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Combining chemistry and marketing

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Women in plastics arrive from all different directions, with the career story of Alena Muravchenko, director of marketing (Ukraine & Russia) for global plastic packaging producer RETAL, showing how varied the careers in the plastic industry can be for those with equally varied skills.

Alena shares her early career influences. “My first degree was in Chemistry. I came to university in the big city in Ukraine from a small city, so to earn while studying I worked in a marketing company; I was assisting in advertising...I didn’t realise it would lead to my career! After my chemical degree, I started working in marketing rather than chemistry and I gained a lot of marketing experience but felt that I wanted to have a proper education in marketing too, so I joined an MBA programme in strategic marketing.”

Alena’s impressive career development and warm character shows why she is so ideally suited to the key role of director of marketing, as her knowledge of the plastic packaging industry comes from two opposite directions – chemicals and marketing. This unusual skillset, coupled with her approachability, is why Alena continues to flourish at RETAL, having joined in 2014 as head of marketing.

Her marketing MBA coupled with her chemistry degree and considerable B2C marketing experience gained in advertising led Alena to apply for a role at RETAL, as it offered an opportunity to combine her skills. She says, “I was excited by the challenge as RETAL represents everything I’ve worked for; I had to learn the B2B approach from scratch and understand new market trends, as well as being in a large multinational company, but I also knew I’d bring my own unique ability of connecting chemistry with marketing.”

This unique combination allows Alena to incorporate her technical knowledge with her understanding of marketing, seeing her make valuable contributions to sales forecasting as well as bringing professional insight to customers. She says, “I think I am good at understanding how customers are buying their packaging; of course, the products must be of the right quality and the right price, but they need to be right emotionally too. Who customers buy from is their choice, so by knowing about the chemical aspects of the products as well as the marketing, I can support our sales teams in explaining how best to communicate with our different customers. No customer is the same as another; everyone has different demands and different requirements and I enjoy working that out and delivering it.”

