimate game of strategy and planning. It is an ever moving and extremely enjoyable profession to be in.

How long have you been a member of CILT, and how has the Institute benefited you?

I have been a CILT member for 10 years, but only in the last three years have I started to get the most of the Institute. Sitting on the sidelines for so long is definitely one of my biggest regrets. It is fair to say that I did not appreciate all of the benefits that my membership offers. Now, not only have I made some good friends, developed lots of new contacts and broadened my knowledge, being a member of CILT has been invaluable in enabling me to learn something new at every event, every presentation and every course I attend.

How did you get into the profession?

Like many people, I simply fell into it. I studied Business and HR at university. Then I applied for positions that interested me, rather than degree-specific jobs, which led me to work on the Operations Graduate Scheme with Calor Gas.

What advice would you give to people looking to pursue a career in the profession?

Transport and logistics is an interesting, rewarding and highly enjoyable career, where you have the opportunity to add value, continually develop and learn new skills. To students wishing to pursue a career in our profession, I would say:

- Use CILT to help you manage your career – I wish I had done so earlier
- Make the most of every experience
- The power of networking is invaluable
- Develop your skills and experiences through the training courses, qualifications, projects and key speakers that CILT provides
- Your career and development is your responsibility, so push yourself

What are your aspirations?

As my career moves on and I continue to develop, I would like to keep learning alongside my company and the Institute, keep motivated to push myself and work towards achieving a senior position in my organisation. Being a member of the Institute holds a certain prestige and value that reflects commitment to professionalism and motivation to build the sector that will allow me to influence the transport and logistics sector, whilst developing other people in the transport and logistics business.

SANDY MOLLER



Sandy Moller recently attended the CILT International Convention 2016 in Montreal, as one of the latest members of the Young Professionals Forum. He tells *Focus* how he benefited from his first CILT event, and expresses his hopes and expectations as his career progresses within the Institute.

What is your role within the profession?

My day-to-day work at Harris Ethical, a small planning and transport consultancy in Gloucester, varies enormously, but I have gravitated towards developing schemes to promote sustainable transport, often through travel plans and focusing on behaviour change programmes. I am relatively new to the profession, having graduated only a couple of years ago, and I have constantly been seeking out a network that supports continuous learning.

How can the Young Professionals Forum help you develop your career?

The Young Professionals Forum is superb and encourages individuals to evaluate their characteristics and skills against the type of work they are preoccupied with in their workplace. Not only are we learning about others' experiences and how people approach different situations, but also we are reflecting on our own individual qualities and that can only enable future progression.

What made you attend the CILT International Convention?

The wide range of programmes and platforms for engagement that CILT offers really appeals to me and the convention was my first glimpse of the Institute in action. As a recently registered affiliate member I was fortunate to be given the opportunity to travel to another continent to gain first-hand experience of how CILT operates and what it can offer to an aspiring transport planner. I was not disappointed.

What did you take away from the International Convention?

The convention brought together peers to converse and share ideas on the array of projects and schemes that they were engaged in. I hoped for an informative and inspiring convention, and it developed into an opportunity to understand what CILT represents in relation to my future career paths. I gained knowledge and information from a range of experts and professionals across their respective study areas. It was an invaluable experience and really highlighted the importance of and potential for interdisciplinary work. It was interesting to listen to presentations on topics that I was unfamiliar with, such as those concerning logistics and supply chain management.

How do you feel membership of CILT will benefit you?

CILT helps to share ideas, celebrate achievements and foster debate around the transport and logistics professionals. I hope to make sure that the Institute will not just be an annual event, but will also become a support system and platform for interaction with fellow professionals throughout the year. I am looking forward to continuing my involvement within CILT and meeting with and learning from my peers and industry leaders.

JOSH START



Josh Start, Head of Colnbrook Logistics Centre (CLC), Wilson James, speaks to *Focus* about winning this year's CILT Young Manager award and the pressures that come with being a manager.

Congratulations on winning CILT Young Manager at this year's Annual Awards for Excellence. What does this mean to you?

