NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY TOWN

INSIGNIA'25

Shaping the Future Through Innovation & Operational Excellence

FIFTH EDITION | FEBRUARY 2026

THE FLAGSHIP MAGAZINE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF OPERATIONS AND LOGISTICS


PDF

Department of Operations & Logistics

The Department of Operations and Logistics at NSBM Green University, under the esteemed leadership of Mr. Shaja Musthaffa, is dedicated to cultivating future leaders in the fields of Logistics Management, Industrial Management, and Project Management. As the department marks its fifth anniversary, it continues to distinguish itself through commitment to innovation and collaborative academic practices. At the foundation of the department's success are its three specialized student circles, Logistics Management, Industrial Management, and Project Management. Each student circle nurtures a community of engaged students and professionals, providing a platform for in-depth exploration of their respective fields. These student circles work in unison to spearhead initiatives that extend beyond the academic setting, influencing both the university and the broader community. One of the department's signature achievements is Insignia, the annual magazine now in its fifth edition. This publication represents the collective research, insights, and creative contributions of all three student circles, highlighting the department's comprehensive approach to academic and professional development. The Department of Operations and Logistics stands not merely as an academic institution but as a vibrant community of forward-thinking individuals dedicated to leadership, innovation, and meaningful impact .

Message from the Dean

Dr. Thilini De Silva
Dean
Faculty of Business

At NSBM Green University, excellence is not just an expectation , it is a culture we continuously build and strengthen. The Department of Operations and Logistics stands as a true reflection of this spirit through its academic leadership, innovation, and commitment to quality.

The release of **INSIGNIA '25**, the 5th edition of the department's flagship magazine, is a remarkable achievement that showcases the intellectual depth, creativity, and collaborative effort of both staff and students. This publication represents more than ideas on paper; it reflects the progressive thinking and professional standards that define our academic community.

The theme, *"Shaping the Future through Innovation, Leadership and Operational Excellence,"* powerfully captures the direction in which the department is moving , embracing change, encouraging leadership, and striving for continuous improvement in an increasingly competitive global environment.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the Head of Department, the lecturers, the editorial team, and every student contributor who worked tirelessly to bring this edition to life. Your dedication and teamwork have produced a publication that truly upholds the standards of NSBM Green University.

I wish INSIGNIA '25 continued success and hope it serves as an inspiration for many more impactful editions in the years ahead. My congratulations to the entire team on this outstanding accomplishment.

Message from the Head

Mr. Shaja Musthaffa
Head
Department of Operations & Logistics

I am delighted to announce the launch of the fifth edition of INSIGNIA, our esteemed departmental magazine, published under the theme "Shaping the Future through Innovation, Leadership, and Operational Excellence." This edition stands as a testament to our department's forward-looking vision and its commitment to preparing future leaders for an evolving global business environment.

As the Head of the Department of Operations and Logistics, I am immensely proud of the collective efforts of our faculty, students, and industry collaborators. Through innovative thinking, strong academic leadership, and a continuous pursuit of operational excellence, our department has successfully integrated multiple management disciplines to enhance efficiency, optimize resources, and drive sustainable value creation within the university and beyond.

The fifth edition of INSIGNIA features a thoughtfully curated selection of scholarly articles, industry insights, interviews, and case studies that highlight emerging innovations and leadership practices in operations, logistics, industrial management, project management, and supply chain management. These contributions emphasize how strategic leadership and operational excellence can transform organizations and enable resilience in today's complex and dynamic business landscape.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our dedicated faculty members, passionate students, and valued industry partners for their invaluable contributions and unwavering support. Your commitment to innovation, knowledge sharing, and professional excellence has been instrumental in bringing this publication to fruition.

I warmly invite readers to engage with the ideas and insights presented in the fifth edition of INSIGNIA Magazine. Together, let us continue to shape the future by embracing innovation, strengthening leadership, and striving for excellence in operations and management for sustainable success.

MESSAGES FROM THE ACADEMICS

Prof. Sudath Amarasena
Professor
Department of Operation & Logistics

Ms. Rekha Kulasekara
Lecturer
Department of Operation & Logistics

Producing a publication of this caliber requires more than coordination; it demands intellectual commitment, discipline, and a genuine passion for knowledge. **INSIGNIA '25** clearly reflects these qualities.

The articles presented in this edition demonstrate thoughtful analysis, awareness of emerging industry trends, and the ability to connect theory with practical relevance. Such work signifies not only academic competence but also the development of professional insight, something we strongly encourage within the Department of Operations and Logistics.

The success of this edition is a direct result of the dedication, discipline, and collaboration shown by the Editorial and Organizing Committee and every contributor involved. The level of quality achieved underscores the department's commitment to academic distinction.

May INSIGNIA continue to inspire rigorous thinking, meaningful discussion, and continued excellence in both scholarship and practice.

INSIGNIA '25 stands as a testament to the strength, creativity, and ambition of the Department of Operations and Logistics. This edition reflects not only academic excellence but also the courage to explore new ideas and challenge conventional thinking.

Through its focus on innovation, leadership, and operational excellence, the magazine captures the mindset required to thrive in today's evolving global landscape. The commitment and professionalism demonstrated by the Editorial and Organizing Committee, along with every contributor, are truly commendable.

Congratulations to the entire team on delivering a publication that informs, inspires, and elevates the standard of excellence within our department. May INSIGNIA continue to grow as a symbol of progress and purposeful leadership.

MESSAGES FROM THE ACADEMICS

Mr. Praveen Ranaweera
Lecturer
Department of Operation & Logistics

It is a proud and defining moment to witness the release of INSIGNIA '25, the 5th edition of the Department of Operations and Logistics magazine. I extend my sincere congratulations to the Editorial and Organising Committee for delivering a publication that truly reflects excellence.

This edition is more than a magazine, it is a bold statement of the department's vision, capability, and forward-thinking mindset. The theme, "Shaping the Future through Innovation, Leadership and Operational Excellence," is not merely a title; it represents a commitment to progress, resilience, and transformative thinking. The quality of this publication clearly demonstrates the intellectual strength, creativity, and professionalism of our students and staff.

My deepest appreciation goes to every individual who contributed to bringing this vision to life. Your dedication and collaborative spirit have resulted in a publication that sets a benchmark for future editions.

I am confident that INSIGNIA will continue to grow as a powerful platform that inspires ideas, nurtures leadership, and showcases the evolving excellence of our department. I look forward to seeing it reach even greater heights in the years ahead.

Mr. Maleesha Edirisinghe
Lecturer
Department of Operation & Logistics

It is with great pleasure that I extend my warmest congratulations to the Editorial and Organising Committee on the preparation of INSIGNIA '25, the 5th Edition of the official magazine of the Department of Operations and Logistics. This publication reflects the commitment, creativity, and professionalism of our students and staff, and it is encouraging to see the department's ideas presented with such clarity and impact. This year's theme, "Shaping the Future through Innovation, Leadership and Operational Excellence," is timely and inspiring, and this edition is a strong contribution toward that vision.

My appreciation goes to every writer, editor, designer, and coordinator who made this possible. I wish the team continued success and look forward to future editions of INSIGNIA.

MESSAGES FROM THE ACADEMICS

Mr. Sachin Kulandaivel
Lecturer
Department of Operation & Logistics

It gives me great pleasure to share my wishes for INSIGNIA '25, the fifth edition of our Department of Operations and Logistics magazine. Each year, this publication reflects the creativity, hard work, and evolving perspectives of our students and this edition, themed "Shaping the Future Through Innovation, Leadership, and Operational Excellence," is no exception.

In today's dynamic and competitive world, the ability to innovate, lead with purpose, and execute with precision defines true excellence. These qualities are not just academic ideals but essential capabilities that will empower you to shape industries, influence systems, and create meaningful impact in society. I encourage all students to continue cultivating curiosity, embracing new technologies, and strengthening the discipline required for effective operational thinking.

May this edition of INSIGNIA inspire to push boundaries, challenge assumptions, and envision bold possibilities. I congratulate the editorial team for their dedication and extend my best wishes to all contributors. May this year's publication serve as a beacon of knowledge and motivation for the entire department.

Wishing INSIGNIA '25 great success!

Ms. Hansika Deivendra
Lecturer
Department of Operation & Logistics

I am pleased to share my best wishes for INSIGNIA '25, the fifth edition of our departmental magazine, presented under the theme "Shaping the Future Through Innovation, Leadership, and Operational Excellence." This publication reflects the intellectual depth, creative intent, and growing professional awareness of students in Logistics, Industrial Management, and Project Management.

The theme resonates strongly with the demands of today's evolving environments, where thoughtful innovation, principled leadership, and disciplined execution shape sustainable progress. Through this edition, students demonstrate not only academic engagement, but also the confidence to question, reimagine, and contribute with purpose.

I sincerely appreciate the dedication of the editorial team and contributors whose collective effort has brought this vision to life. May INSIGNIA '25 continue to stimulate insight, dialogue, and forward-thinking perspectives, enriching both academic discourse and professional practice.

MESSAGES FROM THE ACADEMICS

Ms. Sithumini Jayasekara
Lecturer
Department of Operation & Logistics

It is a privilege to share a message for INSIGNIA ’25, the fifth edition of the Department magazine representing the disciplines of Logistics, Industrial Management, and Project Management. This publication reflects the dedication, analytical thinking, and evolving professional outlook of students who are preparing to contribute meaningfully to complex organizational and industrial environments.

In today’s rapidly changing global landscape, excellence in logistics, industrial management, and project management is driven by the effective integration of innovation, leadership, and disciplined execution. These fields demand not only technical competence, but also strategic thinking, adaptability, and the ability to manage resources, processes, and people efficiently. Developing these capabilities is essential for navigating uncertainty and delivering sustainable value across industries. Students are encouraged to continue challenging conventional practices, embracing emerging technologies, and strengthening problem-solving and decision-making skills. Publications such as INSIGNIA play a vital role in fostering intellectual engagement, knowledge sharing, and professional growth beyond the classroom.

The editorial team deserves commendation for their commitment and collaborative effort in delivering this edition, and best wishes are extended to all contributors. May INSIGNIA ’25 inspire learning, innovation, and meaningful collaboration within the academic and industry community.

Wishing the magazine every success!

Message from the Editor-in-Chief

INSIGNIA '25, the official magazine of the Department of Operations and Logistics at NSBM Green University, proudly presents its Fifth Edition under the theme "Shaping the Future through Innovation, Leadership, and Operational Excellence." In a world where industries transform at unprecedented speed, this edition captures the essence of forward-thinking operations and strategic leadership. Within these pages, you will discover reflections on digital transformation, lean systems, and a blend of local and global strategies, artificial intelligence, human insight, and technological advancement. Each article illustrates a simple but powerful truth: innovation creates opportunity, leadership provides direction, and operational excellence turns ideas into measurable impact. Together, they form the foundation for building resilient, future-ready organizations. As the magazine of the Department of Operations and Logistics, INSIGNIA '25 represents the collective voice of our student circles and academic mentors, a shared commitment to learning, research, and meaningful industry engagement. As you explore this edition, may it inspire you to think boldly, act strategically, and lead responsibly. The future is not something we wait for; it is something we shape.

Sanjana Thilochanee
Editor-in-Chief
INSIGNIA '25

INSIGNIA'25 MAGAZINE COMMITTEE

ACADEMIC ADVISOR

Mr. Praveen Ranaweera

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Sanjana Thilochanee

CO-EDITOR

Dilini Senarath

DESIGN LEAD

Isuru Lakshan

EDITORIAL MEMBER

Sanduni Panditharathna

EDITORIAL MEMBER

Amanda Fernando

EDITORIAL MEMBER

Lihini Hirushika

Shaping the Future Through Innovation & Operational Excellence

“The organizations that shape tomorrow are those that dare to innovate today and discipline themselves to execute flawlessly.”

In an era defined by rapid technological advancement, global uncertainty, and evolving customer expectations, organizations can no longer rely on traditional models of management. The future belongs to those who innovate boldly while executing flawlessly. *INSIGNIA 2025* embraces this reality through its central theme, **"Shaping the Future Through Innovation & Operational Excellence."**

Innovation is not merely the creation of new ideas; it is the continuous reimagining of processes, systems, and strategies to generate sustainable value. It challenges conventional thinking, encourages calculated risk-taking, and transforms complexity into opportunity. However, innovation alone is insufficient. Without structured planning, disciplined execution, and performance optimization, even the most promising ideas fail to create impact.

Operational excellence serves as the foundation upon which innovation thrives. It ensures efficiency, quality, agility, and resilience within organizational systems. Through streamlined processes, data-driven decision-making, and strategic leadership, operational excellence converts vision into measurable results. Together, innovation and operational excellence form a powerful synergy, where creativity meets control, and strategy aligns with execution.

As the official magazine of the Department of Operations and Logistics, *INSIGNIA 2025* explores this dynamic intersection. The articles presented in this edition examine emerging trends, adaptive project management approaches, leadership transformation, sustainability integration, and the evolving role of operations in shaping competitive advantage.

This theme reflects a fundamental truth: the future is not something we wait for, it is something we design, manage, and deliver. Through innovation-driven thinking and operational mastery, organizations and leaders alike can move beyond responding to change and instead become architects of progress.

Table of Contents

01 Driving Industrial Excellence Through Innovation and Smart Leadership
Pg 16-18

02 Operational Excellence: The Heartbeat of Future-Ready Organizations
Pg 20-22

03 Crafting the Future of the Industries Through a Holistic Approach of Innovation, Leadership and Operational Excellence
Pg 24-26

04 Shaping the Future Through Innovation, Leadership, and Operational Excellence
Ms. Rumal Fernando
Pg 28-31

05 Transforming Logistics Through Innovation and Leadership Toward Operational Excellence
Pg 32-34

06 How E-Commerce Giants Use Innovation and Leadership to Transform Operations
Pg 36-38

07 From Globalization to Glocalization: Re-thinking Logistics Strategies
Pg 40-42

08 The Human-Tech Balance: Leading the Future of Hybrid Work and Smart Operations
Pg 44-46

09 The Go-Knowing Revolution: Redefining Logistics Leadership in the Digital Age
Mr. Jude Jayasingha
Pg 48-51

10 Agility in Action: Shaping the Future Through Innovative and Adaptive Project Management
Pg 52-54

11 Plan Today to Make the Future
Pg 55-56

12 Overcoming Barriers and Empowering the Future: Women Leading Innovation and Operational Excellence in Project Management

Pg 58-60

13 From Plans to Performance: Becoming a Better Version Every Day

Mr. Gihan Fonseka

Pg 62-65

14 Project Management 2.0: Where Innovation Meets Execution

Pg 66-68

15 The Power of Leadership and Operational Excellence in a Changing World

Pg 70-72

16 Beyond Boundaries: Global Leadership, Technological Innovation, and the New Era of Project Management

Pg 73-75

17 Driving Excellence: The Role of Innovation and Leadership in Quality Management and Industrial Transformation

Mr. Asanga Haputhanthri

Pg 76-79

18 A throwback to 2025

Pg 80-83

Driving Industrial Excellence Through Innovation and Smart Leadership

In today's fast-paced world, industries are evolving faster than ever before. New technology, international competition, and higher expectations keep reinventing the way organizations operate. In order to compete, it's not enough to be efficient anymore. Today's success relies on innovation, thinking outside the box, and smart leadership, leading other people with vision and purpose. All three together pave the path to industrial excellence.

Redefining Industrial Excellence

Industrial excellence is not simply about lean production lines or meeting month-end targets. It is an ongoing process of enhancing the manner in which things are achieved without compromising on the quality, safety, and customer satisfaction parameters. Excellence previously implied focusing mainly on cost reduction and output. But today it is all about being smart, quick, and nimble.

Industries today need to mix technology, creativity and collaboration. That is the difference between a good organization and a great organization. Excellence today is about embracing change, using data intelligently, and finding new sources of generating value. It's the mentality of "How do we make this better?" that drives real progress.

Innovation: The Heart of Progress

Innovation is the lifeblood of any company. It is not only all new computers or machines, it is smarter, better and simpler. Process improvement, waste reduction, or technology for saving time, innovation is everywhere around you.

We are now living in the era of Industry 4.0, where automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, and data analytics are becoming part of daily operations. These tools help companies make decisions faster and with more accuracy. But even the best technology needs the right people behind it.

That is where the best ideas usually come from teams, individuals who understand problems and propose new solutions. A place where ideas can be shared, and testing can be done without fear of failure, is where innovation occurs.

For instance, scheduling maintenance proactively with smart sensors can avoid downtime.

Implementing lean management practices can achieve maximum quality with less waste. Small gains, if made consistently, add up to significant impact.

Innovation extends beyond technology but assists with sustainability as well. Recycling, reducing waste, and conserving energy make industries both environmentally friendly and profitable. Summarized in one word, innovation enables industries to develop responsibly.

Smart Leadership: The Driver

If innovation is the engine, leadership is the driver. Smart leadership is all about guiding people with vision, adaptability, and wisdom. The days of leaders giving orders and expecting work to be carried out are long gone. Today, leaders need to inspire, communicate, and generate confidence.

Good leaders are visionary. They make decisions based on facts and figures, but also listen to other people and take their suggestions into account. They know that great results are a consequence of motivated people. By creating a good work environment where people feel heard and valued, leaders can elicit the best out of everyone.

Being a good leader also means being emotionally intelligent, understanding what drives people, how they feel, and how to steer them through change. When individuals feel they are supported, they participate and become innovative.

Intelligent leadership is also looking ahead, anticipating what's around the corner. Whether embracing digital technologies, looking ahead to customers' needs, or facing international challenges, leaders who stay ready and proactive are the ones who make a difference.

Simply stated, intelligent leaders do not just manage, they pave the way forward.

Innovation and Leadership: A Perfect Partnership

Innovation alone does not drive improvement; leadership gives it direction. Leadership alone can degenerate into inefficiency. The best of both is excellence in operations.

