

Sharp & Carter

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# The Battle for Talent | Supply Chain Talent Insights



# The Battle for Talent | Australia's Strategic Imperative

The Supply Chain Talent Landscape in Australia is undergoing a transformative shift, driven by unprecedented competition for talent. This “Battle for Talent” is intensifying, with job advertisements in the supply chain sector surging by 33.4% in June compared to pre-COVID-19 levels across the same period in 2019 (Seek). In the last 30 days alone for example, 2,906 Supply Chain Planning roles have been advertised across Australia. The urgency to attract and retain skilled professionals has never been higher, as businesses navigate complex global supply chains and strive to maintain resilience amidst ongoing disruptions.

## RISING DEMAND AND SALARIES IN SUPPLY CHAIN

The increase in job advertisements is a clear indicator of the heightened demand for talent. This surge reflects broader trends where supply chains have become more intricate and critical to business success. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities and prompted a reevaluation of supply chain strategies, and additional factors, such as Shipping companies avoiding conflict zones, which has led to higher operational costs. While these measures are vital for safety, they add complexity and costs to supply chain operations, leading to an intensified focus on securing skilled professionals who can drive efficiency, innovation, and resilience.

In response to this demand, advertised salaries in the supply chain sector have risen significantly. Over the past 12 months, salaries have grown by 3.5%, with a 0.9% increase observed in the past three months alone. Tasmania stands out, with advertised salaries in the state rising by 6.7% year-over-year, outpacing the rest of the nation (Seek). This trend is not confined to Tasmania; all states and territories have seen advertised salaries grow faster than inflation in the year to April, highlighting the broad-based nature of this competition.

Moreover, supply chains are now considered less of a cost centre and more of a value driver, essential for maintaining business continuity and fostering growth. This paradigm shift underscores the strategic importance of attracting top talent to enhance supply chain performance.

## ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC SHIFTS

There has been a notable decline in senior positions across all Supply Chain facets over the past 12 months. SME's to large ASX organisations have nearly all felt the pinch, yet, roles with salaries ranging from \$120-200k+Super continue to be in high demand, as reflected by current Seek and Sharp & Carter live job data. This shift stems from an imbalance in management structures, which became excessively top-heavy during the economic boom of 2021-2023. Since 2023, layoffs have primarily targeted senior roles, indicating a deliberate effort by organisations to streamline leadership while safeguarding core operational capacities.



## Key Areas of High Demand and Talent Shortages

Organisations in Australia face significant challenges in recruiting across critical areas such as Demand and Supply Planning, Warehouse Management, and Procurement and Supplier Management; not only is it a competitive landscape with often complex hiring processes, but up to 80% of Talent is passive at any given time (and not directly applying to job adverts) (LinkedIn). Understandably, this significantly narrows the pool of available talent for organisations reliant on adverts. For strategies to engage and retain the active 20% of talent, refer to our previous resource on [employee retention strategies](#), which covers stay interviews, performance reviews and goal setting, and leadership development.

### KEY SECTORS EXPERIENCING TALENT SHORTAGES:

#### 1. Supply Chain Planning

Organisations need to act swiftly to secure competent Demand and Supply Planners, essential for optimising S&OP and ensuring supply chain resilience in the post-COVID world. This urgency is driven by a significant skills gap; whilst many planners are analytically sound, they often lack in ability to communicate and influence across departments. The high demand for these skills has led to inflated salaries, with top candidates often juggling multiple offers and negotiating favourable conditions like hybrid or remote working. This further supports recent data, with 2,906 Supply Chain Planning roles advertised across Australia within the last 60 days, highlighting the ongoing challenges across this area of the market.

#### 2. Warehouse Management

Similarly, Warehouse Managers are in high demand due to their leadership skills in navigating advanced warehouse operations. The convergence of traditional expertise with new technologies like automation further limits the candidate pool, along with an ability to manage and motivate diverse blue-collar demographics. In Support, over the past 60 days, 4,401 job adverts for Warehouse Management roles have been posted on Seek across Australia. This high volume of listings underscores the intense competition for qualified professionals in this space.