Thank you very much. I was delighted to win this award and, although I knew I had been nominated by my company, it came as a huge surprise. I very much view the award as one for my whole team, as I simply couldn't achieve anything without their efforts. I am very lucky to work with some great people, and this award is very much a reflection of their accomplishments, too. I also receive a great deal of support from the wider Wilson James team and our key client, Heathrow airport, for which I am very grateful.

What does your day-to-day job require?

At CLC, we provide and integrate all the logistics activities that support construction at Heathrow, as well as running the engineering stores delivery operation that supports the entire airport's facilities. I am responsible for the operational, financial and strategic elements. It is an operation characterised by complex and conflicting stakeholder relationships, changing requirements and high activity levels. I make sure we meet all our KPIs, while ensuring we work within budget. Perhaps most enjoyably, I work to identify areas for continuous improvement in everything that we do, so this becomes the norm rather than the exception.

What work did you do to ensure Wilson James was awarded the contract for the Heathrow Logistics Integrator (HLI)?

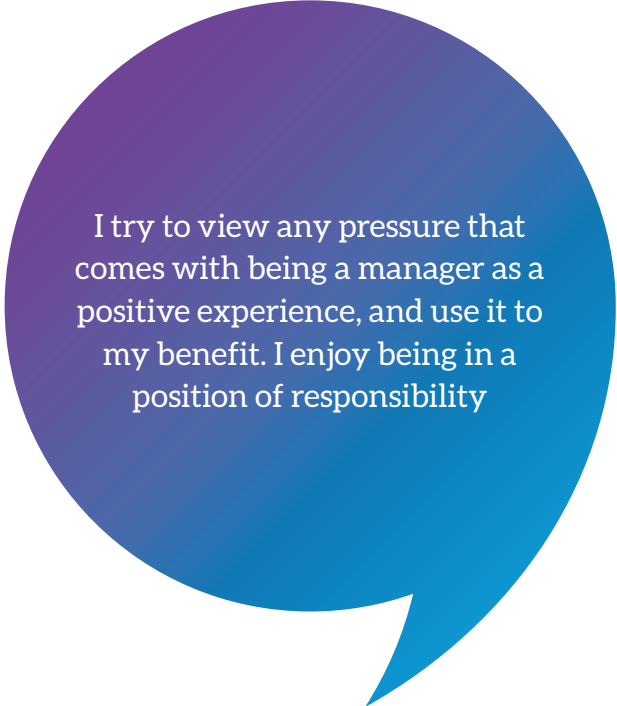
I was appointed to lead the bid team for the HLI contract. After putting together the right team and defining their roles, it was vital to create a project plan that would ensure we could deliver a first class tender response according to the specific timeline. This ensured that no element of the complex documentation was missed and that the very large tender response was coherent across all its sections. I had to ensure we could express our solution effectively on paper and in presentations. It was an extremely enjoyable task, particularly as we also set about designing a new IT solution for one particular aspect of the contract.

How will the recent decision regarding airport capacity affect your role?

It is an incredibly exciting time at Heathrow. The expansion will involve a huge amount of planning that I am sure my role can contribute to. The HLI has a great deal of experience in construction logistics at the airport, and I hope to be involved with this as much as possible when it comes to building the third runway. I fully believe that Heathrow expansion is the right choice for the UK, and to be a part of that will be extremely interesting as the role of the HLI evolves. There will be many opportunities for Wilson James to add value in key areas, including sustainability, implementing innovative logistic solutions and utilising our relationships within the industry and at the airport to make the project a success.

You are just 33. How do you cope with the pressure and responsibility that comes with being a manager?

I try to view any pressure that comes with being a manager as a positive experience, and use it to my benefit. I enjoy being in a position of responsibility, but I try to keep things in perspective while also breaking tasks down to make them as simple as possible. I have found it useful not to think too far ahead, and ensure I switch off from work when I am enjoying time with my family. For its charity of the year Wilson James has chosen Mind, which works to promote better mental health. This partnership has helped develop my understanding of what we can do to improve our approach to mental health in the workplace. This has also made it easier to talk to those around me at times when perhaps there is more pressure than normal, which is particularly important.