Leaders, when they encourage open communication and reinforce creative thinking, make employees feel comfortable innovating. Quality Circles, Kaizen, and continuous improvement programs are all great examples of leadership and teamwork toward innovation.

A leader ensures that every attempt at innovation is significant, that they align with and support the goals of the business, make it more effective, and improve customer satisfaction. It is not about chasing every new venture that comes along, but about chasing those that have actual value.

Shaping the Future Through Operational Excellence

Operational excellence is a result of hard work, smart systems, and wise leadership. Operational excellence is doing the right thing every day and still looking for how to do it better. It applies to businesses by establishing a culture of discipline, innovation, and learning.

In the years to come, leading companies will be those that are constantly learning and evolving. Engaging individuals, spending on training, leadership development, and digital competencies, will prove as important as spending on technology.

Cross-functional collaborations, data-based decision-making, and agility will make industries ready to face their future challenges directly.

In our Industrial Management Circle, we strive to develop just these values. We share ideas, gain insight from real workplace issues, and learn how to apply creative and practical solutions. With each meeting, discussion, or project, we move closer to creating the sort of intelligent leadership and forward-looking mentality the industry today demands.

Industrial greatness is not a destination; it's a process of learning, developing, and guiding. Innovation provides us with the potential to move ahead, and intelligent leadership provides us the vision to use that potential to move in the right direction.

In an ever-changing world, only the companies that continually ask, continually seek new answers and hold themselves to high standards survive. The future belongs to those who begin with vision, imagine creatively, and act bravely.

Innovation breaks the trail, leadership lights the way, and they build the business future together.

Side by side, we must learn, innovate, and exchange know-how to build an even more powerful industrial future. Each step we make today will lead to tomorrow's even bigger advancements. The Industrial Management Circle persists in its quest to inspire creative minds and forge leaders of tomorrow. Side by side, we can convert ideas into action and hurdles into opportunities. With innovation at hand and leadership in heart, we are truly forging the future through excellence .

Sarati Devindi

23.2 Batch

B.Sc. in Business Management

(Project Management) (Special)

JOIN THE NATION'S PREMIER
DEGREE AWARDING UNIVERSITY

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY TOWN

UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

BSC (HONS)
OPERATIONS AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT

NSBM FACULTY OF BUSINESS

AACSB Business Education Alliance Member

UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON, DC

Southern Cross University

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY TOWN

Affiliated exclusively to top-ranked universities

NSBM Green University, Mahenwaththa, Pitipana, Homagama | E-mail : inquiries@nsbm.ac.lk

nsbm.lk

www.nsbm.ac.lk

Operational Excellence: The Heartbeat of Future-Ready Organizations

In an environment defined by rapid technological progress and global competition, organizations are under ongoing pressure to achieve greater results with improved efficiency, sustainability, and operational precision.

The need for Operational Excellence (OpEx) has changed from a management trend to a strategic requirement for success and survival. Operational excellence, whether in project management, industrial operations, or logistics, is the constant commitment to lean systems, process efficiency, and continuous improvement, the real driver for innovation and leadership

Reimagining Operational Excellence for the Next Generation

Implementing improved methods is only part of operational excellence; the other half is establishing an environment where all people can simply keep generating value. It incorporates effectiveness, leadership, and innovation to generate strong, responsive, and continuously improving systems.

Previously, companies concentrated on gauging performance like productivity or cost reduction. Along with these figures, though, the contemporary notion of operational excellence is focused on sustainability, teamwork, and strategic alignment. It is less about making money and more about creating value for the company, its employees, customers, and society in general. Operational excellence is the basis for managing uncertainty as it fuels innovation and expansion during an era when sectors are exposed to technological disruption, volatile markets, and sustainability challenges.

Continuous Improvement: Small, Consistent Change to Powerful Effect

The theory of continuous improvement on which operational excellence rests is usually based on the Japanese kaizen philosophy, to "change for the better."

Continuous improvement is achieved by tuning numerous tiny changes in each process daily, rather than moving forward magnificently from time to time.

Factory improvement through continuous improvement involves delegating authority to teams to spot inefficiencies, suggest alternatives, and experiment with new ways on the shop floor.

Gains can be phenomenal even from relatively minor improvements, like optimizing machine layouts, minimizing setup time, or enhancing interdepartmental communication. Lessons learned, systems, and feedback loops that gather information from every project phase are some ways that continuous improvement in project management is shown. By improving methods and performance with every fresh venture, this learning-oriented approach guarantees that teams grow with every challenge. Continuous improvement in logistics propels the supply chain, optimizing it. Data-driven reviews allow companies to reduce waste, enhance speed, and improve reliability in anything from planning routes and warehouse management to customer delivery experiences. In this sense, companies like FedEx and Toyota are the world's leaders, attaining excellence via constant enhancement. Continuous improvement is a mindset more than a goal. It flourishes in a culture that values inquiry, cooperation, and willingness to question assumptions.

The Toyota Production System gave rise to the philosophy of Lean Management, which transformed how businesses conceptualize productivity and value creation. The philosophy is straightforward: generating maximum value for the customer with minimal waste, either time, effort, or material. This concentration of activities, absence of redundancy and facilitation of flow in every step of a process are the eventual aspirations of lean systems. In production, projects, and supply chains, where complex interdependencies and relationships can quickly culminate in inefficiencies, such an approach is vital. Lean principles are the foundations of industrial management practices like value stream mapping, 5S work organization, and Just-in-Time (JIT) manufacturing, which find expression in smooth, cost-saving, and efficient operations. These practices, simultaneously, optimize customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, and product quality.

Lean Systems: Doing More with Less

Lean thinking in project management shifts how teams collaborate and generate results. Lean Project Delivery Systems (LPDS) are a modern concept that helps reduce resource waste, improve stakeholder collaboration, and enhance adaptability. Lean logistics systems yield better supply chains. Logistics managers make the products move smoothly from the suppliers to the customers via standardized procedures, demand planning, and efficient management of inventories. This minimizes delays and operational expenses. Lean systems are a reminder that operational excellence comes about when one does the right job at a productive and efficient pace, instead of doing more work.

Process Optimization: The Bridge Between Innovation and Performance

Process optimization presents the analytical foundation, while learning principles and continuous improvement set the stage for performance. To make sure that systems function as best as they can, it entails redesigning processes, data, and technologies.

Process optimization in industrial management involves the use of techniques like Business Process The methods in question guarantee consistency in quality, detect process variances, and remove bottlenecks. Digital twins and web-based monitoring systems are being used more and more in new factories to simulate and optimize real-time performance.

Process improvement in the management of projects guarantees no gap between execution, planning, and tracking. With project managers able to foretell problems and make best use of resources with predictive analytics and AI-based scheduling software, automation and intelligent computer programs drive logistics efficiency. Real-time tracking systems, warehouse robotics, and route optimization softwares improve speed and accuracy while cutting costs. By using process optimization, logistics firms are redefining customer trust and service quality in addition to improving productivity. The connection of technology and human creativity is symbolized by optimizing processes. It assures that creativity yields measurable results and that decisions made by leadership are supported by information and evidence.

The Human Element: Leadership and Culture in Operational Excellence

Operational excellence is mainly driven by people, regardless of whether it is process- or technology focused. Organizational behavior and managerial vision are essential to the success of every enhancement project. For the purpose of promoting accountability, empowerment, and engagement, leaders are essential. They have to motivate teams to embrace innovation as a shared responsibility that extends beyond mundane tasks. As W. Edwards Deming once stated, "Quality is everyone's responsibility." When leaders promote an atmosphere where individuals assume charge of results, true operational excellence emerges. Transparency, education, and appreciation have importance in an excellent culture. It inspires communities to welcome innovation and view failures as opportunities for enhancement. This focus on a human approach assures that operational systems remain ethical, sustainable, and efficient. Leadership in the connected world of today is about encouraging others for achievement, not about maintaining control. The best managers blend strategic thinking with emotional intelligence, whether they are in charge of a logistics network, a manufacturing procedure, or a project.

A Future Founded on Excellence

Learning, innovation, and improvement are all components of the constant cycle that results in operational excellence. It involves constructing companies that are capable of adapting, expanding, and thriving in times of hardship. Operational excellence brings the three disciplines of project management, industrial management, and logistics together. It shifts the manner in which we make, design, and deliver value. Infusing excellence in every process, from the manufacturing floor to the delivery van, can enable businesses to sustain long-term success and growth. Operational excellence is more about doing better each day and less about doing everything right. It reflects the type of strong, honest, and innovative thinking that defines future-oriented leaders. We construct the future with operational excellence, innovation, and leadership, as the theme of INSIGNIA for this year is a timely reminder. Every one of us, as professionals, is tasked with maintaining that mindset, of building systems that inspire people to perform.

Sanjana Thilochanee

23.2 Batch

B.Sc. in Business Management

(Project Management) (Special)

AFTER A/L

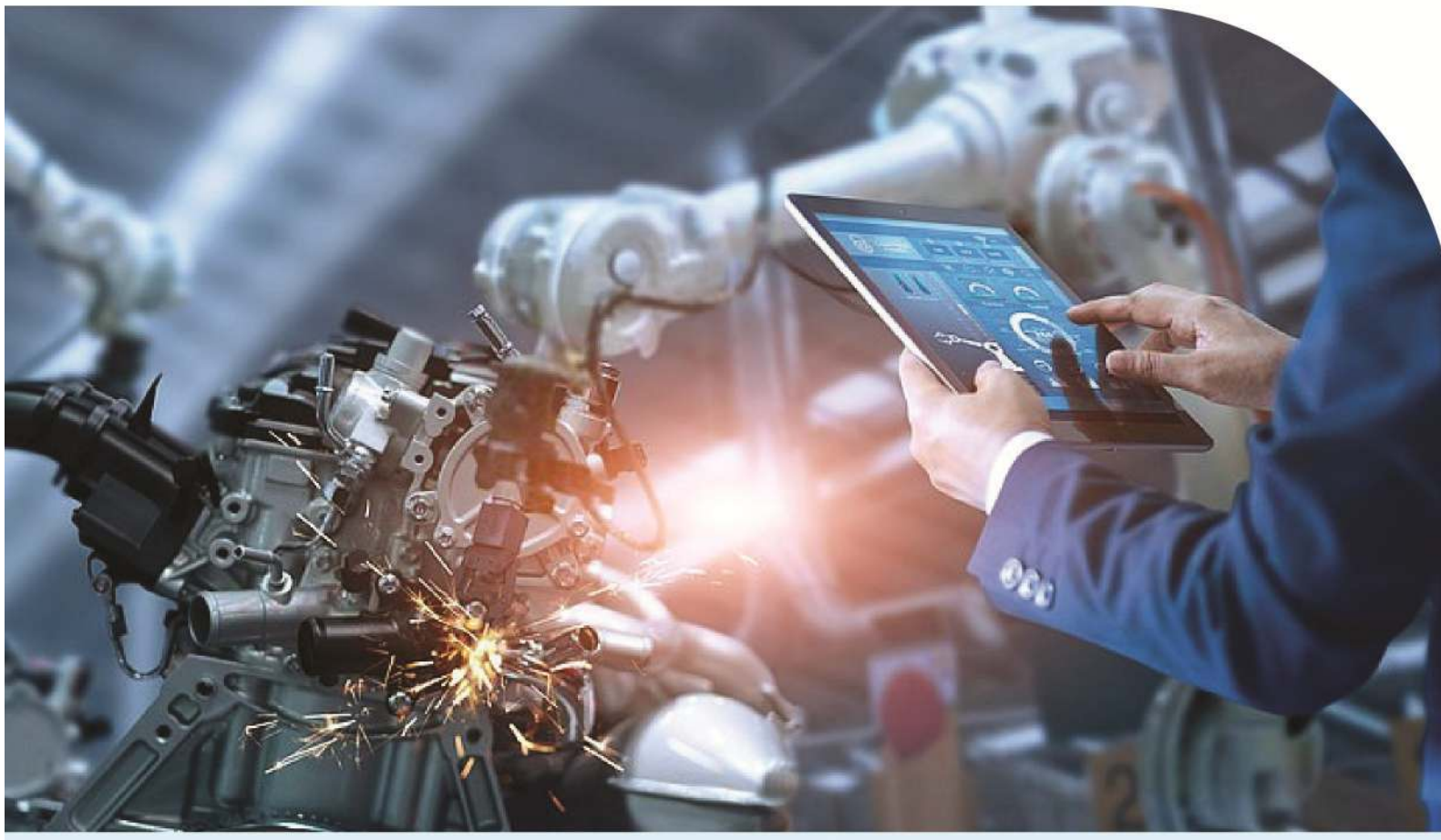
JOIN THE NATION'S PREMIER DEGREE AWARDING UNIVERSITY

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY TOWN

BSC IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

(INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT) (SPECIAL)

NSBM FACULTY OF BUSINESS



AACSB Business Education Alliance Member

UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON, DC

Southern Cross University

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY TOWN

Affiliated exclusively to top-ranked universities

NSBM Green University, Mahenwaththa, Pitipana, Homagama | E-mail : inquiries@nsbm.ac.lk

nsbm.lk

www.nsbm.ac.lk

Crafting the Future of the Industries Through a Holistic Approach of Innovation, Leadership and Operational Excellence

In an ever-changing business environment, innovation is the lifeblood of industries, fostering growth, sustainability, and competitiveness. Industries are exposed to new opportunities and has achieved peak success by embracing innovations. Innovation allows industries align with consumer needs, adapt according to new trends, and upend established business models through the creation and application of new technologies, goods and services. Additionally, innovation promotes experimentation, creativity, and risk-taking, all of which contribute to a culture of continuous improvement. New talent, skills, and expertise are subsequently developed as a result, which eventually propels industry-wide change Innovation offers a vital framework for overcoming these obstacles and grasping new opportunities as industries negotiate the complexity of digitalization, sustainability, and changing consumer expectations. Industries can build a prosperous future with resilience, adaptability, and steady growth by embracing innovation. In order to develop innovative solutions and new business models that have an impact on the entire industry, effective innovation also requires teamwork, open-mindedness, and a willingness to question preconceptions. In the end, innovation is what allows industries to reach their full potential, outstand in a world that is changing quickly, and build a better future for upcoming generations. Industries can control their own fate and build a prosperous, sustainable future by effective utilization of innovation.

Innovation is what propels the expansion and change of an industry. Organizations can stay ahead of the curve, increase efficiency, and open up new opportunities by adopting new products, services, and technologies. By encouraging experimentation, creativity, and risk-taking, innovation helps industries adapt to shifting consumer needs and take advantage of new trends. Industries can improve customer experiences, differentiate themselves, and develop new business models through innovation.

Organizations can achieve long-term sustainability, boost competitiveness, and encourage growth by putting innovation first. Through innovation, industries can take advantage of new opportunities, overcome obstacles, and adjust to changing environments, ultimately paving the way for a prosperous and successful future.

Impact of Leadership

The key to building a prosperous future for industries is effective leadership. Visionary leaders give industries the inspiration, motivation, and strategic direction they need to drive through the journey of success. Leaders enable their organizations to overcome difficult obstacles, seize new opportunities, and maintain focus on long-term goals by expressing a compelling and distinct vision.

Additionally, by encouraging a culture of experimentation, innovation, and ongoing learning, leaders help industries adjust and change in response to shifting market conditions. Leaders unleash the potential of their teams by inspiring and motivating them, which increases engagement, creativity, and productivity. Additionally, leaders are crucial in establishing the culture of their organizations by encouraging virtues like adaptability, responsibility, and cooperation. Leaders who lead with integrity and purpose develop strong relationships with stakeholders, credibility, and trust, which eventually promotes sustainability and industry-wide impact. To promote growth and innovation, effective leaders also make use of data-driven insights, adopting measured risk-taking and well-informed decision-making. Leaders set the stage for a prosperous future marked by adaptability, resilience, and steady growth by leading their organizations with insight, compassion, and foresight. In the end, leadership is the driving force behind turning ideas into reality and allowing sectors to prosper in a world that is changing quickly. By offering strategic guidance, motivation, and inspiration, visionary leaders enable organizations to successfully negotiate difficult situations and seize new opportunities. Leaders cultivate a culture of innovation, experimentation, and ongoing learning by expressing a compelling and unambiguous vision. Teams are inspired and motivated by them, reaching their maximum potential and fostering engagement, innovation, and productivity. By establishing credibility, trust, and solid bonds with stakeholders, leaders mold the culture of their organizations and advance principles like accountability and transparency.

Leaders steer their organizations toward resilience, adaptability, and sustained growth with insight, compassion, and foresight. In the end, they turn vision into reality and clear the path for a prosperous future. Proficient leaders make well -informed choices and use their knowledge to propel advancement.

Impact of Operational Excellence

A key factor in success in the fast-paced industrial environment of today is operational excellence.

Industries can achieve notable increases in productivity, efficiency, and customer satisfaction by optimizing resources, minimizing waste, and streamlining processes.

Organizations can take advantage of new opportunities, react swiftly to shifting market conditions, and establish a solid basis for long-term growth when they practice operational excellence. Industries can lower costs, improve quality, and speed up delivery by putting best practices like lean management and continuous improvement into practice.

Additionally, a culture of accountability, discipline, and teamwork is fostered by operational excellence, which increases employee motivation and engagement. Industries can discover areas for improvement, obtain important insights into their operations, and make well-informed decisions by utilizing technology, data analytics, and performance metrics. Additionally, industries can reduce risks, guarantee compliance, and foster stakeholder trust through effective operational management. Operational excellence offers a crucial framework for success as industries negotiate the challenges of globalization, digitization, and changing customer expectations.

Industries can build a prosperous future marked by effectiveness, adaptability, and steady growth by putting operational excellence first. In the end, industry-wide change is largely made possible by operational excellence, which also boosts long-term sustainability, profitability, and competitiveness. Industries can prosper in a world that is changing quickly by adopting operational excellence. Industries can achieve notable increases in productivity and efficiency by simplifying procedures and getting rid of waste.

