

By Ingrid Ostby

High Above Adversity

Making a difference by sharing APICS offerings

As senior manufacturing analyst and project manager for Ulbrich Stainless Steel and Special Metals, Anthony Cioffi, CFPIM, carries out many roles, such as automated system design, system selection, business analysis, problem identification, and solution recommendations. “My job is likened to an internal consultant and, as a result ... I use the [APICS body of knowledge] (BOK) practically on a daily basis,” Cioffi says.

An APICS member since 1993, Cioffi has served as president of the Central Connecticut Chapter and as APICS vice president of membership and chapter development. “My original reason for joining APICS was to enhance my background in manufacturing to provide more detailed support of the business functions at Ulbrich,” Cioffi says. Since then, however, his APICS education has proved continuously useful. For example, he has used the APICS BOK over his entire career and says that just about every project or problem has its solution in the BOK in some way.

“I have been active at every APICS level. As a result, I have experienced many issues, changes, problems, and solutions [in our industry],” Cioffi adds. “The opportunity to have played a role in the development of [APICS] has been very rewarding both on a personal and professional basis.”

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Cioffi has attended the APICS International Conference & Expo several times. He has gone both as a member and APICS officer, which he describes as “two very different points

of view, but the same result.” Cioffi says the events, speakers, and networking at APICS conferences all have enhanced his understanding of business and personal relationships. “All of us strive for the same goals. The only thing that differs is how we get there.”

Of the notable responsibilities Cioffi has undertaken with his APICS education, one of the most challenging was his decision to close down the APICS Central Connecticut Chapter. Leaders of the fourth-oldest APICS chapter had found it increasingly difficult to recruit board members and motivate volunteers. Cioffi, after realizing the situation would only worsen, decided to close the chapter.

While the transition was a difficult one, he remained proactive. Without a chapter to promote events and opportunities, Cioffi created the Central Connecticut Chapter Goodwill Tour. This event was created to offer educational opportunities for operations management students; provide avenues for collaboration among area universities and APICS chapters; and introduce APICS to area professors, school administrators, and operations management students.

Cioffi also designed a plan that would use the remaining chapter resources to create an annual award. This award would be given to outstanding operations management students at three area universities: the University of Hartford, the University of New Haven,



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Senior manufacturing analyst
Ulbrich Stainless Steel and Special Metals

and Quinnipiac University. Cioffi visited each university to present the donation and talk to school representatives about APICS education. Being an adjunct professor of operations management at the University of Hartford—where he has taught for the past seven years—this achievement was particularly meaningful.

“There are still universities and businesses in the area that don’t know about APICS,” Cioffi says. “One of the goals with the Central Connecticut Chapter Goodwill Tour was to introduce APICS as a professional association that is beneficial to belong to.”

Additionally, Cioffi allocated some of the APICS Central Connecticut Chapter’s funds to the APICS Educational and Research Foundation and the Newhaven and Hartford chapters. With the help of the Central Connecticut Chapter Goodwill Tour, operations management students now have opportunities they otherwise would not be able to access.

Cioffi credits APICS volunteer opportunities with this success and many other positive experiences he has had throughout his career. “I have been an APICS volunteer for a long time. It has taught me to be a better manager,” Cioffi says. “It enables you to look at things from different points of view and thereby increases your ability to understand and deal with the problems that arise on a daily basis.”

Ingrid Ostby is editorial assistant for *APICS* magazine. She may be contacted at iostby@apics.org.