

**ANN K. MASSE | Safety, Health, Environmental and Sustainability Leader, DuPont (ann.k.masse@dupont.com)**

**Degree: When, where, what, and what in?**

I have an undergraduate degree in Environmental Studies (BA, 1981) from St. Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont, and a graduate degree in Physical Oceanography (PhD, 1988) from the University of Delaware.

**Did you stay in academia at all, and if so, for how long?**

I completed a postdoctoral position at the Canada Centre for Inland Waters in Burlington, Ontario. It was a great experience to work with the Canadian researchers and to apply what I had learned about the ocean to the Great Lakes.

**How did you go about searching for a job outside of the university setting?**

I have been fortunate to have had many jobs, and I have probably used just about every approach to job hunting. My best success in finding work was through networking, becoming actively involved in community and professional activities. I also try to learn as much as I can about the company or organization that I am interested in—not only determining what they do and how successful they are, but also examining the corporate culture and whether it will be a good fit for me. Finding the right job is about finding work you love to do in an environment where you can be successful.

DuPont recruited me because I was involved in the community, the local university, and an environmental association. The company needed someone to help navigate the development of a

challenging environmental program and to work with the local government and academic communities.

**Is this the only job (post-academia) that you've had? If not, what else did you do?**

Between undergraduate and graduate school, I worked as a contracted auditor for the Environmental Protection Agency. Through these assignments, I traveled the country and learned about many different industries, such as steel mills, power plants, mines, food producers, and automobile manufacturing. These experiences gave me a solid grounding in how business works in many different settings. I continue to draw on those experiences today. After my postdoctoral appointment, I worked for a brief period in environmental consulting—writing proposals for environmental assessments in many areas of the world. I was also given the opportunity to start looking at climate change to help the company find its niche as the science was developing.

**What is your current job? What path did you take to get there?**

I am currently the global Safety, Health, Environmental and Sustainability Leader for the chemicals division of DuPont. I joined DuPont at a plant site to help work through some local environmental challenges. Over the years, my job scope grew from the site Environmental Manager to overall site Safety, Health, and Environmental Manager. I changed locations—working in New York,



Louisiana, and New Jersey. About 10 years ago, I joined the corporate offices to work on special projects—mostly in environmental and sustainability issues, and six years ago I was appointed to my current assignment.

At a recent career day, I encouraged new employees to be willing to take on a special project, to do something that is difficult or stretches them into areas where they have to learn new skills and work with new people. I told them that in doing so, they would grow both personally and professionally, they would be viewed as positive contributors, and, as new assignments become available, leaders will be more likely to take chances on them.

**What did your oceanographic education (or academic career) give you that is useful in your current job?**

I was fortunate to have Richard Garvine as my advisor in graduate school. He was a disciplined thinker whose rich life involved pursuing diverse interests. He taught oceanography in a way that honed a student's scientific approach to focus on the essential elements of a problem. This type of thinking has served me well at work—helping me to quickly sort out

the noise and focus on the essence of the issue at hand. He also insisted that we write well—many a chapter in my dissertation was covered with his red ink! Graduate school started me on the path to becoming a stronger public speaker. Communicating well—both in writing and verbally—are critical to being effective in my current assignment.

### Is the job satisfying? What aspects of the job do you like best/least?

Hands down, I love my job. I have been able to travel to many parts of the world to see how DuPont operates in different countries. I work with government agencies, community organizations, and other industry groups on a variety of issues. A large part of what I do at DuPont is working on improving safety, health, and the environment. There is satisfaction in knowing that you have helped others be safer and that your work is advancing environmental stewardship. This is a challenging time as climate change and resource constraints become more and more important globally. I enjoy working on these tough challenges, helping the company assess new processes and products to reduce its environmental footprint and provide added value to customers.

### Do you have any recommendations for new grads looking for jobs?

Be targeted in your approach to finding a job to make sure you are the best candidate and the job is a good fit for you. Reach out proactively to the university or organization you may be interested in and then follow up. Persistence is important in a competitive job market. Be active in professional societies or community organizations and continue to work on improving your communications skills. 