Organizations can take advantage of new opportunities, react swiftly to shifting market conditions, and establish a solid basis for long- term growth when they practice effective operational management. Decision-making is aided by the useful insights into operations that can be obtained by utilizing technology, data analytics, and performance metrics. Employee motivation and engagement are fueled by a culture of accountability, discipline, and teamwork.

Industries can increase stakeholder trust, reduce risks, and guarantee compliance by putting efficiency, quality, and customer satisfaction first. This ultimately ensures a prosperous future for the industry by fostering long-term sustainability, competitiveness, and profitability.

Nethmi Rathnayaka

25.1 Batch

B.Sc. in Business Management (Industrial Management) (Special)

AFTER A/L

JOIN THE NATION'S PREMIER DEGREE AWARDING UNIVERSITY

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY TOWN

BSC IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

(LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT) (SPECIAL)

NSBM FACULTY OF BUSINESS

AACSB Business Education Alliance Member

UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON, DC

Southern Cross University

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY TOWN

Affiliated exclusively to top-ranked universities

NSBM Green University, Mahenwaththa, Pitipana, Homagama | E-mail : inquiries@nsbm.ac.lk

nsbm.lk

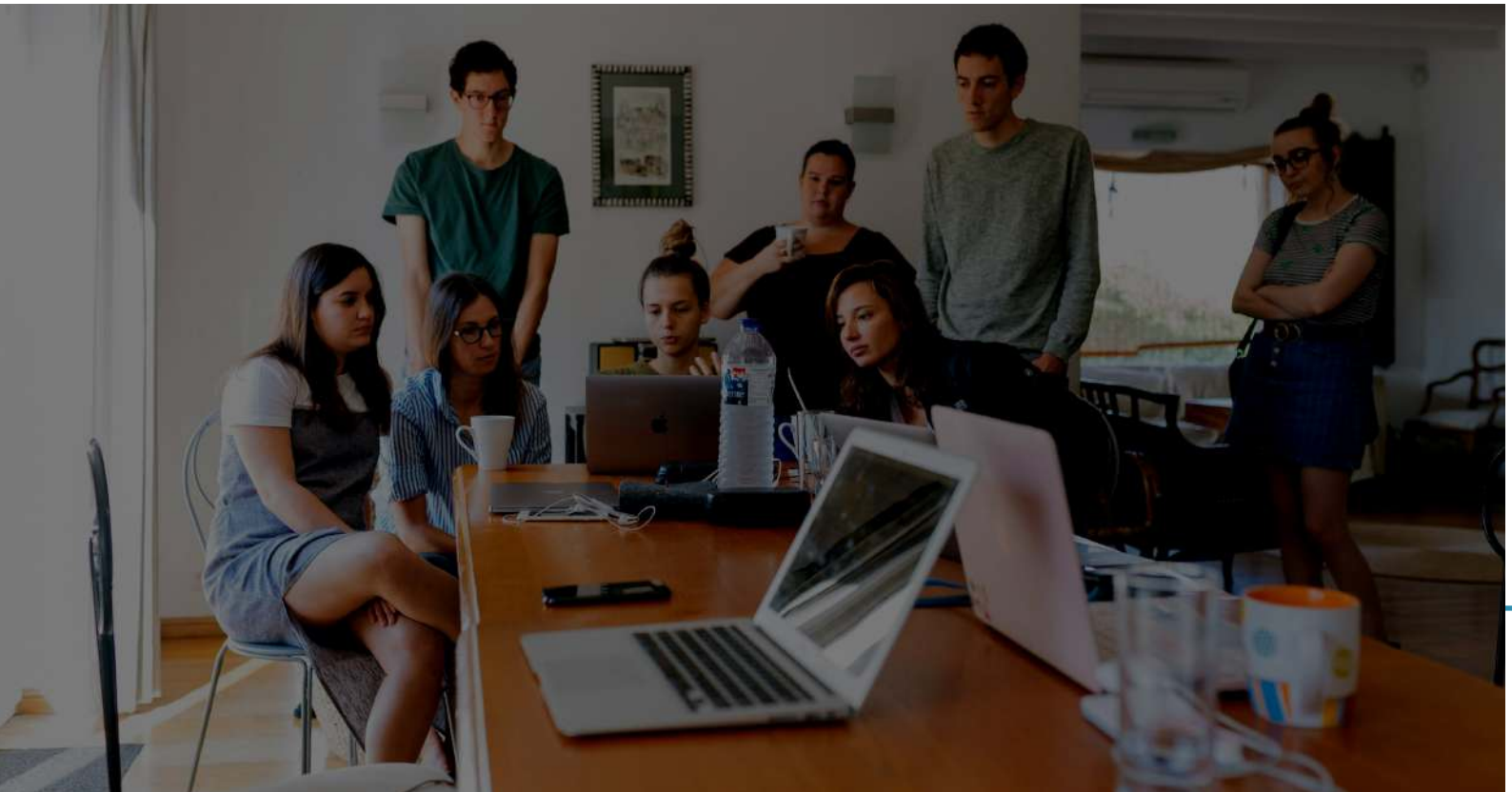
www.nsbm.ac.lk

Ms. Rumal Fernando

Independent Non Executive Director - Hayley's (Group) PLC and Diesel & Motor Engineering PLC

Chairperson - Women in Logistics And Transport (WiLAT), Sri Lanka

Shaping the Future Through Innovation, Leadership, and Operational Excellence



The logistics and supply chain sector has undergone a significant transformation over the past decade. Traditionally perceived as a support function focused on transportation and warehousing, logistics has now emerged as a strategic driver of organizational performance, competitiveness, and resilience. Global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, economic instability, and increasing environmental concerns have further highlighted the critical role of effective logistics management. Insights from an interview with Ms. Rumal Fernando, a senior supply chain professional, provide a clear view of how innovation, leadership, and operational excellence are shaping the logistics industry, especially in developing economies.

Ms. Rumal's professional journey spans over two decades across both multinational and local organizations, offering her a comprehensive understanding of supply chain operations from multiple functional perspectives. She began her career in sales and later transitioned into procurement, where she worked closely with suppliers, transporters, and third-party logistics providers. This early exposure helped her recognize the interdependencies within supply chains and highlighted the strategic importance of logistics in ensuring smooth operations. In 2021, she took responsibility for customer service and logistics operations, overseeing an island-wide distribution network serving both general and modern trade channels. This role required end-to-end oversight of inbound logistics, warehousing, and outbound distribution across approximately fifty-five distribution touchpoints. Importantly, this period coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic and social disruptions. These conditions placed unprecedented pressure on logistics systems, requiring rapid decision-making and adaptability.

Reflecting on this experience, Ms. Rumal noted that many of the challenges were external and uncontrollable, emphasizing that ,

"what mattered was how we responded to them."

This insight underscores the role of leadership and resilience in sustaining operational performance during periods of uncertainty.

Following her operational leadership role, Ms. Rumal transitioned into a strategic governance position and currently serves as an Independent Non-Executive Director at Hayleys PLC. This transition marks a shift from firsthand operational management to board-level oversight, allowing her to contribute strategic direction informed by practical logistics experience.

The Shift Towards Data-Driven Logistics

A key theme emerging from the interview was the growing reliance on data-driven decision-making within logistics operations. Modern supply chains are highly interconnected, where disruptions in one area can quickly propagate across the entire system. Ms. Rumal highlighted that delays in raw material arrivals, unexpected equipment breakdowns, or inaccurate demand forecasts can significantly affect production schedules and customer service levels. As she explained,

"if a raw material shipment is delayed or a machine breaks down, the impact travels across the entire supply chain."

In response to this complexity, logistics organizations increasingly depend on real-time data, digital tracking systems, and predictive planning tools. These technologies enable managers to anticipate disruptions rather than respond reactively, thereby improving efficiency and reducing uncertainty. Data-driven logistics also improves coordination across functions and supports more informed decisions at both operational and strategic levels.

Innovation Through Practical and Contextual Technology

Innovation within logistics is often associated with automation and advanced digital systems; however, Ms. Rumal emphasized that effective innovation does not always require large-scale technological transformation. Instead, practical and context-sensitive solutions can deliver substantial impact when aligned with operational realities.

One example discussed during the interview was the implementation of AI-enabled driver monitoring systems within distribution fleets. These systems monitored drivers' behaviour and provided real-time alerts when unsafe practices were detected. Importantly, alerts were delivered in local languages, which improved comprehension and behavioural response. According to Ms. Rumal,

"the fact that alerts were given in the driver's own language made a big difference."

This initiative contributed to improved road safety and reduced operational risk, illustrating how innovation can be both simple and effective when designed with users in mind.

This example highlights a broader insight: innovation in logistics should focus on solving operational problems rather than adopting technology for its own sake. When technology is aligned with human behaviour and operational needs, it is more likely to support sustainable performance improvements.

Operational Constraints and Infrastructure Challenges

Despite the benefits of technological advancement, Ms. Rumal acknowledged the structural constraints faced by developing economies. High capital investment requirements often limit the rapid adoption of automation, robotics, and electric vehicles. However, she highlighted that transformation need not be immediate or comprehensive. Incremental change through pilot projects and phased implementation can allow organizations to build capability while managing financial risk. As she noted, organizations do not need to

"**do everything at once**"

to move forward. Another significant challenge identified was the limited integration of multi-modal transportation. In Sri Lanka, logistics operations continue to rely heavily on road transport, despite the cost and environmental advantages of rail and sea transport. Infrastructure limitations, coordination challenges, and lack of supporting facilities restrict effective integration. Addressing these constraints could enhance efficiency, reduce logistics costs, and contribute to long-term operational excellence.

Sustainability and Evolving Expectations

Sustainability has become an increasingly important consideration within logistics strategy. Growing environmental awareness among consumers and stakeholders has placed pressure on organizations to reduce carbon emissions and adopt environmentally responsible practices. Ms. Rumal highlighted that logistics performance is no longer evaluated solely on speed and cost, noting that

"environmental impact will matter just as much"

in the future. While sustainable logistics solutions such as electric vehicles and greener distribution practices involve higher initial investment, they represent an inevitable shift. Organizations that proactively adapt are more likely to meet future regulatory requirements and align with changing consumer expectations. Sustainability initiatives also promote more efficient resource utilization and long-term cost optimization.

Leadership as an Enabler of Innovation and Excellence

Throughout the interview, leadership emerged as a dominant factor influencing innovation and operational performance. Ms. Rumal emphasized that innovation cannot thrive in environments where employees fear failure or criticism. As she stated,

"if people are afraid to speak up, innovation will never happen."

Creating psychological safety within teams encourages employees to share ideas, question existing practices, and contribute to continuous improvement.

She also highlighted the importance of trust, empowerment, and cross-functional collaboration. When employees are trusted with responsibility and encouraged to collaborate across departments, they are more likely to take ownership of outcomes. Such leadership practices support a culture of learning and adaptability, which is essential in a rapidly evolving logistics environment.

Diversity, Talent Development, and Future Readiness

The interview also addressed the importance of diversity and talent development within the logistics sector. Female representation remains relatively low, presenting an opportunity to foster inclusion and growth. Inclusive workplace policies and flexible working arrangements can help attract and retain diverse talent, strengthening organizational decision-making and resilience.

As technology continues to reshape logistics roles, continuous learning becomes increasingly important. While automation may alter how work is performed, human capabilities such as analytical thinking, adaptability, and problem-solving remain critical. Organizations that invest in skill development alongside technological advancement are better positioned to sustain operational excellence in the long term.

The insights shared by Ms. Rumal demonstrate that the future of logistics will be shaped by the effective integration of innovation, leadership, and operational excellence. By combining data-driven decision-making with practical innovation and strong leadership, organizations can achieve greater efficiency, reliability, and sustainable progress. Sustainability and talent development further reinforce the need for a holistic approach to logistics management.

For students and emerging professionals, these insights highlight the importance of viewing logistics as a strategic discipline, not merely an operational function. Success in this field will require adaptability, critical thinking, and leadership - the very qualities that enable the creation of resilient, future-ready supply chains.

Article by

Sanduni Panditharathna

23.1 Batch

B.Sc. (Hons) Operations and Logistics Management

Transforming Logistics Through Innovation and Leadership Towards Operational Excellence

Rapid technological innovation and changing customer needs are reshaping the global logistics industry. In this environment, competitiveness is defined by agility, sustainability, and operational precision, with organizations turning to innovative practices and strong leadership to achieve enhanced results.

Technology leadership is one of the main movers in supply chain efficiency, where process innovations can be leveraged and maximum utilization of information technology to achieve maximum operational results. Leadership and technology synergy has revolutionized logistics system functionality, turning traditional supply chains into complex, adaptive networks.

In the face of such evolving currents, Operational Excellence is the formula for success, the deliberate pursuit of quality, efficiency, and ongoing improvement in logistics operations. It is not a cost-cutting exercise, but a culture of innovation and leadership in the service of long-term competitiveness. This article explains how logistics operations can be transformed when technology and leadership are combined and illustrates these concepts using real-life examples. The focus will be on how innovation acts as an accelerant, leadership is the driving force, and both lead to quantifiable operational excellence.

The Evolution of Logistics in the Modern Business Landscape

Logistics has been revolutionized considerably by globalization, expansion of e-commerce, and rapid technological advancement. Globalization has extended markets and intensified competition, which demanded low-cost logistics networks to address the complex global flows of business.

E-commerce transformed customer expectations of convenience, dependability, and speed and consequently created demand for the logistics providers to become efficient and innovate. The technological advancements such as Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Blockchain have eased operations and made them more transparent through real-time monitoring, optimized routes, and secure payment. The technologies have transformed the logistics operations, which have now been transformed into intelligent, connected, and responsive networks. This move underscores the role of innovation and strategic leadership in achieving operational excellence

because logistics not only helps organizations achieve objectives but also serves as a strategic differentiator in the modern competitive environment.

Innovation as the Catalyst for Logistics Transformation

Innovation is the propelling force behind the contemporary logistics revolution, enabling firms to enhance efficiency, accuracy, and responsiveness in the ever-changing global marketplace. With technological enablers such as automation and robotics, artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, and intelligent wearable systems, logistics becomes smarter, data-centric and customer centric positioning firms like DHL at the forefront of digital logistics greatness. Automation & Robotics: DHL case studies demonstrate how robotics and automation are at the center of reshaping supply chain functions by increasing efficiency, reducing labor dependence, and maximizing accuracy. Solutions such as Goods-to-Person robotics, Autonomous Guided Vehicles (AGVs), intelligent scanning wearable devices, and automatic sorters have been deployed in different geographies to streamline picking, pallet transport, and asset tracking. These solutions have added significant value to productivity improvements (e.g. reduced planning time, reduced picker travel), reduced errors, enhanced space utilization, and green operations. In tight labor and rising cost environments, these technologies offer scalability, flexibility, and enhanced customer satisfaction, while also supporting environmental goals such as reduced carbon footprint and waste.

Smart Systems and Wearables: DHL has employed smart systems and wearables together with automation and robotics such as, Goods-to-Person robots, AGVs, wearable smart scanning (Honeywell Ring Scanner), and indoor robotic transport to enhance productivity, reduce labor cost, increase visibility of operations, and speed up order accuracy. Such technologies help to minimize manual labor, optimize travel routes, and expand more efficiently while maintaining quality and minimizing waste.

Artificial Intelligence & Predictive Analytics: DHL Express has utilized Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven predictive analytics through its Advanced Quality Control Center (AQCC) to reinvent shipment tracking and exception management. Through real-time data feeds, AQCC identifies stalled shipments (exceptions), forecasts their probable delays, and enables operation teams to act in advance to re-route or rectify disruptions. Such AI-enabled visibility enhances reliability, reducing response times, and ensuring better delivery performance. In the broader context of logistics evolution, such forecasting capabilities make operations more productive, improves customer satisfaction and resilience deeper and more resilient especially in the face of shifting conditions of demand uncertainty like the one created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leadership as the Driving Force of Change

In today's dynamic business environment, change is at the heart of organizational transformation. Leaders not only dream about the future but also inspire and energize people to embrace change. Transformational leaders create a culture of innovation by setting directions, inspiring employees, and generating continuous improvement. Transformational leaders' ability to define a compelling vision and overcome change resistance guarantees that organizational goals are achieved successfully. At DHL Freight, leadership was central in shepherding the company through a massive digital transformation. Upon realizing the need to keep pace with the evolving logistics landscape, DHL Freight management developed a comprehensive strategy in collaboration with the Business Transformation Agency (BTA). The Digital Capability Framework underpinned this strategy, enabling the company to close the gap between its operations and global customers' growing demands as well as the digital economy.

Management's commitment to innovation led to the adoption of new technologies, the foundation for greater customer centricity, operational efficiency, and the development of new products and global processes. By creating a culture for change and taking an active role in the company's strategic development, DHL Freight management has led by example,

effectively illustrating the role that leadership can play in driving positive change in the logistics industry.

Achieving Operational Excellence Through Integration

Operational Excellence in logistics is more than just efficiency; it is about reliable, flexible, sustainable, and customer-centric operations. When innovation and leadership are ingrained, logistics systems become resilient and adaptive.

Operational excellence through integration in DHL is the strategic implementation of high-quality warehouse automation systems to achieve enhanced productivity and efficiency. DHL can optimize operations in its global network through technology such as robotic systems, data analysis, and Robotic Process Automation (RPA). By automating core processes like order picking, dispatching, and stock management, DHL can minimize human error, maximize utilization of resources, and reduce turnaround time. End-to-end intelligent operation al integration, such as asset tracking and indoor robot transportation, allows DHL to provide high accuracy and less labor investment with improved sustainability and reduced warehouse space. Integrated solutions like these also allow real-time data monitoring and analysis, providing detailed insights that sustain continuous improvement and improve decision-making. This integrated strategy not only enhances operational performance but makes DHL a leader in digital logistics transformation, making it agile and open to the ever-evolving demands of the global market.

