Celebrating women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) on International Women’s Day 2017

Education & Awareness

Wednesday 8th March 2017 is International Women’s Day. At Novartis UK, we are supporting the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) in celebrating women working in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and the impact their work has on the future of UK life-sciences.

At Novartis UK we champion diversity and inclusion. We encourage more women to consider STEM careers. To celebrate International Women’s Day, we heard from some of our female associates who have share their stories and thoughts about working in STEM.

Sarah Mouzouris
Research and Development Operations Manager at Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd., Near Patient Testing, Sittingbourne, Kent.

About me
Hello, my name is Sarah and I work as a Research and Development Operations Manager in the Near Patient Testing team at Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd. I studied at Cranfield University in Bedford and also have an MSc in Medical Technology Regulatory Affairs.

Did you always want to work in STEM?
No, I cannot honestly say I had never considered a career in STEM, so I suppose it happened by accident really.

Be confident in your decisions and always remember that what you do is making a difference for the better.

Why did you choose to get involved with the pharmaceutical industry?
I became involved in the pharmaceutical industry as a result of a family tragedy. At the time, I made the conscious decision to have a completely fresh start and with that came a change of career and I began working in vitro diagnostics.

The theme of this year’s International Women’s Day is #BeBoldForChange – what would you like to see for women in STEM in the near future?
I would like to see an increase in the number of women in senior leadership roles.

**What advice would you give to your younger self when you made your first steps to a career in the pharmaceutical industry?**

Be confident in your decisions and always remember that what you do is making a difference for the better.

---

**Andrea Leonard**  
*Global Project Manager at Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd. Near Patient Testing, Sittingbourne, Kent.*

**About me**

Hello, I’m Andrea and I work as a Global Project Manager within the Near Patient Testing team based in Sittingbourne, Kent. I work on early stage projects for our novel technology with teams across Novartis as well as external collaborations. I studied Human Biology (BSc) and Nutrition at Kings College, University of London.

**Did you always want to work in STEM?**

I was always interested in science at school and toyed with the idea of pursuing a career in medicine. My main interest was biology, especially in relation to people, and decided to undertake a degree in human biology. I was good at it and enjoyed it so to me it made sense to progress a career in this area.

**Why did you choose to get involved with the pharmaceutical industry?**

For me, it was a natural move to pursue a career in the pharmaceutical industry where science is the backbone for everything, and the industry offered opportunities to progress into other areas including sales and marketing, management, operations, quality assurance, regulatory and many more.

Get to know what the whole industry has to offer – it is not just about research, development and making tablets!

**The theme of this year’s International Women’s Day is #BeBoldForChange – what would you like to see for women in STEM in the near future?**

It would be great to have more opportunities to share knowledge and give advice to allow us to learn from each other.

**What advice would you give to your younger self when you made your first steps to a career in the pharmaceutical industry?**

Get to know what the whole industry has to offer – it is not just about research and development and making tablets! Get a good network of contacts – you never know when they might be useful in opening up new opportunities or to help solve a problem.
Michelle Muxworthy  
_Head of Health & Safety Environment (HSE) & Business Continuity (BC) at Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd., Grimsby._

**About me**  
Hello, I’m Michelle. I work at Novartis Grimsby, the company’s manufacturing site as Head of HSE & BC. I am also a Chartered Fellow and Vice President of the Institution of Occupational Safety & Health (IOSH).

I studied Chemistry at Huddersfield University, completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Occupational Health & Safety Management at Oxford Brookes and an MSc in Risk Disaster and Environmental Management. I completed all my studies whilst working full time.

**Did you always want to work in STEM?**  
I was fortunate enough to have inspirational science teachers at school and whilst I did have aspirations for university, I chose to accept a job at Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) Organics Division in Huddersfield, and this set my path in STEM.

I worked in various roles on the site and after twelve years of varied development opportunities, including involvement in technical aspects of HSE, I was successful in being offered my first full time HSE Management Role.

> Always look for the opportunity in everything, have confidence and believe in yourself, but learn to do this with humility.

**Why did you choose to get involved with the pharmaceutical industry?**  
I left the chemical manufacturing industry after nearly 23 years and worked across the water, food and higher education sectors for just over six years; whilst I enjoyed the discipline of HSE as a technical career pathway, I missed the chemical manufacturing’s HSE foundations, diversity of risk management and industry culture.

I decided to look for a position in the pharmaceutical industry because of a combination of my profession and personal experience, having had open heart surgery as a child. If it had not been for the brilliance of the surgeons and the innovation in the pharmaceutical industry, I would not be here today; it was really important for me to give something back and this is my small way of achieving that.

**The theme of this year’s International Women’s Day is #BeBoldForChange – what would you like to see for women in STEM in the near future?**  
I think there has been a lot of good work done already, but I would like to see a more even balance of women in higher management positions within STEM.

**What advice would you give to your younger self when you made your first steps to a career in the pharmaceutical industry?**  
Always look for the opportunity in everything, have confidence and believe in yourself, but learn to do this with humility. I am fortunate to have been successful not only due to hard work and determination, but also because others have seen potential in me that I have not always
Karen Stephenson  
*Head of Supply Chain at Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd., Grimsby.*

**About me**
Hello, I’m Karen and I am Head of Supply Chain at Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd., Grimsby. This site is part of the Chemical Operations platform within Novartis Technical Operations. I studied at Sheffield Hallam University and have a BSc Honours degree in Chemistry.

**Did you always want to work in STEM?**
Yes, I originally studied Chemistry as I wanted to be a Forensic Scientist.

**Why did you choose to get involved with the pharmaceutical industry?**
I entered the pharmaceutical industry by fortunate circumstances rather than choice. After graduating, I was recruited on a graduate training scheme within Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI). Here, I experienced working in different aspects of the chemical industry, from research and development through to procurement. I moved to Grimsby when I got married, as my husband was from the area.

“Don’t undervalue the difference you can make. Know your strengths and play to them.

I was successful in my application to work in purchasing within, what was then, Ciba Geigy (now Novartis Pharmaceuticals). I have worked here for 25 years and during that time, I have seen the site at Grimsby transition from being a multi-discipline site to purely pharmaceutical manufacturing.

**The theme of this year’s International Women’s Day is #BeBoldForChange – what would you like to see for women in STEM in the near future?**
Continue to strengthen and build on the diversity that women bring to an organisation and drive to integrate them more fully across all disciplines.

**What advice would you give to your younger self when you made your first steps to a career in the pharmaceutical industry?**
Don’t undervalue the difference you can make. Know your strengths and play to them.

---

**Source URL:** https://www.novartis.co.uk/stories/education-awareness/celebrating-women-science-technology-engineering-and-mathematics-stem

**Links**
[1] https://www.novartis.co.uk/stories/education-awareness/celebrating-women-science-technology-