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Described as 'an expert in Wilson James' specialised construction logistics information management (IM) system, Fulcrum®', how important are IM systems to the development of construction logistics?

IM systems can provide immense value in the development of construction logistics. It is important we challenge the status quo in an effort to find more effective ways of doing business. Technology offers a great opportunity to do this, as an IM system can often ensure greater control and effective implementation of processes. This may allow streamlining of resource or even the ability to collect useful data that facilitate more informed decision-making.

How would you describe your style of management, and what advice would you give to aspiring young managers?

Whenever possible, I use my experiences gained within the army when developing my own leadership style. I always try to be approachable and set the example as to the standards I am looking for from my team. I also aim to allow my team to develop the solution to problems themselves, which hopefully gives them the confidence to succeed both in that instance and the future. I am also the type of person who enjoys detail, but that probably makes me quite odd. I like to know the evidence and data behind the reasoning for doing something in a certain way. My advice for other young managers would be to know your strengths and weaknesses and to then use these accordingly. At Wilson James

we have utilised the Insights Discovery programme, which I have found extremely effective. It identifies your personality profile and allows you to develop your own effective strategy for interaction with others, as well highlighting those areas you might want to develop. It is even useful to share with colleagues so they can further understand how to work effectively with you.

How did your time in the British Army influence your career?

My time in the Royal Logistic Corps included operational tours in Iraq and twice in Afghanistan, with my final tour training the Afghan Army in logistics. As an officer in the army and after receiving thorough training, you are given command of people and equipment at a very young age. You have no choice but to learn quickly, although I particularly enjoyed the responsibility and challenge that came with this. I developed a wide range of skills that I have found to be extremely transferable to my new civilian career, be they related to logistics or leadership. It has also given me some perspective that I think allows me to deal in a calm and considered matter with fast-paced and complex environments such as Heathrow.

Kaizen and 6S were mentioned a lot in your award entry. Can you explain more about these?

Kaizen, meaning improvement, seeks to eliminate waste. 5S is a methodology that seeks to provide the framework for organising a workplace more efficiently and effectively. We have added safety as

a sixth tenet, as it underpins everything we do at Heathrow. I have found kaizen and 6S to be extremely useful tools in identifying and implementing better ways of working. While they originate from lean manufacturing, they are equally applicable in a logistics environment, where there are so many individual elements to different processes that can be refined. You don't have to be a particular expert to use them and, critically, they are most effective when involving the wider members of the workforce.

You partially designed your role yourself. Why did you feel the need for this role and how has it benefited the company?

When putting together our tender response to Heathrow, it became clear we needed a slightly different approach from the one that had served Wilson James and Heathrow so successfully in the past. With an ever-changing environment, and more complex contract to manage, it was agreed that we needed a role that would combine the management and control of all our services, from an operational and strategic viewpoint. As a result, the HLI has benefited from a number of efficiencies and process enhancements identified within our programme of continuous improvement. We have then shared this experience with the wider company using a number of forums to ensure that our lessons learned can be used effectively elsewhere across other contracts.

NOMSA MASAMVI



Nomsa Masamvi, Graduate Consultant, Freight & Logistics, AECOM, spoke with *Focus* to discuss the value of CILT membership and her commitment to helping the Young Professionals Forum thrive. A recent graduate, she explains her enthusiasm to developing her career in the ever evolving and diverse profession.

What is your role within the profession?

I am currently on AECOM's graduate scheme as a consultant in freight and logistics, based in Greater Manchester. The job is very diverse. I could be attending meetings, working on proposals, writing reports, doing research or talking to freight operators, answering emails or preparing online surveys. I work on UK-based and international projects for private and public-sector clients. I also get the opportunity to get out of the office to attend conferences and meet clients.

What attracted you to work in logistics?

Throughout my years at high school and sixth form, I was very much attracted to a career in the transport sector. I heard about logistics following a conversation with a close relative who works in supply chain. The conversation opened my eyes to what transport has to offer, and led me to investigate which universities offer a degree in transport and logistics.

How are you involved with the CILT Young Professionals Forum?