In conclusion, visionary leadership and innovation are the twin pillars transforming global logistics. Technology is an enabler touching precision, agility, and operational excellence while leadership makes sure that these innovations are right in line with organizational goals. DHL's transition to automation, artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, and intelligent systems is a classic case of how technology, in the absence of firm leadership, drives sustained operational excellence. Lastly, true logistics transformation is realized when innovation is led by leaders who motivate people, cultivate a culture for continuous improvement, and translate technological potential into strategic value.

Imandi Omalya

23.2 Batch

B.Sc. (Hons) Operations and Logistics Management

AFTER A/L

JOIN THE NATION'S PREMIER DEGREE AWARDING UNIVERSITY

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY TOWN

BSC IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

(PROJECT MANAGEMENT) (SPECIAL)

NSBM FACULTY OF BUSINESS

AACSB Business Education Alliance Member

UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON, DC

Southern Cross University

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY TOWN

Affiliated exclusively to top-ranked universities

NSBM Green University, Mahenwaththa, Pitipana, Homagama | E-mail : inquiries@nsbm.ac.lk

nsbm.lk

www.nsbm.ac.lk

How E-Commerce Giants Use Innovation and Leadership to Transform Operations

Two decades ago, purchasing products online felt risky and uncertain yet today, it has become a standard shopping method for billions globally. This shift represents more than digitizing traditional retail, it required innovations in technology and logistics, leadership that challenged conventional thinking, and operational excellence at scale. Companies like Amazon, Alibaba, and Shopify demonstrate how innovation, leadership, and operational execution combine to redefine industries, establishing benchmarks for speed, convenience, and customer satisfaction. This article examines how technological innovation, strategic leadership, and operational execution create competitive advantage in digital commerce.

The Innovation Imperative: Technology Reshaping Commerce

E-commerce has fundamentally transformed global retail. Research indicates that by 2024, smartphones drove nearly 80% of retail website traffic (Topic: E-commerce worldwide, 2025) while global e-commerce sales exceeded $6 trillion with continued growth projected through 2029. These figures represent more than changing consumer preferences; they reflect a reimagining of commercial infrastructure. Amazon's approach to innovation centers on what founder Jeff Bezos called the "Day 1" philosophy, maintaining the dynamism and responsiveness of a startup even as the company grew into a global enterprise. The company's innovation culture relies on customer obsession rather than competitor focused strategies. As outlined in Amazon's leadership principles, the company evaluates new technologies by asking whether they solve customer needs, not just whether they represent cutting-edge capabilities. In October 2024, Amazon unveiled advancements in AI-powered robotics, automated delivery systems, and sustainability initiatives.

These innovations enhance both customer experience and employee safety, demonstrating how operational improvements can serve multiple stakeholders. Artificial intelligence has become central to modern e-commerce. Industry analysis shows that AI algorithms handle demand forecasting, inventory optimization,

and warehouse management at a scale impossible for human teams. By analyzing historical data and real -time signals, these systems predict customer needs before purchases occur, positioning inventory strategically to reduce delivery times from days to hours.

Smart warehouse management systems automate picking, packing, and shipping processes, reducing manual labor and human error while accelerating order fulfillment. Mobile commerce has emerged as a significant force, with market research indicating the global mobile commerce market valued at trillions of dollars in 2024 and projected to exceed $7 trillion by 2027.

Yet technology alone cannot drive transformation. Behind every innovation stand leadership decisions that determine whether innovations reach customers or remain isolated in research labs.

Leadership Principles: Guiding Transformation at Scale

Amazon's leadership principles prioritize customer obsession and long-term thinking over short-term profits. Business scholars note that Bezos's willingness to sacrifice immediate profitability enabled investments in infrastructure and technology that competitors couldn't match. The "Day 1" mentality represents a leadership philosophy that actively combats organizational complacency. E-commerce leaders embed innovation into hiring, evaluation, and reward systems rather than isolating it within dedicated departments. According to Harvard Business Review, Amazon sets high standards at both organizational and team levels, measuring progress against benchmarks while maintaining flexibility in how teams achieve their goals. This approach differs from traditional retail organizations. Rather than emphasizing tenure and institutional knowledge, e-commerce companies prioritize adaptability, customer focus, and comfort with ambiguity.

Leading e-commerce companies understand they cannot innovate in isolation. Shopify has built an ecosystem enabling millions of independent merchants to access e-commerce infrastructure previously available only to enterprise retailers. Similarly, Alibaba has created a digital commerce ecosystem integrating retail, payments, logistics, cloud computing, and entertainment.

Leadership vision means nothing without operational execution. The gap between digital promises and physical delivery determines whether customers return or abandon brands

Operational Excellence: Delivering on Digital Promises

The most visible aspect of e-commerce operations is the final delivery to customers. Industry experts identify the "last mile" as a persistent challenge where costs are highest, variables most numerous, and customer expectations most demanding. Leading e-commerce companies have invested significantly in proprietary delivery networks, route optimization algorithms, and experimental solutions like drones and autonomous vehicles.

These investments reflect a fundamental truth: the promise made on a website or app must be kept through physical operations. Research shows the gap between digital experience and physical delivery represents a common source of customer dissatisfaction in e-commerce. Modern e-commerce operations depend on supply chain visibility. Companies track inventory across global networks of suppliers, warehouses, and transportation networks in real -time. Data from the National Retail Federation indicates that e-commerce returns sometimes exceed 30% of purchases in categories like apparel, creating operational challenges. Leading companies use predictive analytics to identify fraud, automated processing to reduce costs and intelligent routing to optimize returned merchandise disposition.

The Integration: Creating Competitive Advantage

The most successful e-commerce companies excel at integrating innovation, leadership, and operations. Innovation without operational capability produces prototypes that never reach customers. Operations without innovation become increasingly uncompetitive. Leadership without grounding in both is likely to pursue strategies disconnected from reality.

Amazon Prime exemplifies this integration. Innovation? A subscription model combined with logistics technology. The leadership decision? Bezos's willingness to invest initially to build customer loyalty. The operational execution? Building a delivery network capable of same-day delivery on a large scale. Each element reinforced the others: better operations justify the subscription price, more subscribers funded infrastructure investment, improved infrastructure attracted more customers.

E-commerce companies create self-reinforcing systems where success in one area fuels success in others. Lower prices attract more customers, increasing volumes that reduce costs, enabling lower prices. These systems depend on integration between innovation, leadership, and operations.

All three dimensions converge in how leading companies leverage data. Operations generate data flows and innovation creates capabilities to extract insights. Leadership ensures those insights drive strategic decisions. Companies like Amazon, Alibaba, and Shopify use data to understand customer behavior, predict trends, optimize operations, and test new ideas.

The transformation of commerce from physical to digital represents a defining economic shift of the early 21st century. Amazon, Alibaba, Shopify, and other e-commerce companies have demonstrated that sustainable competitive advantage emerges from integrating innovation, leadership, and operational excellence.

As e-commerce continues capturing an increasing share of global retail, the digital marketplace will reward organizations that recognize innovation, imagines possibilities, leadership commits resources and culture, and operations deliver on promises. Together, they transform industries and redefine what customers consider possible.

Mewni Sadithma

24.1 Batch

Bachelor of Business: Management and Innovation & Supply Chain and Logistics Management

JOIN THE NATION'S PREMIER
DEGREE AWARDING UNIVERSITY

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY TOWN

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

BACHELOR OF BUSINESS:

DOUBLE MAJOR IN MANAGEMENT AND INNOVATION & SUPPLY CHAIN AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT

NSBM FACULTY OF BUSINESS

AACSB Business Education Alliance Member

UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON, DC

Southern Cross University

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY TOWN

Affiliated exclusively to top-ranked universities

NSBM Green University, Mahenwaththa, Pitipana, Homagama | E-mail : inquiries@nsbm.ac.lk

nsbm.lk

www.nsbm.ac.lk

From Globalization to Glocalization: Re-thinking Logistics Strategies

In an era defined by uncertainty and rapid changes, global logistics landscapes are undergoing various transformations. For decades, globalization was one of the main drivers for an efficient supply chain that brought together factories, warehouses, and consumers worldwide through carefully designed networks. However, with recent global disruptions such as COVID-19, rising geopolitical tensions and environmental threats have exposed cracks and fragility in a once centralized system. As a result of this, we can witness a shift of focus coming from certain logistics companies and leaders. The shift of mindset from a "global" to a "glocal" approach that gives a balance of being present in the global market while also being highly responsive to local markets. Glocalization is a term that combines both globalization and localization. It focuses on building product or services around local markets, while also maintaining a global presence. Glocalization provides the logistics industry with its next step in shaping the future by leveraging technology, empowering regional decision-making, and prioritizing resilience. Organizations can focus on becoming more agile and thriving in an increasingly unpredictable world.

Globalization and Its Challenges in Logistics:

Globalization has long been the backbone of how modern logistics functions. As a trend, it has shown how organizations can optimize production, sourcing, and distribution on a global scale. Over the years, advancements in technology, communication, and advancements in trade have enabled companies to build vast supply networks that maximize efficiency and minimize costs. Firms such as Apple and Zara stand out as leading examples of this era,

coordinating manufacturing, design, and retail operations across regions, from Asia to Europe, with remarkable precision. However, the same interconnectedness that once served as a strength has now become a source of vulnerability. Disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic and rising geopolitical tensions have exposed the risks of over-reliance on specific regions or suppliers. Furthermore, growing environmental concerns and increasing fuel costs have intensified the scrutiny over long-distance logistics operations. As global supply chains continue to evolve and become more complex, organizations face a critical question of how they can remain resilient and competitive in an increasingly uncertain and rapidly changing environment.

The Rise of Glocalization:

With the growing challenges of globalization, many organizations are now adopting a glocalization approach. This strategy blends global coordination with local responsiveness, allowing firms to operate efficiently while remaining adaptable to regional conditions. Glocalization emphasizes tailoring operations, sourcing, and decision-making to meet local market needs, all while maintaining the expertise and advantages gained from global networks. This approach enables companies to become more resilient, reduce their dependence on distant suppliers, and respond more effectively to local demands. A notable example is Toyota, which follows a "local production for local consumption" model that allows the company to manufacture and distribute vehicles within regional markets while supporting local economies and minimizing transportation disruptions. Similarly, Unilever has embraced local sourcing and manufacturing to strengthen supply continuity and contribute to community development. Glocalization, therefore, represents not only a change in logistics strategies but also a transformation in mindset, one that centers on innovation, adaptability, and sustainable operational excellence as the foundation for shaping the future of global supply chains.

Innovation as the Catalyst for Glocal Logistics:

Innovation has become a key enabler for organizations to successfully implement glocal logistics strategies. Through the use of advanced technology such as artificial intelligence, data analytics and blockchains. Firms have access to real-time visibility, improved forecast accuracy, and enhanced decision-making. The use of these technologies allows organizations to bridge the gap between global oversight and local execution, ensuring that operations remain efficient and adaptable. For instance, Amazon utilizes data analytics and local fulfilment centers that prioritize automation to ensure faster delivery and optimize inventory. Similarly, Maersk has introduced blockchain systems to improve transparency and coordination among global and local partners, which helps reduce delays and minimize inefficiencies. Innovation, therefore, not only helps with enhancing efficiency but also strengthens supply chains' resilience and sustainability.

Leadership and Strategic Adaptation:

While innovation focuses on providing tools for transformation, effective leadership is what ensures that glocal logistics strategies are successfully implemented and can be sustained. The transformational shift from globalization to glocalization requires leaders who possess strategic foresight, adaptability, and the ability to empower local teams while maintaining a stable global vision.

In this context, leadership is not about the maintenance of a unified system but inspiring collaboration and resilience across the diverse regions. For instance, during the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, DHL and FedEx were two companies that demonstrated strong leadership through a decentralized decision-making system, allowing regional managers to respond rapidly to supply chain challenges while maintaining alignment with global objectives.

This type of leadership fosters a culture of agility, where innovation and improvements are encouraged at every level of the organization.

Operational Excellence in the Glocal Era:

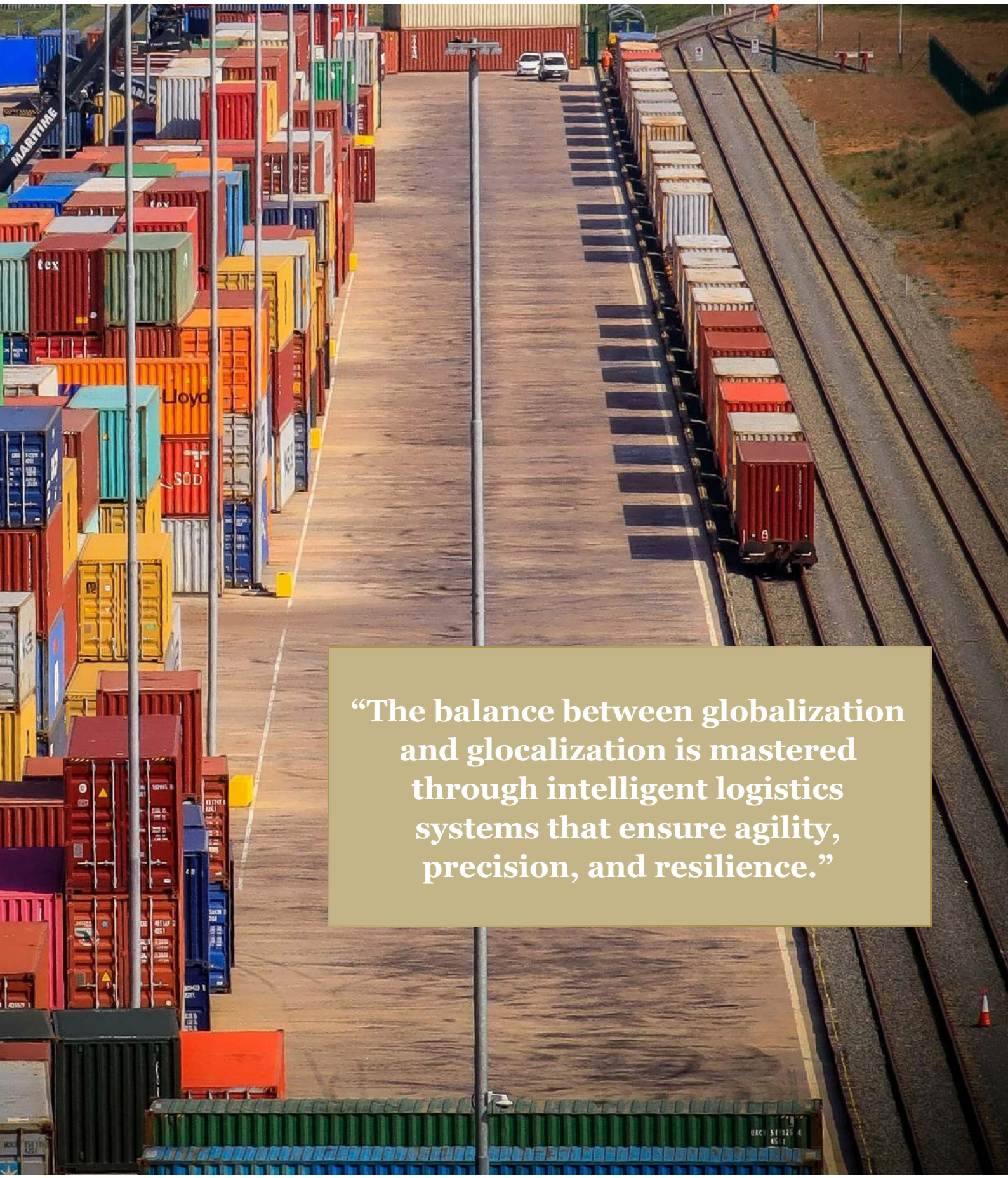
Operational excellence in the glocal era goes beyond the traditional measures of efficiency. It focuses on building logistics systems that are not only cost-effective but also agile, sustainable, and resilient in the era of constant change. Organizations that strive for excellence in this era focus on optimizing processes through continuous improvement, data-driven decision making, and regional collaboration. Lean and Agile methods that were once primarily applied in manufacturing are now being integrated into logistics operations to enhance flexibility and eliminate waste. For instance, DB Schenker, a global logistics provider, has implemented regionally-driven strategies that emphasize local responsiveness while maintaining global performance standards. Ultimately, operational excellence under the glocal framework is about creating a culture where innovation and local empowerment work in harmony. This ensures that logistics operations remain competitive, customer-focused, and are future-ready.

The shift from globalization to glocalization marks a defining moment in the evolution of logistics management. As global networks face increasing complexity and uncertainty, the ability to combine worldwide efficiency with local adaptation has become essential for long-term success. Through innovation, organizations can leverage technology to create visibility and agility, through leadership, they can align diverse teams and empower regional decision-making, and with operational excellence, they can ensure that performance remains consistent across all levels. Together, these elements create the foundation for a resilient and future-ready logistics ecosystem.

Vathila Dilmeth

23.2 Batch

Bachelor of Business: Management and Innovation & Supply Chain and Logistics Management



“The balance between globalization and glocalization is mastered through intelligent logistics systems that ensure agility, precision, and resilience.”

The Human-Tech Balance: Leading the Future of Hybrid Work and Smart Operations

Imagine walking into a manufacturing plant where robots and humans work side by side, machines lift heavy parts with perfect accuracy, while people make immediate decisions that require creativity, empathy, and experience. In the office above, an AI system analyzes real time data from the floor, helping the manager decide how to optimize schedules and reduce waste. Yet, behind every algorithm and automation tool stands a team of humans guiding, questioning, and improving it. This is not a futuristic fantasy; it is the emerging reality of modern organizations.

As digital transformation grows, the future of work will be defined by the balance between human knowledge and technological innovation and the leaders who master this balance will drive true operational excellence. This article explores how innovation, leadership, and operational excellence intersect in the evolving human-tech partnership, showing how organizations can shape a smarter, more balanced future.

