

SYSPRO honoured at Education Excellence Awards

SYSPRO, a provider of business software solutions, has been recognised for its efforts aimed at skills development when it was recently named runner-up in the Corporate Educator of the Year category at SAPICS's 2014 SCM Education Excellence Awards.



This year's awards were presented at the 36th Annual SAPICS Conference and Exhibition, held from 1-3 June 2014. "The nomination and the runner-up award are honourable achievements for SYSPRO," says marketing director of SYSPRO, Meryl Malcomess.

"This award is especially important given the lack of skills in the Supply Chain Management (SCM) field. It has fuelled our already burning desire to contribute to skills development and training in the industry."

Supply chain and operations association, SAPICS, says there is a critical shortage in SCM skills both globally and in SA. The SCM Education Excellence Awards were established to give recognition to individuals, organisations and learning institutions that have been proactive in addressing this shortage and made substantial contributions to alleviate it.

"A severe lack of well-trained personnel in a country with so many unskilled, unemployed citizens means we have the perfect landscape for change on both ends, but the connection simply has to be made," says Malcomess, adding that corporations need to step up and actively make a significant difference, for their own purposes and for the community at large.

Future-focused

Malcomess was recently awarded the Industry Ambassador Award by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's (NMMU) Department of Computing Sciences for her commitment to supporting the educational development of the IT industry's future leaders.

She spearheaded a partnership between SYSPRO and NMMU to encourage the use of new technologies to meet the growing demand for IT skills in South Africa. The partnership also involves collaborative projects that harness social media, mobile technology and ERP to deliver training across Africa at a fraction of the usual cost.

Malcomess adds that through SYSPRO's alliances with universities like NMMU and KeMU in Kenya, the company is making a difference by teaching SYSPRO to students as an example of ERP for manufacturing and distribution organisations.

"We also make SYSPRO available for post-graduate research purposes. In return we've gained access to the latest thinking in IT, scientific methods and research tools; a completely symbiotic relationship," says Malcomess.

Local responsibility

SYSPRO has also provided extensive resources for the Development and Strengthening of Industry-driven Knowledge-transfer between developing countries project. Known as the DASIK project, its main objective is to develop and conduct intense training courses in the current ICT-related research fields to generate a transfer of knowledge between the members of the participating institutions.

At a grass-roots level, SYSPRO is behind Silulo Ulutho Technologies, a company that has built a multimillion-Rand business providing computer training and IT services to township residents. It now has its sights set on fostering software development skills in these informal communities, and has begun tutoring students in web design and computer programming.

"We must increase momentum at tertiary institutions and equally in businesses to actively address the skills shortage in our country - especially in the ERP field," says Malcomess. "I feel that as a successful local business software company, it is our responsibility at SYSPRO to ensure future generations of South Africans are equipped with the right ICT knowledge and career guidance."

Savvy employees

Internally, SYSPRO's strategic objective is to have the most Operations and Supply Chain savvy employee pool in the IT industry. Since SYSPRO develops software it typically employs individuals who have strong IT skills but require business skills development. "Employees need to understand the context and how supply chain concepts work in the business of our customers," explains Malcomess.

SYSPRO has invested in a training curriculum that provides individuals with a solid foundation of relevant knowledge, keeping them on top of both global and local innovation in supply chain and operations management.

"We recognise that in order to achieve our objectives as a business, providing state-of-the-art skills development, training and education for our employees is paramount," concludes Malcomess.

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