I first got involved in the Forum approaching my second year at university and I represented the Merseyside & Warrington Group. Currently, I am a committee member, having some input on some of the activities and events being planned. I have recently organised a sponsored walk in the Peak District, which is due to take place in September.

How has CILT membership enhanced your career in the profession?

Membership has allowed me to broaden my knowledge of transport and logistics through online resources and events. CILT offers the opportunity to visit local distribution centres and control rooms. As these events vary, there is always a mix of people from different professions and various industries. Membership has allowed me to build my network and profile, and given me the opportunity to meet and hear from experienced professionals.

How important do you believe Institute post-nominals to be?

Being part of a professional body is far more than just the post-nominal letters, but they are recognised as a mark of professionalism. It shows commitment to progress. For most people thinking about attaining CILT post-nominals, as membership helps you gain experience and improves your understanding of the industry, I say go for it.

What would you say to encourage young professionals into our profession?

I would strongly advise seeking information from people who have been in the industry for a period of time, to see what is on offer and the different career paths available. Also, networking within logistics is important, whether it's attending events in your region, conferences or exhibitions, there are plenty of opportunities at events organised by the Institute.

How important do you believe the logistics and transport profession is?

Very important. Logistics is a part of everyday life; pretty much everything we do involves logistics and transport. An activity such as getting to work in the morning, or perhaps a trip to the shops, technically involves logistics. The sector is the fifth biggest employer in the UK and is vital to the success of the economy.

What are your hopes for the future?

I look forward to enhancing my expertise in freight transport and improving other relevant skills in conjunction with my company and the Institute. I will continue to keep motivated and work towards achieving a more senior role in the company. I am an ambassador for Transaid. I also play an active role, in Science Technology Engineering Maths (STEM) Network and the Think Logistics Initiative encouraging younger students into the profession.

ROB NOLAN



Rob Nolan, Supplier Manager, Warehousing & Logistics, British Airways, explains to *Focus* his passion for the aviation industry and how his role brings together transport and logistics, and encourages more people to promote and highlight the achievement of the profession.

What attracted you to work in the aviation industry?

I was flying planes before I learnt to drive; it's my passion. When I was growing up, my father worked for British Airways, so going to see him at the office involved going to Heathrow and I was in awe of these huge, flying machines.

What does your role require from you day to day?

I manage the global warehousing and logistics suppliers for the customer experience product department. This encompasses lounge and onboard product to excite and delight our customers to over 160 destinations on over 290 aircraft. I have a hands-on approach, engaging with the operational, financial and strategic activities of our suppliers to ensure the correct service standards are maintained.

What are your career highlights to date?

Whilst on my graduate programme with Gist, I was selected to work in France with bulk gasses distribution, out of my comfort zone and abroad, working on delivering sustainable cost-saving initiatives. I found my niche. Thankfully, with my current role I have the opportunity to work on multiple strategic projects across the globe, working collaboratively with suppliers and group stakeholders to deliver efficiency savings.

To some, warehouse and logistics operations might not be seen as the most attractive of careers. What would you say to people with this attitude, and how would you encourage a new generation of workers into our profession?

It's all about the people, so embracing diversity into senior management levels is key. Diverse work forces are not only more productive, but also it is the right thing to do. To further promote what we do, it is down to everyone in the industry to strive for the best and to highlight all of the amazing things we achieve.

How important do you believe membership of CILT is to your career development?

The knowledge and experience available within the Institute is impressive. In such a fast-paced and ever-changing industry, this wider knowledge enables me to approach my work with a greater appreciation for the complexities and challenge I face on a day-to-day basis.

How much value does being a CILT Young Professionals Forum member give you?

I find networking with other young professionals from across multiple industry sectors very beneficial. The ability to discuss openly the experiences and the challenges of being a young professional is reassuring, knowing that we are not alone. The enjoyment significantly outweighs any negative moments.

Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

There are many opportunities at British Airways. I would like to see myself through training and experience develop into a more senior role where I can continue to deliver and have a positive impact across a multifunctional area.

