

NATIONS, REGIONS, GROUPS & FORUMS

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VOLUNTEERING WITH CILT

Meet Ed Sweeney

I have been a member of the Institute for more than three decades, having joined one of the predecessor organisations in the late 1980s. As my work has taken me to live in different countries over the years, so my CILT membership has followed; I have now been a member of three different national groups. I returned to the UK from Ireland in early 2014 after a gap of almost 20 years and joined the Institute's West Midlands Region. With encouragement from the then Regional Officer Don Hambleton and former CILT board member David Grahamslaw, I became a member of the Region's committee and took on responsibility for education-related matters. However, my active volunteering for CILT commenced much earlier.

I have been attending the annual conference of the Logistics Research Network (LRN) Forum for many years. Our recent e-LRN event hosted by Cardiff University was the 25th such conference and I have attended 20 of them. In 2002, I proposed to the LRN committee, then chaired by Professor Martin Christopher, that Dublin be considered as host for the 2004 event. This was agreed, taking the conference outside the UK for the first time. It was hosted at University College Dublin, with much of the planning and organisation undertaken by the Dublin-based National Institute for Transport and Logistics, where I was a director at the time. In the process, I was also co-opted as a member of the LRN committee, and I am proud to have served as a member of this committee since. Shortly after joining Aston in 2014, I was honoured to be elected by my peers as Chair of the LRN Forum.

I have derived huge value from my CILT membership over the years. It is now great to be in a position to give something back to the Institute, particularly to those who are relatively new to our profession. Supply chain professionals understand better than most how important networking and collaboration is. The Institute provides a critical platform for this networking and collaboration among likeminded individuals



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from all parts of the supply chain – retail, logistics and manufacturing – as well as educators, consultants, policy-makers and others across our ecosystem. As an educator, the intelligence that I gather through active engagement with this network through formal and less formal channels plays an important role in ensuring that the design and delivery of our programmes are informed by the real challenges facing supply chain professionals across various sectors. Similarly, our research priorities are informed by the innovation agenda of the firms with which we engage. Much of this engagement is through the Institute's varied portfolio of events and other activities.

The specific challenges of Brexit and Covid-19 have highlighted the critical role of our profession to economic and wider societal wellbeing. We have demonstrated that our community has the skills, knowledge and competencies needed to address these challenges squarely. I am proud to play a small role as an Institute volunteer as part of this collaborative effort.

Ed Sweeney FCILT

Chair, Logistics Research Network, and Committee Member, West Midlands, CILT(UK).



RAIL FREIGHT FORUM

Diversity and inclusion

Business in the Community calculates the difference between the UK population ethnicity and that of our workforces is costing UK GDP £24 billion a year in underutilised talent and the opportunity cost of not having diverse teams. Logistics and transport exist to serve end-users who in the UK are 51% female and 13% black, Asian and minority ethnic, rising to over 25% in the near future, yet the make-up of our sector's workforce and especially its leadership is predominantly male and white. There is a huge imbalance in our demographic compared to the people that we serve, and we are missing out on talent, income, solutions and innovation.

We need to:

- Acknowledge there is a problem and that its causes are embedded in our society and its institutions; we (especially white men) have power and influence, and if we can become much more conscious of that, and choose to use that power for good, we can drive change
- Educate ourselves on diversity, especially race, by reading, watching or listening to something that makes us feel uncomfortable; we do not have to like it or agree with it, but let us engage with it
- Take personal action; perhaps, we will start to challenge the status quo, promote further dialogue, mentor or sponsor someone from a minority group, question our stakeholders when they present a team or proposal that lacks diversity and use our power to support others who have less influence

Customers and organisations are starting to demand diversity in the same way as we have previously demanded and collectively made great progress on safety and, more recently, sustainability. We must get ahead of that curve, working across our sector to develop diversity as our USP, not as a token gesture, but because it has been proven to add value.

Emma Osborn

Network Rail, Category Management Director.