Innovation: Technology as a Partner, not a Replacement

As the boundary between human intelligence and digital capability continues to blur, innovation has become a collaboration rather than a replacement. While early automation aimed to eliminate human intervention, the most successful modern organizations are discovering that true progress lies in combining the precision of machines with the knowledge of people. This human-tech partnership is now redefining what operational excellence looks like in industries worldwide.

Collaborative Robots (Cobots): Sharing Tasks, Enhancing Trust

One example of this partnership is the rise of collaborative robots, or cobots. Cobots are designed to share physical space and tasks with human workers. They handle repetitive, hazardous, or physically demanding activities, allowing people to focus on higher-level problem solving and creativity.

At Siemens, for instance, the lightweight KUKA LBR iiwa cobot operates with employees on assembly lines. The robot's torque sensors detect human presence and adjust movement instantly, eliminating the need for protective cages, showing a new level of trust between humans and machines. A 2024 study published in Procedia CIRP further supports this trend, finding that cobot-assisted

environments not only reduce cycle times but also enhance employee satisfaction and engagement.

AI-Powered Decision Support: Improving Human Judgment

Decision support systems now integrate AI and machine learning to process massive datasets and generate insights that humans might miss. However, the final interpretation and ethical responsibility still lie with people. A 2024 review in Expert Systems with Applications found that AI augmented systems in Industry 4.0 improve operational adaptability and accuracy, but only when combined with human oversight.

Real-world cases make this visible. In healthcare, hospitals now use AI-driven platforms to analyze patient data, optimize scheduling, and predict treatment outcomes, yet doctors retain control over all final decisions.

Explainable and Hybrid Systems: Building Human Trust in Technology

As AI is used more in operations, a new challenge has arisen - trust. Many employees do not like to rely on AI because its decision-making process can feel like a "black box." To solve this, organizations are turning toward Explainable AI (XAI) and hybrid models, systems that show how and why decisions are made.

A 2023 study on Explainable AI for Operational Research argues that organizations achieve the best outcomes when algorithms are transparent, interpretable, and integrated with human logic. Similarly, hybrid systems that combine machine learning with operations research methods are helping logistics and supply chain managers balance prediction with optimization, creating results that humans can understand and improve.

Innovation, therefore, is not about replacing humans with smarter systems, it's about designing smarter systems with humans in mind. The future belongs to organizations that treat technology as a teammate, not a tool. But this transformation doesn't happen automatically, it needs leaders who can bridge the gap between digital capability and human skills.

Leadership: Guiding the Human-Tech Relationship

Innovation and tech systems may lay the foundation, but without thoughtful leadership, the human-tech balance fluctuates. Today's leaders must act as bridge builders, translating technological capability into human value, shaping culture, and guiding teams through transformation.

Leading with Empathy and Culture: Satya Nadella's Example

Satya Nadella's leadership at Microsoft shifted the company from internal competition to collaboration, promoting empathy, a growth mindset, and experimentation within its culture. He has repeatedly stated that empathy is not a soft skill but a core business skill. Adopting this approach has enabled Microsoft to introduce AI tools, cloud services, and advanced tech, training people, listening to their concerns and including them in the change process. This helps ensure that innovation does not become disconnected from the human side.

Integrating Vision, Operations, and People: Mary Barra's Balanced Leadership

Mary Barra at GM shows how operations-intensive industries can lead innovation without sacrificing human values. With her background in product development, supply chain, and manufacturing, she understands both technology and the people who implement it. Barra fosters an environment where teams are encouraged to take risks in EVs and autonomous tech, yet she maintains strong discipline in quality, safety, and efficiency. Her leadership includes open communication, listening to operational employees, and removing barriers so that innovation is practical, safe, and people-oriented.

Operational Excellence: Delivering Smarter, Resilient Workflows

Leadership sets the stage, but operational excellence is where human-tech collaboration proves its worth in everyday performance. When organizations integrate innovation with operations and people-centered leadership, results become visible, such as better efficiency, less waste, enhanced flexibility, and higher reliability. Below are examples of how companies are achieving that balance.

Predictive Maintenance: Reducing Downtime, Elevating Equipment Reliability

One strong example of human-tech synergy is how predictive maintenance (PdM) systems pair sensor technology, data analytics, and human oversight to predict equipment failure, meaning maintenance happens before breakdowns, not after. **Valcheq Technologies & Global Manufacturer** built a predictive maintenance system using IoT sensors, machine learning, and edge/cloud infrastructure. The result was a 73% reduction in unplanned downtime, a 45% drop in maintenance costs, and a very high failure prediction accuracy. From this, companies can prioritize critical assets first, while human roles shift from constant firefighting to higher level monitoring, decision making, and process optimization.

IoT in Supply Chain Visibility and Smart Monitoring

Operations become more resilient when organizations have real time visibility over their supply chain, especially perishable or time sensitive goods, and can respond proactively. A major example of this is **Hoskins Equipment**. With over 1,400 pieces of equipment across multiple sites, they adopted sensors, gateways, and unified connectivity tools to track assets, facility conditions and vehicle usage. This allowed them to schedule maintenance better and reduce idle times. This visibility and monitoring give companies control before crises. Real time data enables proactive decisions rather than reactive ones.

Automation and AI to Offload Repetitive Tasks, Free Up Human Potential

Efficiency is achieved when machines handle repetitive work or data processing, freeing humans for creative, strategic, or judgment-based tasks. **Maersk** is working toward "zero-touch logistics," aiming to digitize most parts of its supply chain so that human attention is focused on exceptions, oversight and continuous improvement. Operational excellence, therefore, is not simply about implementing smart machines or fancy dashboards, it is about enabling a system where technology gives visibility and power, and humans bring adaptability, judgment, and continuous improvement. When leadership supports this alignment, innovation becomes embedded in daily work, and the organization shapes a future that is both efficient and human.

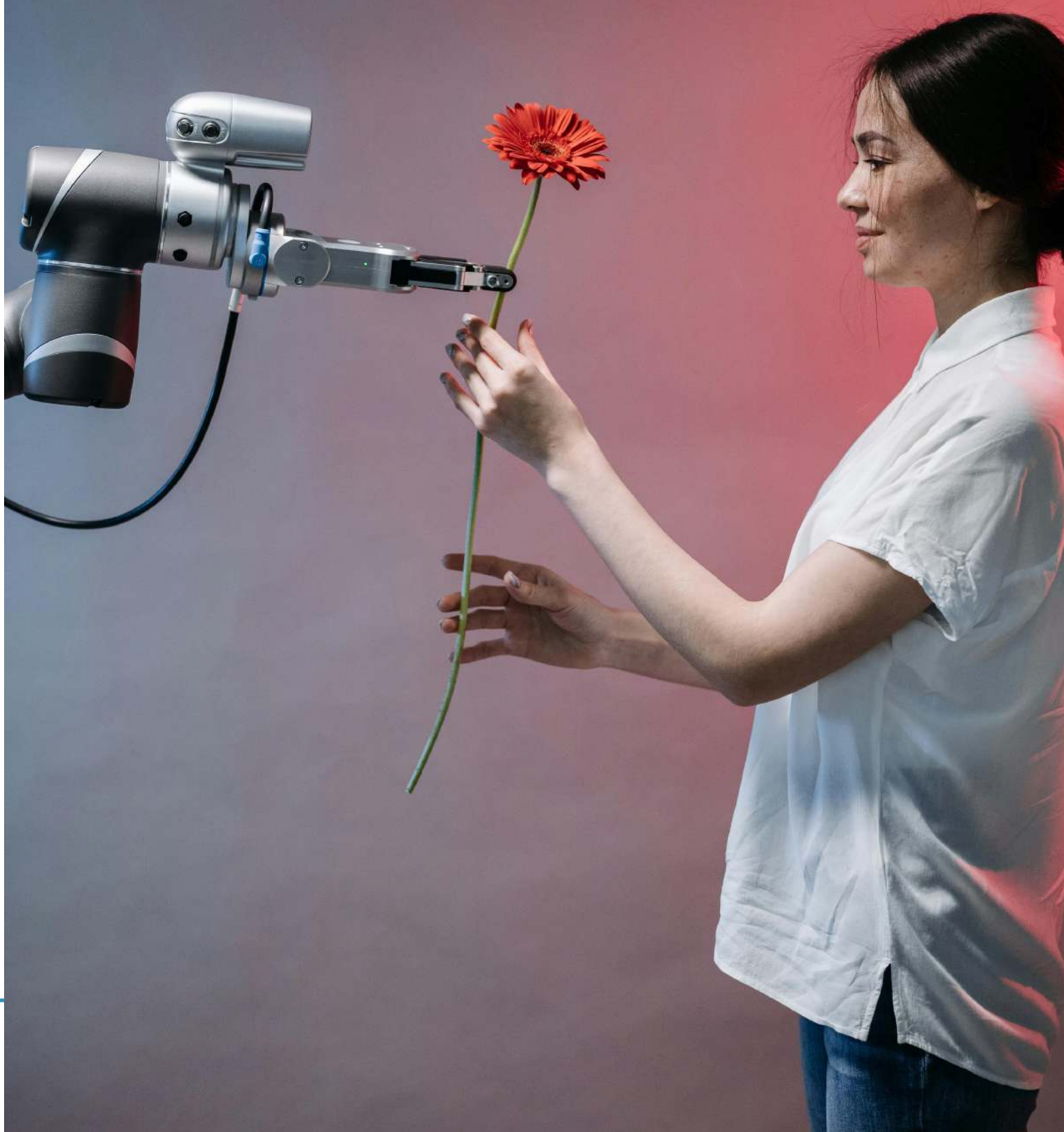
As technology continues to transform how we work, lead, and operate, the true measure of progress lies not in how much we automate but in how well we integrate the human touch into innovation. The future belongs to organizations that see people and machines as partners, each supporting the other's strengths. When innovation is guided by empathy, leadership grounded in purpose, and operations designed for adaptability, businesses don't just evolve, they advance with resilience, intelligence, and humanity. Balancing human insight with technological precision isn't just the next step in progress; it's the foundation for shaping a smarter, more sustainable future.

Thehara Jayawickrama

23.1 Batch

Bachelor of Business: Management and Innovation & Supply Chain and Logistics Management

“When logistics provides the flow, industrial management builds the system, and project management drives execution, robotics and technology become the force that transforms strategy into measurable impact.”



Mr. Jude Jayasingha

Director / CEO at Intermovers Sri Lanka

The Go-Knowing Revolution: Redefining Logistics Leadership in the Digital Age

When Knowledge Becomes the Ultimate Competitive Weapon

In the labyrinth of modern logistics, where containers traverse oceans and supply chains span continents, there exists a deceptively simple concept that separates industry leaders from mere participants. Mr. Jude Jayesinghe, CEO of Intermovers Sri Lanka Pvt Ltd, calls it "go-knowing" – the art of possessing such intimate knowledge of your domain that you can navigate any challenge without hesitation. It's a philosophy born from 21 years of experience, yet it speaks directly to the future of an industry undergoing its most profound transformation since the Second World War.

The parallels to history are striking. Just as ancient Sri Lankan kings employed elephants to transport oversized cargo centuries before the term "logistics" entered our lexicon, today's logistics professionals must harness equally powerful forces not of muscle and mass, but of innovation, leadership, and operational precision. The difference is that while the ancient logistics operations moved at the pace of elephants, today's supply chains must operate at the speed of thought.

The Death of Ignorance

Picture this scenario: A customer asks about shipping a sensitive machine to Mexico. The response? "Let me speak to my manager and get back to you." In Mr. Jude's world, this answer represents more than a momentary knowledge gap, it signals a fundamental failure of professional readiness. "That is not the professional way to handle shipments," he asserts. This is where the concept of go-knowing transforms from philosophical ideal to an operational imperative.

The modern logistics landscape demands what can be called "instantaneous expertise" – the ability to provide informed, accurate guidance at the moment of inquiry. When a client needs a zero-ventilation container to prevent corrosion during oceanic transport, the logistics professional must not only understand the requirement but anticipate the question before it's asked. This isn't about memorizing shipping codes; it's about cultivating a depth of understanding that makes knowledge instinctive rather than retrievable.

Yet Mr. Jude's experience reveals a troubling pattern: even established shipping lines sometimes falter on fundamental concepts. When asked about zero-ventilated containers, one salesperson's response, "Sir, what is zero ventilation?" exposed how surface-level knowledge pervades an industry where depth should be non-negotiable. This knowledge deficit creates cascading failures: delayed responses, misunderstood requirements, compromised cargo, and ultimately, eroded trust.

The solution lies not in individual brilliance but in systematic knowledge cultivation. Organizations must transform training from compliance checkbox to cultural cornerstone. ISO certification demands documented training cycles - quarterly, biannually but the spirit of go-knowing requires something deeper: a learning organization where knowledge flows continuously, not episodically. As Mr. Jude emphasizes, "Training is a must, especially in supply chain and logistics."

From 5PL to AI: Navigating the Innovation Frontier

The evolution of logistics from simple freight forwarding to Fifth-Party Logistics (5PL) integration represents more than nomenclature; it reflects fundamental shifts in how value is created and delivered. "Freight forwarding means you're buying freight from a shipping line and selling to your customer, just buying and selling," Mr. Jude explains. "We don't call that logistics." Traditional freight forwarding involved little more than transactional buying and selling. Today's logistics providers orchestrate complex, technology-enabled ecosystems where artificial intelligence, blockchain, and real-time tracking converge to create unprecedented transparency and efficiency.

Consider the tracking problem: Full Container Load (FCL) shipments can be monitored through shipping line systems, albeit imperfectly. But Less than Container Load (LCL) shipments? They enter a visibility black hole, leaving customers frustrated and service providers reactive. The professional service standard demands something different: proactive communication enabled by technologies like Eagle Eye tracking devices, barcode systems, and mobile-integrated platforms that provide 98% accuracy in pre-move surveys.

This technological imperative extends beyond customer -facing applications. Sri Lanka Port Authority's digitalization journey, including the EDA system implementation, signals recognition that competitive advantage increasingly flows from information infrastructure rather than physical assets alone. Yet technology adoption without a strategic foundation creates what might be termed "expensive automation," digitizing inefficiency rather than eliminating it.

The distinction matters profoundly. Organizations rushing to implement AI across all processes often automate waste rather than value. The wiser path involves first establishing operational excellence through principles like quality, standards, security, and compliance, Mr. Jude's four pillars of operational effectiveness then strategically deploying technology to amplify strengths rather than mask weaknesses.

The Sustainability Imperative: Beyond Carbon Theatre

When sustainability discussions emerge in logistics circles, they often trigger performative responses: tree planting initiatives, carbon footprint calculators, sustainability reports heavy on aspiration and light on transformation. Mr. Jude's perspective cuts through this carbon theatre to identify the fundamental challenge: logistics inherently involves fuel-burning transportation across land, sea, and air.

Honest accounting is sobering. Every kilo-meter travelled by plane, every nautical mile crossed by container ship, every road mile covered by truck contributes to global emissions.

"Carbon footprint reduction begins with efficient transportation methods,"

Mr. Jude notes. Sri Lanka's major freight forwarding companies have begun addressing this reality through systematic carbon reduction programs, including tree-planting initiatives that offset emissions based on distance travelled.

Yet the deeper opportunity lies in efficiency optimization. Reducing carbon footprint begins with eliminating unnecessary transportation through better supply chain design, consolidating shipments, to maximize vehicle utilization, and adopting cleaner fuel alternatives as they become economically viable. This represents sustainability not as corporate social responsibility performance but as operational excellence that happens to benefit the environment.

The integration of sustainability into core operations rather than peripheral programs distinguishes genuine commitment from greenwashing. When environmental responsibility emerges from the same waste-elimination mindset that drives lean operations, it becomes self-reinforcing rather than resource-draining.

Leadership in the Age of Disruption

Perhaps the most pressing challenge facing logistics isn't technological or environmental, it's human. Sri Lanka bleeds talent as young professionals seek opportunities overseas, leaving a leadership vacuum at precisely the moment when industry transformation demands visionary guidance. The irony is acute: an industry that moves goods globally struggles to retain the human capital necessary to orchestrate that movement. Mr. Jude's prescription for aspiring logistics leaders echoes ancient wisdom applied to modern contexts: know your market, analyze your sector,

understand your landscape.

"If you don't know your market then it's like playing blindfolded. You can do sales or you can do business like that, but you have to have a clear idea about your market.".

But the contemporary twist involves recognizing that markets now shift with unprecedented velocity. The traditional approach of learning one's trade through years of apprenticeship must evolve into continuous learning cycles where yesterday's expertise becomes tomorrow's obsolescence. His advice to young professionals is clear:

"Analyze your market, analyze your sector quite often. Then you can have a clear idea, then you can be more innovative."

This creates a paradox: logistics professionals must simultaneously master fundamentals and embrace disruption, preserve institutional knowledge while questioning every assumption, respect tradition while pioneering innovation. The resolution lies in what might be called "dynamic expertise" knowledge that evolves as rapidly as the environment it navigates

The industry must also confront perceptual challenges. Many young professionals view logistics as behind-the-scenes drudgery rather than the strategic, innovation-rich field it has become. Redefining this narrative requires showcasing logistics as a stage where strategic thinking, technological innovation, and leadership excellence converge to solve some of businesses' most complex challenges.

The Automation Paradox

Looking toward the next decade, Mr. Jude identifies automation as the defining shift reshaping logistics. Labor shortages, both current and projected, make this inevitable. Yet automation presents a delicate balance: it promises enhanced efficiency and consistency while raising concerns about workforce displacement and implementation costs.

The Sri Lankan context adds unique dimensions to this challenge. With competitive labour costs and accessible raw materials, the urgency for automation feels less acute than in high-cost economies. This creates dangerous complacency, the comfort of today obscuring the necessity of tomorrow. When cost structures inevitably shift, organizations that delay automation will face crisis-driven implementation rather than strategic deployment.

The solution involves what might be termed “staged sophistication" – gradually introducing automation in areas where it delivers clear value while preserving human judgment where it remains superior. Real-time tracking systems, warehouse management platforms like High-Jump, and pre-move survey technologies represent automation that augments rather than replaces human expertise.