MARC COWAN



Marc Cowan CMILT, VP of Operations & Logistics, Dolphin, speaks to *Focus* about the challenges he faced in logistics that enabled him to develop breakthrough strategies across different sectors and become the youngest Chartered Member in the Institute.

Who or what inspired you to become passionate about the logistics sector?

As I travelled the world across 30 countries and studied in the UK, USA and China, I became fascinated with how the world operated. Whether I was the passenger or my checked luggage was travelling through a different route to the same destination, the intricate processes always kept me intrigued; that and personal challenges that I've been exposed to, which included losing my luggage and, later, having my data compromised after a network was breached. I ensured this would never happen again and started to notice many ways to improve the logistics sector due to my attention to detail. This led to me creating intricate placements of data to keep major companies secure and distributing consumer products around the world. Also, having a passion for marine biology led to my involvement in transportation of ornamental tropical fish.

What significant developments have contributed to your career progress?

I've always had a passion and curiosity to change the world and better other people's lives by focusing on the tiny details that not everybody noticed. My career progressed by constantly questioning these processes and combining newer technologies, which enabled me to develop my own solutions to these problems. After clearly demonstrating these strategies to other executives and bringing them on board

with these ideas, they were implemented across different sectors – for example, the logistics of data security placement and the transportation of tropical fish. This led to my success and recognition by other industry professionals.

What has been your biggest achievement to date that has advanced the sector significantly?

This would be developing my own three-spoke system and procedures for the placement of data across the world. It was used to ensure companies remain secure at all times and was utilised by multinationals, Fortune 500 companies and other major financial and healthcare institutions. If these organisations were compromised, there could have been a major problem for the economy itself. An example of this is that if hospital patients' data were to be destroyed, crucial information would no longer exist. To know that you're protecting a company's most valuable asset, which enables others to keep their jobs and provide for their families, is certainly something I feel honoured to develop and implement.


What inspired you to join the Institute and then go on to receive Chartered Membership?

Sharing knowledge, experiences and ideas amongst other top professionals in the world of logistics enables us to develop the world further. After being directed to join the profession because of my achievements, I believed it would be a way that I could help others advance their own careers and make a difference

by contributing some of my own experiences and challenges. I was very honoured to be elected as a Chartered Member. It marked a personal milestone of success within my career and acknowledgement from other top professionals of my contributions.

What is the most difficult challenge that you have faced?

This was certainly developing a new model utilising new technologies for the complicated process of transporting freshwater tropical fish. I had to ensure they travelled across the world safely with all of the parameters accurately measured so that there are no complications – for example, CO₂ levels, pH balances, oxygen levels, salt balances in relation to their blood, water quantities, fish age and health, quantity of fish per bag, feeding regulations, diseases, heat/ice packs used, modes of transportation, restocking procedures, oxygen pellets, natural additives for reducing fish stress and the changing water/air temperatures at each stage of the journey. This is all before you factor in the costs, which with large quantities of water can become very high due to the weight, all for a very tiny fish. There are so many factors that could go wrong. It certainly has become one of the largest challenges I've had to face, but in turn I've been able to provide substantial advancements to this sector, which have been recognised.



To know that you're protecting a company's most valuable asset, which enables others to keep their jobs and provide for their families, is certainly something I feel honoured to develop and implement.

How does the logistics sector differ around the world?

One of the major differences around the world is the regulations, as the required documentation varies and constantly changes. It's vital to make sure the correct paperwork has been completed and authorised, with the correct permits and certifications obtained. This ensures the journey is successful. It is also important to be aware of the latest information so you're always well informed.

Your job encompasses many of the sectors CILT covers; how do all the industries come together to ensure a seamless supply chain?

It starts with ensuring every operation is pre-planned, while deciphering as many potential problems in advance. I'd then confirm there's constant internal and external communication with everyone in the process. This guarantees that for each stage there are key people who are responsible and informed about the timeframes. Therefore if there's ever an issue, everyone knows the correct person to be in touch with immediately. This process allows streamlined efficiency and problems are quickly resolved. Finally, it's important to remain up to date on current issues across the world, which could slow down operations.

