

# MEMBERSHIP Matters

## Evolving Career Success



**Denise Gillespie,**  
CPIM, CIRM  
Mid-Florida Chapter

After a while, APICS knowledge becomes second nature to members such as Denise Gillespie, CPIM, CIRM. APICS has been a part of her career in operations management since 1983 when she was introduced to APICS by a co-worker. Over the next 13 years, she held various roles in the manufacturing industry and validated her knowledge by obtaining the APICS CPIM in 1986 and the APICS CIRM in 1997. Those certifications now give her the credentials that small manufacturing firms seek to help them improve their businesses.

"I can't imagine doing what I do without APICS," Gillespie says. Ten years ago, she and her husband founded The Denmark Group, a consulting services firm in Winter Park, Florida, which caters exclusively to clients in manufacturing and distribution. The Denmark Group helps its clients streamline their business processes, typically focusing on enterprise resources planning technology solutions and project management in smaller companies.

Continuous learning initially drew Gillespie to APICS, and now she helps spread the APICS body of knowledge through her work and involvement with the local chapter. A key component of her work at The Denmark Group is applying the APICS methodologies with clients. "People are looking for my knowledge when they engage our firm," Gillespie says. "They come to us because they know we are informed and stay on top of the latest trends."

When reflecting on her jobs in materials management, production planning, purchasing, scheduling, and distribution, she realizes that living the APICS body of knowledge is what causes you to learn it. "I obtained results by learning the APICS body of knowledge and applying it on the job."

### With the times

As an operations management professional, Gillespie is enthusiastic about the strategic direction APICS is taking, and she feels the expanding focus in operations management gives APICS something more to offer. "While [the APICS body of knowledge] is supportive of manufacturing and distribution organizations, we can take it beyond manufacturing, and the concepts apply," she says.

For example, at a recent professional development meeting, her chapter hosted a guest speaker from Darden Industries, the well known restaurant chain that owns Red Lobster, Olive Garden, and Seasons 52, among others. During the session, they learned that companies in the service industry still need to move product and manage inventory—whether it be furnishings and serving equipment or crabs and lobsters. "We could see how all of the things we learn in operations management pertain to the restaurant industry," Gillespie says. "If we tweak our focus, we can reach a whole new audience of people who need to apply APICS concepts."

Gillespie also finds it useful for APICS to tailor its educational products to meet the market need. An APICS instructor, she teaches certification courses through the chapter and provides her clients with inventory workshops, certi-

cation review courses, and teaching concepts training.

With today's leaner workforces and time constraints, companies may be less able to take workers away from their jobs or to afford the price tag of whole certification courses, she explains. "Teaching an inventory workshop series helps them get their people on board with the basics, such as good inventory management techniques, and gives them some tangible informa-

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tion right off the bat. And teaching lean and theory of constraints in a workshop format gives APICS chapters a tangible product to market."

Along with the APICS body of knowledge, Gillespie values the professional and personal relationships developed through her APICS membership. "The networking aspect of APICS is a phenomenal thing," she says.

She has been a member of four different APICS chapters, served as chapter president, and is now vice president of membership for the Mid-Florida Chapter.

"When I go to a conference or an APICS event, I see people I know," she says. "Through these connections, I can communicate about an idea or solve a problem or find out what's new. It's a great sharing and networking opportunity. And when you share the same career interests and work together to create a good APICS chapter, you find that you become friends." ■