"Without technology, there are no logistics,"

Mr. Jude declares emphatically.

The Prepared Mind in Turbulent Times

As global supply chains grow increasingly complex and disruption becomes perpetual rather than episodic, the logistics industry stands at an inflection point. The organizations and leaders that will thrive aren't those with the fastest reaction times or the newest technologies, they're those that cultivate what Mr. Jude calls “go-knowing” at every level of operation.

This demands more than training programs or technology deployments. It requires cultural transformation where knowledge becomes embedded in organizational DNA, where innovation springs from systematic preparation rather than desperate reaction, where operational excellence represents not a destination but a continuous journey. The future of logistics belongs to those who recognize that moving goods represents only the visible output of a far more sophisticated process:

moving ideas, cultivating expertise, and building organizational capabilities that can navigate any disruption. In Mr. Jude's words,

"Logistics must stick with technology"

but perhaps more importantly, it must stick with wisdom, preparation, and the relentless pursuit of knowledge that transforms uncertainty into opportunity.

The question facing today's logistics leaders isn't whether disruption will come – it's whether they'll be prepared when it arrives.

Article by

Amanda Fernando

24.1 Batch

Bachelor of Business: Management and Innovation & Supply Chain and Logistics Management

"In modern logistics, leadership is no longer just about movement, it is about mastering technology to move smarter, faster, and further."

Agility in Action: Shaping the Future Through Innovative and Adaptive Project Management

In today's dynamic and rapidly changing world, the business environment is also adapting to new changes. As a result, it can be quite difficult to deliver deliverables according to the triple constraints, in line with these changing technological changes and especially the needs of stakeholders who may change frequently, using traditional project management tools. Therefore, project management tools and processes must also be modernized to suit these changing business environments. That is, they must be flexible to withstand changes. The concept of agile project management comes to the fore for this reason

Agile project management is about being flexible throughout the project, delivering the results to stakeholders or relevant customers at regular intervals before the project ends, making relevant updates and adapting accordingly, and achieving the final deliverable. Here, the step-by-step outcome is shown, so that the project can be successfully addressed in the face of new technologies and the changing needs of stakeholders, as well as unstable economic conditions, and can be constantly updated to suit the situation and reach the end.

At the core of Agile methodology lies a distinct focus on innovation. It welcomes innovation through the delivery of continuous feedback, experimentation, and open communication among team members. Rather than waiting till the project's finish for evaluation, the Agile teams keep experimenting and evaluating their deliverables. Such a culture of perpetual improvement motivates the coming up with new ideas and the implementation thereof at a rapid pace. By empowering teams with the right to make decisions, they begin searching for alternatives outside the scope of procedure and produce innovations in order to cater to the fluctuating demands of customers and market conditions.

In an environment marked by high competition and rapidly changing technology, the only reason organizations survive with a competitive advantage and move forward into the future is the abiding capability to innovate.

Also key is the way Agile shifts leadership. It shifts what leadership is in a projectized environment. Agile leadership is commanding or controlling less; It's inspiring, influencing, and empowering teams more to achieve their best potential .

To those who argue that there's a right skill set in an Agile leader, the phrases Agile Leadership suggest a form of tree of knowledge, such as nature, lineage, etc. The Agilist Leader's role. This practice builds trust, increases cooperation, and holds people accountable at every level. Good leaders set the example. These are the leaders who are approachable, assistive, and remove barriers to forward movement. This style of leadership does not only drive successful projects,

Other than innovation and leadership, operational excellence also owes a great deal to Agile Project Management. Derived from customer value and ongoing improvement, the processes become all the more efficient in the longer run. The practice of regular reviews in the form of retrospectives allows the teams identifying weaknesses and pragmatically applicable solutions to implement the same in short term. The all-pervading process of learning and improving thwarts stagnation and inculcates excellence-oriented culture. Further, the thrust in the form of collaboration with the stakeholders implies that the projects get aligned very close with actual demands and thus waste is minimized and resource usage is maximized. Therefore the end result becomes the completion of the tasks and establishment of lasting systems which yield high-caliber outcomes at all times. Operational excellence thus becomes the ongoing process instead of point-specific feat.

What precisely characterizes Agile Project Management is its focus on people. It maintains people at the center with full recognition that people who are inspired are the very ones that create successful results. Open communication, acceptance of difference of opinion, and rejoicing in teamwork are all encouraged. Not only does this allow productivity in increased amounts, but also development of psychological safety the very ingredient in sparking up creativity and innovation. In working environments where people are treasured and cared for, loyalty becomes only too certain, with corollary superior outputs and longer-term performance. This focus on people in Agile allows teams to get the proportions correct in professional rigors and sensitivities and collaboration and produces, in turn, lean and efficient project results and healthy and inspirational workplaces too.

The impact of Agile on software development goes way beyond its origins. Aspects of Agile are adapted in construction, education, healthcare, and financial institutions in order to bring flexibility and responsiveness. Its usefulness to professional institutions and learning institutions is significant since it is one of the distinguishing abilities of the future leaders. In the academic setting, the Agile culture promotes agility among the students and professionals to thrive in the world of ambiguity, to excel when working in teams, and to embrace a flexible nature that defines the twenty-first century. At the mass level to rethink whole organization change or at the small-scale level to spur local communities, Agile offers a pattern where it balances the process of thinking about planning and operational execution. Summing up, Agile Project Management, therefore, is the art of creating the future potential. It provides organizations and individuals with the mentality that it is not dangerous to change but dangerous to remain unchanged. The innovation coupled with leadership and operational efficiency lead Agile to a balanced system where creativity succeeds, individuals are empowered and performance is optimum.

Depending on how one thinks in an adaptive manner, how you can act accurately, and how one can learn on a continuous basis, those

who understand these concepts will determine what to expect in the future of project management; these are some of the tenets that get to the core of an agile mind-set.

The necessity of dynamic and creative management is even bigger as organizations are increasingly vulnerable to technological interference, environmental pressures as well as growing market demands.

The agile methodologies in this case offer a straight answer to such a balance. This framework makes leaders fearless to assault complexity, teams comfortable to flourish in the presence of change and organizations excelling and performing with excellence and integrity. By doing so, it does not only ensure that the project is a success, but also allows the establishment of a future that is based on innovation, liberated management, and healthy operation capacities.

In conclusion, Agile Project Management is a radically innovative process that follows the vein of the very theme, which is called Shaping the Future through Innovation, Leadership and Operational Excellence. It is an attitude of progress, it is a state of mind which takes a flexible mind instead of strictness, the persons to the processes and the end instead of the means. The Agile approach enables companies and individuals to be willing to not only embrace change but also to be the initiator. The future of any digital transformation is the one, which is ready to develop, to collaborate, to innovate, and Agile is the shift which is going to transform the modern challenges into the opportunities of the future.

Dilini Senarath

23.2 Batch

B.Sc. in Business Management

(Project Management)(Special)

Plan Today to Make the Future

In 1966, when Sheikh Zayed became the ruler of Abu Dhabi, the land before him was mostly desert, yet his vision reached far beyond the horizon. Through careful planning and unwavering execution, that vision transformed into the United Arab Emirates we know today. This is the power of planning, shaping the future before it even arrives.

When we look back at history, every innovation and every great achievement came into reality through the idea of proper planning, doing things efficiently, with quality, and in the right way. Planning is not only about setting goals and checking progress, it is about creating a complete roadmap, knowing what should happen each day, each hour, and how every detail fits into the bigger picture. Real planning means preparing everything, from the largest task to the smallest action, with precision and purpose.

The future cannot be built by planning alone; proper execution is essential to create a lasting legacy. A plan begins with a small step, from the first strike of the hammer to the completion of the vision. Execution must happen perfectly, aligned with the project management process. Yet during execution, challenges, problems, and unpredictable situations often arise. In those moments, workers, employees, and all stakeholders need inspiration and motivation from a true leader. Nothing can be achieved without proper guidance.

Every new innovation begins with a small idea, a simple thought with the power to change something. But an idea alone is not enough; it needs a proper plan to become real. That's where planning becomes essential. Project managers play a key role here, they take the vision and turn it into clear and doable steps. They set goals, divide the work, manage time, and ensure everyone works together toward a shared target. Just as a map helps you reach your destination, a well-structured plan helps bring an idea to life. In the end, planning is the first spark that makes innovation possible. If we plan today, we can create the future we dream about.

Plans are the map, but leaders are the compass that guide the team through the journey. Even with the best plan, challenges and uncertainty will always appear along the way. This is where leadership truly matters. A good leader doesn't just give orders, they inspire, support, and motivate the team to move forward no matter what happens. They remind everyone of the goal and help them stay focused when things get tough. True leadership is about setting an example, building trust, and keeping the team's spirit strong. When people believe in their leader, they also start believing in the plan. That energy pushes the whole team to work with confidence and purpose. So, while planning gives direction, leadership gives life to the plan. It is the force that turns ideas into real actions, proving that great execution is always powered by great leadership.

Having a plan and strong leadership is not the end, it's just the beginning. To reach true success, there must be control and continuous improvement. This means always checking progress, identifying what's going well, and fixing what's not. Monitoring and evaluation help teams stay on track and ensure every step moves toward the goal. Great project managers don't fear mistakes; they learn from them and improve with every round. Feedback plays a vital role in this, it shows what can be done better next time. Being open to change and adapting to new situations keeps plans strong and ready for the future. Continuous improvement is what turns good operations into excellent ones. It's a simple but powerful cycle, plan, act, check, and improve. That is how we keep building a better future.

These three qualities work together in a natural rhythm. Innovation maps out the path, leadership drives the team forward, and operational excellence ensures the journey reaches a meaningful destination. Tools like iterative planning, feedback loops, and clear goals make it easier to bring these qualities to life, keeping plans adaptable and future-ready. From small group tasks to larger projects, combining innovation, leadership, and operational excellence creates a flow that feels effortless yet powerful. Together, they don't just complete a project, they shape outcomes today and build the foundation for a smarter, stronger future.

The journey from an idea to a lasting achievement is never an accident; it is built step by step through careful planning, strong leadership, and operational excellence. Today's actions, no matter how small, lay the foundation for tomorrow's success. Innovation gives us the courage to explore new possibilities, leadership inspires people to move together toward a common goal, and operational excellence ensures that every effort is meaningful and sustainable. As Peter Drucker once said,

"The best way to predict the future is to create it."

This reminds us that the future is not something we wait for, it is something we shape through our decisions, plans, and actions today. By embracing innovation, guiding with leadership, and striving for excellence in every task, we have the power to turn today's vision into tomorrow's reality. Truly, those who plan and act wisely today become the architects of a better, stronger future.

Hashitha .S. Jayathissa
23.2 Batch
B.Sc. Business Management
(Project Management) (Special)

"Successful futures are not accidental; they are the result of structured planning, strong leadership, and purposeful execution. What we manage effectively today becomes the achievement of tomorrow."

Overcoming Barriers and Empowering the Future: Women Leading Innovation and Operational Excellence in Project Management

In a world that is constantly fluctuating, project leadership stands as the point of intersection between leadership, innovation, and operational excellence. With heightened complexity, the importance of various ideas and inclusive leadership has become paramount more than ever. Perhaps among the most powerful forces reshaping the profession today are women in project leadership. Long underrepresented in leadership, women are now spearheaded projects that are revolutionary, inspiring innovation, and driving operational excellence across sectors. Their improvement speaks to individual achievement as much as it does to a mass movement toward a brighter, forward-looking, and more relatable future.

Female project leaders are not only breaking glass ceilings in leadership but are building the project leadership of the future in innovative thinking, collaboration, and executional excellence

Breaking Barriers: Women Redefining Leadership in Project Management

Project leadership, especially in sectors like construction, IT, and engineering, has been a masculine profession for many years. However, that out-of-date arrangement has been unraveling. Business houses have discovered that diversity in leadership makes good decision-making and project outcomes possible. Women have demonstrated extraordinary capacity to manage tough teams, to manage competing demands, and to lead from the soul. Those are leadership skills that bring a new radius of leadership that combines strategy and compassion. Ms. Thilini De Silva, NSBM Green University Faculty of Business Dean in Sri Lanka, leads this transformation.

Appointed in 2017, she has spearheaded strategic direction building of the faculty and a soft skills and academic excellence-oriented environment. Her leadership stands out particularly when she has pushed to embed gender studies as a curriculum aspect, a testament to her current PhD research Stockholm University conducts on women empowerment, entrepreneurship, and social media.

Research by the Project Management Institute (PMI) endorses that companies having higher gender diversity among leaders have higher project success and higher innovative outcomes. Female leaders have good communication and collaborative skills that set trust, transparency, and creativity in team members values that are required in project environments of today.

Leading Through Innovation

Innovation lies at the heart of successful project leadership, and women leaders are now being found to introduce innovative, integrated, and visionary solutions. Their leadership philosophy prefers harmony to competition, rendering team members free and comfortable to share ideas openly. This attitude inherently creates innovations as difference of opinions tend to create decision-making . A good example is Dr. Sian Proctor, the first Black woman spacecraft pilot, who was mission commander of SpaceX's all-citizen "Inspiration4" mission. As much as she was a pilot, she was also in charge of the team's daily operations and mental well-being, showcasing how inclusive leadership and innovation converge even in high-tech, high-pressure situations.

In the business world, when PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi redefined project management to a company level when she started product innovation projects and environment initiatives that combined profit and purpose, her leadership revalidated that it has little to do with invention but much to do with strategy, foresight, and compassion.

Female leaders also innovate project approaches. Most have implemented Agile and mixed project approaches, which enable teams to react more quickly to shifting requirements and cut inefficiencies. For example, IT project teams in Sri Lanka's ICT sector, which are usually headed by women project managers, are adopting AI-driven task tracking and data analytics of performance to boost efficiency. Female leaders instill teams to adopt a mindset of experimentation and iterative improvement, enhancing both innovative capacity and team morale.

Achieving Operational Excellence

Project excellence lies at the heart of a successful project. It provides that objectives are achieved efficiently, resources are used judiciously, and quality is never compromised. Women project leaders are strong in this aspect as they bring strategic accuracy together with compassion and a sense of detail. Women project leaders give importance to communication, stakeholder satisfaction, and long-term value creation, which are essential to maintain project excellence.

Gail Kelly, past Westpac Banking Corporation CEO, has headed key operational transformation initiatives that transformed the company into being amongst Australia's most respected banks. Her leadership strategy entailed finding a balance between customer service superiority and process improvement; a good example of how a continuous improvement approach defines operational excellence. Operational excellence under women's leadership often includes a strong emphasis on risk management and collaboration.

Women are actively forward-looking when it comes to risk, emphasizing protection over response. Their collaborative leadership encourages free communication, and challenges are recognized and addressed proactively as a team.

Their approach enhances project deliverables as much as it does the resilience and esprit de corps of the team.

Shaping the Future: Empowerment, Mentorship, and Inclusion

The rising number of women project leaders is redefining the professional landscape of the globe. Empowerment, mentoring, and inclusivity are the new candidates for organizational effectiveness. Mentor leaders are instructing young women to acquire leadership competencies and assume tough assignments. Organizations like Women in Project Management (WiPM) and PMI's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative are sharing their sites of information, education, and professional advancement.

Back in Sri Lanka, programs such as Women in Management (WIM) and SLASSCOM Women Technopreneurs Forum are crucial to empowering women's career growth, coaching, and leadership growth in project-oriented careers. Such initiatives urge potential project managers to ascend to leadership levels confidently and competently.

Educational establishments also play a key role. Universities such as NSBM Green University, under their subject circles and leadership-oriented degree programs, are cultivating a new breed of learners, both men and women knowledgeable about the fact that successful project leadership relies on innovativeness, understanding, and mastery of functioning. Such academic forums instill confidence and critical thinking to ignore conventional ways and establish sustainable leadership patterns.

Project leadership women are redefining the history of success by blending innovation, leadership, and standards of excellence throughout each phase of work. Their process embodies resilience, invention, and a strong sense of good. By dismantling boundaries and creating integrated environments, they are not just controlling projects they are defining the very future of the profession.

From Silicon Valley to Colombo, women leaders are contradicting the fact that leadership lies in authority but in vision and character. Women's further advancement in project management is a step towards a balanced, inclusive, and visionary world. As organizations become increasingly appreciative of the virtues of diverse leadership, the route towards innovation and operational excellence becomes a clearer focus.

The future is for those who lead with a sense of direction and women project managers are among the strongest visionaries shaping that change.

Hasini Isiwari
23.2 Batch
B.Sc. in Business Management
(Project Management) (Special)


“Women in project management lead with clarity, resilience, and vision, turning challenges into milestones and ideas into measurable success.”

Mr. Gihan Fonseka

Head of Civil Engineering & Planning - CHEC - South Asia & Southeast Asia/ Poet/ Trainer/ Motivator/ Mentor

From Plans to Performance: Becoming a Better Version Every Day

Q1: What are the key duties of a project manager on a construction site?

The major obligation of a project manager is to help define and execute the project as effectively, safely, and in accordance with the client's expectations. This could entail project planning, scheduling, supervision, and continuous monitoring. The project manager must be the hub and link between the various people and organizations working on the project to ensure proper flow of information towards common goals.

They are also responsible for making sure that the project resources, in terms of manpower, materials, and machinery, are procured and utilized in the most effective way to prevent waste, unnecessary cost, and time overruns. The project manager must also impose regulatory compliance for legal, environmental, and safety disciplines. The project manager will have to identify different risks and possible issues surrounding different processes and weigh alternatives to prevent time delays and cost impact on the project. The project manager ultimately takes full responsibility for managing the project from concept to finish, ensuring that time, cost, and quality are adequately balanced for each of the different stakeholders involved.

Q2: What will you do to keep the project within the time frame and to budget?

Keeping a project on track with both time and cost is a vital part of project management. This starts with good planning, which involves planning out each activity using project management techniques such as Gantt charts, critical path method, or project scheduling software. I look at the 'triple constraints' of cost, time and quality and make sure none of these elements affect one another.