What are some of the other most critical functions and contributions that you have worked towards and created?

These include analysing the data structure and information flow of some of the largest financial and healthcare institutions. I held the principal responsibility for articulating and creating the companies, state-of-the-art process known as three-spoke data procedure. I then oversaw the implementation of this for these entities. This incorporated the on-site, off-site and online backups, movement of this data around the world with strict procedural timings and checkpoints to ensure there was no loss of data at any stage.

How do you manage the different logistics operations to cover such a vast array of products in multiple sectors?

It's vital to have an extremely organised strategy in place for every stage of the operation. This can then be adapted to each of the different sectors. This utilises an extremely elaborate system, which makes sure everything is streamlined and monitored at all times. It is vital to guarantee there's a great team behind it with an effective training programme in place. It is also important to ensure everyone is well informed of any changes along the way and that internal and external operations are in sync at all times. Finally, I believe that having a deeper understanding of the products involved, enables you to overcome any issue quickly and in an effective manner.

What advice would you give to the young logistics entrepreneurs starting up their businesses?

Growing up in the age of advanced technology, I always believed that we view the world differently and this led me to notice opportunities that might have been missed by others. I strongly encourage other entrepreneurs to do the same and constantly question the ways we work. As new technologies and mobile apps are developed, they change the world we operate in and continue to lend themselves to logistics. Never be afraid to try out new ideas. Ask questions, contact others who have been there before you and always keep pursuing your goals, if you think there's a way something could be improved.

Having already contributed significantly to the sector, what are your future strategies for further development?

I continue to observe, analyse and challenge many of the current ways we work and constantly think of ways to improve these processes. I hope to continue my success of impacting the sector with significant developments. This includes utilising new technologies, reducing costs, creating new strategies and developing breakthroughs within logistics. I'd also like to help others advance their careers and encourage them to overcome any challenges. I want to continue to leave a lasting legacy in the world, ensuring companies run in the most efficient ways, one process at a time.

MARK HULLAND



Mark Hulland, Service Centre and Depots Controller, Pooling Partners, explains to *Focus* why he pursued a career in logistics, what members can get out of the YPF and why Brexit is a big challenge for the industry.

How much do you value being a part of CILT's Young Professionals Forum (YPF)?

I value the networking of the YPF significantly, because you meet various characters with knowledge and insight that you may not experience day to day. It is important to consider a flexible and fresh thinking approach to all challenges you may face, but the YPF gives you access to a level of people similar to yourself to work alongside.

Was becoming a member of CILT something you had aspired to do since starting out in the profession?

Yes. I was aware of CILT from a young age, as my dad was a member. I have been interested in broadening my understanding of our profession on leaving university and joining Pooling Partners in 2008.

You have been a member of CILT for just over a year now. What have you gained since joining?

I have attended the Annual Conference, meeting a range of fellow members working for various third parties. I learnt about their pathway into logistics and what experiences they have had. I have gained real insight into their different contracts and the substantial crossover of networks where they meet Pooling Partners. The support of the YPF has also given me the confidence to join in various local events and allowed me to encourage my colleagues to get involved with the events relevant to them.

Can you tell us a little about how you got into the profession?

I started working at a local mushroom farm picking the weekend orders for major retail and various wholesalers. I quickly learnt about changing demand and its impact on forecasting and manufacturing, but more importantly I learnt about equipment pooling. The owner was an innovative entrepreneur and liked to find solutions to the headaches that cost his company money. It was while working for his company that he advised me on the right path of education to take. Once out of university, like most students you need to find your footing, and I was lucky that Pooling Partners were an up-and-coming company in a time of recession who were looking for people to grow with them.

You studied logistics at university. Was this a career you always wanted to follow and how important is a logistics degree in today's profession?

I actually wanted to study at a business school; but, to be very candid, I was advised at school that the courses I was interested in may be out of reach compared to my predicted grades, so I was guided towards courses in logistics or supply chain management. I surpassed the grade expectations, but realised that logistics was of more interest to me. I feel that a logistics degree is very important to developing in today's profession, as it taught me about managing people's expectations while remaining flexible in a constantly evolving world.