#### 3. Procurement and Supplier Management

These roles are even more pivotal now in mitigating supply chain disruptions post-COVID, necessitating strategic negotiations and relationship management skills. The complexity of these roles, coupled with their critical impact on operational efficiency and cost management, attracts a multitude of applicants, however despite this volume the general quality is often poor. Again, the feedback we often receive is that candidates don't possess the communication skills or resilience to succeed within these types of roles. Refer to our resource for tips on [improving negotiation skills](#), featuring insights from guest speaker Jessica Gordoun at our recent FMCG event.



## The Case for a Proactive Approach

Given the current labour market dynamics, it is imperative for businesses to adopt a more proactive approach to talent acquisition and retention within Supply Chain. Companies must develop and implement robust talent strategies, underpinned by effective communication of their [Employee Value Proposition \(EVP\)](#), to secure a competitive edge. This includes offering competitive salaries, flexible working arrangements, and a compelling work environment to attract top talent.

Investing in a talent acquisition strategy that focuses on building relationships with passive market talent is crucial, especially in highly competitive and talent-short areas. Engaging passive candidates often requires a multi-channel approach, utilising social media, professional networks, industry events, and targeted outreach campaigns to build and nurture these relationships over time. Importantly, this doesn't need to be overly complex, it can be as simple as tracking candidate engagement across your group and keeping an up-to-date tracker on Excel.

For organisations looking to build a more robust Talent Acquisition Strategy, investing in an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) will help to improve the candidate experience. An efficient ATS can streamline the hiring process, ensure consistent communication, and provide a seamless experience for candidates from application to onboarding. This not only enhances the candidate experience but also helps protect and elevate the organisation's brand in the market.



## The Case for a Proactive Approach

There are several top-rated Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) used in Australia, each offering unique features tailored to various business needs. Some of the best ATS systems include:



- **Features:** Talent management suite including recruitment, onboarding, learning, and performance management.
- **Benefits:** Comprehensive HR solution, good for larger organisations, strong analytics and reporting capabilities.



- **Features:** Collaborative hiring, candidate management, recruitment marketing, and comprehensive analytics.
- **Benefits:** Scalable solution, strong collaboration tools, and integrates with various job boards.



- **Features:** Comprehensive HCM suite including recruitment, payroll, performance management, and learning.
- **Benefits:** Strong analytics, scalable for large enterprises, integrates with other HR and business systems.



- **Features:** Candidate relationship management, advanced analytics, interview scheduling, and collaboration tools.
- **Benefits:** Great for collaborative hiring, user-friendly interface, strong reporting capabilities.



## Communication of Your EVP

In a post-COVID world, an organisation's hiring success hinges on effectively communicating a compelling Employee Value Proposition (EVP). Highlighting opportunities to work on innovative projects, gain international exposure, and make significant business impacts can attract top talent. Consistent EVP messaging across job ads, career websites, and social media ensures clarity and resonates with candidates seeking cultural alignment and career growth. Storytelling through testimonials, case studies, and video interviews enhances EVP communication, making it more relatable and appealing.

A Gartner study found that a strong EVP can significantly attract talent and boost employee engagement. For instance, an attractive EVP can reduce compensation premiums by 50% and extend reach into the labor market by 50%. Organisations that effectively deliver on their EVP can decrease annual employee turnover by nearly 70% and increase new hire commitment by almost 30%.

To strengthen EVP communication, consistently articulate core values, mission, and vision across recruitment materials. Emphasise benefits like flexible work arrangements and career development opportunities in job descriptions and social media posts. Use platforms like LinkedIn and career pages featuring employee testimonials and virtual tours to foster engagement and provide an authentic glimpse into workplace culture.

Training hiring managers to communicate the EVP and using standardised job descriptions reinforces employer branding and aligns candidate expectations. Regularly gathering feedback and staying abreast of industry trends refines the EVP strategy, ensuring it remains competitive and continues to attract top talent, fostering resilient teams and sustained success in today's dynamic job market.

Take a look at our blog to read more on [the importance of an EVP](#).