Budgeting is done with detail, breaking down costs into each element of the project, including materials, labour, equipment and services. A contingency or buffer is also included for unexpected happenings such as or delays due to weather, cost increases (or decreases) or supply issues that may occur.

Conducting regular site visits and progress reviews are also essential in reviewing the completion of works against time. If there is a delay or if there are site issues, then things will happen quickly to correct the issue or put in place a plan so that any site issues will not be too detrimental to the completion of the project.

Communication with all stakeholders enhanced a smooth process in regards to any issues with the project so that everyone knew and expected what was to come. Letting the client know we were going to better industry stakeholder engagement in the project to address issues more quickly, each stakeholder could have an opportunity to provide feedback, so we did not have to wait for a formal meeting.

Q3: What skills do you think are the most important for a successful project manager?

A successful project manager must have a combination of technical, managerial, and interpersonal skills. Technical knowledge lays the groundwork, especially in construction projects, where project managers must understand the engineering drawings and construction materials and methods. But technical knowledge is largely just a foundation; project management knowledge such as scheduling, cost estimation, procurement management, and risk assessment is also a huge part of ensuring a project runs smoothly and is delivered on time.

Soft skills in combination with technical and project management skills are equally important and include communication, leadership, negotiation, and emotional intelligence. The project manager must lead a variety of teams, resolve conflicts with diplomacy, and develop professional relationships with the client and contractors. Project managers must be adaptable as construction can change quickly, and no day is ever the same.

Finally, great project managers are good problem-solvers and can make decisions under pressure. They can make educated practical judgments even when they

have incomplete information, and they can maintain a level head under the pressure of deadlines.

Q4: What methods do you employ to resolve conflicts and challenges arising during a project, and how do you encourage your fellow team members to remain motivated?

Conflicts are a natural occurrence on any construction project, considering the multiple stakeholders, time pressures, and differing expectations. When conflict occurs, my first response is always to promote clear communication. I have found that taking the time to listen to all sides provides a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying issue, rather than the issue being a simple symptom to a much wider problem. Once I know what the underlying issue is, I can work towards a solution that serves both parties while being constructive towards the project objectives.

I firmly believe that working towards a solution publicly is crucial to effective conflict resolution and that it should always be done with empathy, honesty, and fairness. Even when tensions are high and discussions are heated, remaining professional keeps misunderstandings at bay and relationships among the team strong.

As for motivating my colleagues, helping to establish a clear vision and reinforcing the efforts of the team always helps. Communication regarding progress is delivered regularly throughout the project. This includes celebrating milestones as well as individual achievements. A positive, team culture, where everyone feels respected and valued, helps promote a more productive performance. Encouraging professional and personal development through various training opportunities and other skill-building activities helps to retain excitement and commitment from team members to the project. Overall, when team members are motivated, the outcomes are always positive and a team that is working well together is able to operate more constructively as challenges arise.

An effective project is one that delivers on its scope, on time, on budget, and meets the client's expectations for quality and safety. It shouldn't only be thought of in terms of numbers and timelines but in regard to the relationships that were built during that process, and if every stakeholder was happy in the end.

Q5: In your opinion, what makes a project successful, and what advice would you give to someone who wants to become a project manager in construction?

If you are aspiring to be a project manager, my advice is to make sure you have a strong technical foundation tied to engineering and construction concepts, and work to develop your leadership qualities, soft skills like negotiation, problem solving, and emotional intelligence. Set personal goals and then work to improve yourself and track yourself against yourself, not others. Allow yourself to become obsessed with learning, improving your knowledge of what is new, and as such more valuable in the industry you love. But most importantly remember to act with integrity and commitment in everything you do. These are the traits of a true professional, long-term and sustained success will follow.

Q6: What do you do to guarantee communication with clients, engineers, and workers is effective?

Communication is key to every successful construction project. To ensure clarity and consistency, I like to set expectations at the start of the project defining those roles, responsibilities, objectives, and timelines. Then, structured meetings with both owners and the contractor are set to meet regularly, to review and monitor next steps and discuss current issues and track current progress and share updates.

Documentation is important. Every instruction, plan change, and project related decision is documented to create accountability, transparency, and ensure that

everyone is on the same page. In addition, I also utilize digital tools and project management programs whereby we can keep everyone up to date on a real-time basis.

I also think it's important to relay to the construction team that communication is not just about talking about things; it is about ensuring the communicated message is understood by everyone and acted upon. By encouraging feedback from workers and engineers in advance of issues, trust is built amongst the group, early problems are identified, and project issues are mitigated. Having this holistic approach to communication eliminates misunderstandings, increases cohesion amongst diverse teams, and ensures that the project runs effectively from planning to completion.

Article by
Amali Sewwandika
23.2 Batch
B.Sc. In Business Management
(Project Management) (Special)

Project Management 2.0: Where Innovation Meets Execution

Though ideas abound in a world that is changing at a breakneck pace, genuine leaders are distinguished by their capacity to turn them into measurable results. The modern, inventive, and results-driven approach known as Project Management 2.0 combines innovation, methodical planning, and operational excellence. We are navigating this ever-changing environment as project management students, learning how audacious ideas may have a lasting effect when combined with smart execution and leadership. From large-scale university projects to historic worldwide endeavours, the tenets of Project Management 2.0 help us transform our ideas into reality.

The Development of Project Management

Timelines, budgets, and task completion were frequently the main focus of traditional project management; this linear approach allowed for little flexibility. The field has been modified over time by contemporary approaches like Agile, Scrum, Lean, and Design Thinking. These methods teach teams how to adapt to change and uncertainty by emphasizing cooperation, adaptability, and value creation.

Using Agile-inspired techniques like sprint planning, iterative reviews, and retrospectives in our university projects has demonstrated the value of flexibility .

Every project milestone turns into a learning experience, a little experiment that moves the team closer to its objectives, rather than merely a finished work. This development emphasizes that learning and adapting are just as important to modern project management as organizing and carrying out tasks.

Innovation in Action

In Project Management 2.0, innovation is fundamental. It is the catalyst that turns concepts into reality. Globally, Tesla's Gigafactory and Solar Roof initiatives are a striking example. The problem of creating visually appealing yet incredibly functional solar tiles for the Solar Roof was overcome by cross-departmental cooperation, iterative testing, and a readiness to accept failure as a necessary part of the process. Fast scalability, supply chain optimization, and worldwide coordination were all necessary for the Gigafactory while preserving effectiveness and quality.

These initiatives show that innovation is not a random process but rather involves

leadership, teamwork, and organized experimentation. The lesson is apparent for aspiring project managers: in order to have quantifiable impact, ambitious ideas must be combined with purposeful, disciplined execution.

Leadership: Leading Groups Through Difficulties

Results cannot be achieved by innovation alone; leadership makes sure that concepts are guided. In Project Management 2.0, leadership is about empowering groups, encouraging problem-solving, and facilitating cooperation.

For example, consider Sri Lanka's historic Port City Colombo project,. Engineers, contractors, and regulators had to work together to transform reclaimed land into a contemporary urban center while navigating unforeseen obstacles like soil stability problems and tidal effects. Project managers oversaw a variety of teams, making strategic choices and guaranteeing that each milestone complemented the overall goal.

Knowing how leadership shapes results is crucial, even for academic projects. Leading a team involves more than just delegating work; it also involves motivating, coordinating, and empowering others to create and carry out.

Operational Excellence: Bringing Ideas to Life

Operational excellence connects concepts to observable outcomes. Efficiency, quality assurance, organized procedures, and ongoing development are its main focuses. This is best illustrated by the ideas of Agile and Lean, which emphasize executing activities more efficiently, intelligently, and effectively rather than just finishing them.

The Tesla and Port City Colombo projects serve as examples of how operational discipline turns lofty ideas into reality. In addition, putting these ideas into practice through student projects teaches the importance of thorough preparation, iterative improvement, and a steadfast focus on results. In academic and professional contexts, operational excellence may be summed up in a straightforward framework:

idea → Planning → Iteration → Feedback → Delivery → Impact.

The Digital Shift: Smart Tools, Smarter Managers

In today's world, technology is an essential project management partner. Cloud-based collaboration platforms, Jira, Trello, and other tools enable teams to plan, monitor, and carry out projects with never-before-seen clarity. Beyond only task organization, these methods foster transparency, enhance collaboration, and facilitate quick problem-solving.

This digital change is even visible at the university level. With the help of shared dashboards, data analytics tools, and collaborative online project boards, students handle challenging tasks with the same level of rigor as in the workplace.

The difficulty is not in using the tools, but in carefully using them to promote creativity, team dynamics, and decision-making.

Project Management 2.0 shows that technology enhances human ingenuity and helps teams convert ideas into useful outcomes in an efficient and intelligent manner. It does not, however, replace leadership or innovation.

Lessons Learned and Reflections

Project management 2.0 is a mindset, not just a set of tools or techniques. The following are the main takeaways from local and international projects:

Teams are empowered by leadership to handle complexity.

Collaborative, iterative settings foster innovation.

Operational excellence guarantees that concepts result in quantifiable effects.

We may comprehend the discipline, rigor, and inventiveness needed to succeed in professional environments by implementing these qualities even in student work. Modern project management combines vision, execution, and ongoing learning, as demonstrated by projects like Port City Colombo and Tesla's Gigafactory.

The Evolution Ahead: From Project Management 2.0 to 3.0

Project Management 3.0 is anticipated to be the next development in the field. Whereas 2.0 prioritizes iterative planning, organized collaboration, and flexibility, 3.0 promotes empowerment, independence, and results that are motivated by a purpose. In addition to making decisions in real time and balancing technological prowess with human-centered leadership, teams are expected to self-organize.

Many organizations throughout the world are already experimenting with this change. The new era of management is being shaped by hybrid work patterns, decentralized decision-making, and cycles of continuous improvement. Understanding this progression helps students and aspiring project managers get ready for settings where creativity and emotional intelligence are just as crucial as methodology. The shift from 2.0 to 3.0 highlights a fundamental reality: the strength of project management is not in strict control but rather in encouraging impact, resilience, and teamwork - qualities that characterize tomorrow's leaders.

In conclusion Project Management 2.0 is characterized by innovation, leadership, and operational excellence. This method gives aspiring project managers the means to influence the future, from audacious concepts to practical results. The lessons are the same whether working on global projects or academic projects: prepare carefully, lead with vision, innovate constantly, and execute precisely. Project management 2.0 is a lesson for professionals, leaders, and students alike. It is more than just a methodology; it is the link between impact and aspiration.

Ayeshma Liyanage
23.2 Batch
B.Sc. in Business Management
(Project Management) (Special)

“Exceptional leaders don’t chase perfection , they build cultures where operational excellence becomes the standard.”

The Power of Leadership and Operational Excellence in a Changing World

The fast-changing global environment demands that organizations focus on innovation, leadership, and operational excellence to achieve lasting success. Organizations that will lead the future must learn to adapt while using visionary leadership to merge creative thinking with strategic execution. Organizations that will define the future need to adopt innovation as a core mindset, practice leadership as a duty, and view operational excellence as an ongoing development process.

Innovation serves as the fundamental force that drives modern advancement

Modern society depends on innovation as its fundamental driving force for progress. The combination of economic expansion, industrial transformation, and societal problem-solving capabilities emerges from innovation. The advancement from outdated systems to intelligent, sustainable models occurs through innovation, leading to improvements in artificial intelligence decision-making and green technology solutions for climate change mitigation.

The essence of innovation extends beyond creating new products and services. Organizations need to transform their operational methods while developing unorthodox solutions and establishing spaces that support experimental learning. A workplace environment. Leaders must establish this environment by supporting creative initiatives and promoting team-wide collaboration, which fosters innovation. Psychological safety is needed to enable staff members to share their ideas freely without worrying about failure and to recognize attempts that generate valuable learning experiences. Innovation has the potential to transform industries, as illustrated by companies such as Tesla, Apple, and SpaceX. However, innovation is not only the prerogative of large firms

There is a breakthrough in the field of small businesses, start-ups, and even educational institutions through innovative thinking. Innovation does not depend on size or resources but on attitude and the readiness to break the rules and imagine something better.

Leadership - The Human Element of Change.

Innovation is a progressive process, and leadership is a guiding process. Executive leadership is the guide that can direct innovation towards purposeful objectives. During moments of uncertainty, individuals turn to their leaders to get clarity, confidence, and inspiration.

Contemporary leadership has been transformed into something beyond authority and control. In the contemporary world, leaders are facilitators, mentors, and visionaries. They are aware that the best leadership is not about dominating people but enabling them to be leaders. Being empathetic, communicative, and adaptive has become a key quality for modern leaders who must operate in an uncertain world.

The contemporary era of digital change has also created a necessity among the leaders to close the gap between technology and human beings. With the challenges of automation and AI in work dynamics, leaders should ensure that innovation supports human potential, not replaces it. The adoption of technology should be done ethically based on fairness, transparency, and inclusivity.

Furthermore, in the modern context, leadership is not restricted to corporate borders. One of the characteristics of contemporary leadership is social responsibility. Leaders should create not only profitable organizations but also responsible communities. This is expected to be achieved not only by addressing climate change but also by tackling other issues, such as promoting diversity and mental well-being.

Operational Excellence - Turning Vision into Reality

Innovation and leadership are effective, yet without operational excellence, they remain just an abstraction. Operational excellence turns thinking into doing. It is the practice that makes any organization efficient, consistent, and of premium quality in everything it does.

Operational excellence needs a balance between the strategy and the implementation. It involves the continuous improvement of systems, waste elimination, resource optimization, and streamlining all functions to align with the organization's objectives. Methodologies such as Lean, Six Sigma, and Kaizen have been effective in assisting organizations to streamline processes and improve performance.

Operational excellence extends more than technical efficiency. It is also concerned with cultural change. Operational excellence is a joint responsibility of all employees when they understand the importance of continuous improvement, rather than being a management directive. It develops a culture of responsibility, collaboration, and sustainability.

Leaders who instill operational excellence will enable their organizations to challenge inefficiencies and offer solutions. They consider errors as learning chances and not as punishments. By doing so, they end up developing systems that are flexible and sustainable when faced with a change.

The Intersection - Where Innovation, Leadership, and Excellence Meet

A single element will not define the future. It will be influenced by the convergence of innovation, leadership, and operational excellence. In case these three forces are aligned, organizations open their potential.

Ideas emerge through innovation, vision is realized through leadership, and flawless implementation results from operational excellence. They power each other further to establish a dynamic system that is lively and better positioned as time goes by.

Consider the case of Toyota, which has a famous system known as the Toyota Production System. It integrates innovation in process design, leadership focused on employee empowerment, and operational excellence through strict attention to quality.

This synergy has made Toyota not only efficient but also one of the most envied international brands.

Likewise, in the healthcare industry, hospitals that embrace digital transformation enhance patient care through data analytics, effective work, and leadership that prioritize patients. These institutions demonstrate that innovation and operational discipline can work together to save lives and enhance operations.

Challenges and the Way Forward

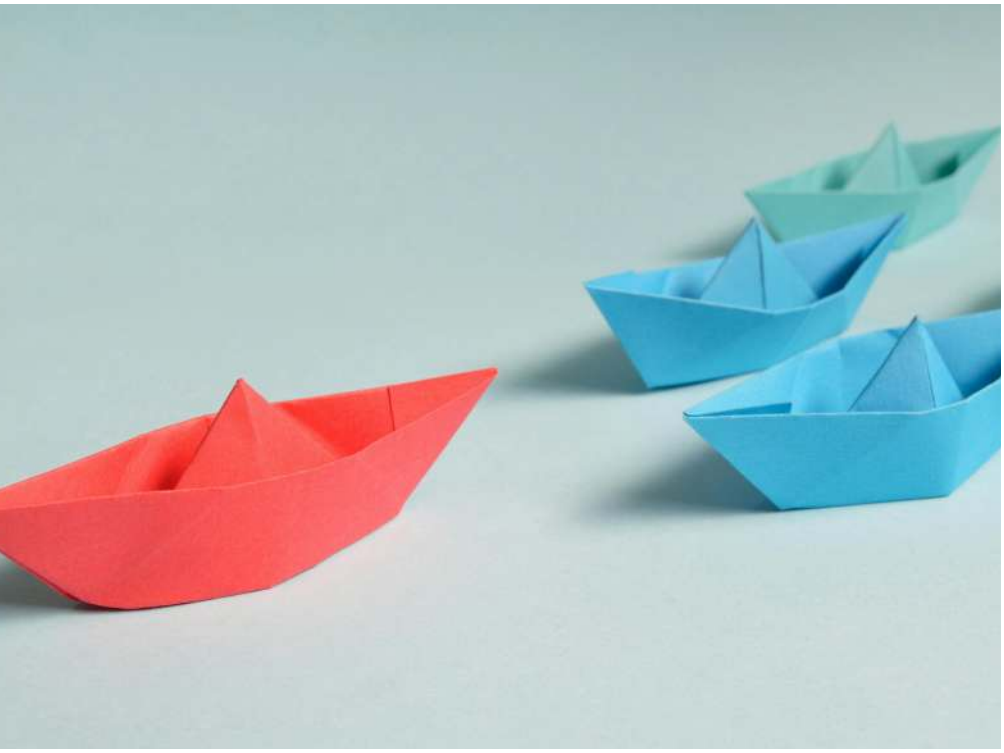
The advantages of innovation, leadership, and operational excellence are evident, but achieving all these is not without difficulties. Change resistance, unsuccessful leadership, and resource constraints are some of the factors that may slow down. Numerous organizations struggle to be consistent while fostering innovation, as the latter may seem opposite to the former.

The solution to these obstacles is for leaders to adopt a growth mindset, viewing change as an opportunity rather than a threat. Employees can be trained and developed to adapt and innovate. Not to mention, the introduction of digital means to make data-driven decisions may increase the level of operational transparency and efficiency.