What do you believe are the biggest challenges that face our profession in the next few years?

I believe the countdown to Brexit will be the biggest challenge. We will be going into an unknown scenario and whether you believe the choice was right or wrong and whether the effects will be positive or negative, the industry will need to work hard to ensure a smooth transition to keep it on an upward trend.

You have developed from within Pooling Partners since 2008. Is this one of the positives of working in logistics?

Definitely. Pooling Partners has had double-digit growth in the UK every year since 2005, which has meant that development opportunities come with that growth. Pooling Partners has been able to fulfil my desire to achieve while ensuring I continue to work hard for the best of the business. I have found that if you have passion for your industry, the industry will reward you.

BRIAN GUTIERREZ



Brian Gutierrez, KTP Project Manager, Priority Freight Ltd, speaks to Focus to discuss the importance of the Institute and offers his advice to professionals who want to move to the UK.

What is your current role within the profession?

I'm managing a knowledge transfer partnership (KTP) project with Priority Freight Ltd and the University of Kent. This involves developing an efficient and bespoke scheduling tool using heuristic approaches for the design of collection/delivery in contingency logistics.

Having studied at the University of Kent, how important do you believe logistics degrees are in today's profession?

The logistics degree I undertook at the University of Kent had a good mixture of qualitative and quantitative modules and research. The qualitative element focused on supply chain strategy, operational management and warehouse management; the quantitative element centred on data analysis, optimisation software, routing program design, modelling techniques and location analysis. It is important to know both parts for today's logistics professions. I've found that understanding both aspects has been extremely useful in my career so far.

What advice would you give to young professionals who want to move to the UK and make a career in the profession?

Do not get overwhelmed with the visa paperwork. Although the process is simple and straightforward, there are several conditions that must be met in order to move to the UK, which can at first glance appear daunting. I found that keeping a journal with facts, website links and important dates made the process less onerous.

How have you found working with senior professionals has enabled your career to develop?

As a young professional, I've had the proclivity to focus on how my tasks help a team or department. Working with senior professionals has enabled me to broaden my scope and appreciate the implications of everyone's role in an organisation.

As a young professional, is getting your voice heard ever a challenge?

I've been fortunate enough to receive support in every organisation I've been in so far, so it's never been a challenge to get my voice heard. The challenge for a young professional, I've found, is speaking up.

How important do you feel being a member of CILT is to your career progression?

The logistics and transport sector ranges significantly. CILT collectively brings the profession together to share ideas and knowledge. This is important to my career progression. There is always something to learn.

How involved are you with CILT, and is this something you want to develop alongside your career?

I've been a member since I was a student and found, and still find, CILT's resources helpful. I've recently enrolled in the Young Professionals Forum and would like to contribute actively.

ANQI WANG



Anqi Wang MILT, Senior Systems Engineer, WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff, speaks to *Focus* about her career in engineering and the importance of diversity in the workplace.

What does your day-to-day role at WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff consist of?

As a senior systems engineer, I develop and deliver complex engineering systems and programmes for rail projects in the UK and internationally. I'm involved from start to finish by working with investors and stakeholders to understand user requirements and make sure that the system created is fit for purpose and provides value for money. As a project moves forward, I work with designers, engineers and subcontractors to make sure that design and procurement are safe and reliable. This involves communicating with people, reviewing schematics and documentation, performing analysis, and summarising findings and making recommendations.

What part of your job involves logistics and transport and how important is the sector to engineering?

Without logistics and transport, the railways wouldn't exist. It is crucial that engineers and stakeholders appreciate this, so that decisions made at the start of a project all the way through to completion can maximise the socioeconomic benefits a railway can bring to the public.

What lessons have you learned from working on major projects?

As a global professional consultancy, WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff has offered me great opportunities to work on transformational programmes and future landmarks. I'm currently working on one of the UK's biggest electrification programmes and in the past have worked for Crossrail, as well as on the world's largest observation wheel under construction in Dubai. Exposure to good and bad engineering practices has shown me the importance of effective communication and programme-level co-ordination and particularly how important it is for the relevant audience in a timely and accurate manner. Thorough application of systems engineering principles and practices promotes a more focused start, smoother progress, and a more satisfactory end-product in large investment programmes.

