

THE TIMES OF INDIA, MUMBAI

ascent global 

“We look for candidates who have the ability to work in synergy with people across different levels/divisions.”

Izabela Megerle, general manager and head – HR, Lanxess India Private Limited discusses the career growth opportunities available in the Indian chemical industry



INDUSTRY IN-SIGHT

HOW IS THE INDIAN CHEMICAL INDUSTRY FARING CURRENTLY? WHAT ARE SOME OF THE EMERGING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THIS INDUSTRY?

The chemical industry in India is growing at a very healthy rate currently, propelled by the rising middle-class and increasing purchasing power parity. The specialty chemicals industry alone has a potential to build a USD 80 to USD 100 billion specialty chemical industry by 2020. The end-user

industries like automobile, construction, paints and coatings, tyre, agrochemicals among others are growing steadily and hence, they create a strong demand for specialty chemicals in India. Graduates in chemistry/engineering (chemical, mechanical or comparable disciplines) are the most sought for professionals for the primary jobs in the chemical industry. This industry involves manufacturing of chemicals, so there will be ample career opportunities at the production sites. This includes production engineers

at the entry level, moving upto technical specialists roles.

WHAT ARE THE COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS REQUIRED TO EXCEL IN THE FIELD OF CHEMISTRY?

The chemical industry requires bright minds who have undergone requisite training. We look for candidates who have the ability to work in synergy with people across different levels and divisions and have a global

mindset, as often they have to work with teams from other countries. The ability to think and act strategically, analyse well and understand the basic concepts is important. The willingness to continuously learn on-the-job and question the status quo are an important part of the work attitude. They should be open to work in the plants as well if the job demands it.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF ACADEMIA IN PROMOTING THE GROWTH OF THIS INDUSTRY?

To begin with, there is a gap in the demand for graduates with relevant profiles in the chemical industry and the supply of such students passing out of colleges and universities. The demand is higher than the supply. There are possibly two reasons why this happens. One is the lack of awareness about the interesting jobs available in this industry; hence, chemical engineers or chemistry graduates end up joining other industries, which is clearly a loss for the chemical industry. In order to

overcome this, the academic institutions could organise more seminars, workshops and training programmes specially designed for students where industry representatives could throw light on the subject, so that students make well-informed decisions when they graduate. Secondly, students who join the industry with an academic orientation do not necessarily have the right understanding of the application of their knowledge to their work. Organisations should therefore offer more possibilities for students to implement their theoretical knowledge for performing the jobs in a real-time scenario in the industry. In very short-term internships, it is difficult to design an appropriate project for the student to derive any benefits from.

- Sheetal Srivastava

Log on to www.itsmyascent.com to read more interviews