The role is also played by governments and educational institutions. Societies would facilitate ecosystems to support innovation-led growth by investing in research, enhancing entrepreneurship, and appreciating public-private partnerships. Academia, industry, and government could collaborate to accelerate developments that would positively impact the economy as a whole.

We are looking not at a future that we sit back and wait to have set in, but rather a future that we create. Innovation, leadership, and operational excellence can be used to create resilient, inclusive, and future-proof organizations and society. Innovation is the power that drives development, leadership provides guidance, and operational excellence ensures a lasting impression.

With the current times guiding us into an era of swift change, it is upon each of us as leaders, professionals, and citizens to play a role in creating a better tomorrow. Through embracing creativity, integrity, and constant improvement, we will be able to convert challenges into opportunities and visions into reality. It is a journey to the future that starts today, and the boldness to be first, the interest to innovate, and the skill to achieve the best.



R P G P Sathsarani

23.2 Batch

B.sc. in Business Management
(Project Management) (Special)

Beyond Boundaries: Global Leadership, Technological Innovation, and the New Era of Project Management

A few years ago, project management looked completely different. Teams gathered in one place, shared ideas on whiteboards, and followed strict schedules. Communication was often slow and formal, and most coordination happened inside an office. The biggest technological hurdle was getting everyone on the same video call.

Today, that world has transformed. Projects have moved beyond buildings, cities, and even borders. Teams now work across multiple time zones, using advanced tools that make real-time collaboration possible. A designer in Sri Lanka can brainstorm with a strategist in Germany or a developer in Canada. The once 'local task' of managing a project has become a truly global experience, one that blends people, technology, and culture in exciting new ways.

This transformation has also reshaped what it means to be a leader. Modern project managers must be adaptable, digitally aware, and emotionally intelligent. They are not only managing tasks but also connecting people, guiding innovation, and keeping teams united across boundaries. The new era of project management is not just about delivering outcomes but about leading with vision in a world powered by technology. For example, Tim Cook (Apple), Satya Nadella (Microsoft), and Sundar Pichai (Google) show modern leadership by guiding global teams, encouraging new ideas, and using technology. They focus on teamwork, clear communication, and helping diverse teams work well together to complete projects successfully across different countries.

From Traditional to Global Project Management

The traditional style of project management focused on structured plans and linear progress. Leaders worked with teams they could see daily, using fixed schedules and repeated steps. But as technology advanced and world connections grew faster, this model became too limited. Today's environment demands flexibility.

Projects now involve diverse teams from different regions, cultures, and professional backgrounds. Managing such teams requires more than checklists and timelines, it calls for cultural sensitivity, open communication, and an understanding of how technology supports collaboration.

A project manager in the modern world must act like a bridge connecting people, platforms, and processes to achieve common goals. Those who cling to old systems risk falling behind, while those who embrace change lead the way into the future.

Global Leadership in the Digital Era

Leadership in project management has evolved from command and control to connection and collaboration. The modern leader does not stand at the front giving orders, instead, they create an environment where everyone contributes their best ideas no matter where they are.

Global leadership today focuses on building trust across diverse cultures and languages while understanding how technology influences teamwork and communication. Modern leaders inspire creativity and problem solving as an alternative to strict rules, encouraging innovation to grow. They also manage virtual teams effectively, ensuring that every member feels a strong sense of belonging and shared purpose despite geographical distances.

True leaders go beyond supervising; they inspire. They transform geographical distance into diversity of thought and make every voice matter. This human-centered approach strengthens motivation and performance, even in the face of uncertainty.

Modern global leaders combine cultural awareness, digital fluency, ethical integrity, and adaptability to thrive in today's interconnected world. They recognize the importance of understanding cultural differences, promoting respect and teamwork among diverse groups. Being confident with technology, they effectively use digital tools such as AI platforms, dashboards, and cloud systems to guide decisions and improve transparency. With this power, they also carry the duty of acting ethically; safeguarding data, preventing bias, and ensuring fairness in every process. Above all, they maintain a clear vision while adapting to global changes, turning emerging challenges into new possibilities for innovation and progress.

Technological Innovation: The Engine of Modern Project Management

Technology is not just supporting project management, it's driving it. Digital platforms have replaced traditional paperwork, and automation has taken over routine tasks. The result is faster, smarter, and more collaborative workflows.

Smarter collaboration tools like Asana, Monday.com, Trello, and Slack have made remote teamwork more seamless by centralizing communication, tasks, and updates in one space. This reduces confusion and keeps everyone accountable, allowing team members in different locations, whether Colombo or London, to access information instantly. Artificial intelligence and automation have introduced predictive accuracy into project planning by forecasting delays, detecting risks, and optimizing resources automatically. AI also handles repetitive tasks such as updating schedules or analyzing reports, giving project managers more time for creativity and decision-making. Real-time, data-driven insights enable leaders to make informed choices rather than relying on assumptions. Performance dashboards display what is working, what is delayed, and where costs are increasing, making teams proactive, improving efficiency, and enhancing overall morale.

Technological innovation has made project management more dynamic, but it also demands that leaders keep learning. The tools evolve constantly, and those who fail to adapt risk being left behind.

Adapting Project Management to a Global Scale

When a project spans multiple countries, leadership is about staying connected and clear. The best project managers keep the team aligned without controlling every little detail.

Effective global leadership requires mastering remote teamwork, diverse resource management, and agile thinking. Leading remote teams begins with trust leaders setting clear goals, promoting open communication, and using transparent progress tracking to keep everyone aligned. Through asynchronous communication, teams across different time zones can stay productive without unnecessary late-night meetings. Managing diverse resources adds another layer of complexity, as global projects must navigate different laws, tax systems, exchange rates, and cultural practices. Successful leaders rely on centralized tools to coordinate operations while staying adaptable to unexpected changes. At the same time, applying an agile mindset worldwide means valuing flexibility, feedback, and continuous improvement. Instead of rigidly following a single method, leaders tailor Agile principles to each region's unique pace and work style, ensuring constant learning and adaptability across borders.

"Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower."

By Steve Jobs

Project management has entered an age without borders. Technology, globalization, and innovation have erased traditional limits of time, place, and structure. What was once a local discipline had become a global network of collaboration.

The leaders who thrive in this environment are not defined by authority, but by adaptability and vision. They embrace technology as a tool for empowerment, not control. They understand that diversity fuels creativity, and that empathy builds stronger teams than strict rules ever could. As artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and remote collaboration continue to evolve, project management will become even more connected, and data driven. But no matter how advanced technology becomes, leadership will always rely on human values, trust, respect, and understanding.

The future of project management belongs to those who can balance new ideas with understanding, logic with creativity, and technology with a human touch. Beyond limits lies a world full of opportunities, where leaders guide not just projects but people toward a smarter and kinder global future.

Nadishka Ranaraja
23.2 Batch
B.Sc. in Business Management
(Project Management) (Special)

Driving Excellence: The Role of Innovation and Leadership in Quality Management and Industrial Transformation

Mr. Asanga Haputhanthri
General Manager | Plant Manager
Global Rubber Industries Pvt., Ltd.

Q: Good evening, sir. Could you please introduce yourself, your current workplace, and your position?

I have worked across several industries during my career. I began in total engineering and precision engineering, providing industrial support and vibration analysis services. Later, I moved to the plantation industry, followed by the glass and rubber industries. Over the years, I have worked with a range of rubber products such as gloves, mattresses, and tires. Altogether, I have around 25 years of experience, which has given me sound knowledge in multiple industrial sectors.

Q: From your perspective, how do innovation and leadership contribute to achieving operational excellence in modern industries?

The two binding factors that, therefore, shape and drive organizations toward their goals of operational excellence are innovation and leadership. Though leadership itself may provide a route and give shape, innovation is what brings transformation. Innovation can only arise when a positive attitude thinks of new ideas that can then be manifested in one's actions and improvements in the processes.

This process leads to gradual, incessant improvement within an organization. Combined, innovation and leadership reshape processes and introduce new technologies that develop modern business models, thereby enhancing efficiency, reducing costs, and improving quality. Leadership, outside of all this, plays a very important role in the building of strategies that provide organizations with a competitive advantage. It helps in the development of an organizational culture supportive of customer satisfaction, stakeholder engagement, and employee involvement. The organization gains sustainable operational excellence when the employees are regarded as business partners and encouraged to think innovatively.

Q: What are the key elements of a strong quality management system that organizations often overlook?

The quality mindset is the foundation of a good quality management system. It cannot be built overnight, as it requires discipline, trust, and consistency. In bringing about a quality mindset among employees, guidance must be provided to employees for positive thinking and ownership of work. Some key elements include:

- Building discipline in the organizational culture.
- Encouraging emotional intelligence and mutual trust. Maintenance of standard, stable processes.
- Encourage open, two-way communication between management and staff.
- Engaging employees in problem-solving and innovation. Identifying skill gaps and providing training.
- Encourage data-driven decision-making through such aids as control charts and Pareto analysis.

Perform continuous improvement by using PDCA and Kaizen methods. Both "raw Kaizen" (employee ideas) and "process Kaizen" (technically analyzed improvements) play a vital role in fostering a culture of quality and continuous improvement.

Q: How can industrial managers balance efficiency, cost, and quality in a highly competitive environment?

The managers need to understand, first of all, their market and product positioning. Some customers, for example, are focused on price, others on quality, or finally, brand value. Strategy, combining practices and tools, is the only way to balance efficiency, cost, and quality.

The Lean principles have proved very effective to eliminate waste, reduce cycle time, and cut activities not add value. The managers shall also conduct a proper cost analysis-segregating fixed and variable costs-and focus on the reduction of variable costs by optimizing the processes. Other technologies and automation, such as applications related to Industry 4.0, further enhance efficiency through reduced human error and better data visibility. Additional optimization of the supply chain can be performed using techniques like Just-In-Time, which will reduce procurement and inventory costs. These strategies put together help managers maintain highly qualitative products, keeping the cost at a minimum and operations efficient.

Q: In your experience, how has technology influenced the evolution of quality management practices in the past decade?

Technology has transformed the quality management system into a comprehensive data-based one. Decision-making has to be based on rational analysis rather than emotion. Converting raw data into process data is how organizations are able to apply different tools of quality, such as control charts, to monitor trends and variations and take corrective actions. Data analytics permit

continuous improvement and maintain quality consistency. Organizations can make appropriate, evidence-based decisions that can offer enhanced quality and productivity by reanalyzing performance data with the use of technology and continuous improvement projects.

Q: What role do employees play in sustaining a culture of continuous improvement and operational excellence?

The success of any organization always comes from the heart: the employees. Building a great culture starts with them. A focused target culture, where key performance indicators are clear, helps employees align their efforts towards organizational goals. For operational excellence, employee participation is crucial. Through their ideas and experiences, innovation and improvement take place. They gain their knowledge from hands-on work, which is called tacit knowledge, but is really very valuable. Theoretical knowledge provided by managers is much more effective when combined on the ground.

Ownership and accountability of the employees need to be encouraged for suggestions and improvements. Regular training, benchmarking with other industries, and maintaining two-way communication help to continue the culture of continuous improvement.

Q: How can young professionals in industrial management prepare themselves to become future leaders in quality and operations?

Many of the youngsters entering the industry, though with a strong theoretical background, are only theoretical. They need to apply their experience on the floor and learn how operations work in the industrial world. Working on the shop floor allows them to identify problems, understand practical challenges, and apply what they learned in theory. This helps them develop critical thinking and creativity. They should also learn to see the big picture and focus on long-term solutions rather than temporary fixes. Curiosity and problem-solving are essential qualities for future leaders. The ability to convert data into meaningful decisions is also a vital skill for anyone aspiring to excel in quality and operations management.

Q: What are some common challenges organizations face when trying to implement operational excellence frameworks, and how can they overcome them?

One of the major issues is the resistance to change. When companies introduce automation or job rotation, some employees sometimes feel insecure about their roles. Organizations will have to pay more attention to employee development in the direction of multi-skilling their teams and ensuring flexibility.

It is also very relevant that employees be trained to take rational and not emotional decisions. Continuous learning, open communication, and strong leadership will ensure such transitions are managed well.

Q: Could you share an example where innovative thinking led to a significant improvement in operational performance?

Yes, there was a factory that I worked with that had high costs and low efficiency. We started with value stream mapping, noting non-value activities. Mechanization, automation, and study of the process led to a reduction of 50% in throughput time

and workforce from 700 to 400 through natural wastage without productivity being hampered. This project amply demonstrated how out-of-the-box thinking and optimization can transform operational performance and provide tangible results.

Q: How can collaboration between academia and industry help shape the future of industrial management and quality enhancement?

The collaboration between universities and industries is essential. It will allow academic knowledge to be applied and tried out in environments that will create new opportunities for innovations. The role of universities should be to assist industries in using emerging technologies, such as AI and image processing in quality control, through internships and projects. For instance, automatic defect detection systems using image processing can reject defective products on the line itself. Such innovations are only possible when academia and industry go hand-in-hand.

Q: Finally, what message would you like to share with university students who aim to contribute to shaping the future through innovation, leadership, and operational excellence?

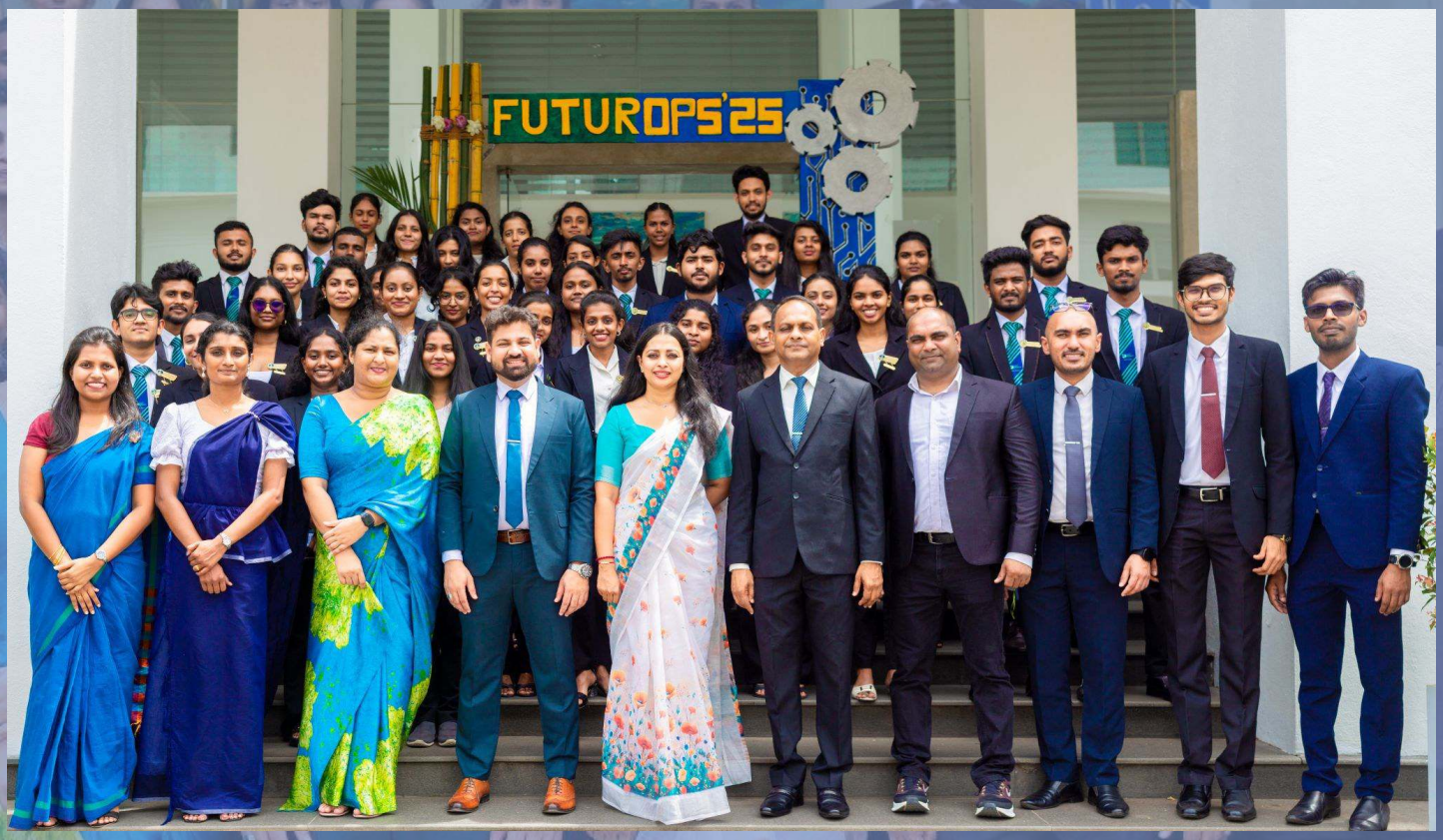
My message is for the students first to understand their leadership styles—whether it is transformational, transactional, or authentic—and how it aligns with their goals. Effective leadership calls for one to be self-aware and adaptive. The focus of students should also be on data-driven decision-making, as data connects leadership and innovation with operational excellence. Learning to process raw data for insightful decisions will enable them to lead transformation in any industry. The ingredients of leadership and innovation go hand in glove, and together form the bedrock of industrial excellence.

Article by

-Janani Mudalige
22.2 Batch
B.Sc. in Business Management (Industrial Management) (Special)

-Deepan Madhushan
23.2 Batch
B.Sc. in Business Management (Project Management) (Special)

A Throwback to 2025




IMMINENT' 25


NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY TOWN
UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA
NSBM CONVOCATION WEEK 2025

"Driven by purpose, united by passion, 2025 stands as a testament to our growth, resilience, and operational excellence."

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY TOWN

NSBM Green University

Mahenwaththa, Pitipana, Homagama, Sri Lanka.

+94 (11) 544 5000 www.nsbm.ac.lk nsbm.lk nsbm_srilanka

+94 71 244 5000