



# Sloan Career Cornerstone Center

## Profiles of Chemical Engineers



**DeAnne Hellyer**

**Imaging Media Product Planner  
Lexmark International  
Lexington, KY**

### **Education:**

B.S. - Chemical Engineering, Iowa State University  
M.S. - Chemical Engineering, Carnegie Mellon University

### **Job Description:**

Product planner on specialty imaging media.

### **Advice to Students:**

"It's important to apply yourself in the work that you do, but it's also important to realize that there are other skills that you need to have, such as communicating with people."

### **Video Transcript:**

"For the last four months I've been over working as a product planner. What I'm doing now is more of like product coordination for release of new products, dealing with marketing, dealing with requirements, putting together the product objectives and functional specifications. I'm, functioning more in the role of coordination of, of new product releases and getting out the packaging for those new products I'm not personally designing it but I review it."

### **Interview:**

Hellyer: My name is Deanne Kay Hellyer, and I am a product planner on specialty imaging media, in the imaging solutions division.

### **Q: Why did you choose chemical engineering in college?**

Hellyer: I started off studying chemical engineering because I always liked math and science. I thought about just going into chemistry initially, but I visited both the chemical engineering college and the college for chemistry, and I thought chemical engineering was much more practical.

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### **Q: Did you enjoy college?**

Hellyer: I really enjoyed my undergraduate experience. Anyone who's an engineering student knows the course work is pretty heavy and it's difficult. Even if you're a bright student, it still demands a lot out of you as far as the time that you are required to put in and the amount of studying that you have to do. But it's still satisfying, and I thought the courses were interesting.

### **Q: Did you have an internship or co-op experience during college?**

Hellyer: I didn't co-op, but I did work two summers at different companies. Between my junior and senior year, I worked at Procter & Gamble in the food development area, on a new food project that they had. That was interesting in the fact that, I never got to apply my schooling until I went to work there. The summer between my senior year and going to graduate school, I worked at GE in the plastics plant. There, it was more about putting together a computer program so they could transport their Lexan pellets from one facility to another.

### **Q: Do you feel those experiences help you in your job now?**

Hellyer: I guess what I learned most of all, is that you can apply your chemical engineering background to a variety of different types of jobs-from food development, to computer work, to ink development and product support. Now I'm a product planner, so it just opens your eyes to the fact that with a chemical engineering background you can do many different things.

### **Q: How did you go about getting your master's degree.**

Hellyer: I didn't work while I did my master's, I had a scholarship and stipend from the university. I was really interested in biomedical research at that time, so I took on a biomedical project. That involved cancer research on rats-that's just one more thing that's really diverse about this field. I found that very interesting, but I also felt like I didn't want to go on with my Ph.D., and I really didn't want to teach, so I started looking for a job.

### **Q: How did you find your job?**

Hellyer: When I was done with my undergraduate degree, before I decided to go to graduate school, I went through the placement office and looked at jobs. Then I made my decision to go to graduate school. When I finished with my graduate degree, I went through the career placement services there at Carnegie Mellon also. They had people from various companies come on-site, and that's where I did my interview and got the job offer.

### **Q: What have you learned since completing your undergraduate degree?**

Hellyer: The first job I had when I came here was as a product engineer, supporting some of our typewriter ribbons-that was a metalizer process. It was something totally new, and I learned that the education you've gained, just gives you more experiences and makes you more flexible for different opportunities and different challenges that come along. As far as graduate school, it really teaches you project management, and driving towards completion of your goals.

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### **Q: Are there pitfalls to working for a large corporation?**

Hellyer: I guess a pitfall could be that you might get lost in an organization if you get put aside in a lab. You might not get noticed, or it might take a while for your hard work to get noticed because there are so many people and so many different projects. As a new person, you're not going to get the best projects right off, you're probably going to get a lesser project because they can't trust you yet with the more advanced stuff.

### **Q: What is a typical day like for you?**

Hellyer: For the last four months, I've been working as a product planner. So we're talking about very diverse things. If you're developing inks, you're in the lab working with technicians, and running tests. What I'm doing now is more like product coordination for release of new products-dealing with marketing, other requirements, and putting together the product objectives and functional specifications. I'm functioning more in the role of coordination of new product releases and getting out the packaging for those new products. I'm not personally designing the packaging, but I review it. With input from marketing and engineering, I decide what the product's going to look like.

### **Q: Do you work on a team?**

Hellyer: I work with other engineers, the design center, and graphic artists. I work with printer people to talk with them about what they're expecting, and what types of specialty papers they need to promote their products. If there are new product applications, then we work on what new products we need to be thinking of to go along with those. What I like about it is the variety of different contacts that I have across the site-you get a really wide breadth of exposure to different areas.

### **Q: What is the work environment like here?**

Hellyer: I like the work environment here. Everybody has a cooperative attitude. It's not one of the companies where you feel like you have to be on your guard because there's going to be back stabbing, or whatever. I think people are overall very cooperative and friendly and tend to get together every now and then to do things after work.

### **Q: What skills should engineering students look to acquire?**

Hellyer: I think it's really important to have good writing skills and good communication skills-so anything you can do to improve those is important. Also, it's very important to be proficient in using the computer. And experimental design courses and statistics are good to have for designing experiments.

### **Q: What advice would you offer to those interested in becoming chemical engineers?**

Hellyer: It's important to apply yourself in the work that you do, but it's also important to realize that there are other skills that you need to have, such as communicating with people. Don't ignore that side of your development while you're getting the skills in math and science. I would recommend chemical engineering as a career to young people, as long as they know what they're getting into. I would recommend it because I've found it rewarding. I enjoy the different types of work that I've done, and I enjoy the fact that I've been able to do so many different things. In that sense, you're not really locked into always being in the lab, but you can branch out and do other things.

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