

Transcript of Sylvie Cloutier, Chemical Engineer

The coolest thing about my job is... that I invent things that you can use every day! [French].

I manage a group of scientists that work on putting Omega3 into food products; and that could be in any staple food like in orange juice or yogurt or bread. But, Omega3 is not stable; so it goes rancid and if you didn't do anything to it you would put it in the food and it would taste like rotten fish.

What I love the best is doing things at manufacturing scale and thinking of the process to get there. So if we have something that looks like it's good and close and going to be manufactured, conceptualizing how that's going to be done and then doing it and solving the problems that arise from that. The toughest thing about this job is actually measuring what we do. So we have this concept, we do something and it looks really good for three weeks and then at week four it tastes horrible.

I chose engineering because I wanted to do practical science and I didn't want to do theoretical science. With a chemical engineering degree you can do a number of things. You can work in an engineering firm; you can work on environmental projects at a number of different levels, municipal or manufacturing; you can work in technical sales if you are a little bit more on the outgoing side of things; and you can work in any sort of manufacturing process because it's a very general degree.

If I had some advice, I would say to you that the first thing you need to do is figure out what you are good at because that's the key to becoming better. So, you start with something that you're good at and stick with it and put some effort in to it; you are going to become better at it and you're more likely to be successful and more likely to enjoy your work life. And if you enjoy your work life you're going to enjoy your life over all because that's a big part of your life.