Inaugural Edition—A Word from the Editors

Dear Reader,

Thank you for opening the first edition of *The Bullwhip*. Inside, you will find articles written by students from the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill Operations Club about the experiences they’ve had and the knowledge they’ve gained this year as developing professionals and students of operations.

Our Vision & You
While this edition of *The Bullwhip* focuses on UNC, our hope is that reading about the exciting things UNC Operators—that is operations students—have done or learned will inspire you to join *The Bullwhip* team and contribute what makes you, your club, and university special. Our earnest desire is that this newsletter would create something rare—a bullwhip effect of students having an increasingly greater impact on their peers, schools, and workplaces, supported by the best wisdom and knowledge other students and schools around the world have to offer.

Contribute to the Fall Edition by May 1
Space in the fall edition of *The Bullwhip* has already begun to fill up! Reach out to us by May 1 if you have an idea for an article or have questions, please use the contact information on the last page. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Elliot Orenstein
Chief Editor

Jacob Baldwin
UNC Operations Club President

“The purpose of education is to share our knowledge with others”

- Dr. David James
The Great Education Debate

In This Issue

- Forecasting the Future: Supply Chain Management and Lowe’s
- A Summer in the Amazon (Leadership Program)
- Still Searching for a Summer Internship?
This year, the Kenan-Flagler Operations Club was fortunate to host Eric Johnson, Vice President of Inventory Fulfillment and Optimization at NC-based Lowe’s Companies, Inc., and learn from his 20+ years of experience.

Industry Trends & Lowe’s Adaptations

Johnson explained that due to increased competition in recent years from low-cost online retailers, Lowe’s has implemented critical adjustments to its supply chain to enhance its cost structure. During sales and operations planning (S&OP), information about infrastructure and dependencies is being readily shared to a greater extent in order to expand mutually beneficial partnerships. Also on the rise is a breakdown of the supply chain into individual channels of products. Therefore, inventory can be moved more quickly and the resulting savings can be passed on to customers through short-term promotions. Lowe’s has undertaken the process of streamlining large distribution facilities into regional market hubs, which further reinforces Johnson’s notion that there is a competitive advantage in taking risks and investing in the “experience of the future.” With these strategic changes come additional challenges in minimizing transport costs. Nonetheless, the prominence of technology in optimization will ensure that supply chain management is a viable career path for innovators who can find new applications for their degree and their relevant real world acquisitions when the marketplace fluctuates.

Student Take-Aways

Students were curious to learn more about undergraduate experiences that could help develop an executive skill set. Aside from the all-important junior-year internship, Johnson reinforced the benefits that come from understanding corporate psychology and organizational agility when participating in team projects. Ultimately, a firm grasp on industry knowledge will not elicit positive gains if decision-makers are not proficient at interpersonal communication. Johnson’s simple message struck me when he spoke about the fine line that persists between servant leadership and conflict management because it reminded me that a company’s capabilities are reliant on people skills; human capital can be the tipping point even in a sector that revolves around impersonal inventory.

Forecasting the Future: Supply Chain Management & Lowe’s Corporation

By Danielle Fraley, University of North Carolina

Lowe’s operates 1,750+ stores in NA, serving more than 15M customers each week.
IT'S TIME to talk about internships! Are you curious as to where to find internships? Do you feel like you would be a good candidate but don't know where to begin? Most universities have numerous options and ways to match up companies with those looking for internships.

Career Services
Your university’s Career Services (CS) website is likely a great source of internship information. Find internships that are sponsored by your school through the website search feature and by reading CS emails. Leveraging these resources will fast-track your internship search. Additionally, CS provides a wide array of educational resources about networking, cover letters, and the like.

MICHAEL BOJANSKI, a senior Business Administration major and Operations concentration at the Kenan-Flagler Business School, interned with Amazon last summer and accepted an offer to return full-time after he graduates in the spring. I sat down with Michael to learn about what an internship at Amazon is like:

What was your role with Amazon last summer and how did you become interested?
I was an Operations Leadership Intern last summer, which is a program that puts college juniors in fulfillment centers across the country. The goal is to train interns for an Area Manager role, the entry-level position to warehouse and system management. I became interested in Amazon because I felt like they had strength in operations. From my own experience receiving packages and from reading case studies in class, I knew Amazon was a leader in their field.

Walk me through a typical day
Each day, I would come in around 6AM to do a floor walk with my manager before the shift started at 7AM. During the day I would help as we allocated labor, trained associates, and kept track of incoming volume. At the
end of the shift, we would check our rates for the day and note any problems encountered. As time allowed during the day I would work on my different projects.

**So, did you get to see any drones?**

Nope, no drones! Though I wish I could have worked on the program. The interns all flew up to the Seattle headquarters for a week, and we met with senior executives who gave us a great overview of several initiatives Amazon was working on.

**What’s something most people wouldn’t know about Amazon?**

Unlike many large companies, Amazon expects you not to just manage a system but to improve it; you have to leave things better off than you started. They give their employees freedom to suggest and implement changes. They are willing to sacrifice consistency between fulfillment centers to allow for the great ideas to surface and spread.

**From your own experience, what would you say the culture is like?**

Amazon has a strong culture of meritocracy. Employees are pushed to perform through many different avenues, and there are metrics for almost everything imaginable. Meeting rate (daily quota for whatever function) is difficult if you don’t focus, whether you are someone unloading trucks or a manager ensuring a shift unloads all the necessary trucks. As a result, employee turnover is high. However, I believe though that Amazon rewards those who rise to the occasion. It’s a great place to work if you want to try hard and be recognized for your efforts.

**What was your favorite part of your experience with Amazon?**

I initiated a project to install computer monitors in several sections of the warehouse to display how full individual aisles were. With monitors, not only did I save the warehouse over $12,000 a year in printing and labor costs, I also enabled the capacity information (which was usually printed every four hours) to update as quickly as every 30 minutes. It was rewarding to see such a tangible impact on a project I put so much effort into.

Elliot Orenstein, University of North Carolina

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**LinkedIn**

One of the best ways to develop a professional profile of your experience, skills, and activities is to sign up for LinkedIn. The online networking company has expanded drastically over the past few years and is now a reliable way for recruiters and potential employees to connect.

**Relationships**

Another effective way to find and be chosen for an internship is through your personal network. Don’t overlook anyone—professors, peers, and relatives are more than willing to support your search.
About UNC Operations Club

The Undergraduate Operations Club at Kenan-Flagler Business School is a student-led organization that serves the needs of undergraduate students interested in the operations discipline or operations-related careers.

Our goal is to educate students on operations careers, provide connections to potential employers and faculty resources, and foster an environment of intellectual curiosity and practical guidance to better prepare them for their careers and lives beyond college.

The operations concepts and knowledge students gain in the classroom are complemented by the club with hands-on, real-life experience through facility tours, guest speakers, recruiting events, interactive activities, case competitions, and meet-and-greets with Operations Department faculty and alumni in the field.

A Special Thanks

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Professor Bin Hu  Michael Bojanski

Contact Us

Please email or call if you have questions, corrections, or want to become involved.

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In Next Edition:

- ZF Friedrichschaften Case Study
- Careers in Operations: By the Numbers
- An article from your club or university! Contact us by May 1