## Case Study

### SUCCESSFULLY LEVERAGING EVP IN A TALENT SEARCH

<b>Role</b>	National Inventory Manager, Melbourne
<b>Duration</b>	1 month
<b>Results</b>	87 candidates engaged (passive), 8 shortlisted, and 1 A-Grade candidate secured from a Tier 1 competitor
<b>Background</b>	A Melbourne-based company undergoing a significant cultural shift and an overhaul of its Employee Value Proposition (EVP) was struggling to attract top-tier talent through traditional methods like internal networks and online advertisements. To address this challenge, a proactive approach was needed to engage the market and bring high-quality candidates to the forefront.

### APPROACH

#### Engagement of Passive Candidates

- 87 passive candidates were engaged by utilising existing networks, internal databases, and LinkedIn Recruitment.

#### Communication of EVP

- **Leadership and Vision:** The shift in leadership across the C-suite and the company's five-year growth vision, which included site acquisitions and investments in state-of-the-art technologies (such as Warehouse Management Systems and automation), were communicated effectively.
- **Employee Benefits:** Newly introduced employee benefits and a flexible work environment were highlighted to attract candidates.

#### Addressing Concerns

- **Initial Engagement:** It took two attempts to engage a standout candidate from a Tier 1 competitor. The candidate agreed to a conversation after initial concerns were addressed over the phone.
- **Lowering Resistance:** By framing the initial conversation with no expectations, the company lowered the candidate's resistance and encouraged open dialogue.



## Case Study

### Transparency

- **Candidate Concerns:** Information about the candidate's initial concerns was shared with the hiring team. This enabled a transparent hiring process that did not shy away from discussing the challenges faced by the business.
- **Alignment and Risk Mitigation:** Ensured that both the candidate and the hiring team were aligned on expectations and that any potential risks were mitigated through open communication.

### OUTCOME

The targeted search led to the shortlisting of 8 strong candidates, culminating in the successful hiring of an A-grade candidate from a Tier 1 competitor. This candidate, who would not have applied for the role directly, was persuaded to consider the position due to the compelling EVP and transparent communication throughout the process.

The success of this search underscores the critical role of a well-articulated EVP in attracting top talent, especially when traditional recruitment methods fall short. By clearly communicating the company's vision, benefits, and addressing concerns openly, the company was able to secure a high-caliber candidate who aligned with their strategic goals and cultural transformation.





## Conclusion | Get in Touch

The talent shortage in the supply chain sector is not just a hurdle but an opportunity for companies to innovate and strengthen their operations through strategic talent management. Adopting a proactive approach in 2024 and beyond will enable companies to attract top-tier talent, drive operational excellence, and maintain a competitive edge in the dynamic landscape of supply chain.

If you're interested in discussing further, or if you have any questions regarding the information shared, please contact Lewis at [lironside@sharpandcarter.com.au](mailto:lironside@sharpandcarter.com.au) | 0435 824 108

All the best for the remainder of 2024.

Lewis



### Lewis Ironside Manager

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Lewis is a qualified teacher who began his career working across the Prison Education system in the UK, teaching offenders English and Maths, before moving into a Management capacity at a College in England, in which he was responsible for the delivery of BTEC education to 16-18 year olds. Moving to Australia in 2016, he commenced his recruitment career working for a large international agency.

With nearly 8 years' experience, Lewis is focused on building trust and strong relationships whilst consistently offering value to his diverse network within the Logistics, Supply Chain and 3PL sectors across ANZ.

## Testimonial

"Working with Lewis feels like having a local Talent team by your side - regular, open communication, great market insights and is tactical in the way he thinks about attracting the best candidates in the market. Has the EQ to find candidates that are the right fit based on personality and soft skills combined with technical expertise. He also has the best interests of our business in mind and a high level of integrity - on two occasions Lewis recommended removing candidates previously presented for roles when new information came to light, others would have ignored the red flags and pushed the candidates anyway. Lewis has helped us grow 3 x in the space of 3 months in a highly competitive market with exceptional candidates. In addition, he's also just a great guy to work with."

- Damien, Employer



# Contact Us

## LOCATIONS

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Melbourne

South-East Melbourne

North Sydney

Parramatta

Brisbane

Perth

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