

STEM CAREERS AND SKILLS OF THE FUTURE

The STEM Alliance proposes a series of online events (webinars and chat discussions) and career sheets that aim to promote STEM careers with role models. Representatives from companies – partners of the STEM Alliance – are invited to give online presentations to inform teachers about possible careers in their companies. Based on content picked up from the webinar and drawing on the experience of STEM experts, the STEM Alliance will then create a career sheet for the specific career profile presented in the online event. The career sheet will serve as an awareness-raising tool for teachers and career guidance officers, as well as providing valuable information for the companies' own awareness-raising campaigns.

The following document contains suggestions of the questions that can be highlighted during webinars and chats. Moreover, the answers provided by professionals will be transformed into the career sheets – short articles that will be published on the STEM Alliance website and will be accessible by teachers.

Please do keep in mind that the information in this career sheet relates closely to the context of the professional whose experience the career profile is based on. STEM professions, studies and challenges vary between countries and industry sectors.

Category Manager Supply Chain Sourcing & Contracting

Questions

What is this profile about?

A Category Manager position within Supply Chain Sourcing & Contracting in the STEM field is filled by engineers, or marketing or business administration professionals. This position gives you a chance to take part in the supply chain management side of the industry (more information about supply chain [here](#)). In this position, you manage the spending and performance of a defined transport category (e.g. shipping, barging, road or rail transport) from beginning to end – from procurement to exit strategies. Tasks range from negotiating contracts with Logistical Service Providers, analysing data and processes, long and short-term strategy development, to designing, running and updating systems. The type of systems and processes you will manage are largely dependent on the specific industry you are working in as a Category Manager. An example of systems is innovation on ships and an efficient way to transport products.

What does a typical working day look like?

A typical day in a Category Manager position includes working on a variety of tasks. The day begins by checking emails and confirming that daily operations are all in order. If there are any problems in the day-to-day operations which require intervention at a commercial level, you help your colleagues to find a solution. However, in this job, you are mainly responsible for long-term strategy and planning and securing of transport capacity. A Category Manager

spends time on contract management (including review meetings and KPI evaluation), contract negotiations, gathering data, analysing performance and reading industry-specific reports. Based on these reports, you create long-term strategies. Then it is your responsibility to oversee that strategies are implemented step by step. The Category Manager has to be sure to continuously keep in touch with colleagues from other departments throughout the day. While the job of the Category Manager takes place within regular working hours, sometimes tasks might come up early in the morning, late in the evening or during weekends as well.

How much and what does one need to study?

To become a Category Manager, you must complete at least undergraduate studies. If you want to work as a Category Manager in the STEM field, you will usually have a background in retail management, marketing, business administration and engineering studies. Good financial knowledge and knowledge of legal, fiscal requirements, and environment, health and safety (EHS) requirements is needed.

What are the key skills needed?

As a Category Manager in the STEM field, it is generally important to have good negotiation skills. Basic understanding of technology and engineering is preferred. In addition, you will need a good understanding of business administration and supply chain management. A creative mind can contribute to your success as a Category Manager, because it will lead to creative solutions and openness to change and innovation. Analytical skills, team working and communication skills will also greatly help you in this position.

What are the possible places of employment?

Category Managers for logistical services are needed in various industries and in companies that deal with a large variety of products, such as the chemical industry.

This is a job for you, if...

You like to think in processes, you are ambitious and enjoy multitasking. You are passionate about innovation and making your plans become reality.

A Category Manager should be:

- *Entrepreneurial*
- *A team worker*
- *A relationship builder*
- *Creative and initiative-taking*
- *Reactive to change*

What are the challenges of this job?

As a Category Manager, you are defining and implementing the category's Sourcing & Contracting (S&C) strategy and as such contributing to the S&C departmental strategy in order to safeguard operations (e.g. transport, warehousing capacities) with regard to agreed service levels (safety, quality, delivery reliability and security of supply) and managing the spending and performance of the category. It is a complex position with multiple facets that require commercial, technical and interpersonal skills.

Advice to teachers and parents:

Encourage students to pursue an engineering career, because it provides job security and it gives access to a wide range of opportunities. For instance, junior engineers can rise to managerial positions and receive training in management and business administration.

More information:

This information is based on content picked up from the webinar [*STEM careers and skills of the future – engineer careers in the petrochemical industry*](#) of 7 February 2018 and drawing on the experience of the STEM expert Paul Ruigt, Category Manager Shipping & Barging Petrochemicals, Supply Chain Liquids Europe, [*SABIC*](#), who spoke during this online event.

Learn more (links to the external resources/webpages related to the career profile):

<https://resources.workable.com/category-manager-job-description>

The article is written by *Workable*.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jwebb/2015/12/23/what-is-category-management/#6f718ab5dbf6>

The article is written by *Jonathan Webb, Contributor at Forbes*.

<https://www.brandrecruitment.co.uk/5-key-skills-you-need-for-a-category-manager-job/>

The article is written by *Alana Walden, Writer at BrandRecruitment*.