You moved to the UK in 2009. What brought you here?

There's an official agreement between Fudan University in China and the University of Birmingham whereby students studying towards a list of eligible degrees can have their credits recognised and transferred. I was fortunate to be selected and graduated from both universities with two degrees. I had been a big fan of classic English literature (and football!!) growing up, and was naturally excited by the prospect of one day living in the UK.

How has your career developed since coming to the UK?

The UK has provided me with a world-class education and fantastic career development. Having completed my undergraduate studies, I studied managerial microeconomics and strategy at the London School of Economics and Political Science. This MSc provided me with a valuable complementary view of engineering projects from a non-engineering perspective. I then went to the Birmingham Centre for Railway Research and Education to work as an International Business Development Officer, liaising between industry and higher education on rail research and education in the UK and China. The world-leading research carried out at the centre enabled me to visualise the future for rail and link theoretical research with industrial applications. Moving from Birmingham back to London, I worked as a consultant in access planning and optimisation. In August 2015, I started working at WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff and have been able to work on high-profile projects. I have met a number of influential and helpful mentors throughout my career in the UK. They, and the UK rail industry, have developed me into the young professional I am today.



As a project moves forward, I work with designers, engineers and subcontractors to make sure that design and procurement are safe and reliable.

What are the main challenges you have experienced while working in the profession?

Jargon and inconsistent language are definitely one of the biggest blockers to common understanding and knowledge transfer. As the UK invented the railway, we now suffer from this first-mover disadvantage where the old and the new will need to remain compatible, when other countries are building modern trains and tracks from scratch. I think this unique challenge is what makes the UK rail industry quirky and interesting.

Many academics believe there is a high number of Chinese students studying logistics at university. Is the importance of the sector engrained from a young age in China?

Given the size of the population and of the country, the importance of efficient logistics has always been understood. Growing up, we could feel a marked difference between places that were well connected and those that were not. Some of the top technical universities in China have the word 'transport' literally in their names, demonstrating that the original need for technical advancement was for the purpose of logistics and transport.

What do you believe will be the main challenges for the rail sector in the next five years?

We must comprehensively adopt the latest technology across the whole country in order to take advantage of the implementation of the digital railway. Construction volumes are at historical highs, whilst old rolling stock is being replaced by modern fleets, and cross-industry collaboration will be essential in the planning, integration and delivery to ensure the operational railway continues to serve the freight and passenger traffic. Finally, we need robust succession planning to ensure the next generation of rail engineers and operators are competent and ready to take over when specialists enter retirement.

In what is a predominantly male-dominated industry, how have you coped with being a woman in engineering?

I consider interactions between male colleagues and myself to be interactions between individuals, rather than two genders. If I come across a problem, it may be a clash of personalities, preferences or opinions, rather than sexism. Considering this possibility, rather than jumping to the conclusion of sexism, helps me find a suitable solution more often than not. There are, however, a few instances of outright sexism, xenophobia and ageism. On those occasions I make a point of not suffering in silence and clearly point out that such

behaviour will not be tolerated. Most of the people I have worked with in the UK rail industry are open-minded and caring, so I never had difficulty in finding support. I feel being a young foreign woman working in the rail industry here has never held me back. People I have come across value my input, and I have got to where I am today thanks to my hard work and capability rather than anything else. WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff is a very diverse and inclusive workplace and I have the pleasure of working in a collegial and supportive environment with talented engineers from the UK, Portugal, Spain, Asia and North America.

What would you say to encourage the promotion of a diverse and integrated workforce?

We must promote the diverse talents of today so they can become the role models of the future. A visible and relatable role model motivates me more than any corporate policies. That said, quantifiable diversity goals are almost a necessary evil in order to encourage and cultivate the diverse leaders and role models of the future. I hope that all the efforts towards promoting equality, diversity and inclusion will one day lead to a true meritocracy.



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