

# Liverpool DC turns into college laboratory

By BRYAN HILLS

This fall, the Liverpool DC provided educational opportunities for Syracuse University students. General Manager Matt Holt, along with HR Manager Molly Barber and VP of Distribution Centers John Long, worked to build a relationship with Syracuse University's Whitman School of Management to host several projects for its supply chain management program.

"We've developed the relationship with SU for a few reasons. It's a potential feeding ground for new talent," says Matt. "It's also going to help us network in the community, to get us to a point where Dot Foods is a name people associate with quality, customer service and people. It's also a fun part of the job to work with a school that draws students from all over the world."

## SIX SIGMA CERTIFICATION THROUGH WHITMAN SCHOOL

Two Six Sigma Black Belt trainees are working on their projects through sponsorship provided by the Liverpool DC. Six Sigma is a quality management program like Total Quality Management (TQM) – which we employ at Dot. It was created by Motorola engineers and executives in the 1980s and has gained popularity in the business world because of the cost-savings it produces.

"The difference between Six Sigma and TQM is that Six Sigma is more statistics driven in examining variations in processes," says Matt. "So, you look at defects per million as an index. A defect being where a process goes bad, and you have something like a damaged case, for example."

Tom Willson, associate director of Army programs at Whitman, is in the certification process. Tom is working with Randy DuMond, Dot dispatcher, and Mike Mein, warehouse specialist, to examine in-transit damage.

"It's great to have local companies host projects," says Tom. "It allows us to get hands-on experience, and it has the potential to help the companies as well. If we find ways to reduce variations in the distribution process, Dot can reduce damage. That benefits Dot and its customers, but it also benefits employees."

Assistant Warehouse Manager Mike Stewart and Mike Mein are also working to provide data for a Six Sigma project examining warehouse damage with Syracuse student Anil Shenoy.

## UNDERGRADS GET INVOLVED, TOO

Supply chain management is one of the fastest-growing degree tracks in American universities, and Whitman's supply chain management program is the oldest in the country and one of the best.

In addition to the two Six Sigma projects, one of the school's warehousing classes studied our operations during fall semester.

That class examined warehouse productivity, warehouse equipment mix, the Illinois-to-New York transfer process and warehouse damage. Warehouse Supervisors Steve Kutchko, Mark Greenwood, Ed Price and Assistant Warehouse Manager Mike Stewart each led a group. These groups presented findings to fellow students, Syracuse faculty and Dot employees on Dec. 5.

The Liverpool DC will continue to grow this relationship with the university. Matt, Molly and VP of Human Resources Mike Hulsen attended a career fair for the entire university earlier in the fall. Matt and Molly also attended a recent career fair for the supply chain management students.

"Certainly, more than anything, this relationship will help us continue to network, build relationships and recruit in the Syracuse community," Matt says. "They also offer a number of executive management courses and other training opportunities of which we can probably take advantage. The school has a beautiful new building, and you can tell they've got a lot of support from graduates and from the community."

## What is supply chain management?

*Supply chain management is the study of how products are manufactured and ultimately distributed to consumers of those products. It is a hot topic because of the success that companies like Wal-Mart and Dell have had in changing their industry's supply chains to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace.*

